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Young Adults' Reflections on Being the Child of a Veteran

A Narrative Inquiry to Inform Educational Psychology Practice

Young Adults' Reflections on Being the Child of a Veteran: A Narrative Inquiry to Inform Educational Psychology Practice

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED   Stephanie A Hopkins   DATE 04.09.2020

Abstract

Approximately 14,000 service men and women leave the UK Armed Forces each year and return to civilian life (Nicholls, 2019). This group of people who have served, but are no longer serving, in the British military can be described as veterans. The children of veterans are a hidden population, who are not monitored or recorded by the British government, and whose needs and experiences remain largely under researched.

This study employed a qualitative, three-phase design to explore the experiences of the children of veterans and examine the possible role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in relation to this group.

A Narrative Inquiry was conducted with four young adults, aged between 18 and 25, who had experienced a parent leaving the military. These narrative accounts were analysed using the Listening Guide (Brown & Gilligan, 1993) and revealed complex experiences of transition, belonging and identity. These findings suggest that the children of veterans may move in and out of vulnerability according to their family circumstances.

The views and experiences of EPs were explored using an online survey and a focus group. Findings of these two research phases suggest a perceived lack of experience, knowledge, and confidence regarding the children of veterans. Many of those EPs expressed a desire for further training to improve practice in relation to this group of children.

The findings from all three phases of the research suggest that the children of veterans are a distinct group of children with needs that differ from those of their civilian and military counterparts. The likelihood of their experiencing some challenge due to their parents leaving the military suggests that there is likely to be a role for EPs in supporting the children of veterans at times of vulnerability. Several recommendations for practice have been made at profession, service, and individual level. These include training, awareness raising and a consideration of parental military service during communication with the family and subsequent hypothesising.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	Adverse childhood experience
CoV	Children of veterans
CoP	Code of Practice
'Civvy street'	Civilian life
CPMT	Communication privacy management theory
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
FST	Family systems theory
NI	Narrative Inquiry
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
RAF	Royal Air Force
RQ	Research question
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SFA	Service Family Accommodation. Housing allocated by the Ministry of Defence
SIT	Social identity theory
SMVs	Serving military personnel and veterans
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Chapter Overview

Approximately 14,000 people leave the Armed Forces every year, with over half of those who left in 2019 citing the impact of service life on their family as their reason for leaving (Nicholls, 2019). Indeed, the children of serving personnel are recognised by the UK government as a vulnerable group due to the potential disruption caused by mobility and parental separation that can often accompany military life (The Ministry of Defence, 2018). However, once a parent has left the Forces, their children are no longer afforded any recognition as a distinct group either in policy or, seemingly, in research. As such they have been described as an "invisible" population (O'Neill, 2017). Nonetheless, it has been suggested that "just because children suddenly find themselves becoming a 'civilian child' it does not mean that the service child issues suddenly go away" (Fossey, 2012, p. 7).

This research, conducted as part of a three-year Doctoral training programme in Educational Psychology, set out to explore the experiences of this group of children, and what the implications of those experiences may be for the practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs).

In the remainder of this chapter I will outline the terminology being used, discuss the context and motivation for conducting this research, and provide an overview of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

1.2   A Note on Terminology

1.2.1   Veteran

The British Armed Forces community is made up of those who serve in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force (RAF), and their families. In this study, the term 'veteran' is being used to refer to anyone who has served, but is no longer serving, in the UK Armed Forces. This is in line with the terminology currently employed by the British government.

However, it is important to note that the term veteran "does not have a universal meaning" (Burdett et al., 2013, p. 752) and has come to be understood somewhat differently by many of those in the Armed Forces community, as well as the general public. The UK government's definition of a veteran as someone who has "served for at least a day in Her Majesty's Forces" (The Ministry of Defence, 2017) is one of the most inclusive in the world, and some members of the Armed Forces community prefer the terms "ex-serving" or "ex-Forces".

Throughout the body of this report the terms veteran, ex-serving and ex-Forces are used interchangeably.

1.2.2 Children of Veterans

'Children of veterans' (CoV) is the term being used to describe the children of those who have previously served in the Armed Forces. The terms 'military-connected children' (MCC) and 'service children' are used to refer to those whose parents are currently serving in the military. Whilst many CoV will have experienced life as service children prior to their parent leaving the military, the term is also inclusive of those who were born after their parent became a veteran (O'Neill, 2017).

1.3 Context of the Research

Raising a family during, and after, service is not a new phenomenon. However, recent conflicts in Iraq (2003-2011) and Afghanistan (2002-2014) have changed the landscape of military life. The war in Afghanistan in particular posed "the greatest challenge in a long time" (Egnell, 2011, p. 297) to UK Forces and saw the deployment of over 134,000 troops (The Ministry of Defence, 2015). The sustained level of conflict and number of personnel experiencing combat sparked new interest in the experiences of veterans by researchers and the general public (Sundin et al., 2011).

It has been suggested that veterans are a "focal point of public interest" in the UK, having frequently been represented in the media and popular culture (Phillips, 2020, p. 64). Despite this apparent interest, they are a seemingly misunderstood group who are often characterised as either 'victims or heroes' and portrayed in terms of "negative and erroneous stereotypes" (Phillips, 2020, p. 64).

Historically, the needs of this community have mostly been met through third sector charity organisations, and the recognition of veterans in government policy is arguably in its relative infancy. For example, the Office for Veterans Affairs was established just last year, in 2019, and although the Royal British Legion have recently announced the success of their campaign to have ex-serving personnel recognised on the 2021 census, to date there is no routine monitoring of this population (RBL, 2020). Based on a 2017 Annual Population Survey (APS) the current number of veterans in the UK is estimated to be approximately 2.5 million (The Ministry of Defence, 2019).

The families of veterans continue to remain relatively 'hidden' and it has been argued that CoV are an almost invisible population as, once their family leave the military, they are no longer recognised as a distinct group and, as such, the numbers of CoV in the UK are currently unknown (O'Neill, 2017).

Despite this apparent lack of acknowledgement of CoV at a government level, concerns have been expressed amongst researchers and charity organisations as to the wellbeing of this group of children (Fossey, 2012; O'Neill, 2017). In their introduction to a 2009 report, the Royal Marines & Royal Navy Children's Fund staff noted their alarm regarding the impact they were continuing to see on CoV from the conflict in the Falklands, despite it having taken place in 1982. In light of the suggestion that the

"long-term impacts still have a grip upon many families' lives" (2009, p. 11) they raised concerns regarding the wellbeing of CoV following more recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The legitimacy of media representations of veterans as "the mad, the bad and the sad" continue to be challenged by research findings that the majority of ex-service personnel integrate back into civilian life successfully (House of Commons Defence Committee, 2018). Nonetheless, it remains likely that even successful transitions pose the potential for some disruption (Mobbs & Bonanno, 2018), and that there are a small number of veterans who will face significant difficulty after leaving the military. What this may mean for their families, and their children in particular, has received little attention.

In the case of such hidden or marginalised groups, it is often the case that a researcher's own personal experiences and knowledge of 'anecdotal evidence' are likely to guide the choice of topic (Al-natour, 2011). As such, my personal and professional motivations for this study will be considered next.

1.4 Personal and Professional Motivation

The motivation to complete this research has largely been the result of the interplay between my own personal experiences and my professional training in Educational Psychology.

My journey toward conducting this research can perhaps be traced back to an incident that occurred years before I began training, in an unexpected traffic jam in the early days of a new relationship with a combat veteran. A person that I had come to know as calm and collected suddenly became overwhelmingly agitated and distressed. As someone who had very limited knowledge of the military up until that point, this marked the beginning of my understanding of the saying '*Once a Marine, Always a Marine'*. Through a very steep learning curve, I learnt about strength and determination, but also about hypervigilance, contingency plans, de-escalation and exit strategies. I came to learn that sitting in traffic was associated with a perceived level of threat that meant it was to be avoided at all costs.

During this time, I also became a member of an online support network of those affected by the aftermath of combat and began to learn of some of their stories of family life.

It was through my professional training, and an increasing awareness of the application of psychological theory, that I came to hear those stories in a different way. Through the lens of this training I began considering how children themselves made sense of their experiences, and I wondered about the possible impact on their emotional wellbeing. As a profession that often positions its members as advocates for vulnerable and hidden groups of children (DfEE, 2000), I began to wonder if Educational Psychologists may have a role in relation to CoV and what this may be.

My current relationship with a serving member of the RAF has shed new light on the unique experiences often faced by service families, and on some of the aspects of culture and identity that can accompany military service. From my own experiences, and conversations with other members of this community, I have come to appreciate the possible disruption that even a smooth, well-planned transition to civilian life can bring.

My initial searches of the literature highlighted similar concerns regarding the possible ramifications of transition. They were also troublesome in that, even though some researchers had highlighted the possible impact of parental veteran status on children (e.g. Fossey, 2012; O'Neill, 2017), the voices and experiences of CoV seemed noticeably absent from the literature. At the same time as considering the research base, I was also having conversations with my EP colleagues about my possible research topic. Often, those that I spoke to expressed the view that it was likely there is a role for EPs in relation to CoV, but that they had simply never considered this before. This combination of factors cemented my desire to conduct research that listened to the stories of CoV, as well as exploring if there is any role for EPs to play in relation to this group.

Despite having contacts within both the veteran and serving communities, the recruitment process for this research was still long and difficult. This served to further endorse my view that CoV are a hidden population, who do not seem to currently be monitored or recognised in a way that would allow for the delivery of any effective support other than perhaps through community settings, such as schools.

1.5   Relevance to Educational Psychology

The role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is often accepted to be one of carrying out five key functions – consultation, assessment, intervention, research, and training. These activities are conducted at three levels - individual, group and system (Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017). Against the backdrop of the 'Every Child Matters' (Department for Education, 2003) agenda and the introduction of a new SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education Department of Health, 2015), which introduced Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs as a new category of SEND, the role of the EP has increasingly become one of employing those functions to promote and support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing (Greig et al., 2019).

As noted above, MCC are recognised as having the potential to experience a degree of vulnerability associated with the disruption sometimes brought about by military life and, as suggested by Fossey (2012), it is possible that these experiences will continue to have an impact on the wellbeing and academic achievements of some CoV. In addition, CoV may also experience difficulty associated with the process of their parents leaving the military.

In recent years there has been an increasing acknowledgement that educational settings can play a critical role in providing stability and support for vulnerable children, particularly when there are possible stressors within the home environment (Department for Education, 2010). In the instances of 'hidden' populations, school staff may be unsure as to how to approach, or even identify, the relevant issues. A key element of the EP role is one of bringing a knowledge of psychological theory that can aid an exploration and understanding of the child's circumstances and guide the implementation of support (Morgan & Gill, 2013; Weare, 2015). In this way, by virtue of their training, many EPs consider their role to be one of taking an holistic view of any potential strengths and difficulties that may be impacting on the child, and are able to encourage a consideration of a wide range of influencing factors within the school, home and community (Fallon et al., 2010).

In addition, through their work in schools and with other professionals, EPs are well placed to promote an awareness of CoV at a systems level by supporting the development of policy and practice (e.g. recording and monitoring practices) that can help to make CoV more visible within their communities.

It is hoped that this research will contribute towards an evidence base that may guide the work of EPs in relation to CoV.

1.6   Overview of the Current Research

In light of the apparent invisibility of CoV in the existing literature, the primary aim of this research was one of eliciting the voices of CoV directly, to explore their experiences. A secondary aim was one of considering what the role of EPs may be in relation to CoV. To meet these aims, a multi-method study was designed and conducted to answer three research questions:

1) How do CoV experience and understand their lives?
2) What are Educational Psychologists' and Trainee Educational Psychologists' attitudes and experiences relating to CoV?
3) In what ways, if any, can EPs and TEPs develop their practice in relation to CoV?

These were addressed through three research phases:

Phase 1: A Narrative Inquiry into the experiences of CoV, which consisted of unstructured interviews with four young adults who are the children of veterans.

Phase 2: An online survey of a sample of the EP population.

Phase 3: A focus group with EPs from one Local Authority.

1.7   Structure of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation will be presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 outlines a review of the relevant literature. Details of the search process, as well as an overview of the results of that search, will be presented alongside important psychological theories that may be relevant to understanding the experiences of CoV.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach and design of the research. In this chapter I discuss my epistemological and ontological positions as a researcher and how these have influenced the research design. I will present the rationale for having adopted a multi-method approach, and for using Narrative Inquiry as a methodology for Phase 1 of the research, as well as a detailed description as to how each of these phases was conducted.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the findings of Phase 1 and presents the narratives of the four participants – Ayla, Audrey, Rita, and Sophia. These narratives are presented separately and my researcher response to each is included in this chapter to promote transparency.

Chapter 5 details the findings of Phases 2 and 3 of the research. An overview of responses to the online survey and the results of a thematic analysis of the focus group will be presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of all three of the research phases in light of the research questions and the relevant literature.

Chapter 7 details my consideration and personal reflections on the research process, including the perceived strengths and limitations of the current study and implications for possible future research in this area.

1.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the current research, the context in which it has been conducted and an account of my personal and professional motivation for conducting the study. The existing research and literature that is relevant to this study will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of a literature review can be considered to be one of synthesising and summarising the research on a particular topic, so as to provide an overview of its scholarly context (Denney & Tewksbury, 2013). To this end, a review was conducted to establish and explore what is known about the experiences of children of veterans (CoV).

The experiences of CoV represent an emerging matter of interest, and there is a paucity of relevant literature in this area, particularly from a UK context (Fossey, 2012; O'Neill, 2017). This presented several barriers to a review of literature for this study, the process of which had to be adapted accordingly. As such, this chapter will cover:

- The search strategy, and reflections on the review process.

- The implications and limitations of the results of a systematic search.

- A consideration of the wider evidence base around the experiences of veterans and their spouses or partners, and how identified factors may impact on the children of veterans.

- A summary of the review, its implications for the work of EPs and a rationale for the focus of the present study.

2.1 Reflections on the Review Process

Systematic searches are often hailed for their transparency and their comprehensive nature (Davies, 2019; Ferrari, 2015) and, as such, I initially adopted this approach to searching the literature. However, the results of the systematic searches indicated that, to date, research on CoV has been limited in scope, and there appear to be significant gaps in our knowledge regarding their experiences.

It is widely acknowledged that there is a paucity of research relating to the British military context, particularly in regards to the families of serving military personnel and veterans (SMVs) (Fossey, 2012). Despite a recent increase in attention on the experiences of children of serving personnel following recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the same level of attention does not appear to have been extended to the children of those who have left the Forces (Fossey, 2012). Furthermore, as Creech et al. (2014) state, research in this area has focused "almost exclusively on PTSD." This would appear to have been supported by the findings of my systematic search, as most of the relevant results were concerned with the impact of PTSD, often in relation to the conflict in Vietnam. In addition, none of the results were of studies conducted within a UK context.

Considering the lack of available information regarding British veterans and their families, it is commonplace to refer to an international literature base, particularly studies that have been conducted in the U.S. However, Fossey (2012, p. 11) urges caution when considering the implications of these studies, noting that there are some "significant structural and contextual differences" between the two cultures. For example, the focus on PTSD is likely to reflect the differing priorities associated with much higher prevalence rates of the condition reported in the American veteran population compared to the UK (Richardson et al., 2010).

Despite these difficulties, I felt it important to include a consideration of the results of the systematic search, as the indication that much of the research exploring the experiences of CoV has focused almost exclusively on parental PTSD was considered to be an important representation of the way in which CoV have been reflected within the literature. However, in light of the fact that those with PTSD represent a "small but significant" (Centre for Social Justice, 2014, p. 25) percentage of the veteran population in the UK, it was also acknowledged that the included studies are unlikely to be representative of the experiences of the majority of CoV in this country.

Due to the apparent limitations of the literature returned by the systematic searches, I felt it was necessary to adopt an additional method of identifying and reviewing relevant research. Boote & Beile (2005, p3) highlight that the "messy, complicated nature" of some topics often necessitate a more nuanced approach to literature reviews. The narrow focus of the studies pertaining to the experiences of CoV meant that a broader review of the wider literature around veterans and their partners, and the experiences of MCC, was felt to be necessary and was therefore conducted.

As such, the remainder of this chapter will be presented in four sections. The first of these will consider the process and results of the systematic search and the implications and limitations of the identified research. The second will detail the process of searching the broader literature on veterans and MCC and a consideration of what a review of this literature indicated regarding the implications for CoV. Section three will outline key psychological theories that have been considered relevant to the experiences of veterans and their families. Finally, the last part will provide a chapter summary and outline of my position as a researcher.

| Section One: The Systematic Search Process & Results |
| Section Two: A Review of the Broader Literature |
| Section Three: Relevant Psychological Theories |
| Section Four: Chapter Summary |

Figure 1: Overview of the remainder of the chapter

Section One: The Systematic Search

2.2 Systematic Search

2.2.1 Establishing Search Terms

As Ferrari (2015) highlights, establishing the relevant key terms is an important process due to their impact on both the scope and nature of the subsequent searches. There were some difficulties associated with determining the terms for this systematic search, as indicated in Appendix 1.

The nature of these difficulties with keywords was such that exclusions based on titles or abstracts were not always possible, and several papers had to be read in full to determine if they met inclusion criteria.

The final combination of keywords used in the search was: veteran* or ex-serving or ex-force* or ex-military or former military or former serving AND child* or famil* or adolescen* NOT childhood.

2.2.2 The Search Process

A systematic search protocol was drawn up and used to run searches of four databases – PsycInfo, PsycArticle, SCOPUS and the Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC). The Electronic Thesis Online Service (ETHoS) was also searched, but no relevant theses were identified. The search of ERIC revealed two papers relating to EP practice with MCC, which are discussed in subsection 2.10 of this chapter, but no papers pertaining to CoV. In a process known as snowballing, reference lists of

included papers were searched manually in order to identify any other literature that may meet the inclusion criteria (Sayers, 2008). One additional paper was identified via this snowballing method.

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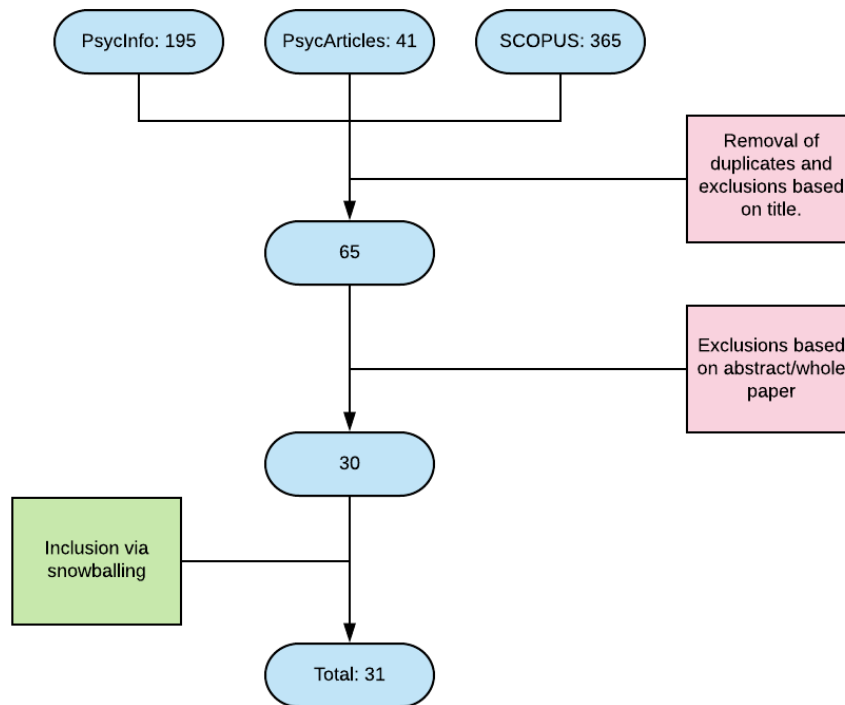
Figure 2: Overview of the systematic search process.

As well as studies that explored the experiences of CoV, papers were also included if their main focus was on some element of a veteran's life that may be related to their children's experiences – e.g. parenting or family systems. Due to the lack of literature in this area, searches were not limited by date.

Key reasons for exclusion were:

- Literature concerned with non-military veterans (e.g. veteran teachers)
- Literature relating to the veteran's own childhood
- Literature focused on family planning or childcare

The search conducted according to this protocol did not result in the identification of any relevant literature from the UK. To try and minimise the impact of calling on an international literature base (for the reasons noted in subsection 2.1), research conducted within non-ABCANZ countries was excluded. ABCANZ is an international programme that promotes standard practice across the training and operation of international Forces and includes the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It was felt that these countries were most like the UK in terms of political, operational, and cultural practices.

In addition to primary research, three relevant literature reviews and three commentary pieces were also identified and will be referred to within this chapter. A full list of the included studies identified during the systematic searches is included in Appendix 2.

The findings of the studies identified through the systematic search will now be presented in order to draw together this knowledge regarding the impact on CoV of parental PTSD.

2.3   PTSD

Most of the studies identified during the searches (29 out of 31) were concerned with a consideration of the implications of a veteran parent's PTSD. PTSD is an anxiety disorder, characterised by four main clusters of symptoms – re-experiencing, avoidance, negative cognitions and mood, and arousal (APA, 2013). The condition is triggered by experiencing or witnessing a frightening or distressing event and as such, due to the nature of combat, it has a long history of association with military service (Crocq & Crocq, 2000) Internationally, PTSD rates are often reported to be higher in veterans than in civilian and active-duty populations (McNally & Frueh, 2013; Stevelink et al., 2018). As Dekel & Monson (2010, p 304) highlight in their literature review, the relevance of PTSD symptomatology to the experiences of CoV lies in the fact that the veteran "does not operate in a vacuum" as their thoughts and actions can impact on those around them.

It seems that much of the literature pertaining to CoV has been focused on this 'noxious' nature of PTSD (Cramm et al., 2018; King & Smith, 2016) and a review of the search results revealed that the included studies fell into categories investigating the impact of a veteran's PTSD on two broad domains: children's wellbeing & behaviour, and family functioning & parenting. These will now be considered in turn. The studies that were not focused primarily on PTSD were concerned with broader considerations of veterans' mental health and wellbeing and will also be considered in this part of the review, for context. Due to the qualitative nature of this current study, and its focus on the experiences of CoV, the qualitative studies identified during the systematic search will be considered separately and afforded some additional focus.

2.3.1   Impact of PTSD on Children's Wellbeing and Behaviour

Much of the interest in CoV to date appears to have been prompted by the phenomenon of 'secondary traumatisation' and the notion that the implications of PTSD are not limited to those who were exposed to the precipitating events. As such, much of the literature in this area is characterised by the use of quantitative methods in attempts to measure the consequences of parental PTSD on the behaviour, mental health, and wellbeing of CoV.

As Dekel and Monson (2010) note, there are two primary understandings of the concept of 'secondary traumatisation' evidenced within the literature. The first, and narrowest, of these applications refers to those who have experienced secondary traumatisation as displaying symptoms of PTSD themselves.

Evidence for this application of the concept has been put forward by Beckham et al. (1997), whose study of the children of US Vietnam veterans found that 45% of their sample reported significant PTSD symptoms on the relevant subscales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Similarly, O'Toole et al.'s (2017) study of the children of Australian Vietnam veterans using diagnostic interviews revealed that veteran PTSD increased the risk of PTSD in both sons and daughters. Suozzi & Motta (2004) found secondary traumatisation to be associated with the level of combat intensity experienced by the veteran father. However, Davidson & Mellor (2001), found no evidence of association between PTSD scores of veterans and those of their offspring. Evidence for this first definition of secondary traumatisation then appears limited and presents a mixed picture.

Much of the remainder of the literature concerned with secondary traumatisation has made use of the second, broader understanding of the phenomenon, defined by Galovski & Lyons (2004, p 478) as referring to "any transmission of distress from someone who experienced a trauma to those around the traumatised individual".

In accordance with this broader understanding of secondary traumatisation, several studies have attempted to measure the impact of parental PTSD on CoV, typically by means of checklists addressing aspects of mental health, wellbeing, and behaviour. The findings of these studies are often reported as indicating that children of veterans with PTSD are more likely to display problem behaviour (Beckham et al., 1997; Duranceau et al., 2015; Jordan et al., 1992), greater aggression (Parsons et al., 1990) and show more symptoms of depression and anxiety (Beckham et al., 1997; Dansby & Marinelli, 1999). In contrast, Davidson & Mellor (2001) found no significant differences in self-esteem between children of veterans with PTSD, children of veterans without PTSD, and children of fathers who had never served in the Forces. A review of the literature by Dekel & Monson (2010) highlights these studies as evidence of 'inconsistent findings'. However, these findings also point to the complexity of the literature base in that it is characterised by the use of different tools to measure various aspects of children's functioning, making it difficult to ascertain if differing results are indeed contradictory. These difficulties, brought about in part by the changeable definitions, are perhaps why secondary traumatisation has sometimes been considered to be a controversial construct (Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008; Dekel & Monson, 2010).

Many of these studies reflect parental views regarding their child's behaviour. This in itself can be considered problematic, as studies by Creech et al. (2019, p. 115) and Duranceau et al. (2015) have

found that veterans with PTSD are more likely to perceive their children as exhibiting difficulties "when the issue may actually stem from parents' lack of appropriate developmental expectations." Interestingly, studies by Dansby (1990) and Dansby & Marinelli (1999) of the children of Vietnam veterans that included teacher rating scales found that teachers did not notice any differences between this group of children and their peers. However, the authors suggested that this may be due to CoV being "overly controlled" and demonstrating more internalising behaviours at school, as CoV participants who took part in the studies themselves indicated that they experienced symptoms of depression, problems of adjustment and difficulties with their relationships with their fathers.

It could be the case that these findings are the result of combat exposure, rather than PTSD. A finding by Forrest et al. (2018) of Australian Vietnam veterans found that children of deployed veterans were more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety and depression, to have had thoughts of suicide or self-harm, or to have made suicidal plans than offspring of comparable non-deployed veterans. The authors concluded that "there are significant and enduring adverse effects to parental deployment on the mental health of children in families". However, the study did not control for PTSD and no information was provided as to whether the veterans suffered from the condition or not.

Overall, the weight of evidence seems to suggest that CoV's wellbeing and behaviour could be negatively impacted by having a parent who has PTSD. To try and explain how this secondary transfer of distress may occur, several studies have considered the impact of PTSD on parenting and family functioning. These studies will be considered next.

2.3.2 Impact of PTSD on Parenting and Family

Several researchers have attempted to measure the perceived impact of PTSD on family functioning and parenting (Creech & Misca, 2017). As such, PTSD has been found to be associated with poorer perceptions of parenting satisfaction (Ruscio et al., 2002; Samper et al., 2004) and family functioning, as reported by male and female veterans (Sullivan et al., 2016; Vogt et al., 2017), spouses (Hendrix et al., 1998), and CoV themselves (Westerink & Giarratano, 1999).

This has been found to be the case in some studies that have controlled for pre-deployment factors and combat exposure. As Hendrix & Annelli (1993) reported, it appears to be the psychological impact of combat, rather than combat exposure itself, that is associated with reports of poorer family functioning.

It would appear then, that there have been reports of "severe problems" (Jordan et al., 1992) in the families of veterans of conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the picture becomes somewhat more complex when the impact of individual symptom clusters and comorbid conditions are considered. Studies that have attempted to account for these factors have often resulted in

contradictory findings. For example, Ruscio et al. (2002) found that emotional numbing (the process of shutting down feelings) was most associated with Vietnam veterans' perceptions of father-child relationships, even when they controlled for depression and substance abuse, whereas Samper et al. (2004) found both avoidance and emotional numbing to be implicated in parent-child functioning. In contrast, Possemato et al. (2015, p. 271) found that "no PTSD symptom clusters emerged as independently associated with parental functioning" as they were so highly correlated that they could not be distinguished from one another. Furthermore, the results of Possemato et al.'s study were found to suggest that depression may also be uniquely correlated with poorer family functioning. These contrasting findings suggest that, whilst it may be likely that PTSD is negatively associated with family functioning and parenting, the mechanisms by which this occurs are complex and difficult to distinguish.

The literature base around the impact of PTSD on CoV is multifaceted, with several studies attempting to control for a number of additional variables, including combat-exposure and comorbid conditions and, whilst there is an apparent correlation between PTSD and negative outcomes in CoV, neither veterans, nor indeed their children, are homogenous groups. As Davidson & Mellor highlight "members of culturally similar groups who have lived through a similar traumatic experience cannot be expected to demonstrate the same responses to the trauma." Indeed, research by Yager et al. (2016) and O'Toole et al. (2018) has suggested that the impact of parental PTSD may differ according to the gender of the child, and the findings of Smith et al. (2017) indicate that the gender of the veteran may also be a contributing factor. Several of the studies identified during the systematic search have attempted to shed further light on the mechanisms of transition, and how this may differ between CoV, by qualitative and mixed methods approaches. These studies will be considered next.

2.3.3 Consideration of Findings from Qualitative Studies

Several qualitative studies were identified that considered the impact of PTSD on CoV, and the mechanisms by which these may come about, from the perspectives of both veterans and CoV. Rosenheck's (1986) study was the earliest piece of research returned by the systematic search, but reflects an important exploration of what the author termed the 'transgenerational effects' of trauma. Rosenheck conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 adult children of 5 American World War II veterans. All the fathers had been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of combat.

The study's findings suggested that for most of the families, the father's unpredictable moods "constituted a dramatic emotional center around which family life revolved" (Rosenheck, 1986, p. 327), and participants described having mediated their behaviour as children so as not to provoke a response from their father. The study also found evidence to suggest that the father-child relationship was a key factor in how the participants experienced their lives. The three who identified most with

their fathers and saw themselves as responsible for providing companionship and support, were found to report the most negative outcomes in terms of their own wellbeing. Rosenheck described these children as having been traumatised by the aftermath of combat, through their relationships with their fathers. In contrast, a second group of three participants was identified who described having close relationships with the veterans but did not identify as strongly with them. These children expressed a sense of responsibility for their parents, and Rosenheck noted that some of those that fell into this group appeared to be shielded somewhat by having a sibling who was more involved with the parent. The remaining participants were felt to have been less involved in their parents' lives and reported more positive outcomes.

Rosenheck's study consisted of a small sample of the families of veterans who were not volunteer soldiers, all of whom were receiving treatment for PTSD, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Similarly, the veteran fathers all reported high levels of alcohol consumption, which was not explored in the interviews with their children. Nonetheless, this study was one of the first to qualitatively explore the ways in which CoV may experience having a father who has PTSD, and to put forward the suggestion that the father-child relationship may mediate that to such an extent that siblings within the same family would report differing experiences. A key finding of this study was that participants reported having an awareness of problems within the family when they were younger, but only really coming to understand the psychological impact of war on their fathers when they entered their late teens or early twenties. This poses the question as to how they made sense of their experiences as younger children, particularly as unexplained PTSD symptoms have been linked to a family environment of fear and guilt (Galovski & Lyons, 2004).

Two pieces of Australian research, those of McCormack & Sly (2013) and McCormack & Devine (2016), used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the experiences of adult female children of Vietnam veterans. The findings of both studies were interpreted by the authors as suggesting that the participants' childhoods were characterised by difficult relationships with emotionally absent fathers, and that this continued to engender negative effects in them into adulthood. Participants in both studies described their tendencies to deny their emotions, viewing them as a sign of weakness, as had reportedly been modelled by their fathers. Similarly, themes of growth and forgiveness in adulthood, as participants came to understand their fathers' experiences more, were identified in both pieces of research. These studies appear to support Rosenheck's (1986) findings that the nature of the father-child relationship can have a lasting impact on the children of veterans with PTSD. As suggested by King & Smith (2016, p. 31) in their review, these studies provide evidence of a "mimicking effect" in daughters of their fathers' coping behaviours, including "self-medicating, heightened alertness and suppression of emotions." It is notable that all participants in

both were born after their fathers had finished their military service. Considering their similarities, it is also interesting to note that the two studies had a researcher in common. IPA as a methodology recognises the role of the researcher's own experiences in making sense of the information from participants, something that the authors reference in their accounts of the study.

In a study of Canadian peace-keepers with PTSD, Ray & Vanstone (2009) also examined the perceived impact of PTSD on family members from the perspective of 10 veterans, using IPA. A central finding of their study was that many of their participants identified issues associated with emotional numbing. The veterans expressed complicated feelings regarding this symptom. They felt it to be a way of protecting their family members by shielding them from anger, however, it was also acknowledged that emotional numbing interrupted their abilities to meet their children's needs. In line with the findings of the two Australian studies (McCormack & Devine, 2016; McCormack & Sly, 2013) Ray & Vanstone hypothesised that the presence of emotional numbing was likely to result in veterans modelling unhelpful strategies to their children for managing emotions.

In the only qualitative study to explore the experiences of female veterans, and one of the few not concerned with PTSD, Leslie & Koblinsky (2017) conducted focus groups with women who had experienced deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. The findings of this study suggest that many of the difficulties previously identified in male veterans were also indicated for females, and that they were not necessarily linked to a diagnosis of PTSD. Leslie & Koblinsky suggested that mothers experienced a desire to protect their family members from disturbing information. The veterans also expressed difficulty at fitting back into family routines and structures after periods of absence.

Research by Sherman et al. (2016) made use of focus groups and interviews to provide detailed accounts of veterans' perceptions of PTSD on their parenting and children. They found that the themes detected in the data correlated with the clusters of PTSD symptoms. For example, with respect to avoidance, veterans described feeling unable to attend events at their children's schools for fear of experiencing symptoms in public, despite a desire to support their children. Similarly, emotional numbing was a commonly cited challenge to parenting, with veterans describing difficulties in feeling attachments to their children, even though they wanted to feel connected. Participants indicated that they felt their children experienced distress, including hurt, anxiety and confusion, because of their behaviours. Some veterans expressed that they felt their children were afraid of them, due to their outbursts of anger and need for control. As a response to their distress, children were described as withdrawing physically (e.g. staying in their rooms) or becoming hypervigilant themselves. The authors noted that some veterans described their children as being very aware of their triggers, and attempting to help minimise exposure to them, as well as providing emotional support and yet none

expressed "worry about possible role reversal or parentification" (p 407). Sherman et al.'s (2016) study provides a rich picture of how PTSD symptoms can manifest in everyday life, impacting on parenting and the family-child relationship.

2.3.4   Discussion and Summary of PTSD Research

In summary, the systematic search revealed a relatively small body of literature concerned with the experiences of CoV, most of which has focused primarily on the impact of parental PTSD. The notion of secondary traumatisation appears to be controversial, and research into the implications of trauma has revealed a complex picture. Nonetheless, PTSD has been implicated in parenting practice and family systems and, taken together, the findings from these studies indicate that children of veterans with PTSD are possibly at increased risk of a range of adverse effects to their mental health and emotional wellbeing, which can sometimes be evidenced in their behaviour.

However, a note of caution is due here, as the literature on the impact of parental PTSD on CoV is not without its limitations (McFarlane, 2018). Research regarding military-connected children has attracted critical attention for several methodological issues, many of which are also apparent in the literature outlined above. As Wadsworth et al. (2017, p. 26) highlight, comments have included,

> "Criticisms of convenience samples, cross-sectional designs, retrospective reports, overreliance on parental or self-reports, overemphasis on negative outcomes, lack of attention to children or female service members and veterans, and lack of attention to mediating and moderating variables."

The use of parental reports may be particularly problematic in this population, considering the implications of research showing that PTSD can impact on perceptions of behaviour and developmental expectations of children. One example of this is Parsons et al.'s (1990) recognition that the use of veteran reports is a limitation of their research for this very reason, and yet report their results as being indicative of child behaviour problems, rather than of veteran's perceptions of behaviour. Later studies (e.g. Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008) have gone on to cite these findings in a similar manner, perpetuating a possible misrepresentation of CoV.

It is also of note that the "lack of attention to mediating and moderating factors" highlighted by Wadsworth has resulted in CoV being portrayed nearly exclusively in terms of negative outcomes. Nonetheless, Lambert et al. (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of this relationship between parental PTSD and psychological and behavioural issues in CoV, determining a medium effect size. Similarly, Dekel & Monson (2010, p. 304) hold that there is a solid base of evidence linking PTSD with negative outcomes that "has been found with respect to different wars, at different times, and in different countries", indicating that parental PTSD is a key factor influencing the lives of some CoV.

This latter point made by Dekel & Monson (2010) regarding the consistency of findings across different nations would appear to suggest that the findings around the impact of PTSD on CoV are likely to be comparable to those in a British context. However, as this systematic review of the literature found no research regarding the experiences or views of CoV from the UK, the accuracy of this assertion remains unclear.

Section Two: A Broader Search of the Literature

2.4 Research on British Veterans and Their Families

In order to gain as full a picture as possible, it was necessary to broaden the scope of the review beyond the results of the systematic search to include research from a British context. To achieve this, the Veterans & Families Research Hub (VFR Hub) was searched manually. The VFR Hub is an online repository of UK and international literature regarding veterans and their families. The identified literature was considered using an adaptation of the approach suggested by King & Smith (2016) which proposes the noting of themes emerging within the papers, and comparing them between each article under specific headings, allowing for a synthesis of the key points being discussed.

Much of the information regarding the experiences of veterans and their families within the UK context is found within grey literature (Oliver, 2013), particularly in the form of doctoral dissertations and reports from charitable organisations. Reports of this nature are often commissioned with a view to improving support for the veteran, and any consideration of family members is often framed in terms of an extension of that support. For example, Halkiopoulos et al., (2018, p 7) identify that positive relationships with spouses provide a buffer against difficulties for the veteran, and go on to state "*to this end*, voluntary organisations offer support to the families" (my emphasis). As such, there is a lack of data gathered directly from children and their views, opinions, and experiences were found to be mostly absent from the literature. The need to consider the experiences of CoV in their own right has been identified as a priority for future research (Creech et al., 2014; Fossey, 2012).

As indicated above, several of these reports are critical of the narratives surrounding veterans which characterise them as either "victims or heroes" (St George's House, 2014). There remains some controversy within the UK over rates of PTSD amongst serving personnel and veterans. Calls to dismiss the 'harmful myth' of PTSD (House of Commons Defence Committee, 2018) have recently been challenged by findings that PTSD rates among UK veterans have increased such that PTSD is now more common amongst veterans than the general population (Murphy et al., 2017; Stevelink et al., 2018).

Despite this mixed picture, it is often emphasised within UK publications that the majority of service leavers and their families transition successfully to civilian life (Heaver et al., 2018). Paradoxically, however, after issuing this caveat, many of the reports then concern themselves primarily with the 'small but significant' number of veterans who experience difficulty (Cooper et al., 2018; Iversen et al., 2005). This is perhaps reflective of the fact that much of the literature is produced by charities supporting the most vulnerable of veterans (SSAFA, 2016).

It was noted that several of the key themes emerging from the literature were similar in nature to those identified within the framework of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Thus, to guide a consideration of the possible implications for CoV of findings from research focused on veterans and their partners this framework will be used, and additional research from comparable groups of civilian children is discussed where appropriate. However, it is important to note that, due to the focus on veterans who experience considerable difficulty, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding resilience and positive outcomes in veteran families.

The next part of this chapter will briefly outline the ACEs framework, before considering the possible impact of parental mental and physical health difficulties and the implications of the transition from military to civilian life.

2.5   Adverse Childhood Experiences Framework

Relevant literature from the UK is primarily focused on a cohort of veterans who experience difficulties that are characterised by complexity and a high degree of comorbidity (Murphy et al., 2017). It is possible that the children of these veterans will be exposed to stressors within the family environment. The notion of adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, provides a helpful framework for considering the possible implications of these adult-oriented difficulties on CoV.

Used to refer to childhood stressors, the language of ACEs is based on the notion that experiences during childhood are often associated with social, emotional and cognitive difficulties, as well as an increase in risk taking behaviours, and can affect physical and mental health into adulthood (Bellis et al., 2015). Typically, the term is used to refer to a list of 10 traumatic events or circumstances that can occur during childhood. These are made up of direct experiences, including all forms of abuse, and indirect experiences, including witnessing domestic violence or a loved one's substance misuse, a parent's mental illness, parental separation or incarceration of a family member (Wilkes, 2018). Several indirect ACEs, including parental mental health and alcohol use, are present within the literature on veterans.

It is worth noting that the ACEs framework does not always provide a consideration of the possible ameliorating effects of protective factors. This requires additional emphasis considering the negative focus of the literature around CoV.

2.6   Parental Mental Health

Several studies have indicated that, in addition to PTSD, veterans who experience mental health difficulties also suffer from depression, anxiety disorders, anger, aggression and more problems with alcohol use than the general population (Iversen & Greenberg, 2009; Murphy et al., 2008; Murphy & Turgoose, 2019; Turgoose & Murphy, 2018).

Research on parental mental health difficulties on children in civilian families has shown that some may be at increased risk of emotional and social problems, which can manifest in behaviour, and of disrupted attachments (Manning & Gregoire, 2006). These negative effects can be brought about by witnessing a parent's irrational or unpredictable behaviour, or by disruptions to parenting capacity (Smith, 2004). A cross-sectional study of American veterans found that those with depression were more likely to feel like a "guest" in their own home, which can disrupt normal family functioning (S. L. Sayers et al., 2009). Similarly, studies with civilian samples have found depression and anger in parents to be associated with the use of more physical discipline (Rodriguez & Green, 1997), less warmth and engagement (Duranceau et al., 2015) and an increase in negative perceptions of ambiguous behaviours in children (Pidgeon & Sanders, 2012).

The extent and nature of the impact of parental mental health difficulties on CoV is not currently known. However, in her paper on the impact of parental mental health on children, Smith (2004) emphasises that research estimates that up to 60% of civilian children with a parent with mental health difficulties will have associated difficulties, and that the remainder do not suffer any ill effects.

Qualitative studies of children's experiences of parental mental health difficulties are less common than quantitative studies. A descriptive study conducted by Stallard et al., (2004) found that child participants reported worries about their parents' mental health and a desire for them to get better. Of the parents who were interviewed as part of the same study, over half felt that their relationship with their child had changed as a result of their illness, with most reporting that it had become stronger and more positive as a result. In a similar study, Cogan et al., (2005) report that the majority of children expressed a desire for more information on their parents' difficulties.

Without more specific research on the impact of the complex mental health problems experienced by some veterans on their families, it is difficult to say to what extent CoV are affected by such factors and whether their experiences are similar to those of civilian children. However, the literature on ex-

serving personnel also points to aspects of military culture around drinking and help-seeking that may exacerbate the impact of these issues on veterans and their families.

2.6.1 Alcohol Misuse

References to alcohol use amongst veterans are prevalent throughout the literature, and these are often linked to discussions about the culture of excessive drinking that exists within the Forces (Forces in Mind Trust, 2013; Fox, 2010; Patel et al., 2017; Samele & Foundation, 2013).

A 2007 study of dangerous drinking patterns within the military revealed that 67% of men and 49% of women regularly consumed hazardous amounts of alcohol, compared with 38% of men and 16% of women in the general population (Fear et al., 2007). This trend appears to continue amongst ex-Forces personnel, with a 2018 study of treatment-seeking veterans finding that they are more likely to report alcohol dependency and alcohol-related harm than both the general public and current members of the Armed Forces (Murphy & Turgoose, 2019). This exacerbation of drinking problems has been linked to the combination of a loss of structure associated with military life, and the "removal of a culture which hitherto had masked alcohol abuse" (Mans et al., 2016, p 78).

Whilst excessive alcohol use amongst veterans is described within the literature as 'detrimental to family cohesion' (Fossey, 2012), 'destabilising' and 'devastating for families' (Mans et al., 2016), the exact nature of the impact on CoV does not appear to have been studied. Research on civilian populations indicates that parental alcohol misuse can have adverse effects on family relationships, parenting and the routine of family life, and it is implicated in the development of emotional and social problems in children, with child participants describing feeling angry, frustrated, sad, anxious and depressed (Turning point, 2011). Whilst it is acknowledged that the degree of impact on children correlates with the severity of misuse amongst their parents (Turning point, 2011), research has also indicated that adverse effects can occur even in the event of low levels of alcohol misuse (Foster et al., 2017).

In light of Murphy & Turgoose's (2019) findings regarding rates of misuse, the extent to which existing research on the impact of parental alcohol misuse on children is relevant to CoV remains unclear. As Kiernan et al. suggest, this cohort of veterans "have a range of distinctive and unique difficulties that subtly differentiate them from the wider civilian substance misuse population" (2018, p 723). This has prompted calls for further research on the impact of alcohol misuse specifically on veteran families (Fossey, 2012).

2.6.2 Domestic Violence

Several of the reports on veterans also raise the issue of domestic violence (e.g. Brian Parry Associates, 2015; Centre for Social Justice, 2014). There is a paucity of literature regarding domestic violence in

UK military and veteran populations (Fossey, 2012; Williamson, 2012) but it is often considered to be interconnected with mental health difficulties and alcohol use (Forces in Mind Trust, 2013).

A Home Office report on domestic violence found that alcohol was a feature in the majority of offences (62%) and almost half of the perpetrators (48%) were dependent on alcohol (Gilchrist et al., 2003). The implication of increased rates of alcohol use in veterans on the perpetration of domestic violence has not yet been thoroughly researched within the UK. However, literature from the US indicates the possibility of a relationship between military culture and violent behaviour (Fossey, 2012) and, within the UK, there is some evidence to suggest that when domestic violence does occur within military families, it can be more serious and severe in nature (Ministry of Defence, 2015).

A study by MacManus et al., (2012) has provided some evidence that experiences of combat are significantly associated with violent behaviour in UK military personnel. The Centre For Social Justice (2014) highlights that, of the few veterans who are imprisoned (estimated to be approximately 3.5% of the prison population in England and Wales at the time of the report) the majority were convicted of a violent offence. However, there is no indication as to how or whether these events manifest in the home.

Currently, there is too little research available to determine the extent to which some CoV may be at increased risk of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence.

2.6.3 Spousal Mental Health and Wellbeing

Although most of the relevant literature in this domain focuses on the experiences of the veteran, there is an increasing recognition that spouses can also be affected by their partners leaving the military, and that they can play an important role in family cohesion (Spencer-Harper & Murphy, 2019).

Several studies have indicated the likelihood of a correlation between the mental health of the veteran and that of their partner. Murphy et al.'s (2015) study of UK partners living with a veteran with PTSD found that 17% presented with PTSD symptoms themselves, and reported significantly higher alcohol use than the general population. In a qualitative study conducted with a similar sample of female spouses of veterans with PTSD, participants reported a loss of congruence with their own identities, volatile home environments, and emotional distress (Murphy et al., 2017). This is in line with the international literature on PTSD outlined previously that indicates that PTSD affects family functioning (Sullivan et al., 2016). In their introduction to a report on The Together Programme, which is aimed at supporting caregiving partners of veterans, Spencer-Harper & Murphy (2019, p. 2) highlight research from the US that indicates higher levels of psychological distress amongst these partners than in other caregiving populations, and suggest that the challenges faced by them "may be unique and complex."

However, other studies have pointed to the role of a partner as a protective factor, with doctoral research conducted by Clifton (2007) indicating that a mother's ability to cope with family stressors is instrumental to her child's wellbeing.

The implications of these factors for CoV remain unclear, but the research indicates that whilst for some the non-veteran parent may be a protective factor, for others it may be important to consider the non-veteran parents' mental health and alcohol use when considering the ACEs experienced by CoV. Spencer-Harper & Murphy (2019) found that the level of distress in a partner was mediated by the stage a veteran was at in accessing support, indicating that beliefs and behaviours about help-seeking may influence the level of risk experienced by the family.

2.6.4 Help-Seeking Behaviours

Several studies and reports draw attention to the notion of stigma and highlight that there are certain aspects of military culture that can act as barriers to help-seeking amongst SMVs experiencing mental health difficulties.

Halkiopoulos et al. (2018) and Heal et al., (2019) point to the concept of 'hardness' in the military as being implicated in the belief that mental health difficulties and help-seeking are indications of 'weakness'. Similarly, Mans et al. (2016, p. 33), highlight that "emotional strength and resilience are essential qualities for those in the military", which can lead to 'sucking it up' and trying to solve problems independently without support (Coleman et al., 2017). Participants across different studies also indicated the belief that seeking help from services is only for those who are at crisis point (Coleman et al., 2017; Heal et al., 2019).

There is some evidence that these beliefs can continue to influence the behaviour of ex-Forces personnel. A recent poll conducted by YouGov, commissioned by Help For Heroes, found that 30% of veterans with psychological wounds have never sought support, and those who have had waited an average of 4 years before asking for help (*Cut the Clock - Help For Heroes*, 2018). These figures reflect that, as well as stigma, veterans can also display a mistrust of civilian services and the feeling that their military culture and experiences will not be understood (Rafferty et al., 2017). This uneasiness regarding civilian professionals can pose an additional barrier to help-seeking in veteran families, who no longer have access to specialist military services. Instead, they must seek support through general services or third-sector providers.

The results of the Help for Heroes poll would suggest that there are many veterans, and families, who are tackling mental health difficulties without support. Rhonda Galloway, lead clinician at an American Military Family Clinic providing care to veterans and their families, suggests that children can mirror the behaviour of their parents in being stoic and adopting a "warrior ethos" that can be a barrier to

their acceptance of help, which can cause increased emotional distress and problem behaviours. However, this appears to be anecdotal and there is limited research to confirm this (Galloway, 2019).

2.7   Injury

In addition to mental health, the subject of physical health is also relevant to some veterans returning from combat roles. Advances in medicine have meant that it is now possible to treat injuries that would previously have been fatal, resulting in an increased number of wounded veterans returning from conflicts (Fossey, 2012).

The British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA) report that wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in a new generation of veterans with multiple amputations. They currently support 198 amputees from these conflicts, including double and triple amputees (Murrison, 2011). Literature from the US on such injuries indicates that they can impact on parenting capacity and on family routines, with the whole family system having to adapt to treatment and rehabilitation (Holmes et al., 2013). Demands of caregiving can result in children receiving less attention from both parents, and they may even take on caregiving responsibilities themselves (Brickell et al., 2018). Within the UK, such injuries are not often encountered outside of the military, and Murrison's (2011) report indicates that uncertainties within general NHS services about how to manage treatment can heighten the stress felt by families.

Similarly, the nature of combat in recent conflicts has resulted in increased incidences of blast-related mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), leading to this having been dubbed the 'signature injury' of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Wooten, 2015). A traumatic brain injury is defined as "an acute brain injury from an external force impacting on the head" (Murphy et al., 2015, p 613) and can result in significant changes in the veteran's personality and behaviour. There is little research as to British children's experiences of this type of parental injury. However, a Canadian study on serving personnel indicated that a parent's injury can impact on children's health and well-being, which were often evidenced in behavioural problems (Hachey, 2016). Literature from the US also highlights the additional challenge for children of veterans with mTBI in trying to understand changes to their parents' behaviour in the absence of a visible injury (Cozza, 2016).

TBI falls under the umbrella of the wider category of Acquired Brain injury (ABI). The epidemiological frequency of ABIs is such that there is a body of international literature regarding non-military children's experiences of living with parental brain injury. These children are reported to be at higher risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties (Butera-Prinzi & Perlesz, 2004; Pessar et al., 1993) and a number of qualitative studies have captured children's own voices regarding the complex emotions they feel in response to their parent's injury and subsequent changes to the family system. Ambiguous

loss (a loss that occurs without closure) was a consistent theme amongst these reports (Butera-Prinzi & Perlesz, 2004; Kieffer-Kristensen & Johansen, 2013; Rohleder et al., 2017). For each of the four participants in one study, school was considered a 'safe haven' from the disruption at home, but only one reported having been supported by a teacher (Butera-Prinzi & Perlesz, 2004). In another study, participants described feeling isolated and forgotten at home and at school (Kieffer-Kristensen & Johansen, 2013). This raises the question as to whether school staff have a role to play in supporting children whose parents have suffered a brain injury, and whether this is applicable to the children of veterans with TBI.

Cozza (2016, pp. 9–10) summarises how TBIs can affect the children of veterans when he states that they "can alter a service member's behaviour and personality in ways that make parenting difficult and reverberate through the family."

In "Unsung Heroes", a report on the experiences of UK Service Families, Fossey (2012) recommends that future policy and practice take account of the practical and emotional impact of a veteran's injury on their family members.

2.8   Summary of The Implications Of Veterans' Physical And Mental Health

Much of the relevant literature that originates within the UK is concerned with the adult-oriented issues of a minority of veterans who experience complex difficulties. '*Lifting the Lid on Transition'* (Heaver et al., 2018), a tri-service research report, suggests that veterans and their families can be positioned along a continuum according to the level of challenge they face. Research has often focused on those at the extreme end of this continuum, where the veteran has complex needs. Little is known about the impact of these factors on CoV, but drawing together information about ACEs and research from other populations of children in similar circumstances indicates that some CoV may be at risk of negative outcomes on their health and wellbeing (Murphy & Rogers, 2019).

In addition to the points highlighted above, it should be noted that some researchers have suggested that difficulties associated with having experienced socioeconomic disadvantage may be overrepresented in military (and therefore veteran) populations compared to general populations. For example, Elder et al. (2010, pp. 469–470) highlight that the recruitment and enlistment incentives associated with an all-volunteer military are linked to "a variety of personal benefits – socioeconomic, educational and developmental" which, in turn, are more likely to "have particular appeal to young people who are relatively disadvantaged." As a result, it is suggested that military recruitment has come to rely on the enlistment of such disadvantaged young people. Although Elder at al.'s study is concerned with the US military, similar criticisms have been levelled at the recruitment practices of the British Army, in particular. A report by the Child Rights International Network (CRIN, 2019, p. 10)

entitled *'Conscription by poverty?'* holds that enlisted soldiers, particularly recruits under the age of 18, are "disproportionately from deprived backgrounds." In addition, ACEs were found to be common among enlisted personnel, irrespective of the age at which they joined the Forces. Similar to Elder et al's findings, the CRIN report highlighted that enlistment was driven by an apparent lack of options and the perceived opportunity to "escape" deprivation. A critique of UK Armed Forces recruitment practices by health professionals (Louise et al., 2016) maintains that PTSD rates amongst Iraq war veterans are higher amongst those with the highest levels of childhood adversity than other personnel. As indicated by this review, these factors, in turn, may influence the life experiences of the children of veterans.

However, whilst it is important to acknowledge that leaving the Forces can be more difficult for families when there are physical, mental or co-occurring conditions involved (Cramm et al., 2018), this exclusive focus on negative experiences has been criticised for "problematizing and pathologizing" the process of transition (Cooper et al., 2018, p 167). The remainder of the literature is concerned with the more universal experiences associated with leaving military life which, even when successful, can involve a degree of challenge and upheaval (Heal et al., 2019).

2.9   Transition

Transition can be defined as the 'period of reintegration into civilian life from the military' (Cooper et al., 2018, p. 157). The period of time during which transition occurs has been described as 'pivotal' for veterans and their families due to the nature and extent of the adjustments they face (Fulton et al., 2019; SSAFA, 2016). It is a complex process that can involve practical changes to many areas of life, including employment, education and housing (Halkiopoulos et al., 2018). In addition, the process also incorporates what Heaver et al. (2018) term the 'softer' elements of transition; namely, those relating to important shifts in culture and identity. As with much of the literature in this domain, research has primarily focused on the experiences of the veteran. However, transition is acknowledged to be a process that can have a significant and lasting impact upon the whole family, including children (Keeling et al., 2019).

2.9.1   Practical Elements of Transition

Children who have a parent transitioning out of the military can face many changes. As well as one, if not both, of their parents pursuing a new career, children can also experience relocation, change of educational setting and integration into a new community. The impact of these factors on CoV has received little attention from researchers, but the wider body of literature around veterans' and spouses' experiences of transition suggest that this type of relocation may be qualitatively different from civilian and in-service moves, with families facing unique challenges as a result.

In response to the lack of research about the impact of transition on family members, Heaver et al. (2018) gathered the views of adult family members via online survey and case studies for the Forces in Mind Trust. Their findings highlight that transition is a non-linear process, with uncertain timeframes, meaning decisions about housing, employment and schooling can sometimes prove difficult to coordinate. This was found to be particularly problematic for those living on base in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) trying to secure social housing. The researchers highlight the challenges such families can face finding available school places for their children, particularly as they are no longer afforded support as members of the military, as would have been available during previous in-service moves. Families reported feeling anxious about the uncertainties around transition, and the authors proposed that difficulties finding school placements were likely to cause significant stress, but children's views were not captured.

Relocations during transition can also have added complexities due to their financial implications. The fact that daily living costs are often subsidised for those within the military can lead to families being "cocooned from many of the realities of civilian life" (St George's House, 2012). Financial stresses caused by being unprepared for the cost of life outside of the Forces was a common theme amongst several of the reports on transition (Forces in Mind Trust, 2013; Heaver et al., 2018; Mans et al., 2016). Although none of the studies directly addressed the impact of financial strain on CoV, Mans et al. (2016) highlight a possible reduction of family resilience. Research on civilian families facing similar economic strain has shown it can negatively impact upon a child's mental health (Crouter & Bumpus, 2001) The exact nature and extent of the effect of transition related financial strains on the CoV requires further research.

Finally in regards to relocation as a result of transition, Keeling et al.'s (2019) conceptual paper on military spouses' experiences highlights the loss of community that can be felt by families leaving the Forces, particularly those who had been living on a base. This sentiment was echoed by the participants in Heaver et al.'s (2018) study, some of whom emphasised the loss of their informal support networks that had been provided by the military community and described an associated feeling of isolation. Although the research did not directly gather the views of CoV, participants referred to their children feeling unsettled and less safe living in civilian neighbourhoods. In her writings on CoV, National Governance Leader Joy O'Neill (2017) highlights that they will also have lived within a service community alongside peers who have had similar experiences. Whether CoV feel a similar sense of loss when transitioning to civilian life has not yet been addressed by research.

This sense of loss of community and support can be exacerbated by a shift in identity and the cultural divide that exists between military life and 'civvy street' (Fulton et al., 2019)

2.9.2   'Softer' Elements of Transition

As well as the practical elements of transition, there are important psychological changes associated with leaving the Forces that can be significant and challenging for both veterans and their families (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011).

The Armed Forces represent a discrete cultural group with "unique features of language, manners, norms of behaviour and belief systems" (Reger et al., 2008, p 21). Beneath this overarching umbrella of 'military culture', each branch – Army, Navy and Royal Air Force – have their own subcultures built around history, traditions, vocabulary and practices (Petrovich, 2012; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011) . As a result, military culture is complex, and the difference from civilian norms has been described as 'substantial' and 'immense' (Heal et al., 2019; St George's House, 2012). A cultural divide develops when the majority of civilians have limited experience or understanding of military life and how it can impact on families (Keeling et al., 2016). As noted previously, this cultural divide can impact on the willingness of veterans and their families to engage with civilian services, as they can feel alienated and misunderstood (Ahern et al., 2015).

Researchers have highlighted how military culture, and an associated sense of belonging, play an important part in the identity of service personnel (Halkiopoulos et al., 2018; Heal et al., 2019). As a result, one of the challenges of transition for veterans lies in the loss of a dominant identity (Binks & Cambridge, 2018). There is also an emerging recognition within the field that families can experience this transition from military to civilian life, coupled with parallel identity shifts (Hunt, 2018; Keeling et al., 2019). A report into the experiences of MCC, issued by the Children's Commissioner, found that many of the participants they interviewed self-identified as 'service children' and had developed a sense of identity accordingly. For many of these children, their lives were characterised by the unique experiences that were afforded by belonging to a military family. One 14 year old is quoted as saying "Civilian children, they just don't get it", indicating that they too feel the divide between cultures (Children's Commissioner, 2018). As O'Neill (2017) suggests, children may have experienced a life that has revolved around the military, and this could have "meshed and contributed to the child's development, self-worth, self-identity and social relationships", and that the importance of these experiences can continue even after their parent has left the Forces.

Issues associated with identity and belonging seem to be particularly pertinent to children who have lived primarily on base, and who have moved several times due to their parents' postings. Termed 'proxy transitioners', such children will also be transitioning to the civilian world (Forces in Mind Trust, 2013). These highly mobile children who move regularly can find their sense of belonging in a connection with military culture, due to its constancy. Similarly, it was also noted that children who have attended schools primarily or wholly for service children can find it difficult to integrate into

'civvy schools' (Brian Parry Associates, 2015). As O'Neill (2017) notes, these children have been part of their own community of peers who have similar experiences and understand their culture. Adapting to a less mobile lifestyle can be difficult for some of these children, especially when they find themselves in settings where they feel that their cultural identities as service children are not valued or understood (Fossey, 2012).

Identity has been recognised as a key component of children's social and emotional wellbeing (Cooper, 2014). Although a report for the Forces in Mind Trust identified that the changes in identity that come with transition can impact negatively on these children's self-esteem, there has been little research into how children and young people make sense of these changes themselves.

2.9.3   Summary of Transition Research

Research on the transition experiences of veterans and their families suggest that CoV may be experiencing a unique set of circumstances, which has both practical and psychological ramifications. Veterans and their family members will each experience transition in their own way, and whatever the nature of the transition, it has been suggested that 'everyone in the family undergoes considerable changes' (Sherman, 2014, p. 18). Children can face relocation, a change of school and community, uncertainty and an associated shift in identity and culture. This combination of experiences is likely to be qualitatively different from those experienced by MCC or civilian children, indicating that CoV who have undergone transition with their families may be a discrete group. I was unable to identify any research that has directly considered how children and young people make sense of their own lives throughout these experiences.

2.10 Experiences As MCC

Although the focus of this review is on the experiences of the children of veterans, it is important to note that, for many of these, the transition to civilian life will be against the backdrop of their experiences as a military connected child.

There is evidence to suggest that MCC can face additional challenges because of their parents' role in the Forces. They are exposed to stressors, which can include lengthy separations from parents and frequent relocations that can impact on all aspects of their lives (Clifton, 2007; White et al., 2011). Researchers have suggested that the impact of a parent's military service on their children may follow an indirect pathway where parental stress is experienced through relationships with both the serving and non-serving parent (Palmer, 2008). In a similar way, Easterbrooks et al. (2013) propose that a deployment can alter the family structure and, in some cases, result in the child catering for a remaining parent's emotional needs through a process of parentification.

Pupil mobility can be defined as 'joining or leaving school at a point other than the normal age at which children start or finish their education at that school' (Dobson & Henthorne, 1999, p. 5 in Hogg et al., 2014). For some service children, regular changes of school can affect both learning and friendships. An OFSTED (2011) report found that MCC did not always meet their academic potential, and were susceptible to social and emotional distress when a parent was deployed. Similarly, a review by the House of Commons Defence Committee (2006) found that service children can miss out on bonding experiences, and highlighted that friendship groups are often formed at the beginning of the school year. In recognition of the additional challenges faced by this population, MCC are recognised within the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and are entitled to additional funding for support in the form of pupil premium.

Although several commentators in the field have raised the possibility that these difficulties may have long-term implications for children, even after their parent has left the Forces, there has been a lack of longitudinal research into the impact of these factors on CoV (O'Neill, 2017; Trautmann et al., 2015). It also appears to remain unclear as to whether difficulties associated with mobility may also be felt by CoV relocating because of their parents' transition out of the military.

Similarly, there are studies indicating that some military children demonstrate resilience and experience a number of positive impacts as a result of their lifestyle (Park, 2011; Stites, 2016), with the Children's Commissioner describing them as "resilient, spirited and well able to deal with the turmoil" (2018, p. 7). Cozza (2016, p. 3) notes that research has focused largely on the potential risks posed to children by their parents' military service, and that a consideration of strength and resilience is needed in order to present "a comprehensive and balanced picture." The American Psychological Association maintains that for some children, the military lifestyle fosters a worldliness (2016). Further research would be useful to aid understanding of if and how these factors play a part in CoV's experiences of transition.

Two papers were identified that discussed the role of EPs in relation to MCC. Eodanable & Lauchlan (2012) detailed their work with service children, delivering an emotional health curriculum to small groups and whole classes, as well as their creation of a critical incident policy with school staff to be used in the event of the death of a serving parent. Hogg et al. (2014) undertook a commissioned piece of work supporting non-serving parents through group work and individual consultations. Both papers emphasised the role of EPs in the psychoeducation of those supporting service children, with Hogg et al. (p 178) asserting EPs are "best placed to support and develop appropriate interventions" with service children and their families, due to their "evidence-based psychological knowledge, facilitation and consultation skills."

The review of the literature did not result in the identification of any literature considering the role of EPs with CoV.

Section Three: Theory

2.11 Psychological Theories

This review of the literature has outlined the factors in the lives of some CoV that could have an impact on their emotional health and wellbeing. In addition to the framework of ACEs, relevant psychological theories can provide helpful structures for understanding the mechanisms by which the above factors may influence outcomes for those CoV. The application of these theories to CoV will be further discussed and critiqued in Chapter 6 of this report.

2.11.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) proposed a model of human motivation based on a five-tier hierarchy of needs, often depicted as a pyramid. The pyramid consists of increasingly complex levels of need, ranging from basic physiological needs at its base, to self-actualization at its top.

The lower four levels can be described as deficiency needs in that, when there is a deficit in one of these areas and needs are unmet, humans are motivated to address this deficit. A lower level of need must be met, to a degree, before higher levels of need can be addressed (Mcleod, 2007). The top level is a growth need. It does not stem from a deficit, but from a desire for personal growth.

What is likely to be of relevance to this study is the need to belong at a social level. The high levels of mobility associated with military life may impact on service children's sense of belonging. An unmet need at this level can have a negative impact on self-esteem. Research by Bowen et al. (2003) found that the experiences of service families were influenced by their sense of belonging and community, often in relation to formal and informal support afforded by the military community. The possible impacts of a potential disruption to this sense of belonging brought about by a parents' transition out of the military do not appear to have been explored within the existing literature.
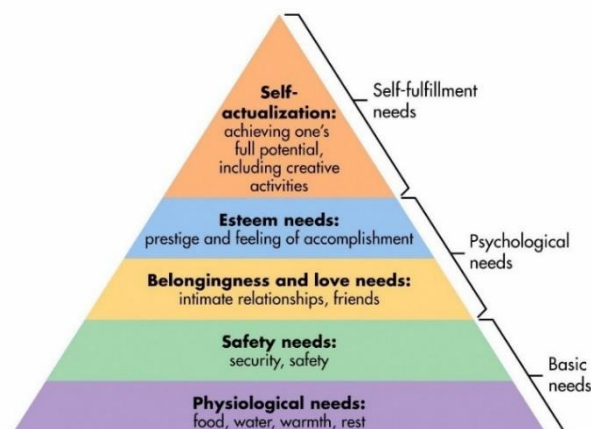
Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

2.11.2 Family Systems Theory

Bowen's family systems theory (FST) holds that the family unit is a complex social system whose members are interconnected (Gilbertson & Graves, 2018). As explained by Sullivan et al. (2016, p. 690) family systems theory assumes that:

> "(1) the family as a unit is greater than the sum of its individual members, (2) family members will have an ongoing and reciprocal impact on each other, and (3) the behaviour of individual family members is best understood in the context of the family system as a whole".

FST has been used by researchers to consider the impact of changing family dynamics before, during and after a military deployment (e.g. Paley et al., 2013), and may also be applicable to the adaption of a family after a veteran has left the military.

This theory also suggests that the physical and mental health of the veteran has the potential to impact on the rest of the family, as it holds that the psychological response to trauma felt by one family member may affect the others in the family system (Hendrix & Anelli, 1993).

2.11.3 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) suggests a sense of self is made up of many identities and is influenced by a person's social roles and social interactions (Tajfal, 1972, Tajfal & Turner, 1979, in Binks & Cambridge, 2018). The nature of the military is such that it can promote a strong sense of social identity amongst its members, which can result in an "us" and "them" attitude towards civilians, and thus pose problems for the process of transition (Binks & Cambridge, 2018).

Some professionals in the field (e.g. O'Neill, 2017) have suggested that MCC may also develop a social identity that relates to the military, and that they may also experience difficulties with transition associated with a change to this identity.

2.11.4 Ecological Systems Theory & Bio-Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory holds that development can be understood in the context of a system of relationships within their environment. The child is understood to be at the centre, surrounded by nested 'levels' of the social environment, each of which interacts and influences one another to influence the child's development and wellbeing. According to Bronfenbrenner's model, these levels of external influence are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Wimelius et al., 2017) (Figure 2).

The mesosystem is the layer of environment with which the child has the most immediate and direct contact. This is made up of settings such as family, school, neighbourhood, and community. The mesosystem is comprised of the interactions between the different elements of the microsystems. In

this way, what happens in one microsystem can affect others. This can help to explain why a child's academic performance may suffer due to a disturbance in the home environment.

Exosystems consist of elements of a child's environment with which they may not be directly connected but will still have an influence on their lives. For MCC and CoV, the military systems may form part of this layer.

Finally, the macrosystem is made up of overarching structures that will impact on the child indirectly, such as historical, social, and cultural contexts. For CoV, government and public response to veterans will be relevant to this layer of the environment (Lester & Flake, 2013).
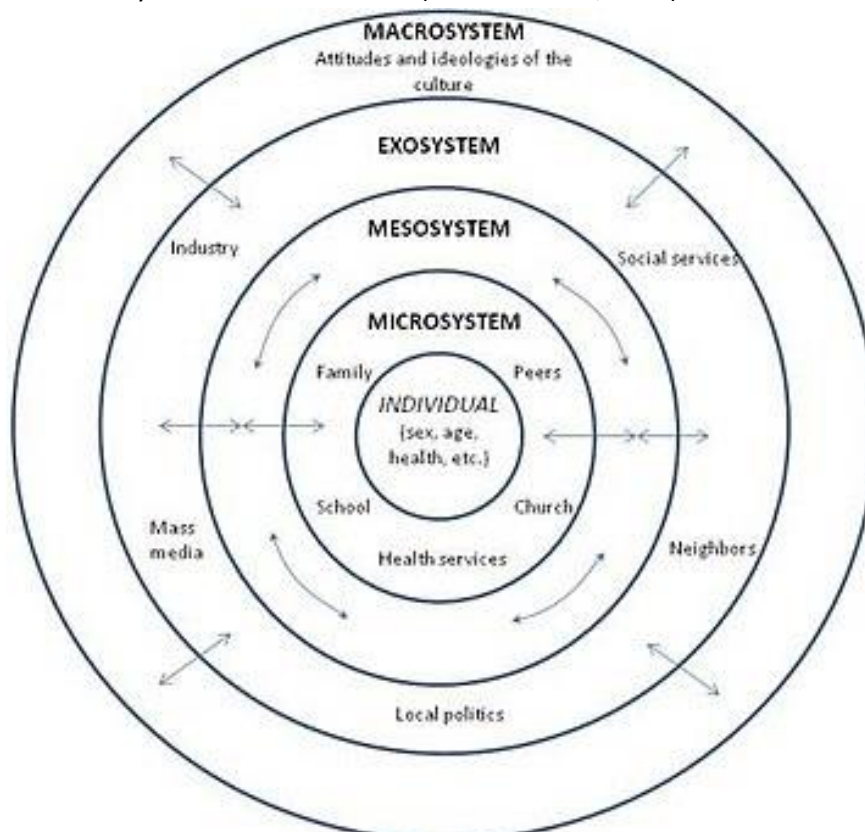
Figure 4: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

Bronfenbrenner's model evolved over time, and was developed so as to include the bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). In addition to the context emphasised in the original ecological systems theory, the latter theory proposes a Process-Person-Context-Time model of development which calls for a consideration of processes of interaction, individual characteristics, and time. In short, the bio-ecological model holds that "human development occurs over the life course through progressively more complex reciprocal interactions (proximal processes) between individuals and their environment" (Wooten, 2013, p. 700).

2.11.5 Resilience Theory

Resilience is an in increasingly used theory in educational psychology to help explain how some children and young people can maintain "sustained competence or positive adjustment in the face of adversity" (Easterbrooks et al., 2013, p. 100). Typically, resilience is conceptualised in terms of the interplay between risk factors, or conditions and incidents that increase the likelihood of difficulty, and protective factors, which "buffer, interrupt, or prevent problems from occurring" (Greene et al., 2004, p. 76).

Several researchers have applied a resilience framework to MCC and military families to support the exploration of how many successfully navigate the stressors of military life, such as deployment (e.g. Masten, 2013; Palmer, 2008).

The framework may be similarly useful to exploring the experiences of CoV and will be returned to in Chapter 6.

Section Four: Chapter Summary

2.12 Chapter Summary & My Position

This review of the literature has revealed significant gaps in our knowledge regarding the experiences of CoV. Studies that have explicitly researched CoV have been dominated by a focus on the impact of parental PTSD, have been conducted in other countries, and have mostly been quantitative in nature. Whilst this literature has contributed to an understanding of the impact parental PTSD can have on some CoV, most does not reflect their experiences, beliefs, or views. There remains a lack of clarity over the rates of PTSD amongst veteran population within the UK, and it is unknown to what extent this literature applies to British CoV.

Research from the UK has predominantly focused on the experiences and needs of the veteran, with some consideration of 'family' but no specific studies pertaining to the lives of their children. It has been proposed that veterans and their families can be placed on a continuum according to how successfully they manage transition and subsequent life on 'civvy street'. Most research has focused on those at the extreme end of this spectrum. A consideration of the nature of the difficulties experienced by these families, along with research of civilian populations in similar circumstances, indicates that there is a cohort of CoV who may be vulnerable due to the number of adverse childhood experiences present in their lives. However, it is acknowledged that these children likely represent the minority of CoV. Furthermore, the focus on risk without a consideration of protective factors or resilience presents these children in a particularly negative light.

The majority of CoV are reported to be members of families who will ultimately transition successfully to civilian life. However, even a successful transition can seemingly involve a period of adversity due

to relocations and possible shifts in community and identity. Furthermore, there are challenges faced by some MCC associated with military life that can influence their wellbeing and academic attainment. There is an apparent lack of longitudinal data that considers how these factors may translate into the lives of CoV.

The current study has been designed to address this gap in the literature, to a degree, by qualitatively capturing the narratives of British CoV, as well as exploring the attitudes and practices of EPs in relation to this group and how these might be developed.

The following chapter will outline the aims of the research, the research questions, and the methodological approach that was adopted.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The term methodology refers not only to a researcher's choice of methods, but also "more importantly, why one is using them" (Thomas, 2017, p 104). As is alluded to by Thomas' quote, a key element of qualitative research is the acknowledgement of the role of the researcher in shaping the nature of the study (Leung, 2015). In this way, methodology can be thought of as providing both a description of method, and an account of the values, principles and philosophies on which the research is based.

As such, this chapter will begin with a review of the aims of the research, before discussing my own epistemological stance and values and considering how these led to the adoption of a qualitative, multi-method, three-phase design. Each of these phases will then be discussed in more detail in terms of recruitment, data gathering, analysis and ethical implications. Finally, in light of the unique circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak, the way in which data gathering was impacted upon, and subsequently adapted, will also be outlined.

3.1 Research Aims & Design

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, despite increasing amounts of research and media attention into the lives of veterans, a consideration of any impact of transition, or indeed of any lasting outcomes from their military service, on their children's education and wellbeing appears to be largely absent from both the literature and policy. In particular, the views of CoV are rarely represented in research. As such, the primary aim of this study was one of eliciting the voices of young people directly, in order to explore their experiences and to capture their narratives. This aim is reflected in RQ1:

1. How do CoV experience and understand their lives?

As well as adding to the literature on CoV, it was in keeping with my values as a researcher that the study be of some use to the profession, and so a secondary aim of the study was to consider what the role of EPs might be in relation to CoV. This led to the adoption of RQs 2 and 3:

2. What are Educational Psychologists' and Trainee Educational Psychologists' attitudes and experiences relating to CoV?
3. In what ways, if any, can EPs and TEPs develop their practice in relation to the CoV?

To best meet the aims of the study and answer the research questions, a three-phase, multi-method design was adopted:

Phase 1: Narrative Inquiry into the experiences of CoV

Phase 2: An online survey of EPs' views

Phase 3: A focus group with EPs.
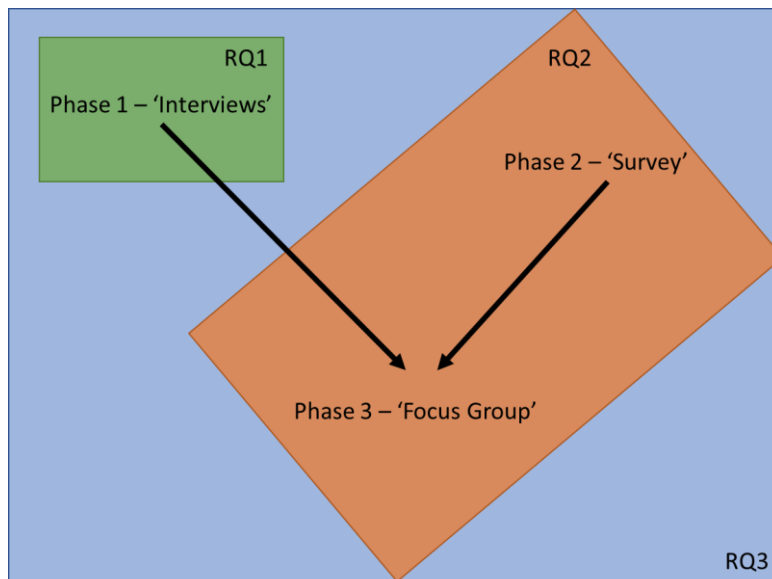
Figure 5: Research Design.

As Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) state, the use of a multi-method approach suggests "that the researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research." This thinking, and the reasoning behind the study design, will be considered further in the next section.

3.2   Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the term given to the process whereby researchers reflect on and account for the ways in which they 'shape and are shaped by' the research process (Attia & Edge, 2017, p 36). Despite a general consensus that reflexivity can be thought of as "a defining feature of qualitative research" (Finlay, 2008, p 5), there are differing suggestions as to how best to put it into practice (Gough, 2003). For the current study, given my connection to the research topic, I felt it appropriate to reflect on both my personal values and my beliefs as a researcher. As such, Willig's (2001) model was deemed most suitable for this study as it proposes a consideration of both epistemological and personal reflexivity. Therefore, in the following section I will put forward my epistemological stance and a reflection on my position as a researcher. Then, I will outline some of my values and experiences that I feel to be pertinent to the current study and put forward an account of my consideration as to how these contributed to the shaping of this research. (It should be noted that this section draws upon thinking which formed the basis of an unpublished piece of writing (Hopkins, 2019) which was submitted in partial fulfilment of the doctoral course requirements.)

3.2.1   Epistemological Reflexivity

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge, or "what we can know about reality and how we can know it" (Willis et al., 2007, p. 10). Typically, epistemological

beliefs will be determined by a researcher's overarching paradigm, or "basic belief system and theoretical framework" which guides our way of understanding the world and how it should be studied (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p 51). In this way, for many social scientists, thinking of this nature has been characterised by the so-called 'paradigm wars', which posit two key paradigms of positivism and interpretivism as being in opposition to one another.

Positivism holds that "there is an objective reality which exists independent of the individual" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p 8). In this way, phenomena are observable and positivistic studies are often deductive in nature, setting out to measure the impact of a variable or test a hypothesis (Mustafa, 2011). To remain value-free, positivism relies on the use of "objective tools and methods" and is typically associated with the collection and analysis of quantitative data (Sullivan, 2010, p. 20).

In contrast, interpretivists maintain that reality is the result of subjective experience and they highlight the complexity of human nature and social phenomenon. From this perspective, knowledge comes "from the inside, not the outside" (Cohen et al., 2018, p 17). Thus, they typically concern themselves with studying interpretations and experiences, often by qualitative means, and question both the extent to which these can be 'measured' and the assumption that researchers can remain objective. Instead, knowledge is viewed as subjective and the role of the researcher in its co-construction is often acknowledged and explored (Leung, 2015).

The contrasting positions maintained by placing these two paradigms in opposition has led to what Howe (1988) termed the 'Incompatibility Thesis', and the belief that quantitative and qualitative methodologies cannot be used together, as their underlying principles are incompatible with one another (Bryman, 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). However, my approach to the research was founded in an alternative way of thinking, put forward by pragmatists, who consider the 'paradigm wars' to be based on a false dichotomy (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Rather than considering positivism and interpretivism as in opposition to one another, pragmatists often view them as differing ends of a continuum, with pragmatism occupying the middle ground (Johnson, 2006).

Sometimes termed the 'pacifier' in the paradigm wars, pragmatism maintains that "at some stage during the research it will take an objective approach… while at other stages it will be necessary to take a more subjective approach" (Brierley, 2017, p. 17). According to this perspective, the choice of method should be driven by 'what works' to answer the research questions, rather than by an overriding paradigm. As Erzberger and Kelle (2003, p. 482) state, "methods are tools for the answering of research questions, and not vice versa." This has resulted in the assertion that pragmatist researchers should be "shamelessly eclectic" in their choice of methods, so that they may thoroughly investigate the phenomena of interest (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012).

The emphasis on using 'what works' in research indicates another defining feature of pragmatism – its focus on the usefulness of research. As well as investigating phenomena, pragmatists hold that the results of the inquiry should be a progression towards a solution for everyday problems (Briggs, 2019). As such, my adoption of a multi-method design and the incorporation of research questions focused on the usefulness of the research for the work of EPs indicate my position as a pragmatist.

Although Willig's (2001) model calls only for epistemological reflexivity, it is also worth briefly considering ontology, as the two concepts are so closely linked. 'Ontology', derived from the Greek term for 'existence', is concerned with assumptions about the nature of reality and what can be known about it (Marsh et al., 2002). I find myself operating from a social constructivist view, which holds that there is no single reality or truth, but that reality is inherently subjective and constantly in flux as it is negotiated through our experiences. My interest then, lies in capturing the reality of the children of veterans as they construct and interpret it.

The relative freedom of pragmatism has been described by some as a 'double-edged sword' as, unlike other epistemological stances, there is no framework or prescription with which to guide the researcher's choice of methods (Clarke & Visser, 2019). Brierly (2017, p. 19) states that, as well as considering the best way of answering the research questions, pragmatists "conduct research in a way that is consistent with their own value systems." As such, my personal values and experiences will be considered next.

3.2.2   Personal Reflexivity

According to Willig's (2001, p. 10) model, epistemological reflexivity cannot standalone without a consideration of the impact of a researcher's "own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities" in order to provide a full justification of methodological and procedural decisions. As such, in this section I will note the aspects of my personal values and experiences that I believe may have influenced my approach to the research.

As Higate and Cameron (2006) note, it is often the case that a researcher's own personal experiences are implicated in the choice of research topic. This is particularly true in the case of research with hidden or marginalised groups, where the researcher is more likely to be led by knowledge of 'anecdotal evidence' that a phenomenon may require further exploration (Al-natour, 2011). In this study, it was principally my personal experiences that led to an appreciation of the 'unique constellation of factors' (Palmer, 2008) faced by veterans and their partners, and my training in Educational Psychology that led me to question how CoV may understand their lives.

When reflecting on their own study with veterans, I note that Higate & Cameron (2006) emphasised that an acknowledgement of researchers' experiences can be particularly pertinent in studies of this

nature, as military culture can often be characterised by a dichotomy between "them" (civilians) and "us" (military). The extent of a researcher's "cultural intuition" (Berger, 2015, p. 223) can have implications for the collection and analysis of data. Considering this assertion, and in acknowledgement of my own relationship with military culture, transparency about the implications of my personal experiences was a key factor in my deliberations about an appropriate methodology for Phase 1 of this study.

In addition to my experiences with military culture, my personal values of feminism and advocacy were also implicated in my choice of approach to the interviews. The ways in which my personal reflexivity influenced my research decisions will be expanded upon in section 3.4.2 of this chapter, which sets out the rationale for adopting Narrative Inquiry.

3.3   Multi-Method Research: A Rationale

Pragmatism is perhaps most commonly associated with mixed-methods research, which involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. This allows for "inquiry from all possible angles" (Hesse-Biber, 2015, p. xxxv) as quantitative methods are typically employed for counting and measuring, and qualitative techniques can address questions of "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics and descriptions" (Snilstveit et al., 2012, p. 411).

In this study, the research questions are primarily concerned with experiences and understandings. The research aims are exploratory, rather than confirmatory, setting out to capture the meanings that CoV and EPs make of their experiences as they construct and interpret them (Atieno, 2009). This called for a qualitatively driven approach which would allow for a focus on exploring the experiences of participants from their perspective.

In contrast to the mixed methods' combination of quantitative and qualitative data, a multi method design incorporates the collection and analysis of multiple types of one form of data, in this instance, qualitative data, obtained through the use of different data collection tools. As Frost & Shaw (2015) indicate, multi-method approaches such as this can bring different perspectives and vantage points to the research. This design allowed for the use of three such data collection tools – interviews, a survey, and a focus group – in combination, to answer the separate, but closely connected, research questions. Each research phase, and its associated data collection tool, will now be considered in turn.

3.4   Phase One: Narrative Inquiry

To address the first research question, phase one of the research consisted of a Narrative Inquiry into the experiences of CoV by means of interviews and an accompanying narrative analysis. The rationale behind this approach, and the procedures for interviewing and analysis, will be outlined in this section.

Firstly, however, it is necessary to clarify the definitions of narrative and Narrative Inquiry being used in this study.

3.4.1   Defining Narrative

'Narrative' is primarily concerned with storytelling, or the creation of a written or verbal account of connected events. The art of story-telling has been argued to be an ubiquitous part of human culture, with claims that we live in 'storied worlds' (Murray, 2003) to such an extent that "narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies" (Barthes & Duisit, 1975, p. 237).

However, the pervasiveness of narrative in everyday life, and the sheer breadth of the construct in research (Overcash, 2004), has led to definitions becoming muddied and somewhat ambiguous. This is further complicated by the fact that the term 'narrative' can be used to describe both the process of telling a story, and the resultant product of that process.

For some, narrative is simply the representation of an event (Abbott, 2008) whereas for others, such as Polkinghorne (1988), narrative requires an element of meaning-making, in that storied accounts give sense to the behaviour of ourselves and to that of others. In this way, we "come to understand and give meaning to our lives through story" (Trahar, 2009).

For the purposes of this study, with its focus on lived experience, the use of story-telling as a means of creating a narrative identity and "providing structure to our sense of selfhood" (Murray, 2003, p. 115) was considered paramount. As such, Murray's accompanying definition of narrative was adopted for this research. Murray defines narrative as "an organized interpretation of a sequence of events. This involves attributing agency to the characters in the narrative and inferring causal links between the events".

The belief that narrative acts as a form of external expression for "internal representations of phenomena – events, thoughts and feelings" (Squire et al., 2013, p. 5) underlies the use of Narrative Inquiry as a means of investigating how individuals experience their world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As Murray (2004, p. 102) notes, through the detailed analysis of narratives we can begin to understand participants' "ways of interpreting the world". Thus, NI was a suitable approach to adopt for the answering of RQ1 – *how do CoV experience and understand their lives?* The rationale for the use of NI is detailed further in the following section.

3.4.2   Rationale for NI

As noted in section 3.2.1 above, a pragmatist's approach to conducting research is guided by two key factors – what works to answer the research question, and the researcher's own value system. Indeed, both these elements contributed to my choice of Narrative Inquiry.

For the purposes of this study, the answering of Research Question 1 called for an approach that allowed for an exploration of how CoV experience their lives, and their understanding of those experiences. This necessitated a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis.

Initially, both Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and NI were considered as possible approaches to answering this question, as the two methodologies are concerned with exploring experiences and perceptions of events (Smith & Osborn, 2003). However, IPA is closely linked to theories of interpretation, and analysis in this vein employs the use of a double hermeneutic. That is, "the researcher is trying to make sense of participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 51). In contrast, NI focuses on preserving the integrity of participants' stories by keeping them intact. As the aim of this research was to explore participants' own understanding of their experiences, I felt NI to be a more appropriate choice for the answering of RQ1.

From a personal perspective, NI also felt in harmony with my own history of attempting to convey my experiences as the partner of a veteran. I often seemed to encounter a lack of familiarity with the topic of military life and found storytelling to be the most effective means of conveying my experience. Considering the relative invisibility of the views of CoV in the existing literature, and the primary research aim of eliciting their voices, I wanted to provide an opportunity for their stories to be heard. As Shay (2010, p. 4) suggested, "before analyzing, before classifying, before thinking, before trying to *do* anything – we should *listen*".

This reflection also brought into focus my values around transparency in research, and the need to resolve a tension between the desire to posit CoV as experts in their own lives, hearing their voices above all else, and acknowledging the implications of my own experiences. This called for a methodological approach that took account of my subjectivity as a researcher, without detracting from the stories of the participants. NI allows, to an extent, for the management of this complex interplay between researcher and researched. Influenced by feminist ideals of giving voice to hidden or marginalised groups, and attending to the research relationship, narrative interviewing attempts to diminish the disparity of power within that relationship by being participant led (Riessman, 2008). Interviews are unstructured, protecting against the imposition of a researcher-led agenda, and participants largely retain control of the content and direction of the interviews (Riessman, 2008). In this way, NI also fits with my professional values of advocacy and person-centred working. At the same time, NI acknowledges that narratives are co-constructed, and the relationship between narrator and audience is considered to be of central importance (Murray, 2004).

Thus, NI was deemed to be the most appropriate methodological approach for answering the research question and maintaining my values as a researcher.

3.4.3 Sampling & Recruitment for Phase 1

There are no clear, consistent guidelines regarding the appropriate sample size for qualitative research, but rather this should be informed by "fitness for purpose" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 108). The nature of narrative interviews is such that their success is dependent on having established good rapport with participants, which may require more than one interview (Murray, 2004). In addition, the depth of analysis required for NI can mean it is a time-consuming process. This combination of factors can mean that NI is often best suited to smaller sample sizes (Bell, 2002; Edwards & Weller, 2012). Small samples can provide a depth of information that has the potential to affect change in real world situations (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Frost & Ouellette, 2011). As Cohen et al. (2018, p. 224) note the purpose of qualitative research is often not one of generalisation, but of presenting "unique cases that have their own, intrinsic value". As such, a sample size of between 3-6 participants was deemed appropriate for this study.

Originally, I set out to recruit participants between the ages of 13-19. This age range was selected to ensure, as best as possible, that participants would have the ability to reflect on their experiences and engage with the more unstructured style of interview typical of narrative research. In recognition of the fact that interviews could be sensitive and noting the potential difficulties with help-seeking amongst veteran families identified during the literature review, the decision was made that only participants with existing access to an appropriate support network would be recruited for the study. As such, relevant charities and organisations were approached regarding help with recruitment. A full list of the charities approached is included in Appendix 4.

Charity staff were not asked to act as gatekeepers, but rather to advertise details of the study. Most of the organisations approached felt unable to help with recruitment, due to their own guidelines or because they work solely with veterans and their adult family members. Two charities did advertise details of the study on their social media pages, but this did not result in the recruitment of any participants.

To maintain the focus on capturing the voices of CoV, the decision was made to change the potential age range for participants, so that adult CoV participants might also be recruited. It was felt that older participants would have more opportunity to voice concern or distress and seek help after an interview if they needed it. Additional approval was sought and received from the ethics committee for this change. This allowed for recruitment via an opt-in, purposive snowballing method. Snowball sampling involves the identification of a small number of individuals who are then "used as informants to identify, or put the researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 220). For this study, my own contacts within the military and veteran communities were asked to forward details of the research to others in this manner.

This allowed for the recruitment of 4 female adult participants, between the ages of 18-25.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Veteran Parent & Force	Other relevant information
Ayla	25	F	Father - RAF	Ayla's father served in the RAF until she was 10.
Audrey	18	F	Father – RAF	Audrey's father retired from the RAF, after 25 years of service, approximately 18 months before the study.
Rita	22	F	Father – RAF	As above, Rita and Audrey are siblings
Sophia	22	F	Father – Army	Sophia's father left full time service when she was 11. He was out of the Forces for 5 years before re-joining the Army as a reservist.

Table 1: Phase 1 Participant Information.

3.4.4   Process of Data Collection

Participants were initially provided with the study information sheet (Appendix 5) by mutual contacts in line with the snowballing method of recruitment. This was an opt-in form of recruitment, so participants had to contact me directly to express their interest in the research. This conversation allowed me to confirm participants' eligibility for the study, and to ensure that they were fully informed about the purposes of the research and their rights regarding confidentiality and their data. Once this conversation had taken place, and participants had indicated that they wished to continue with their participation, the interviews were arranged.

As Murray (2004, p. 101) notes, in research "the primary means of obtaining narrative accounts is through interviews". Rather than being researcher-led, narrative interviews are often intended to give participants control over the agenda, with the researcher's role being one of listening and responding to what the participant has to say (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Murray, 2004). In order to achieve this, interviews were unstructured and researcher input was largely limited to the use of follow up and probing questions (Kvale, 1996). Unstructured interviews are intended to be empowering for the participant, but it was also acknowledged that an open agenda could also be overwhelming for some participants (Murray, 2004). For this reason, an interview schedule was created (Appendix 5) and participants were given the opportunity to use Dixit picture cards to prompt discussion (Examples of Dixit cards are included in Appendix 5). All four of the participants were able to tell their stories without prompting and opted not to use the picture cards.

To allow time for reflection and further exploration of narratives, two separate one-hour interviews were conducted a week apart. Only Rita did not take part in a second interview. The circumstances of Rita's interview are considered further in section 3.4.6.

The interviews with the fourth participant, Sophia, were conducted via telephone due to the restrictions on face-to-face research brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak. The implications of this are discussed in section 3.7 of this chapter.

3.4.5   Analysis of Data from Phase 1 (NI)

Having reflected on the research aims, and my own values, it was clear that Phase 1 of the research would require a method of analysis that would "honor the role of the researcher, and respect the voices and experiences" of the participants (Woodcock, 2016, p. 1). The 'Listening Guide' (LG) was identified as the most suitable method for meeting these requirements. Created and developed by Carol Gilligan and her colleagues, the LG can be described as a "qualitative, relational, voice-centred, feminist" method of analysis (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998).

The LG proposes four successive 'listenings' to the data, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the narrative.

| 1. LISTENING FOR PLOT | 2. LISTENING FOR THE 'I' | 3. LISTENING FOR THE INTERPLAY | 4. LISTENING FOR RELATIONSHIPS |

Figure 6: Four readings of Gilligan's (2015) Listening Guide.

1. The first listening – Listening for Plot – focuses attention on the 'terrain' of the interview and involves identifying the story lines and any themes, repeated words, salient images or metaphors within the data (Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan & Eddy, 2017). This reading stays close to the data and is presented using the participant's own words as much as possible. This first reading also incorporates a 'researcher response' element which "directs researchers to locate themselves in relation to the data and explore their own feelings and thoughts" (Gilligan, 2015, p. 71). This is intended to allow for a degree of transparency in how the researcher's experiences are implicated in the analysis of the data.

2. The second listening – Listening for the 'I' – is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the LG (Woodcock, 2016). This stage of analysis involves identifying each use of the first-person, and any important accompanying text, and creating 'I-poems'. I-poems are created by lifting these statements from the narrative, in the order they appear, and arranging them into stanzas. Breaks between stanzas indicate where the 'I' has shifted direction (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017). The purpose of this step is to tune in to and access "meaning about interviewees' sense of self" (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 4). In an acknowledgement of the different speech patterns among participants, instances where 'you' or 'we' were being used to refer to the self were also listened for in this stage. As Mauthner & Doucet (1998,

p. 128) highlight, shifts between pronouns can signal changes "in how the respondent perceives and experiences herself". As part of this listening, the different voices that the interviewee uses to talk about themselves are identified and noted in the poem. Creating I-poems is an intuitive process, and participants were given the opportunity to read their poems and give feedback as to whether they felt their narratives had been reflected accurately.

3. The third listening – Listening for the interplay – involves listening for the relationships between the different voices identified in the second listening. Guided by the research question, the transcript is listened to and examined for tensions, harmonies and dissonances (Gilligan, 2015).

4. The final listening draws attention to the ways in which the interviewees speak about relationships. In light of the nature of the study, and the secondary aim regarding EP practice, any mention of school was also noted during this reading.

The final stage of the process is to "compose an analysis" based on the interpretation of findings from all four of the listenings (Balan, 2005).

3.4.6   Ethical Considerations for Phase 1

One of the guiding principles of research is that it should do no harm (Lavrakas, 2013). The nature of the topic of this research is such that there was the potential that interviews may touch on issues of a sensitive nature, such as mental health difficulties or substance misuse. These conversations could have been distressing or highly emotive for participants, and as such, there were some ethical issues that required careful consideration.

Firstly, for the purposes of both participant and researcher safety, it was determined that no interviews would take place in participants' homes, where there was the possibility that other family members, including the veteran, may have been home. This made it necessary to find community spaces that allowed for privacy and confidentiality to be upheld. Private rooms in library spaces local to the participants were ultimately used.

Secondly, it was necessary to ensure that all participants were fully informed of the purposes of the study, their rights to withdraw from the research, and how their data would be stored. An information leaflet was created and emailed to participants in advance of the interview. A second copy was also provided at the beginning of each interview, and participants were provided the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns and reminded of their right to withdraw from the study. Signed consent was obtained at the beginning of the first interview with each participant. A confidentiality protocol was drawn up, and a script was read aloud before each interview (Appendix 5).

Maintaining participants' anonymity posed a challenge in this study, as military communities can be small and close-knit, and several features can be identifying. It was confirmed with each participant that a pseudonym would be used in all transcripts and report. At the end of each interview, participants were also asked if there was any other identifiable information they would like removed. Although no participant raised additional concerns, it was decided that all references to place names, military bases and types of aircraft would be removed from the transcripts.

In recognition of the potential for interviews to be sensitive, details of support services were made available. Additional ethical issues arose during the interview of one participant – Rita – when it became apparent that she had a serious mental health condition for which she was receiving treatment. At the end of the interview, we spoke about the implications for Rita and if she felt she may need additional support. It was confirmed that she would have company for the remainder of the day, and that she was not feeling distressed. It was also confirmed that her treatment meant that she had ongoing therapeutic support from professionals. We discussed any additional concerns she may have regarding anonymity, and it was determined that Rita felt her condition to be an important part of her story and should be included in any write-up. Following a discussion with my dissertation supervisor, Rita was offered a second, follow-up interview, which she accepted, but was ultimately unable to attend due to other commitments.

The methodology adopted for Phase 1 meant that participants were offered the opportunity to read their I-poems and provide feedback on these. There were additional ethical issues to be considered in this process due to the lockdown, and these are discussed in section 3.7.1. below.

3.5 Phase Two: Online Survey

Phase 2 of the study consisted of an online survey, intended to contribute to the answering of RQ2 by gathering information on EPs' attitudes and experience relating to CoV. Survey research is defined as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 160). For the purposes of the present study, this term is being used to refer to the collection of such information by means of a questionnaire.

3.5.1 Rationale

Phase 2 of the study was designed primarily to address RQ2, but the data gathered also contributed in part to the answering of RQ3. An investigation of EPs' current perceived confidence in their knowledge of the experiences of CoV called for the use of "information from a sample of individuals to make some inferences about the wider population" (Kelley et al., 2003, p. 261). Historically, survey research, and questionnaires in particular, have been used to address questions such as this, as they

allow for the collection of data from a relatively large sample within a narrow timeframe (Cohen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, surveys can provide a "useful and legitimate" (Ponto, 2015, p. 171) means of gathering information on the points of view, attitudes and behaviours of respondents (Weisberg et al., 1996). This combination of factors led to the decision that a survey would be an appropriate tool for the answering of RQ2, which called for a description of EPs' current attitudes and experience in relation to CoV.

As such, Phase 2 of the research involved the design and distribution of an online, descriptive questionnaire.

3.5.2   Survey Design

The survey was a self-administered questionnaire that was comprised of a combination of open-ended and closed questions.

Closed questions are 'quick to complete' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 476) and can help to maximise response rate by reducing the imposition on EPs' time. However, the rigidity of such questions can limit the scope of responses. In contrast, open-ended questions can invite a greater depth of data, but are more time consuming to complete (Cohen et al., 2018). Rating-scales form a 'happy medium' between these two forms of question, as they are quick to answer, but also allow for a degree of sensitivity in the response.

Given the reportedly 'hidden' nature of the group, the survey aimed to obtain information about EPs' perceived levels of confidence relating to their knowledge of CoV. This was obtained by means of a ten-point scale. For context, information on participants' perceived confidence in their knowledge of children whose parents are currently serving in the Forces was also gathered. Similarly, respondents were asked about their professional and personal experiences with both CoV and MCC.

Two open-ended question were included to allow participants the flexibility to indicate how their perceived level of confidence in this area may be improved and provide any additional comments.

3.5.3   Sampling & Distribution

According to Ponto (2015, p. 168), the goal of sampling in survey research is "to obtain a sufficient sample that is representative of the population of interest." To access a wide sample of the EP population, the survey was distributed online via an online forum for those in the EP profession (EPNET). There was also an element of snowball recruitment for this phase, as respondents were encouraged to forward the link to the survey to any of their colleagues who may have an interest in participation in the research.

62 participants completed the survey. Their demographic information is presented below.

Respondents' Demographic Information			
Job Role		Age	
Trainee	20	18-24	1
Maingrade	28	25-34	31
Senior	9	35-44	16
Principal	2	45-54	5
Associate	3	55+	9

Table 2: Survey respondents' demographic information.
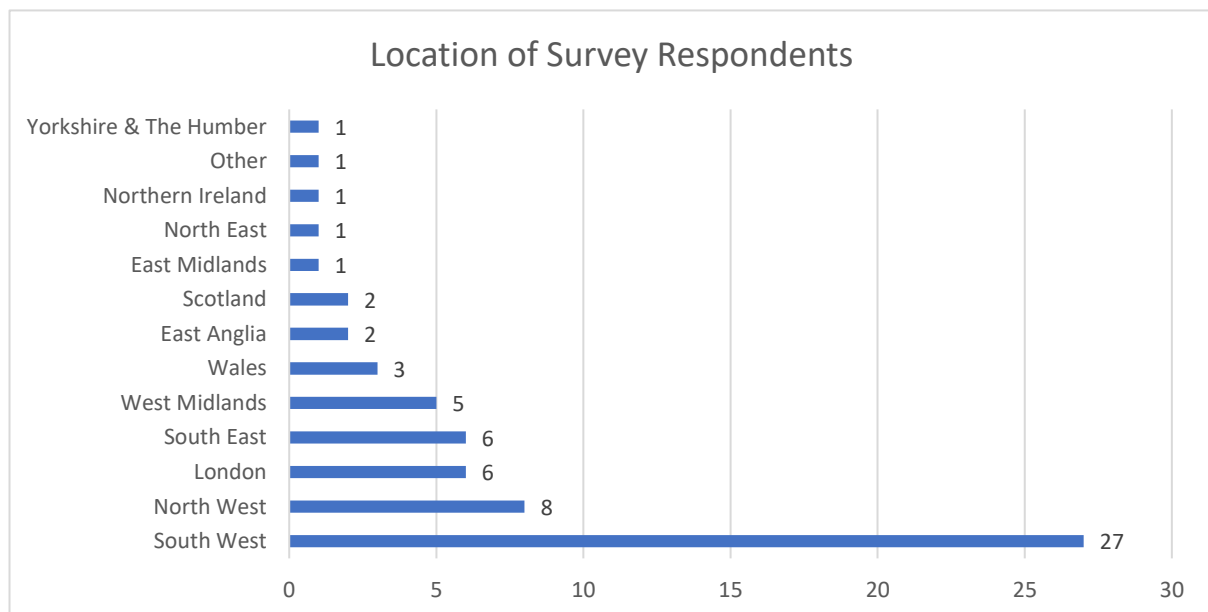
Figure 7: Location of Survey Respondents.

3.5.4 Analysis

This was a brief descriptive survey, and as such, the responses to closed questions and rating scales were analysed using simple descriptive statistics to indicate overall trends in the data.

Responses to the open-ended question about what may improve confidence relation to CoV were analysed using a Word Cloud. A word cloud is a visual representation that "identifies key words in different sizes and colors based on the frequencies" (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014, p. 38). This form of display allows a researcher to tell the story of their data in an easy to comprehend manner by visualising the key themes and patterns in the responses (McNaught & Lam, 2010; Ramlo, 2011), which makes them suitable for the analysis and presentation of qualitative survey data (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014).

3.5.5 Ethical Considerations for Phase 2

As was outlined for Phase 1, there were also ethical responsibilities to participants in Phase 2 to ensure they were fully informed of the purpose of the study and their rights. As such, an information leaflet and consent form were designed and included in the online introduction to the survey. In addition, to ensure that data was collected and stored in line with UK and European data collection laws, the platform approved by Bristol University – Online Surveys – was used.

As noted by Lavrakas (2013), there is a 'social responsibility' associated with research that requires the sharing of findings in order to contribute to the wider body of knowledge. As participation in the online survey was anonymous, this posed additional barriers to the sharing of the results with those who completed the questionnaire. It was agreed that a summary of the findings would be shared on the online forum EPNET.

3.6   Phase Three: Focus Group

3.6.1   Rationale

Phase three of the research consisted of a focus group, which was conducted in order to contribute to the answering of RQs 2 and 3, by further exploring EPs' and TEPs' attitudes and practices towards CoV, and any ways they felt they may develop their practice in this area. A commonly used tool within qualitative research, focus groups can be defined as 'in-depth, open-ended group discussion' (Robinson, 1999, p. 905). Whilst retaining their 'focus' on a particular phenomenon of interest, this approach also allows for the participants to interact with one another (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this way, not only is focus group methodology in line with the pragmatist position that knowledge exits in interaction between people (Briggs, 2019) but, according to Stewart & Shamdasani (2015), these exchanges produce rich, in-depth data. According to Gibbs (1997), focus groups are an appropriate tool for drawing investigating attitudes and experiences relating to a given topic. Thus, a focus group was conducted with EPs in order to further contribute to the answering of research questions 2 and 3. Whereas the online survey allowed for a degree of breadth by virtue of a larger sample size, the focus group was intended to provide further depth to the answering of these questions. Lambert & Loiselle (2008, p. 228) suggest that qualitative triangulation in this manner, by means of combining data from a focus group with that of the survey data, can allow for "more comprehensive understanding of phenomena."

3.6.2   Sampling & Recruitment

Due to the time limits for the completion of the study, convenience sampling, or the recruitment of participants "based on their accessibility and/or proximity to the research" (Jager et al., 2017, p. 16) was used for this phase of the research. Colleagues within my team at the Educational Psychology Service were provided with information about the study, and all opted to take part. Consent forms

were signed electronically and returned via email, and 6 participants took part in the study. The focus group consisted of one Senior EP, four main grade EPs, and one Trainee EP.

3.6.3 Process & Analysis

As a result of the changes to working practices brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, the focus group was held virtually via Skype. The implications of this for the research are considered further in section 3.7 of this chapter.

I took on the role of moderator for this focus group, and the conversation was guided according to a topic guide that had previously been drawn up by myself (Appendix 6). This topic guide aimed to promote an exploration of any previous experience of working with CoV, of psychological theory and of whether EP practice can be developed in relation to this group of children. The audio recording of the focus group was transcribed, and then analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves the repeated reviewing of data to identify trends and key themes. To achieve this, I followed the procedure recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). In accordance with this approach, I followed six steps of analysis, namely:

Familiarisation with the data	Generating initial codes	Searching for themes	Reviewing themes	Defining and naming themes	Producing the report
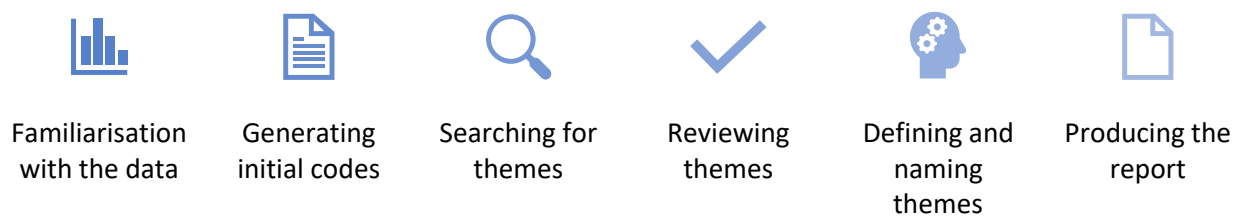
Figure 8: Stages of thematic analysis.

The recording of the focus group was first transcribed, before the transcription was subject to repeated readings in order to familiarise myself with the data. Initial codes were then created to identify and represent key features of the data. Initial codes were organised into groups, to aid the identification of themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82), a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question". The data was then re-read, and the themes were refined until it was felt that the essence of the data had been adequately captured and conveyed. This identification of themes was done in an inductive, or 'bottom-up' way, in that themes were data-driven, rather than being driven by the research question.

Braun and Clarke (2006) propose that themes can be identified according to the prevalence of similar codes within the data, or according to their pertinence to the research question. During the analysis of this focus group data it became apparent that there were one or two dominant voices within the data. Only one of the EPs reported having had direct experience of working with CoV that she felt able to comment on. Subsequently, this EP made several comments that were coded and felt to be

pertinent to the research question, but that were not necessarily representative of the attitudes and practices of the rest of the group. Other codes seemed to be much more prevalent within the group as a whole. As a result, it was decided that a combination of both prevalence and pertinence would be used to identify themes. When completing step 6 of the analysis, producing the report of the analysis that is presented in following chapter of this dissertation, I took care to highlight where themes were heavily influenced by coded speech from one participant.

3.6.4   Ethical Considerations for Phase 3

Participants were provided information leaflets and consent forms about the focus group prior to their participation. There is some additional risk within focus group research as participants have less control over the discussion than in an individual interview (Sim & Waterfield, 2019) and there is the possibility that one of the members may comment in a way that is distressing to another participant. To mediate this to the best of my ability, participants were reminded of their right to leave the group at any time and withdraw their data from the study if they so wished. In addition, prior to their involvement in the focus group, participants were provided with details of additional support services, and were made aware that I would be available following the focus group if anyone felt any distress or had any additional concerns that they wished to talk about. As a moderator, I remained vigilant to the nature and tone of the discussion. At the beginning of the group, participants were encouraged to agree ground rules for the discussion. It was decided that all participants need to be respectful of one another, and that all contributions were welcome regardless of experience or perceived knowledge about CoV.

There were some additional ethical considerations brought about by the need to carry out the focus group remotely, via Skype. These are considered in section 3.7.2 below.

3.7   Additional Considerations Brought About by the COVID-19 Pandemic

The situation arising as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent 'lockdown' of the UK necessitated the urgent modification of data collection methods for Phases 1 and 3 of this research. An overriding ethical concern arose in ensuring the neither participants, nor myself, were put at risk of harm because of face-to-face meetings. As such, approval was sought and subsequently obtained from the University of Bristol Ethics Committee on 13th March 2020 to conduct the remaining interviews of Phase 1, and the focus group of Phase 3, remotely. This adaptation of the research design introduced a few procedural and ethical issues that required additional consideration.

3.7.1   Additional Considerations for Phase 1

Regarding Phase 1, there were additional points to be discussed and confirmed with the fourth participant, Sophia, whose interviews were the only ones that had not yet been completed. Firstly, it

was necessary to confirm that she was able and happy to continue with participation in the research. The outbreak and subsequent lockdown had the potential to impact on health and wellbeing, as well as disrupt daily life.

Secondly, if Sophia wished to proceed, I needed to ascertain by what means she would be most comfortable doing so. The option to conduct interviews via videocall was provided, as it was acknowledged that this provided "a close substitute to in-person interviewing" (Jowett, 2020), as it allows for a degree of non-verbal communication, which can be important for the establishing of rapport (Block & Erskine, 2012). However, in acknowledgement of the potential for video calling to feel intrusive (as it can allow a view into the home) or uncomfortable, the option of telephone interviews was also provided.

Sophia confirmed that she would like to proceed via telephone. Before arranging the interview, we discussed confidentiality and how best to ensure she would not be interrupted or overheard, as well as how to seek support after the interview should she feel she need it. The implications of having conducted the interview by telephone were considered during analysis.

The second amendment to Phase 1 of the research was in the sending of the I-poems to participants for their feedback. I spoke at length with my thesis supervisor over how to do this in such a way that participants were afforded the time to read and consider their I-poems, whilst ensuring that they would have access to adequate support from myself to understand or query anything, or be signposted to additional support should they need it. It was decided that a date would be agreed with participants to share their I-poems via email, and that these would be sent in the morning with the accompanying leaflet signposting support services. A time in the afternoon for a debrief and feedback was also arranged, for the same date, prior to the I-Poem being distributed. Participants were made aware that I could be contacted earlier on that day if there was something they urgently wished to discuss.

3.7.2 Additional Considerations for Phase 3

Regarding Phase 3, the focus group was also conducted remotely via Skype. This focus group was conducted with my colleagues within the Local Authority, who had already begun to use Skype for team meetings. As per Phase 1, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study and prompted to consider their wellbeing regarding participation. All 6 of the original participants confirmed that they would like to continue to take part in the focus group, and signed consent forms were collected via email.

Procedurally, the focus group was conducted at the beginning of lockdown, when participants were still becoming familiar with using the technology in this manner. This, in conjunction with some

connection issues for some participants, is likely to have affected the dynamics of the group and the impact of this was considered further during the analysis of this data.

3.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the aims and research questions of the current study. Through a process of reflexivity, my epistemological position and values as a researcher have been considered. The multi-method, three phase design has been discussed, with the rationale, data gathering tools, method of analysis and ethical considerations for each phase having been outlined. The implications of the COVID-19 outbreak for data collection and analysis have also been examined. The next two chapters will present the data analysis and findings for each of the three research phases.

Chapter 4: Findings of Phase 1

4.0   Introduction

The next two chapters will present the findings of each of the phases of the research in turn. These phases were designed to answer three research questions:

1.   How do CoV experience and understand their lives?

2.   What are Educational Psychologists' and Trainee Educational Psychologists' current attitudes and practices in relation to the children of veterans?

3.   In what ways, if any, can EPs and TEPs develop their practice in relation to the CoV?

This chapter will present the findings of Phase 1 of the research, intended to address RQ1. This phase consisted of narrative interviews with four young adult participants, all of whom are the children of veterans.

The narratives of these four participants – Ayla, Audrey, Rita, and Sophia – will be presented and considered separately in order to preserve the individual nature of their stories. The interview data was analysed according to the steps in the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 2015) which require a number of consecutive 'listenings' to the data, focusing on a different aspect of the narrative each time. These steps are outlined in full in section 3.5.5. of the previous chapter.

LISTENING FOR PLOT	LISTENING FOR THE 'I'	LISTENTING FOR CONTRAPUNTAL VOICES	LISTENING FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Figure 9: Four readings of Gilligan's (2015) Listening Guide.

For the purposes of clarity in this presentation of the findings, the results from the third and fourth readings have been incorporated into the final summary and analysis of each narrative.

Woodcock (2016, p. 3) proposed that researchers "need not be shy about developing a creative, color-coded system" for organising themes and voices that are detected in the data at various stages. This "trail of evidence" can be used to indicate how a researcher has gone about interpreting the data. In this spirit of transparency, an example of this process has been included in Appendix 8. Similarly, examples of the third listening (listening for the interplay of voices) have been included in the analysis below to indicate how voices were colour coded and voices were interpreted.

Each of the participants' stories is presented using a quote that I felt to be representative of a key element of their narrative.

4.1 Ayla's Story: "I mean, that was a culture shock"

4.1.1 First Reading: Plot & Researcher Response

Ayla was 25 at the time of the interview. Her father had served in the RAF, and Ayla was born in Scotland during a posting there. The family moved to England when Ayla was 18 months old, where her younger brother was born, and then returned to Scotland when she was five. The family remained in Scotland until Ayla's father left the military when she was 10. The timing and destination of the family's move was determined by her father's offer of employment.

> "*He wasn't eligible for the Scottish ambulance service, so it had to be somewhere in England. It was literally the first one that got back to him with a place training… So, we didn't even know where (English town) was. Never heard of it.*"

Ayla's family were living in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) at the time of transition, and she described her family's experiences of trying to coordinate a move to "the other end of the country" into a council property. Ayla indicated that, once they knew where they were going to be moving to, the process of transition "was very quick after that point."

> "*And my Mum came down, I think I was doing an afterschool club or something. I just remember being absolutely caked in mud and she suddenly turned up and went 'Oh, we're going now'… because we'd been in touch with the council and they were like 'Oh, we've got a flat, but you need to view it tomorrow' which, obviously, when you're at the other end of the country…*"

Following this sudden move, Ayla started a new school in May, shortly before the end of the academic year. Ayla described the Scottish education system as "so different from the English one", and that the differences between the ways "birthdays work" meant that she "ended up repeating a year" in a very different school setting to the one she had attended in Scotland.

> "*I moved and went from one year left of primary school to the youngest in middle school. I went into Year 5, although technically, I should have been up in Year 6.*
>
> *I was in a small-ish school… I was the oldest in the school… then we came down, and went into, it was a four-form entry school. It was massive. I suddenly had to navigate between classes. And obviously, everyone else had been there for the best part of the year… I didn't really understand it, just sort of went with the flow.*"

Ayla described herself as being a "swot" and spoke of knowing that she was "quite academically able". Ayla explained that she "hated" having to repeat things that she had done the previous year and felt that "there was less academic expectation" of her in her new setting.

"They didn't necessarily sort of, push me, or anything."

Ayla also spoke of having "general friendship issues" in her school in Scotland, which meant that she "tried far too hard to fit in" in her new school in England. Something she described as "definitely down to not feeling like you belong there."

"I started over effectively. It took me a good 18 months to get a good group of friends."

Ayla spoke about transition as something that the whole family experienced. She described how her father went "straight into shift work, so he just wasn't around", but that her mother, brother, and herself were "all trying to make friends at the same time." Ayla spoke about the family all "finding their feet" individually and then having to readjust to a new way of being together as a family.

"It wasn't immediate… probably, once we all found our feet with what we were doing individually, I guess. Then a couple of years later, as a family unit, it's like right, how do we now work around each other and learn to live with each other again… I've got to deal with my issues, and you've got your issues, okay… we've sorted that out now, who actually are we as a unit?"

When considering the impact of her experiences of transition, Ayla stated that she "was probably depressed" at that time, and school was the part of the day that she "just had to get through". However, Ayla was also involved in a number of extra-curricular activities at that time, which seemed to be protective for her, and she recalled how a teacher described her as being "an entirely different person in school and out of school". She noted herself that, as an adult, she is spontaneous and able to adapt, which she attributed to her experiences.

Researcher Response

I found Ayla to be very engaging, and she seemed confident to talk to me about her experiences with very little prompting. Considering my reflections made after the interview, I note that I recorded Ayla as having "launched" into her narrative. I think my wording indicates how I was struck by how much Ayla had to talk about. At times Ayla's telling of her story was quite disjointed and rapid, with sudden shifts in topic and it felt a little overwhelming at times to listen to. Ayla's telling of her narrative seemed be representative of the sudden changes she described having experienced, and I wonder if my feeling of being disorientated whilst listening to it has influenced my impression of how it might have felt for Ayla.

Whilst listening to Ayla's narrative, I have certainly found myself reflecting on the sheer amount of change she experienced. Ayla offered some helpful insights into what these changes have meant for her in terms of her identity, both at the time and as she has grown up. I felt myself experiencing a real sense of sadness for Ayla when she talked about denying aspects of her identity so as to 'fit in' and make sense of who she was in her new environment.

Similarly, noting how much Ayla described her experience as a 'struggle', I found myself feeling quite angry on her behalf. It seemed to me as though she was almost invisible in the processes and systems happening around her, and I was left feeling as though she had been let down. I think there were elements of Ayla's story that I interpreted in light of my own experiences of being in a relationship with a veteran and feeling as though ensuring his wellbeing took centre stage in my life, and I wonder how this is implicated in my analysis.

I also found it interesting to reflect on the fact that Ayla is now working in a role in SEND. This meant she brought an understanding of education systems and was able to offer her views on school support for CoV. The job that Ayla is employed in now is a role that I used to do myself, and this seemed to help foster rapport and a sense of connection between us. Ayla's reflections on her experiences as a child and making sense of them in terms of her knowledge as an adult, seemed a key part of her narrative and I wonder how much this was 'drawn out' by this common ground.

4.1.2   Second Reading: Ayla's I-Poem Voices
Listening to Ayla's I-Poem (Appendix 9) I identified six distinct voices. These were voices of:

| Disempowerment |
| Struggle |
| Belonging |
| Agency |
| Responsibility |
| Reflection |

Figure 10: Ayla's I-Poem Voices.

Disempowerment
A voice of *disempowerment* was heard at points in Ayla's narrative when she seemed to experience a lack of agency and control. I detected this voice when Ayla spoke of military and education systems that she was 'subject to' and that had subsequently impacted on her. This appeared to be one of the more dominant voices in Ayla's narrative:

> *"I went into Year 5*
>
> *I should have been in Year 6*
>
> *I hated repeating things"*

At times, I could hear Ayla speak more explicitly about her own powerlessness in the face of those inflexible systems that she 'had to' manage and endure:

> *"The approach I had, of carrying on regardless*
>
> *That's what you had to do*
>
> *What you learned to do*
>
> *You just carry on regardless*
>
> *You're a military kid*
>
> *You have to"*

Struggle

A voice of *struggle* could be heard at times of difficulty, which seemed to be predominantly when Ayla experienced change or felt difference. Although this voice was most often heard when Ayla was talking about her struggle with friendships after transition, I also noted it when she spoke about her school experiences in Scotland:

> *"I really remember struggling*
>
> *I remember making some questionable decisions*
>
> *I wanted to be, sort of, accepted by people*
>
> *I had some issues not long before we moved*
>
> *I was refusing to go to school*
>
> *I felt concerned that that would continue*
>
> *So, I tried far too hard to fit in*
>
> *I really struggled in terms of that relating."*

This voice spoke not only to Ayla's experience of struggle, but also her response to this and how it impacted on her:

> *"I turned inwards and self-destructed*

70

I was probably depressed

I spent a lot of time not doing very much

I was very emotional."

Belonging

A voice of *belonging* could be heard when Ayla spoke with confidence and certainty about a sense of connection with others. I often detected this voice when Ayla spoke about the "military group" and her Scottish heritage:

"I was born in Scotland

I'm the one with the Scottish birth certificate

I quite liked the military group

You know what's going on

There's a definite community feel

You can relate to that, and have that conversation

'I know what you're talking about', I can relate."

Agency

A voice of *agency* was heard at times of Ayla's narrative when she described experiencing choice and control. I heard this voice most clearly when Ayla spoke about being able to choose the school she wanted to attend:

"I chose what school I wanted

And choose somewhere I wanted to be

I think it was the first time I had a choice"

As well as choice, this voice speaks to Ayla's busyness and sense of independence:

"I was allowed to make my own mistakes

I was never really restricted

I started working as soon as I was 16

I just wanted to be busy"

Responsibility

A voice of responsibility was identified when Ayla spoke about her role as the eldest child in the family. I heard this voice when Ayla talked about helping her Mum to pack and clean the house, and of 'instructing' her younger brother on how to fit in at school. Ayla also spoke explicitly about her sense of responsibility, as a 'military kid', to defend and explain certain military traditions (e.g. practices around Remembrance Day).

> *"I was the eldest*
>
> *I had to help my Mum*
>
> *I was the older one*
>
> *You have to look out for little brother*
>
>
> *I feel I have a part, almost a responsibility, to explain".*

Reflection

Ayla's voice of *reflection* was heard as a more tentative voice, which brought an adult perspective to her childhood experiences. I identified this voice when Ayla put forward possible explanations for what she had thought or felt. Ayla also used this voice to imagine, or wonder aloud:

> *"I think, probably, because I moved down a year*
>
> *I think, potentially, I felt there was less academic expectation on me*
>
> *What if I had been pushed more when I was younger?*
>
> *Would I have learnt to work?*
>
> *I wonder whether that had any impact*
>
> *I think, I do wonder, if it had anything to do with the whole identity."*

I also noted this voice when Ayla drew parallels between her adult self, and her experiences as a child:

> *"Now I'm not very good at sitting in the office.*
>
> *I'm great when it comes to packing*
>
> *I can do it in like 10 minutes."*

4.1.3   Ayla: Summary and Analysis

Ayla's narrative told a story of what appeared to be significant change. When telling her story, Ayla often repeated the terms 'shock' and 'struggle' which felt to me to characterise Ayla's experiences of transition. I took this repetition to indicate that these may be indicative of important themes in Ayla's stories.

Ayla's use of the word 'shock' seemed to signal times that she felt difference, and I noted that this feeling seemed to be central to Ayla's narrative. As well as the educational systems and settings, Ayla described feelings of difference relating to her new environment and peers. The extent of this difference is indicated by Ayla's description of transition as a "culture shock", and her use of the terms "strange" and "foreign" to describe her new circumstances.

> *"So that was a bit of a shock. Going from military in Scotland, people used to coming and going all the time. (Town) is the sort of place where people literally stay their whole lives.*
>
> *These were people who had been with their friends all the way through school as well… People had come all the way through from nursery, reception, they'd lived in the same area… I had never lived in the same place for more than four years at this point. What is this? It's a shock."*

Ayla's use of the word 'struggle' in her narrative appeared to describe her experiences relating to her academic performance, making friendships, and making sense of her own identity. Following the voices of struggle and belonging through Ayla's narrative revealed a pattern that suggested them to be in disharmony with one another. Ayla's voice of struggle was most notable when she spoke of events that had served to highlight her sense of difference from her new peers, which had in turn seemed to silence her voice of belonging. Ayla appeared to give voice to this explicitly when she spoke about struggling to make friends, something she put down to "not feeling like you belong there" and "having nothing in common with these people". In contrast, when talking about the "military group", Ayla described feeling more settled and having found it much easier to make friends. Notably, Ayla switched from "I" to "you" when talking about herself as a service child, which was taken to indicate her social identity.

An example of the interplay between Ayla's voice of **belonging** and her voice of **struggle**:

"It was <u>different </u>when we were in the military. I felt a lot more, sort of, outgoing… maybe there was a bit of 'If we're not RAF anymore, then what are we?' and so, I didn't necessarily have that identity to hold on to and my confidence definitely took a knock. I was a lot more quiet.

I struggled so much more to settle. That's when I started to realise that actually, things are quite different when you're not in that environment anymore."

As Ayla's narrative continues, it appears that she took on an active role in silencing her voice of belonging by 'shedding' the aspects of herself that it had voiced most strongly; namely, her Scottish heritage and military identity. Listening to Ayla's talk of her identity suggests that she came to view her voice of belonging as the source of her struggle. This ongoing battle with herself seems to have had a negative impact on Ayla's wellbeing.

> *"The bullying South was a lot more to do with things I considered more of an identity.*
>
> *So, I was the one in my family, I'm the one in my family with the Scottish birth certificate. Everyone else has been moved all over, and (…) I did have an accent at the time. So, it was forming the new accent of the local area, or blending to fit in a bit better.*
>
> *It was 'Well you sound different, you look different, you've got a name we've never heard before.' So, and, a background that none of them had ever come across before as well. I think I just got very bored of answering questions… I got fed up of trying to explain myself. It almost felt like I had to validate my experiences because they were just so different to everyone else's, which was probably quite draining emotionally."*

As well as difficulties with low academic expectations and friendships, Ayla's narrative tells the story of a feeling of a lack of support and understanding from her teachers. She explained that she "didn't have many dealings" with her teachers but rather "kept herself to herself." It was noted that in Ayla's I-poem, her talk of turning inwards and self-destructing followed a story of being told she would fail her exams for using a method she had been taught in her previous school. I wondered if this had challenged her identity on yet another level – that of being someone who was quite academically able.

A central theme in Ayla's narrative was felt to be that of the family unit, and her description of transition as something that the family experienced together. I noted an interplay between Ayla's voices of struggle, responsibility and belonging when she spoke about her brother. This seemed to indicate a joint sense of struggle, which she described as having brought her and her brother closer.

Ayla's voices of **struggle** and **responsibility** appear to be implicated in her relationship with her brother, which she is heard to speak about using her voice of **belonging**:

"*I'd* **instruct him** *on how to behave almost… It was very much* **telling him***, you know, how to not get noticed and what to do* **to stay out of trouble** *and stay out of* **being the target for everybody***. I definitely went after… there were a couple of girls in the year between us that were pretty grim to him… and* **I went after them** *a couple of times…* **I took a lot of the pressure** *to try and keep* **our troubles** *away from what ever my parents were going through initially, so, we almost had* **this bond***.*"

Ayla's father was felt to be noticeably absent from her narrative, something which she felt was due to his working shifts. However, Ayla did describe some apparent difficulty for the family as her father and brother tried to adjust to a new dynamic. Ayla indicated that her brother had some 'ASD type tendencies' which could result in 'meltdowns' when his routine changed, and that this was something her father was not used to seeing:

> "There came a point when him and my brother being in the same house just wasn't working… I don't remember it as much when we were younger, but then he wasn't necessarily in the house when Mum was trying to do things like take us to school as much as he was when we were out of the military."

Ayla is now employed in a role working with children with SEND, and her knowledge of the relevant systems allowed for some interesting reflections. Ayla described feeling strongly about her experiences of transition, and the lack of recognition or support from those around her. She expressed that she felt CoV are good at masking their difficulties and would not ask for help, and so they need others to "ask the question". Ayla felt that this was particularly important when the whole family were disrupted by transition, as this was the time, she believed she needed the most support

> "That was when I think I needed the most external support from my point of view because, before I was like, talk to my Mum when I was finding my own identity, or you know, just have a cry at home. But if it was something at home… I was struggling at home… then I would be struggling at school, but I just didn't have anybody to talk to about it."

4.2   Audrey's Story: "It was never bad"
4.2.1   First Reading: Plot & Researcher Response

At the time of the interview, Audrey was 18 years old. Her father, who had served in the RAF for 39 years, had left the Forces approximately a year and a half before we spoke. Although he officially left in the summer, Audrey explained that he 'stopped going in' from the April, meaning there was a period of readjustment for the family before he formally retired in the summer. After some uncertainty about his employment, Audrey's father took on a role working on the same military base as he had previously worked, albeit in a civilian capacity, and the family have since settled into a "new dynamic".

Audrey described the period since her father left the military as having been "actually quite nice", something she put down to "having him home all the time, and not having to worry." Despite this mention of worry, Audrey went on to explain that she did not feel as though she has had a particularly negative experience of life within a military family.

> "I don't think we had necessarily… like… a bad experience."

> *"It was a good experience… It was never bad."*

Audrey attributed her having had a positive experience, in part, to having felt quite separate from the military. She described a feeling of disconnection that came from having a stable home off base, having never had to move, and the consistency of her day to day routines around attending school.

> *"We kind of had our own space. You kind of disconnect from his work and then just focus on family life."*

> *"One of them would be having our own home because, if we didn't have that, the it would be us having to find somewhere to live… and having to move… and that would have completely knocked us."*

There is some indication that this disconnection from the military may also have been fostered to an extent by her parents. Audrey explained that she has been taught to be careful in how she talks about her father's career for fear of 'making him a target', and she talked about how she does not often mention her military connection to her peers.

> *"It's the only thing I've ever known. I've been told from a young age to not make a big deal out of it and to just act like it's normal life."*

In terms of her father being "home all the time", Audrey talked about how, since starting his new role, her father has worked more regular hours and has had the flexibility to work from home so, if he's needed, "then he's actually able to do that." Her father's ability to be more available to the family is illustrated in the way Audrey talked about her 18th birthday. Audrey mentioned her birthdays at several points across both interviews, explaining that, when her father was in the military, "he missed like, five in a row" and how "getting birthdays back" was the thing she was most excited about when he left the Forces. She mentioned at several points how important it was to her for him to be home for her 18th birthday and described the relief she felt when, in his new role, he was able to rearrange a work commitment so as to ensure he could be there.

> *"I was quite happy because I kind of got a bit emotional that he wouldn't be there, but then I thought that he was just going to be there for every birthday and that he wouldn't have to go away… unless.. I think he went away a couple of weeks later so, it's kind of more the fact that he almost wasn't there. It kind of felt like he was still... it felt like old times, but then when he actually managed to change it, because he would have never been able to do that before, because it was just a training school. It was like... okay… thanks. I didn't know he would be able to do that, so it was a bit of a relief."*

As well as her father having more of a physical presence in the home, Audrey talked about an increase in his emotional availability since he has left the Forces. She described him as initially having been quite "tough" and "disconnected" from his feelings, to the extent that she didn't think "he believed in emotions at one point", but that he is now a lot more "open".

> *"Now we can actually sit down and talk to each other. Whereas before he would kind of just shut… not just his feelings, but anyone's emotions down. So, it's like his new job's kind of made him a bit… softer, and less defensive".*

Audrey describes the outcome of these changes in positive terms, suggesting that they brought the family closer together.

> *"I definitely thought it brought us closer, and we did more together."*

However, Audrey's narrative also acknowledged a period of adjustment for the family whilst they settled into this "new dynamic". Audrey described this period, where her father was unemployed, as being "weird" and "unnatural". She talked about feeling annoyed and sad because she was not used to seeing her father upset, and how his feeling unsettled impacted on the emotions of the rest of the family. She described trying to cheer him and up and make him feel more positive during this time.

> *"Him being home when you got home, it felt a bit unnatural, like it shouldn't be happening… I don't think we ever had that where he was home before us. It was always my Mum there. You've kind of got to learn a new routine of doing everything, instead of what you've been doing for sixteen years."*

> *"Then, because he felt it was… probably unnatural, I think it made us feel like it was as well. The way he felt probably had an influence on the way that we felt as well."*

> *"I think, because he was getting himself down, it's kind of like… brings you down a bit and then you try... you don't want them to feel like that… try to make them feel positive about how things are going to be okay."*

Audrey identified her father's feeling comfortable and settled in his new role as being a factor in the family's adjustment to life after the military.

> *"Him being able to stay in the same environment and working on the (aircraft) and like literally just doing the job of what he was doing before probably made him feel a bit more confident in what he was doing and probably not as stressed about starting something new."*

Before I met Audrey, I had already begun to form an impression of her based on our communication about her participation in the research. Audrey was quick to respond to emails, and I was struck by her almost professional tone. Audrey came across to me as responsible and mature.

During the interview, Audrey appeared shy and reserved, but she needed little prompting to talk about her experiences. I noted the warmth with which she spoke about her Dad. I was left with the impression that they have a close bond, and being able to spend more time with him now he has left the Forces was something she spoke about often. There was something that felt very innocent about Audrey's accounts of being driven to school by her Dad and having him there for her birthday. There was something about this that resonated with me regarding my relationship with my own father, who used to work extremely long hours. Audrey spoke about going to work with her father when she was younger, and I have fond memories of this myself. I wonder to what extent my own recollections are implicated in my interpretation of Audrey as speaking with warmth about these experiences.

There were also elements of Audrey's story that are similar to my own experiences as the partner of a serving member of the RAF. I felt particularly connected to her narrative when she spoke about her experiences of visiting the base or in supporting her father to choose non-uniform outfits. We laughed about this together during the interview, and I wonder if we found validation in each other's responses to these shared, unusual experiences.

On reading through the transcript, I found myself noting that Audrey appears reserved, particularly when talking about emotion. I sometimes struggled to identify her own voice in her words, observing that she moves fluidly between "I", "You" and even "it" when telling her story. I'm curious as to whether there is a pattern to this interplay and what it might mean for this narrative. I wonder if my identification with Audrey's experiences of spending time with her father meant I was perhaps less alert to any contradiction in her words and the possibility of things being unsaid.

4.2.2   Second Reading: Audrey's I-Poem Voices

The stories in Audrey's I-Poem (Appendix 10) were felt to be characterised by three voices. These were voices of:

Connection

Detachment

Responsibility
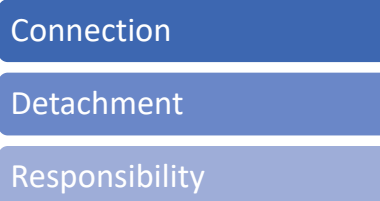
Figure 11: Audrey's I-Poem Voices.

Connection

Audrey's voice of *connection* was felt to be a positive voice, which spoke of her close relationships with her family, and of how these have grown stronger following transition.

"I think we did more together

I think it brought us closer, as a family"

I particularly noted this voice when Audrey was talking about her relationship with her father, and it voiced stories about him being present for her birthday or surprising her when he came home from deployment. This voice was also heard when she expressed her gratitude for this relationship.

"I was the first one who got to see him

I felt a bit… special"

"I think I was just grateful

I did actually have him

I knew that he'd come home

I think for me to still have my Dad in my life

I think I just felt quite lucky"

Detachment

In contrast, Audrey's voice of *detachment* was heard when she spoke about distance and disconnection. Audrey was heard to use this voice primarily when she spoke about a sense of separation from the military.

"I think, it kind of allowed you to disconnect

Instead of still being in the military environment even when you're at home

You weren't part of that environment, you were just a normal one."

Responsibility

A voice of *responsibility* was identified at points in Audrey's narrative where she spoke about her father being upset or distressed. This voice spoke of worry, and of needing to take action to support him to feel better:

"He'd be a bit down about it, so you'd have to try and… make him feel a bit more positive

You don't want them to feel like that… try to make them feel positive

You kind of worried for him."

This voice was also noted when the narrative seemed to convey a perception that Audrey had a responsibility to conceal her own feelings, so as not to cause any further distress:

"I wouldn't mention it to him

I knew it would stress him out"

At other times in the narrative, this voice was heard talking about providing more practical support when her father was adjusting to life away from the military:

"You've kind of got to teach him about, what to wear."

4.2.3 Audrey: Summary and Analysis

Audrey's narrative tells the story of her experiences of her father leaving the military and undergoing a period of unemployment whilst he waited for a civil service job to become available in the base where he had previously been stationed.

The significance of stability was identified as being a central theme in Audrey's narrative, as she spoke about the importance of her daily routines, remaining in the family home and the continuity afforded by her father returning to a job that was in a familiar setting. Considering the interplay of voices through Audrey's narrative suggests that her talk of stability represents a point where her voices of detachment and connection are in harmony with one another.

The interplay between Audrey's voices of **detachment** and **connection** suggest that her positive experiences of military are the result of a sense of stability brought about by both a feeling of connection to her family, and of a degree of disconnection from the military.

"***I don't think we had a bad experience. Because we*** *never lived on the base* ***or anything, we kind of*** *had our own space.* ***You kind of*** *disconnect from his work* ***and then just*** *focus on family life*…"

Following these voices of connection and detachment through Audrey's narrative reveals a story of how transition has impacted on the family's relationships and disrupted her sense of stability before a 'new dynamic' was found.

Prior to transition, Audrey's voice of **connection** speaks about her relationship with her mother, whereas her voice of **detachment** can be heard when she speaks about her father:

"If anything was wrong, I would always go to my Mum because she was a bit more understanding. Whereas my Dad, because of all the experiences he's had he's just very…tough."

Listening to these voices when Audrey talks about her experiences of transition indicate how this dynamic changed:

"My Mum started being there less, and my Dad's there more"

Audrey's narrative explained that she ultimately adapted to the new dynamic, and her voice of connection conveyed that she now believes the family are closer as a result. However, this period of transition and adjustment was described by Audrey as being "weird" and "unnatural". She linked this to her father's own feelings of unease, indicating that the family's emotional state was responsive to his.

A second theme that was thought to be central to Audrey's narrative was the expression of emotion. Audrey primarily talks about this theme in relation to her father, who she described as having been "disconnected" from his emotions prior to transition. Following his retirement from the military, he is reported by Audrey to be more open in this regard. However, listening again to the data for the "I" statements, I noted some indications of restraint when Audrey spoke about her own feelings. Often, the "I" became "you", or an expression of emotion was preceded by a statement that served to minimise its impact. I interpreted these instances to be the voice of detachment inserting some distance between Audrey and the emotion.

Examples of the voice of **detachment** signalling restraint when Audrey expressed emotion:

"**I was quite happy because I kind of got a bit emotional that he wouldn't be there.**"

"**It made you worry a bit… you kind of worried for him**"

Gilligan (2015) suggested that a change from the first to second person can indicate times when a person is reluctant to take ownership of a statement and I wondered whether this detachment was suggestive of Audrey being uncomfortable expressing emotion. When discussing her father's distress after leaving the military, Audrey spoke about having to conceal her own feelings so as not to cause further upset, and I'm curious as to whether this was something she was well practiced at. Interestingly, Audrey talks of feeling "unnatural" during transition because her father felt unnatural and similarly, feeling more "normal" when her father felt more settled in the familiarity of his new role, indicating that her father's emotions play a role in her own. I wonder if there is a similar mirroring

of his 'disconnection' from emotion, and if Audrey takes his lead on what she feels comfortable expressing.

Regarding education, Audrey refers to school and college as being places of stability and continuity for her throughout transition. Whilst she talks about having received some resources funded due to being a service child, Audrey rarely mentions any other form of support. She did recall having spoken to a teacher when she was worried about not having heard from her father whilst he was on deployment, and reported that the teacher had "tried to reassure" her. I wonder if her use of 'tried' suggests that she felt the support was inadequate. I noted that Audrey's voice of detachment could also be heard when she spoke about college, and how she does not mention the military to her peers, and I interpreted this as being a continuation of the earlier pattern of her sense of stability seeming to be reinforced by a sense of disconnection from the Forces.

4.3   Rita's Story: "We don't talk about that".
4.3.1   First Reading: Plot & Researcher Response
Rita is Audrey's older sister, and her narrative tells her story of her father leaving the RAF after 39 years.

Rita's narrative begins with her explaining that her father leaving the military was a "massive change" that she found "so emotional". Rita explained that even into her early 20s she "didn't understand" that her father's work or why he had to go away, and the she felt "frustration" and "resentment" about this. Rita tells of the turning point in her understanding as being when she met some of her father's military colleagues before he retired and being able to "understand the impact" that he had on other people. After this meeting she explained how "it turned from this resentment to this pride".

Rita described the period of transition after her father left the RAF and before he started his current role as a "massive transition for the whole family". She spoke of his "struggle" and being "bored" at home, and how it drove the rest of the family "insane". Rita indicated that she felt she could relate to this as she is similar to her father:

> "I know I'm the same, like, if I sit at home and don't really have much purpose or structure to my day… I really struggle, and then I irritate people. I'm quite like my Dad, so I will wind people up".

Rita's story suggested that she associated her father's sense of struggle with having to find his place in the family, which she compared to their previous experiences of his return from a deployment. Rita likened this to her own experience of returning to the family home after a period of living away. Rita talks about this family readjustment as having an impact on her parents and the "dynamics of their relationship". She described this as a "control battle" and reported them arguing so much that, at one

point, she questioned if they were going to get a divorce. Rita explained that she was "glad" when her father got a job because she didn't know how much longer she "could have coped with it".

As well as a sense of pride in her father, Rita's narrative also expressed her pride in her mother:

"In the same way, I'm proud of my Mum. I think that a lot of the time, it gets overshadowed. It's always about my Dad… Everyone is all really proud. But I think a lot of people forget in order for my Dad to be able to go and do those things, he needs to have a backbone, and that is my Mum."

A central story in Rita's narrative was felt to be that of her experiences with an eating disorder. She explained that she has Anorexia and described herself as having put her parents "through hell". Rita mentioned several times during the narrative that her family "just don't do emotions" – "we don't talk about that" – and questioned whether "maybe if we would have spoken about it then it might have been different." She described her illness as a source of "upset" and "frustration" for her father, because it's a "problem he can't fix". Rita explained that she has now moved back home and is "grateful" for the support of her family and expressed that she would not have had it "any other way":

"I definitely wouldn't have had it any other way. I wouldn't change it. I had a good childhood. I had a lovely childhood. I wouldn't have wanted my Dad to do anything else… I don't know, it's just my Dad. I wouldn't change him for the world."

Researcher Response

My communication with Rita before the interview was sporadic and attempts to try and arrange a phone call with her felt a little chaotic at times. These attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, and the interview was arranged and confirmed via email. Having not had a conversation with Rita left me feeling a little unsettled and apprehensive as to what to expect from the interview.

I noted in my research journal that Rita had had a "frenetic energy" during our meeting, and once I turned on the recorder she spoke for several minutes without any prompting or questioning. Listening back to Rita's narrative I felt as though she had experienced her voice being silenced ("we don't talk about that") and wondered whether she appreciated the opportunity to talk and be listened to without any agenda other for her story to be heard.

Analysis of Rita's narrative posed a challenge for me. I experienced her story as being "so emotional" (to borrow her words) and felt exhausted after the interview. I felt a strong sense of responsibility for conveying her story accurately in a way that allowed her voice to be heard. However, Rita's story of feeling frustrated and resentful about deployments, alongside feeling that she would not have had it any other way, seem to represent a complexity of emotion toward the military that I've struggled to articulate in my own life. Similarly, talk of a 'logical' approach and wanting to 'fix' emotional issues

resonated with me from my own experiences. I have connected with this story in a way that has been challenging, and I am wary of the possibility of countertransference. I am grateful for the opportunity to be transparent about these considerations afforded by the Listening Guide.

4.3.2   Second Reading: Rita's I-Poem Voices

Listening to Rita's I-Poem (Appendix 11), I detected four voices. These were the voices of:

| Struggle |
| Understanding |
| Emotion |
| Silence |
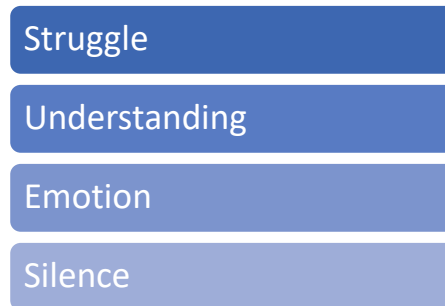
Figure 12: Rita's I-Poem Voices.

Struggle

Rita's voice of *struggle* spoke of the difficulties she described having experienced relating to transition and illness. I also heard this voice when Rita spoke about herself in terms of "problem", which was interpreted as indicating that she may feel that she herself is a source of struggle for her father.

"*I really struggle*

I irritate people.

What's what I've given him, a problem that is difficult"

I also sometimes noted the appearance of this voice when Rita expressed her thoughts regarding her parents' experiences of transition.

"*I think he struggled a bit*

I think him and Mum clashed quite a bit"

Understanding

Rita's voice of *understanding* was heard to speak about both understanding and misunderstanding. I first noted this voice when she spoke about trying to understand her father's job. This voice appeared to indicate her journey, and the process of understanding, that she went through regarding his role.

"*I didn't really get what he did*

I still didn't really understand

I got to the stage where I realised

I understood more."

Silence

Silence was heard to give voice to the Rita's stories of things that had previously remained unsaid. I noted that this voice appeared evident at times in the narrative when Rita spoke about emotions going without expression. This appeared to be an active process, indicated to me by Rita's repeated use of the metaphor of putting emotions and experiences "in a box".

> "*I definitely became "I'm fine"*
>
> "*There's nothing wrong with me", put it in a box".*

Expression

In contrast to the above, *expression* was heard to give voice to Rita's emotions. I noted this voice when Rita spoke about her feelings of pride, frustration, worry, gratitude, and resentment.

> "*I was frustrated at times*
>
> *I was so grateful when he got a job."*

4.3.3   Rita: Summary and Analysis

Rita's narrative was complex and hard to follow at times, as she gave voice to several contradictions and conflicting emotions. For example, she initially described herself as being different from her father in relation to how they manage difficult events:

> "*Don't think about it. Don't talk about it. It's happened, therefore you just move on…. Not just with my Dad, but with other people in the military. It is literally like, something happens, and you just close the box. The box goes in the back of the head and we just don't talk about it. Whereas like, for me… it's like everything kind of connects to form different things."*

However, at the end of the interview, Rita states, *"I like to put it in boxes, which is not very good*." Similarly, Rita expressed seemingly conflicting thoughts regarding her mother, who she described as both controlling and brilliantly organised. To me, this narrative told the story of Rita's struggle to understand herself, and her relationships, in the face of conflicting thoughts and feelings.

> Rita's father's role in the military, and how this impacted on his expression of emotion (heard in the voice of **silence**), seem to be important aspects of her **struggle** to **understand** her relationship with him:
>
> "***I** didn't really get what he did. Even up until my early 20s, I still didn't understand, because he would never come home and talk about work. That was definitely something I struggled with, because I would think 'why is everyone else's parents around?'*"

Following the voices through Rita's story provided me with some more insight into this apparent contradiction and revealed an interplay that tells a story of her struggle to understand, influenced by her voice of silence.

The next time Rita talks about this sense of struggle, her voice of expression can be heard.

An example of Rita's voices of **understanding**, **struggle** and **expression**:

"I didn't get it, I didn't understand. I got frustrated and when my Dad was away I used to get bullied."

I noted the disharmony between Rita's voices of silence and expression, and how this seemed to be a source of confusion for her. For example, Rita's contradictory talk of putting things in boxes voiced a real sense of conflict for me, as though she is battling herself as to what is healthy for her in regard to expressing emotion. I noted a pattern in Rita's use of "we" and constructed a secondary 'we poem' from her narrative (Appendix 12). Rita's repeated use of the refrain "we just don't talk about it" indicated to me the extent to which Rita feels the suppression of emotion to be a part of the family story. Rita appeared herself to wonder aloud during the interview as to how much of a part this played in her illness.

"I feel like maybe if we would have spoken about it, then it might have been different."

Rita's talk of her relationship with her father also revealed times when she relates to him, "I irritate people. I'm quite like my Dad", and times when she felt difference. I wonder if recent experiences of transition have prompted Rita to try and make sense of what appears to be quite a complicated relationship with her father. I was curious as to her references to herself as a "problem that can't be fixed", but also how she talks of the support she receives from the family.

Rita's father leaving the military and feeling unsettled is conveyed by Rita as having been quite difficult for the whole family, but she notes that now he has returned to a sense of normality, things have improved. Rita talked about her father being able to support her now that his role has changed, and I wondered if she is still making sense of his not being able to be there previously.

4.4 Sophia's Story: "With the Army, everyone sticks together".

4.4.1 First Reading: Plot & Researcher Response

Sophia was 22 when we spoke. Her father had served in the Army for 23 years, until he left when she was "in Year 7". Sophia's father was then out of the military until she was "finishing Year 11", when he re-joined the Army as a Reservist.

At the point in time they left the military, Sophia and her family – made up of her parents and younger sister – were living on an Army camp, where Sophia's mother taught in the primary school. The family

moved from their Army accommodation into a rented property "in town", which is something Sophia described as one of the biggest changes of their transition. Several times throughout the interviews she reflected fondly on the "close-knit community" within the "bubble" of camp, which made her feel safe.

"On camp, it's such a close-knit community, everybody is in the same boat. You'd know your neighbours so well because you'd always be in and out of everyone's houses all the time. And I loved that. I'm so glad I had a childhood that was like that."

"I think it was quite hard… You've gone from, you can go out at whatever time… you don't feel vulnerable and you don't feel like anybody could approach you or anything like that… you come into town and, I mean, our town is really lovely, but you had a little bit more restrictions… I'd be a bit more scared of going to certain places. I think it was quite hard, moving from there."

Sophia's father left the military at the same time as she was due to transition to secondary school. She described these simultaneous changes as "big steps" that were "probably really scary". However, Sophia explained that, as an "Army kid", she was used to change and adjustment.

"It was obviously a really big change because it was me leaving school, leaving my little Army school, close knit community… It was quite a big thing, but I don't remember it being too much…

Because, I just… you just do that as an Army kid. You just adjust to it."

Initially after leaving the Forces, Sophia's father went to work in America for 18 months, which she described as being "weird" but "exciting". After returning to the UK and working away in another city for a period, Sophia's father was "screwed over" by his business partner and was left without employment. He returned to live in the family home full-time, and Sophia described this as a time of "struggle" for her parents. Sophia indicated that her family had to adjust to a new dynamic, as well as managing financial concerns.

"So, for my Mum, to have him only being in the house like, two days a week basically, or not even being in the house for 18 months, for him to just come home… was probably quite hard."

Sophia talked about the impact of unemployment on her father as being particularly negative as he was "not a person to sit around and do nothing". She described him as "100% lost" during this period.

"Because he was bored… he was just stressing himself out and, he was just trying to find anything, and I know he couldn't stay in the house by himself. The day after he lost his job, my Mum found him walking up the road and… my Dad doesn't walk. He's had a knee replacement,

he can't walk anywhere. She just found him wandering up the road because he didn't know what to do."

During this period, he was "so down because he didn't have a job, and everything was just crumbling", which Sophia described as having been "horrible to see". It was also during this period that Sophia became aware that her father suffered from some symptoms of PTSD.

"It was like PTSD kind of, kind of came into it a bit. It wasn't until when he lost his job, when we lived in town… it wasn't until that that I ever knew he ever suffered from anything like that."

"That was the only time I'd ever really seen or heard about that… so it was quite scary. The fact that he was like that."

Sophia also spoke about how this period of "stress" was "tricky" for her mum, who "struggled" with "hating not being on camp" as that was "all she'd known".

"I think she became quite… probably a little bit resentful towards him, because he didn't have a job and, I know that she really struggled when he got out of the Army and always said 'You should never have got out of the Army'. That's how she looked at it."

Sophia indicated that she grew quite close to her father during this period, as she spent a lot of time with him. She described him as her "best friend" and spoke about how he confided in her about her mum's feelings of resentment.

"Dad got affected by that and he would tell me about it, because, at that time he hadn't got any friends around him... because he worked away all the time. So, he kind of turned to me and would open up to me about it. Which, I appreciated, but it was also kind of hard."

Her father's decision to re-join the Army as a Reservist seems to have been something of a relief for the family as it was "what they knew". However, Sophia described her experiences of her father re-joining the Forces as something which she "struggled with" after having grown close to him over the summer. She spoke about this as an "emotional" time and expressed that she felt both pride and sadness.

"I really struggled when he went back into the Army, because I'd spent so much time with him. I was really emotional when he went back in."

"I felt really proud that he was getting back in, but I was really sad because it was like 'Oh, you're going away again'."

Sophia also reflected on her experiences as an "Army kid" throughout the interviews, and what this meant for her when her father came out of the military. She spoke about being in a school with a mixture of Army and civilian children, and what she noticed about herself during this period.

"I think it became more clear, that I was an Army kid, and how different I was to other kids… I didn't stop identifying as an Army kid almost, but I felt it showed a lot more, because of how I dealt with friendships."

This is something that Sophia described having continued to notice throughout her adult life.

"Even now, I will speak to people and… I'll be like 'Why do I feel like I'm getting on with them so well? I don't understand it' and then they'll mention, 'Oh yeah, my Dad used to be in the Army'… I don't understand how it… It just kind of works. They're just so different…"

Expanding on her thoughts of life in the Army, Sophia recalls it having been "really good" and explained that she felt her family have a closeness as a family unit as a result. She stated that she would not have had it "any different".

"I think it's just brought us closer together because then when my Dad was home, he'd make a big effort with us… I think my parents did such a lot with us. I always remember doing a lot as a family… I don't feel like I missed out, I feel like I gained more than others."

Researcher Response

Sophia's two interviews took place after lockdown and so were arranged and conducted by telephone, without my ever having met Sophia. I recorded in my research journal that I was feeling quite apprehensive, not knowing what this might mean for the building of rapport.

I felt grateful that I found Sophia to be very warm, and that she seemed keen to engage with the research. I do wonder, however, if in the absence of body language, I was a little more directive that I would have otherwise been because of my own anxiety. Whereas in person I may have felt more comfortable to hold the silence, I wonder if perhaps I was too quick to prompt Sophia. I also wonder what this was like for Sophia, telling her story to someone she had not met.

Listening to Sophia's narrative during analysis, I have found myself once again reflecting on my status as a researcher. In my journal, I recorded that Sophia seemed responsive to the approach of respecting her as an expert in her own story, and that she seemed comfortable to talk to me. Listening again, I hear times when it feels as though she almost shuts down her narrative. Unlike the RAF, Sophia's story of Army life is one I am less familiar with, and I felt to be more of an 'outsider' in this interview. Sophia talked about civilians being untrustworthy, and I am curious how she saw me, and whether she felt I could be trusted.

4.4.2   Second Reading: Sophia's I-Poem Voices

Listening to Sophia's I-poem (Appendix 13), I identified five voices of:

The 'Army kid'
Struggle
Connection
Difference
Adulthood
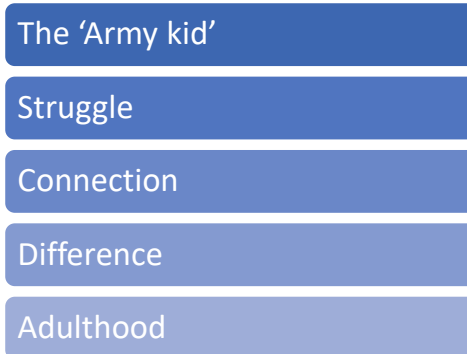
Figure 13: Sophia's I-Poem voices.

The Voice Of The Army Kid

The voice of the *Army kid* appeared to be one of the most dominant in Sophia's narrative. I heard this voice to be strong and powerful, it spoke of being independent and adventurous and conveyed to me a sense of bravery and adaptability in Sophia's narrative:

> *"I've moved around every three years*
>
> *I think, you just adapt*
>
> *I feel like because I was an Army kid*
>
> *Adjusting to something like that just wasn't too much for me".*

Struggle

Sophia's voice of *struggle* sounded to me to be a vulnerable voice, that could be heard when she spoke of potentially difficult emotions and experiences. I particularly noticed this voice when Sophia appeared to be conveying a sense of loss, in relation to her relationship with her father or the community on the camp:

> *"I spent a lot of time with him*
>
> *I really struggled when he went back into the Army"*

As well as speaking to her direct sense of struggle, I also heard this voice when Sophia described her parents' experiences of difficulty:

> *"I think for my Dad, that's where he really struggled with it."*
>
> *"I think my Mum found it hardest."*

Connection

Sophia's voice of *connection* indicated to me points in her narrative when she spoke about her closeness to others, and this appeared to convey a sense of belonging. I noted this voice when Sophia spoke about her close bonds with her family, and her relationship with the wider Army community:

"You are such… it's such a close-knit community"

"You'd know your neighbours so well

You'd always be in and out of houses

I loved that"

"I just had my Mum and Dad and my sister at some points

You become so, so close

Me and my sister growing up

She's my best friend."

Difference

In contrast, Sophia's voice of *difference* appeared to me to convey a sense of disconnection from those around her. I detected this voice when Sophia spoke about those who were not from the military community. This voice appeared to emphasise a sense of division between Army kids and non-Army kids:

"I think it became more clear, that I was an Army kid

How different I was to other kids."

"That's one thing, when I went up to the Highschool

I found really weird, was how people had grown up together and had been best friends all that time

That was weird to me."

I also heard this voice when Sophia spoke of her adult experiences of "the civvy world":

"I've just known that people are very different".

This voice also appeared to indicate times when Sophia experienced change, where I noted that she tended to compare her experiences after transition with those of her life living in the military community:

"You had a little bit more restriction

You couldn't go out until this time at night

I'd be a bit more scared of going to certain places."

Adulthood

Sophia's voice of *adulthood* brought her narrative into the present, and I heard it when she spoke about her experiences as an adult. Occasionally, this voice could be heard to reflect on how her childhood has influenced her adult life, and at other times these links were not made explicit:

"I'm quite a home bird now

I just want to find a house and settle down for a long time now".

"I'm quite independent

I don't need people"

Sophia's voice of adulthood also seemed, at times, to convey a sense of confusion and a difficulty recollecting the events of her childhood:

"I can't remember

How old was I?"

"I'm pretty sure he went to work in America first

I'm pretty sure it was America

I think it was (English city) first

Then he went over to America".

4.4.3 Sophia: Summary and Analysis

Sophia's narrative tells the story of her experiences of her father leaving the Army and taking up employment away from home, before losing his job and eventually returning to the Army as a Reservist. During transition, Sophia experienced several changes simultaneously, and her stories seem to convey that she had mixed feelings about these events. At times, she indicated a sense of excitement and opportunity, at others she expressed a sense of struggle and difficulty. Reading Sophia's narrative for contrapuntal voices suggested that she tended to reframe any potentially difficult experiences in a more positive light.

Following the interplay between her different voices suggested a pattern of her telling a story using the voices of **struggle** and **difference**, which is then reframed by the voice of the **Army kid**, often in conjunction with the voice of connection. For example, Sophia first tells the story of moving off camp in the voice of difference, before the voice of the Army kid interjects:

"*It was obviously a really big change because it was me leaving school, leaving my little Army school, close knit community, my Mum being at the same school… my Mum has always taught at the same school that I've been at, and then, my Dad also going to live and work in a different country. It was quite a big thing, but I don't remember it being too much. I remember it being, it was probably really scary for me, because everything was happening at the same time, but I think I just adjusted really well.*"

Sophia then told the same story, reframed by the voices of the **Army kid** and **connection**:

"*Yeah, so it wasn't too much of a big change. The only change was just us moving to a different school and living in a different house, but I still had all my friends there, which was good*".

Whilst this reframing of events gave an impression of a degree of strength and adaptability, it also seemed to interrupt and curtail Sophia's expressions of difficulty (below). Sophia explained in her narrative that she takes after her father, who she described as being a very positive person, and I wonder to what extent this has influenced her tendency to adapt the telling of a story.

When Sophia spoke about the period when her father lost his job, she used the voices of **struggle** and the **Army kid** to describe it as:

"*Difficult. I think it was… because, it wasn't on good terms, like him coming home and not having a job. The whole dynamic changed a lot, because it was just like, he's home and no-one… It was difficult, but it wasn't as bad as… I think it was quite nice. I really enjoyed it, because he was at home a lot more.*"

To me, Sophia's narrative conveys a strong sense of connection to the military and with an identity as an "Army kid". Sophia seemed to speak with pride about the association and how she connects with other Army kids with ease, even in adulthood. Her talk of the community on camp, and of her common ground with other Army families, combined to indicate to me a sense of belonging within the Army community. This impression was reinforced by Sophia's suggestion that Army families will support one another, but civilians are 'only out for themselves'. She explained that in her experience, when people leave the military, they do not necessarily consider how different life will be on "civvy street". At times, listening to Sophia's narrative, it sounded as though this assertion of difference served to reinforce her sense of belonging within the Army community.

However, Sophia herself seemed much less certain about this sense of identity. Listening for Sophia's adult voice in her interviews revealed indications of uncertainty and contradiction. At times, it felt as though Sophia was just beginning to make sense of her experiences as she was talking, and I wondered to what extent she has explored them previously.

Sophia's voices of **difference** and **connection** indicated that her sense of belonging with other Army children often appeared to be reinforced by their shared sense of difference from non-Army children:

"I will speak to people and... I'll be like 'Why do I feel like I'm getting on with them so well? I don't understand it' and then they'll mention 'Oh yeah, my Dad used to be in the Army' and I'll be like 'So you're an Army kid!' I don't understand it... They're just so different. I don't know how they're so different, but they just are."

Although Sophia's reframing of events gave her narrative a seemingly upbeat tone, she did also describe a period of struggle when her father was unemployed. I identified her closeness to her family as a central theme in Sophia's narrative, and this period of struggle and readjustment appears to have caused her some distress. The metaphor of her father's life "crumbling" was particularly striking. Sophia once again conveyed mixed emotions in this regard, talking about feeling sad and emotional, but also proud and happy. Sophia's happiness was described as having stemmed from her father returning to his usual self, which she seems to have had to reconcile with her own feelings of loss.

Sophia talked very little about her experiences of school during her interview. However, she did note that this was the time she began to notice that she was 'different' to the non-military children, and I wonder if having to reconcile this with having recently left the Army community was a source of the apparent uncertainty she reframed into opportunity.

4.5　Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of Phase 1 of the research, which consisted of narrative interviews with young adults who are the children of veterans. These were analysed according to the four stages of the Listening Guide. To preserve the individual nature of these narratives, they have been presented separately. A consideration of the overarching themes identified within and between these narratives will be presented in the discussion. The next chapter will detail the findings from Phases 2 and 3 of the research.

Chapter 5: Findings of Phases 2 and 3

5.0   Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of phases 2 and 3 of the research, intended to answer RQs 2 and contribute to the answering of RQ3. These phases consisted of an online survey completed by a sample of EPs, and a focus group with 5 EPs and 1 TEP.

5.1   Phase 2: Online Survey

Phase 2 of the research consisted of an online survey, distributed to a sample of the EP population. This survey was designed to gather information on EPs' perceived levels of confidence relating to CoV (Appendix 6). The survey was completed by 62 respondents, and the demographic information of this sample is detailed in Section 3.5.3 of this report. Answers to closed survey questions were analysed using simple, descriptive statistics. Findings from an open question will be presented in the form of a Word Cloud, as described in Section 3.5.4.

5.1.1   Experience of Practice with CoV

To obtain an overview of respondents' professional experiences with CoV, survey questions were included to ascertain if a respondent had had previous involvement with CoV, and if so, if they were made aware that the child had a veteran parent prior to their involvement.
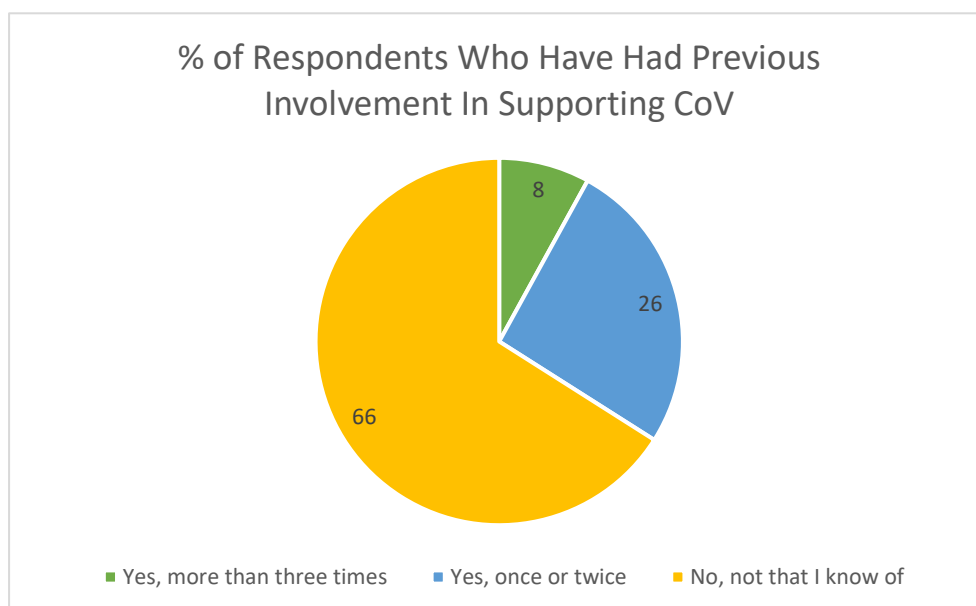
Figure 14: No. of respondents who have been involved in supporting CoV.

Most respondents (66%, n = 41) reported having had no previous involvement, to their knowledge, of supporting a CoV.

Of the respondents who did report having had previous experience of working with this group, most (53%) reported that they became aware that the child was a CoV during their involvement. Of those

that were informed that the child was a CoV before their involvement, 24% reported having been made aware by school staff, and 19% were informed by the family. 1 respondent reported having worked on a specialist Armed Forces project, whose criteria for involvement was that the child was an armed forces child or a veteran's child eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

5.1.2   Knowledge of Monitoring of CoV

A survey item was included to obtain an indication as to EPs' knowledge of current practices around the monitoring of CoV in the educational settings in which they worked. Most respondents (84%, n = 52) indicated that they were unaware of any monitoring of CoVs in the schools in their area, whereas 5% (n = 3) of respondents indicated that schools in their area consistently recorded this information.
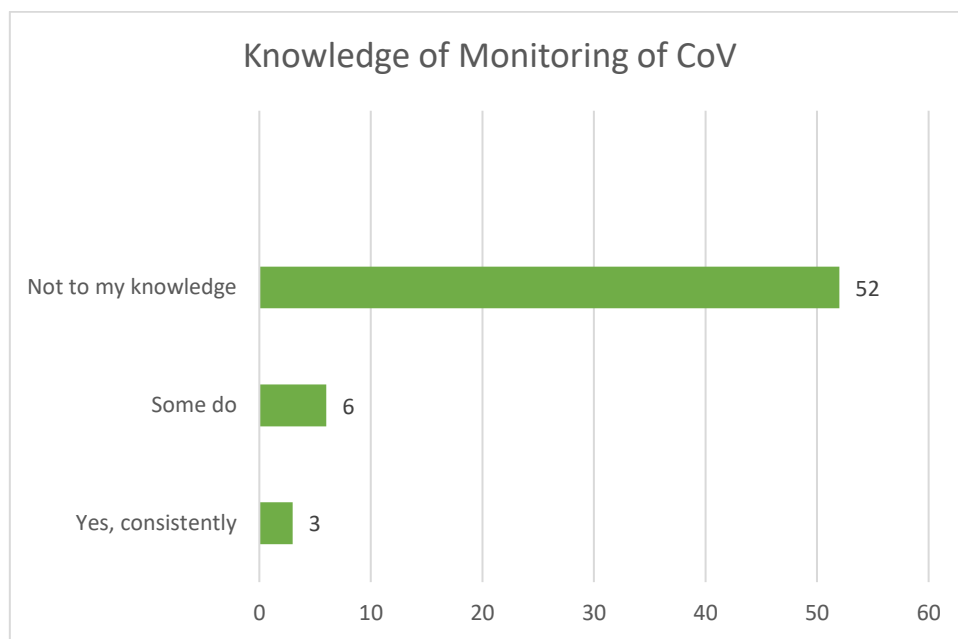
Figure 15: Knowledge of Monitoring of CoV.

5.1.3   Perceived Confidence in Knowledge of CoV

To gauge respondents' current perceived levels of confidence regarding their knowledge of CoV, a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all confident) to 10 (very confident) was used. For context, participants were asked the same question regarding children who had a parent currently serving in the Armed Forces.

79% (n = 49) of respondents reported having a low perceived level of confidence (indicated by a score of 5 or below on the scale) in relation to CoV, and 66% (n = 41) of respondents indicated they have a low perceived level of confidence in relation to MCC. The results suggest that there are overall low levels of perceived confidence for both groups of children, but that respondents felt they knew less about the experiences and needs of CoV.

Perceived Confidence in Knowledge of Children of Veterans and Children of Serving Personnel
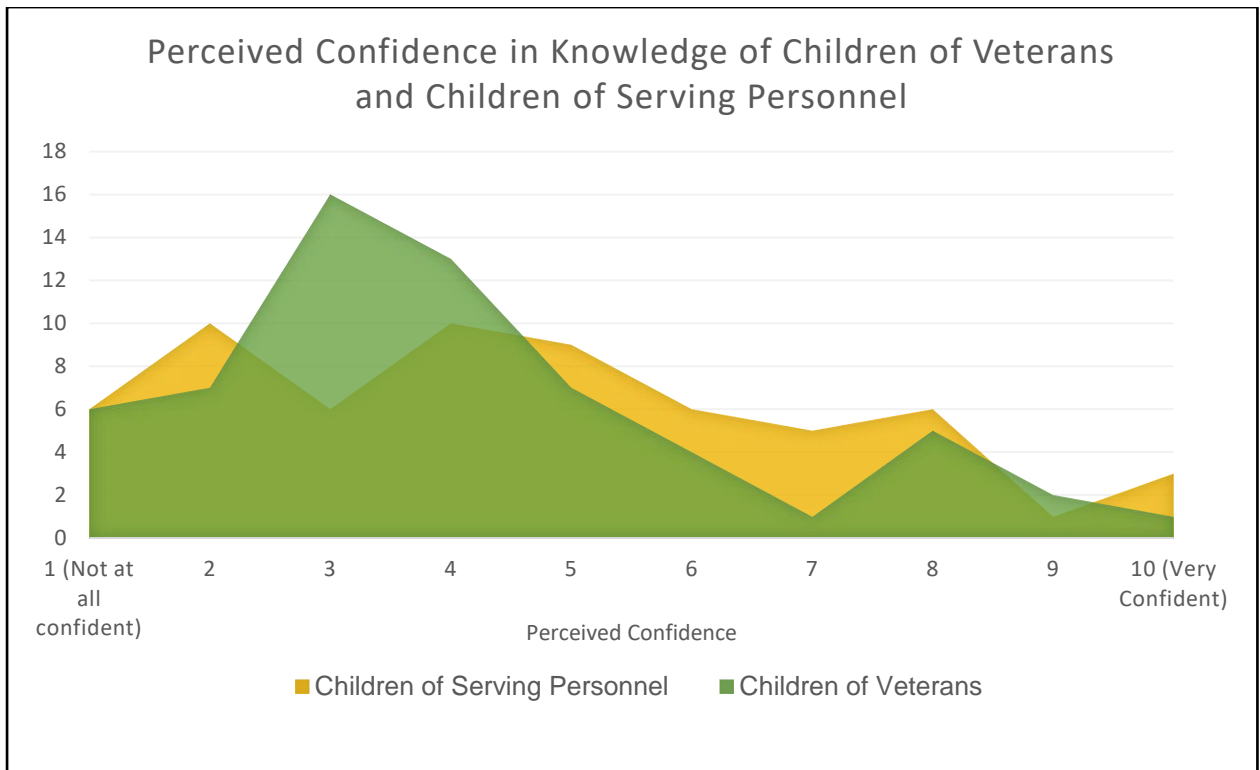
Figure 16: Perceived levels of confidence of survey respondents.

When asked about the source of their knowledge regarding the experiences and needs of CoV, only 16% of responses indicated that knowledge came from training.

Where Did EPs' Knowledge Of CoV Come From?
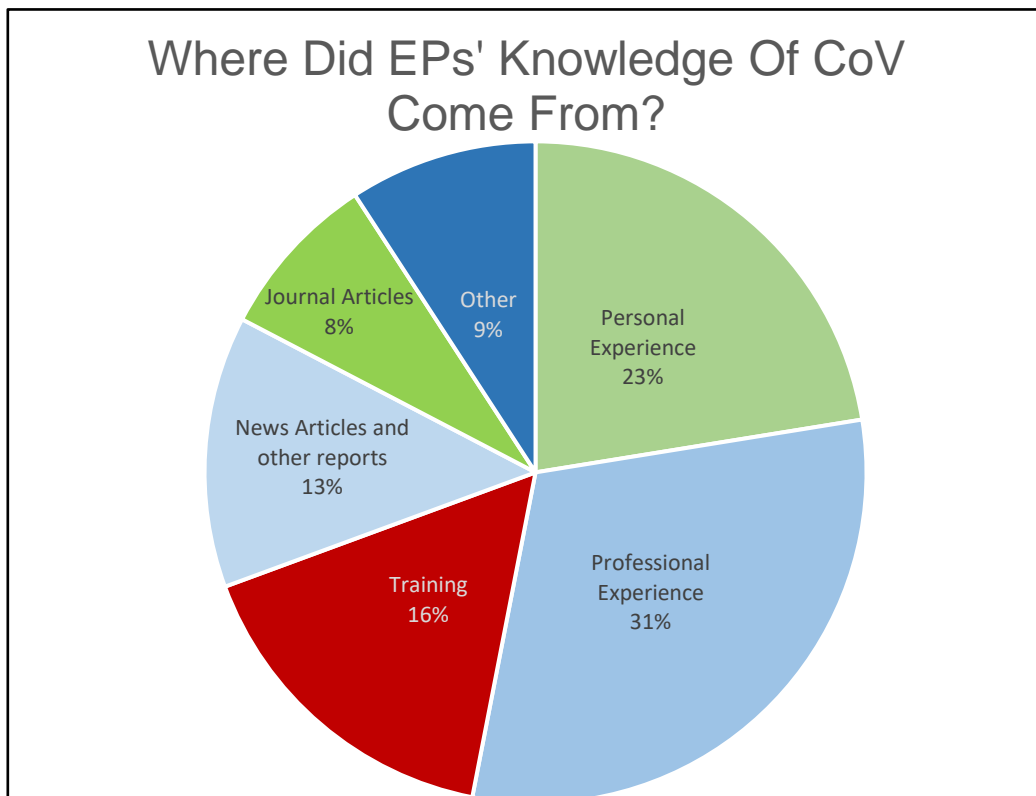
Figure 17: Sources of survey respondents' knowledge.

Other sources of knowledge included research experiences with military families, previous job roles and contact with other professionals working with veterans.

Of those respondents who reported their perceived confidence levels to be above 5 in regards to CoV (n = 13), all but one indicated that they had either personal or professional experience with this group of children.

A follow up question regarding the needs of CoV indicated that 52% (n = 32) of respondents felt their knowledge was not sufficient to answer as to whether they believed the needs of CoV to be distinct from those whose parents are currently serving. Of the remaining respondents, 43% (n = 27) reported that they felt the needs of CoV were distinct from those of MCC, and 5% (n = 3) felt that they were not.
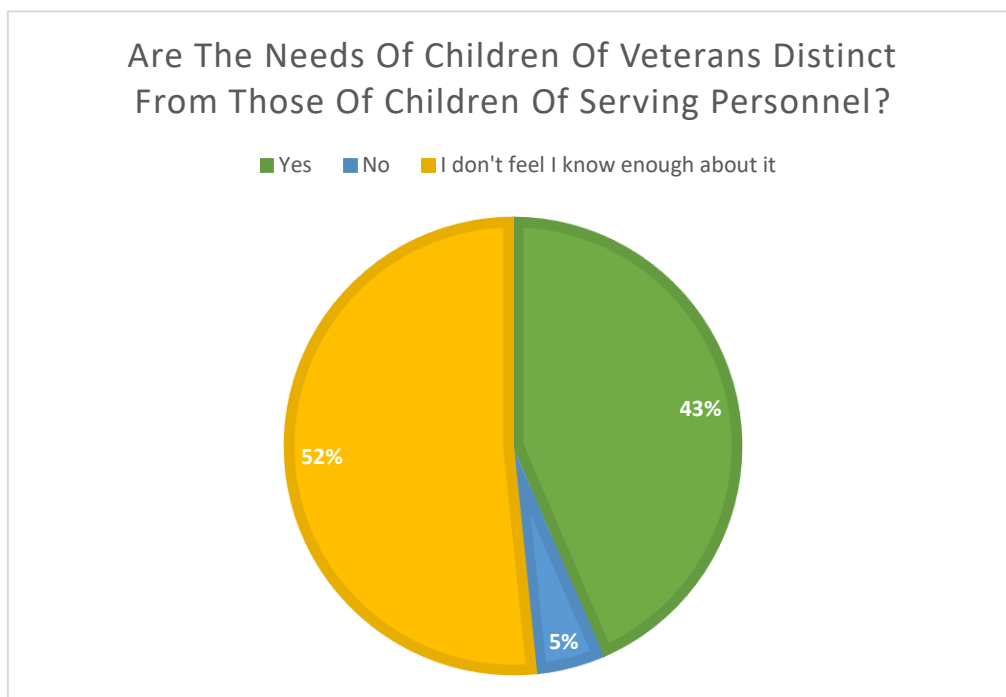
Figure 18: Survey respondents' views on distinctiveness of the needs of CoV from MCC.

5.1.4 Suggestions for Improving Confidence

An open-ended question was included, asking respondents to state what, if anything, they felt would help to increase their confidence relating to CoV. The responses were analysed by means of a Word Cloud.

Figure 19: Survey response word cloud.

The most common theme amongst the responses was a desire for further training on the matter. Other key themes related to hearing the views of children, experience, research, information and understanding.

For example, one participant wrote:

"*Any input about how the needs of these children differ from other children. It would be really interesting to hear children and young people's views about their experiences of having a parent who is a veteran*".

A final question of the survey allowed participants to add any additional comments, and many expressed an interest in the topic and indicated that they had already begun to form some hypotheses as to the experiences of CoV.

"*I wonder if there might be some distinct needs for this population i.e. parent being around more where previously they were away a lot, potential PTSD of parent and how this might impact on the child, no longer belonging to the military community, change of employment or unemployment for the parent and how this might affect family finances etc.*"

5.1.5   Phase 2: Summary

Phase 2 of the research consisted of an online survey designed to provide an indication of EPs' current attitudes regarding CoV and focused on their perceived levels of confidence relating to professional practice with this group. Many respondents reported experiencing low levels of confidence (as indicated by a score of 5 or below on a scale of 1-10) in relation to both CoV and MCC., but more participants reported having a lower perceived confidence level in their knowledge of the needs of

CoV. Most (66%) of respondents reported not having had professional experience of working with CoV, to their knowledge. Only 16% of responses indicated that at least some of knowledge of this group came from training and a desire for further training was a key theme in the responses to an open question about what would improve participants' confidence in their knowledge of the experiences of CoV.

5.2 Phase 3: Focus Group

Phase 3 of the research consisted of a focus group with 5 EPs, and 1 TEP, who were employed within an EPS in the South West of England. For the purposes of this report, each member of the focus group has been allocated a pseudonym. This phase of the research was designed to add to the information obtained during the survey and allow for a more thorough exploration of EPs' perceived confidence relating to CoV and how they feel practice may be developed in this area. The findings from this phase will further contribute to the answering of RQs 2 & 3 within the Discussion chapter.

The focus group data was analysed using thematic analysis, according to the guidelines proposed by Braun & Clarke, (2006) as outlined in section 3.7.3 of this report. Within the focus group data, two interconnected, overarching themes were identified. These were 'Uncertainty' and 'Competence'. Both themes had two additional subthemes. These will each be discussed in turn in the remainder of the chapter.

5.2.1 Theme of Uncertainty

The first theme identified was one of 'Uncertainty', with two sub-themes of 'Uncertainty about knowledge of CoV', and 'Uncertainty about practice relating to CoV'.
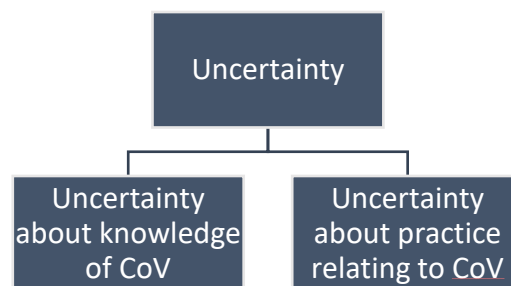
Figure 20: Theme of Uncertainty.

Uncertainty about knowledge of CoV

Comments identified as denoting participants' uncertainty about their knowledge of CoV were noted throughout the focus group. At the beginning of the discussion, a perceived lack of knowledge was explicitly referred to by all participants. When invited to talk about any familiarity they might have with the topic, all EPs reported having limited or no knowledge about CoV:

"Aaron: I've had no experience, as far as I know, within that area at all. So, it's all new to me."

As well as these direct comments pertaining to this theme, it was felt that a degree of uncertainty was also indicated in the way participants spoke tentatively and appeared to question themselves. For example, this lack of certainty appeared to extend to their own professional experiences as they questioned how they might know if they had worked with CoV in the past. Although some of the EPs had professional or personal experience of MCC, only one – Jade – had direct experience of working with CoV. When talking about this experience, Jade expressed her uncertainty about her knowledge of CoV by questioning how she could have explored this further with her limited understanding:

"Jade: How can I talk to them about something my knowledge is so limited about?"

A second participant echoed this sentiment by indicating that her lack of knowledge of veterans and CoV made her worry about using the incorrect terminology:

"Niamh: I'd be worrying that I was using the wrong terminology… I don't know if there is any offensive terminology about it, because I wouldn't know if it was."

When participants were able to draw on knowledge from the media or previous reading, participants still expressed a degree of uncertainty:

"Rebecca: I don't know, I don't think I know very much about it, but thinking about what you hear in the media and so on. Certainly, there are sometimes, there are things in the media where they're talking about veterans who are homeless, who can't get access to support…."

Uncertainty About Practice

The second subtheme was concerned with uncertainty regarding best practice with CoV. This subtheme was heavily influenced by Jade, who questioned herself regarding her experience of working with CoV and whether she could have gone about this differently.

Jade: "Maybe I should have been more questioning, but it just felt at the time that questioning that would have been quite intrusive".

Jade linked this feeling of uncertainty of how best to approach information gathering with CoV to concerns about a perceived lack of knowledge impairing her ability to talk about this effectively.

Jade: "I don't have any experience, so me trying to have a chat about that probably would have been inappropriate and I would have bodged it properly"

This sentiment appeared to be echoed by a second EP, Liam, who expressed concerns about "making assumptions" about children of military personnel.

Liam: "I don't know if there's a danger in making an assumption that all children of military personnel need some kind of special… because many of them will be resilient… It's that kind of… I'm just wondering how it would fit in"

5.2.2 Theme of Competence

The second theme was one of 'Competence', which incorporated two subthemes of 'use of existing knowledge to hypothesise' and 'confidence in the role of the EP'.
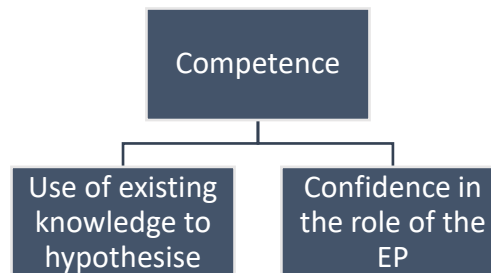
Figure 21: Theme of Competence.

Use of Existing Knowledge to Hypothesise

Despite a perceived lack of knowledge regarding the experiences of CoV, when prompted, the group were able to draw on media reports and their knowledge of other groups of children who may have shared characteristics with CoV, as well as their understanding of psychological theory. Through the course of the discussion, EPs appeared to draw together their knowledge to form some working hypotheses as to what CoV may experience and how theory could help to make sense of the possible impact of those experiences.

Dave: "I've done some statutory work with a young person who, not due to the military, but who had moved around a lot and had a lot of homes… I'm wondering if that is replicated in some young people who move about and how that changes after, when they do get a stable place, does that impact on them as well?"

Rebecca: "I guess that sense of belonging, maybe"

Lisa: "I suppose any of the psychology around identity development and cultural identity. So, thinking about some of the psychological research around refugees or asylum-seeking children who move from one culture to another".

Confidence in the Role of the EP

The second subtheme related to participants' comments about the possible role of EPs regarding CoV, which suggested a degree of confidence in what this may be. EPs were able to identify ways in which they could possibly work with this group of children to promote awareness in schools, and during consultations with families.

Liam: "Producing some kind of guidance for settings around potential settings... some additional support maybe whilst that child is there. That kind of thing is something that I think might be quite useful on a wider scale than just individual casework."

Niamh: "Just having it a bit more in your mind. To ask the question, think about what the impact of that might be, might be helpful".

5.2.3   Phase 3 Summary

Phase 3 of the research consisted of a focus group with EPs from one Local Authority. Two overarching themes were identified from this discussion. The first theme was that of 'Uncertainty', which included subthemes of 'Uncertainty about knowledge of CoV', and 'Uncertainty about Practice relating to CoV'. This theme was seemingly linked to a lack of experience working with CoV and appeared to indicate a lack of confidence as to how to explore or incorporate CoV status into EP practice. Conversely, the second theme was that of 'Competence', which included subthemes of 'Use of knowledge to hypothesise' and 'Confidence in the role of the EP'. Despite having expressed a perceived lack of awareness as to how to go about considering the implications of a child having a veteran parent, during the course of the discussion the EPs demonstrated a willingness to draw on their knowledge of existing theory and children who may have experienced similar circumstances, and apply this to making sense of how CoV may experience their lives. Participants also discussed the possible role that EPs could have in relation to CoV and suggested several ways in which EPs may work to explore CoV status during consultation and offer guidance to school settings.

5.3   Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the findings from Phases 2 and 3 of the research – namely the online survey and the focus group. These phases were designed to contribute to the answering of RQs 2 and 3, regarding current attitudes and practices within the EP community and how, if at all, these might be developed regarding CoV. The implications of these findings, alongside those of Phase 1, will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.0 Introduction

The current study was designed with the intention of meeting two research aims. The first of these was the primary aim of eliciting the voices of CoV directly, and the secondary aim was one of considering how EP practice might be developed in relation to CoV. As such, three research phases were employed to contribute to the answering of three research questions. In this chapter, I will draw together the findings from each of the different phases and discuss them in light of those three research questions, as well as the existing literature on the topic and relevant psychological theory, drawn from Chapter 3.

Firstly, I will consider the findings from phase 1, the Narrative Inquiry, and what this has revealed about how CoV experience and understand their lives. Secondly, I will draw together the findings from phases 2 and 3 – the online survey and the focus group – to determine what these indicate about current attitudes and practice of EPs in relation to their knowledge of CoV. Then, to address the third research question, the implications of all three research phases will be considered together in regard to what they may mean for future EP practice in this area.

> RQ1: How do CoV experience and understand their lives?
>
> Phase 1: Narrative Inquiry

> RQ2: What are EPs' and TEPs' current attidues and experiences of working with CoV?
>
> Phases 2&3: Survey & Focus Group

> RQ3:In what ways, if any, can EPs and TEPs develop their practice in relation to CoV?
>
> Phases 1,2 & 3
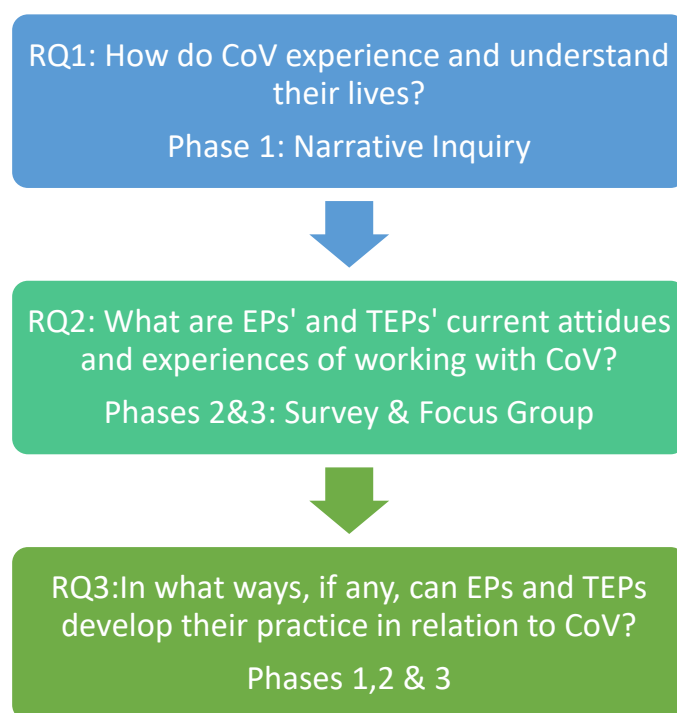
Figure 22: Overview of the Chapter.

6.1 RQ1: How Do CoV Experience and Understand Their Lives?

RQ1 was concerned with the experiences of CoV and was linked to the primary research aim of eliciting their voices directly, in order to capture their narratives. This was influenced by the findings of a review of the literature, which indicated that views of CoV are rarely represented in the research. As such, RQ1 was addressed through unstructured, narrative interviews during which participants were invited

to tell the stories of the experiences they wished to convey. I will now present a summary of the key findings of phase 1 of the research, before considering them in greater depth.

6.1.1   Summary of Findings Relating to RQ1

The participants' narratives have thus far been presented separately, so as to preserve the individual nature of their stories. Indeed, a key finding of Phase 1 related to those individual differences of experience and understanding conveyed by participants' narratives. These narratives were found to be unique, complicated, and sometimes contradictory of themselves, indicating the complex ways in which CoV experience and understand their lives. Despite how different the narratives were, considering them collectively and noting the points at which they overlap or diverge from one another revealed some notable areas of interest across the lives of the participants.

In particular, the period of transition appeared to be central to the narratives of all the participants. Even though they experienced this process at different times in their lives, and in different familial and societal contexts, all of the participants told stories of transition that conveyed a sense of disruption and change, both at an individual level and within the family context.

Secondly, stories regarding stoicism and indications of the suppression of negative emotions were noted in all the narratives. Participants often spoke about this in relation to their fathers, and the wider military context.

These two themes of transition as a disruptive process, and stoicism and the suppression of emotions, will now be considered in turn and discussed in the context of the literature and relevant psychological theory highlighted in Chapter 3.

6.1.2   Transition as A Disruptive Process

Transition can be described as the "period of reintegration into civilian life from the military" (Cooper et al., 2018, p. 157). The existing literature on the experiences of veterans has often focused on this period of transition due to its potential to involve significant changes, both in terms of practical elements, such as housing and employment, and shifts in culture and identity (Heaver et al., 2018). More recently, researchers in the field have begun to question the possible impact of transition on family members (e.g. Keeling et al., 2019), but no research specifically addressing how CoV experience this process was found during the literature review.

The findings of the current study suggest that CoV can also experience the disruption of transition, both directly, due to relocation, and indirectly through their relationships within the family. This latter point, regarding the experience of transition at a family level, was perhaps one of the most consistent across the narratives.

6.1.2.1 Family Experiences of Transition

The importance of the family context was felt to be a key finding of the current study, as each of the narratives included stories relating to familial relationships. These stories conveyed that participants' experiences of both military life and transition were largely shared and made sense of within the family unit. It is important to note that participants talked warmly about their relationships with family members, speaking of them as sources of strength and support. Nonetheless, participants also described a sense of tension arising from within the family system. The relationship with the veteran parent seemed to be particularly important in this regard. Audrey, Rita, and Sophia all told stories of their fathers struggling with aspects of transition, and of subsequently feeling anxious or worried about their fathers' wellbeing.

This finding is perhaps unsurprising given the prevalence of the family unit as a factor in existing literature on the experiences of MCC (e.g. Easterbrooks et al., 2013; White et al., 2011). Service families have been described as facing a 'unique constellation' of factors (Palmer, 2008), which they encounter together. Research on deployment, in particular, has highlighted the impact that it can have on family members and the relationship between them. Palmer (2008) put forward the suggestion that MCC were not necessarily directly affected by a parents' deployment, but rather that they were indirectly impacted through alterations in their relationships with both parents (assuming it is not a single-parent family).

Palmer's pathway is in line with the principles of family systems theory (FST), which holds that the experiences of family members are interconnected (Gilbertson & Graves, 2018). As such, "the behaviour of individual family members is best understood in the context of the family system as a whole" (Paley et al., 2013, p. 246). In this way, FST posits that when one family member is experiencing stressors, other family members will also be affected (Paley et al. 2013). Research on veterans has highlighted that the period of transition has the potential to pose significant challenges for them and, as such, in accordance with FST it has been theorised by some that CoV may also experience a degree of distress (O'Neill, 2017). However, the literature review indicated that no research specifically focused on the experiences of CoV regarding transition has been conducted to date.

Findings from the current study suggest that Palmer's (2018) pathway may also be applicable to some CoV who may indirectly experience the stressors associated with transition, through their relationships with their parents. Similar to the existing literature, participants described their fathers' sense of loss of purpose associated with moving from a highly regimented military environment to a comparatively unstructured period of unemployment, which impacted on the wider family system. Paley et al.'s (2013) account of FST in relation to service families suggests that family members will often take action to ameliorate the distress of another within the system, and this was also apparent

within some of the narratives. Several participants indicated a degree of parentification in the way they responded to the disruption. Audrey spoke of having to 'help' her father adjust to the practical realities of civilian life (e.g. with paperwork), Sophia acted as a confidante to her father during difficulties in his relationship with her mother, and Ayla described a similar process in regards to her younger brother, in that she took responsibility for supporting him with difficulties at school and 'shielding' her parents from them. The implications of these ameliorating behaviours on the participants remain unclear, but both Sophia and Ayla indicated that this had sometimes been difficult for them.

Whilst stories of their relationships with their fathers seemed particularly prevalent within the narratives, participants also spoke about the wider family system and told stories that indicated an element of readjustment to the family dynamic. For example, Rita told of a 'power struggle' between her parents as they negotiated household tasks, and Ayla spoke of tension that arose when her father attempted to discipline her brother.

The likelihood of a process of readjustment within the family, and its potential to cause disruption, was indicated within the existing literature on veterans. As Lester & Flake (2013, p. 129) suggested, "the transition from military to civilian life requires changes to roles and routines, and these changes can disrupt family stability." However, research on serving personnel and their families has cast some uncertainty over the nature and extent of any disruption brought about by a change in family dynamics. Military families have been described as 'accordion families', in that this process of readjustment and reorganisation is a 'normative crisis' that they can experience during and after each deployment (Paley et al., 2013). However, it is also of note that these experiences often take place within the context of a military community and families often "make meaning of the situation" in relation to the purpose and nature of military life (Riggs & Riggs, 2011, p. 630). In this way, it is possible that a readjustment without the constancy of the military may be experienced differently from that of a deployment. Findings from the current study would appear to support this notion, with participants' stories telling of having to develop a "whole new" way of doing things, even within the context of past deployments.

6.1.2.2 Individual Experiences of Transition

As well as their experiences with family, participants also described their own individual experiences of transition, stories of which were often focused on the issue of relocation. Here, it was the differences between participants' experiences that were found to be most revealing. For example, whereas Audrey and Rita described feelings of being 'grounded' and 'stable', which they largely attributed to not having had to relocate, Sophia indicated a degree of impact of moving from the Army camp into the local town, and for Ayla transition and the associated relocation represented a period

of seemingly significant personal struggle. The differences between these experiences seemed to be mediated by the nature of participants' relationships to the military community, and the extent to which these ties were severed by relocation. The concepts of belonging and social identity theory (SIT) provide helpful frameworks for making sense of these different experiences.

Belonging can be defined as a "subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship" (Mahar et al., 2013, p. 1026). As indicated by Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, a sense of belonging can be a powerful motivator. So much so that Leary & Cox (2008, p. 27) have suggested that the need for belonging underlies "a great deal of human behaviour." Indeed, research has suggested that the fulfilment of this need is implicated not only in a child's self-esteem, as suggested by Maslow, but also in academic performance and socio-emotional development (Pittman & Richmond, 2007). A feeling of belonging is derived from a sense of connection to social networks and, typically for children, the school setting plays an important role in this (Pittman & Richmond, 2007). Interestingly, Faircloth (2009) has suggested that peer relationships alone cannot account for a sense of belonging, as it involves not only a sense of connection *at* school, but also a sense of belonging *to* school. This has important implications for MCC, who can experience a high degree of mobility and several changes of school (Hogg et al., 2014). It has been suggested that, as a result, for some MCC their links to the military community can be an important source of connectedness that contribute to their sense of belonging (Bowen et al., 2003). What this may mean for CoV who experience a separation from the military community does not appear to have been explored in the literature.

The findings of the current study suggest that the social networks that provided the source of this sense of belonging, and the extent to which the military community was implicated in this process, seemed to vary amongst participants. For example, Audrey and Rita did not relocate at all during their fathers' military career, or during transition, and Audrey noted that this provided a sense of distance and disconnection from the military. Both sisters referred to their sense of connectedness to the local community, in terms of their school settings and extended family, suggesting they felt connected both at and to these settings. This is in line with suggestions by Faircloth (2009) and Pittman & Richmond (2007) that school environments can play an important role in fulfilling this need. In contrast, Ayla, and Sophia, who had experienced a greater degree of mobility as MCC, indicated a greater sense of belonging in relation to the military.

Although Sophia relocated off camp, a move which she described as being of some significance to her, this appeared to be mediated somewhat by her ability to maintain some sense of connection to the military community through continued relationships with the "Army kids", who transitioned to secondary school at the same time as her. Indeed, Sophia indicated that this sense of belonging in

relation to the military has continued into adulthood (although, of course, it is important to note that her father has since re-joined the Army, which may be implicated in this).

Ayla described having experienced a complete disconnection from the military community, which she spoke about in terms of feeling as though she "didn't belong" in her new setting. Interestingly, Ayla also spoke rather candidly about how this separation from the military, and subsequent relocation to a 'foreign' environment, contributed to her sense of struggle in her attempts to make sense of her identity. It is often held that identities are fluid, multiple and shaped by the contexts in which they are formed (Faircloth, 2009). As such, it is of note that Ayla relocated at the age of 10, as she was entering the period of adolescence, and "theory and research suggest that adolescents are intensely involved in identity development" (Faircloth, 2009, p. 322). However, Ayla's narrative indicated that her strong sense of self as a service child and member of an 'RAF family' may have made the process of developing and understanding her identity different, and potentially more complex, than that of her non-military peers. Other than the suggestion that those who have attended schools primarily for service children can find it difficult to integrate into 'civvy schools' (Brian Parry Associates, 2015), and similarly that adapting to settings where their cultural identities are not valued or understood can prove difficult for such children (Fossey, 2012), I found little literature pertaining specifically to CoVs' experiences of belonging and identity during and after transition. However, Grotevant's (1997, p. 11) writings on adoption suggested that a "major contextual shift", such as that arguably experienced by Ayla, can pose challenges to identity that are beyond those normally experienced during adolescence, and can interrupt the coherence and meaning of an individual's narrative. Furthermore, he goes on to add that "the inability to construct a coherent narrative that confers meaning to the individual's life circumstances can be related to various forms of psychological distress" (p 21), such as was perhaps indicated by Ayla's narrative and her description of herself as struggling and feeling as though she was most likely depressed in the years following transition.

From a theoretical perspective, social identity theory (SIT) may be helpful in considering the links between identity and the military in CoV. SIT, which is concerned with the sense of self defined by group memberships (Bennett, 2011), has been implicated in the experiences of veterans. The nature of military service is such that it can promote a strong sense of social identity in its members, which can result in an 'us' and 'them' attitude towards civilians that can pose difficulties during a veteran's reintegration into civilian society (Binks & Cambridge, 2018). Although SIT was primarily formulated in relation to adults, there have been suggestions that it can also be applied to group processes in children (Nesdale & Flesser, 2001). Literature regarding MCC has indicated that children may also form social identities that are connected to the military (Children's Commissioner, 2018; Lester & Flake,

2013), which has led to some researchers questioning whether CoV may face similar challenges associated with negotiating a change in a dominant social identity (Keeling et al., 2019; O'Neill, 2017).

In the current study, the possible relevance of SIT was indicated by an ingroup favouritism suggested by some of the participants. According to Bennett (2011), ingroup favouritism is one of the most common behaviours predicted by SIT, and both Ayla and Sophia mentioned their preference for friendships with other MCC. Indeed, Sophia appeared to have adopted the ingroup/outgroup divide suggested in the literature on veterans, as she referred to civilians as being untrustworthy and 'out for themselves'. Although the extent to which participants seemed to identify themselves in relation to the military diverged, they all conveyed varying degrees of a sense of difference that they felt from their non-military peers by virtue of their unique experiences associated with Forces life. This was often accompanied with expressions of feeling misunderstood by those who did not have similar experiences. These findings are of note as theorists have suggested that a strong social identity is linked to positive self-esteem, and as such, threats to that identity can have negative impacts on self-esteem and mental health (Bennett, 2011; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001).

6.1.2.3 Summary of Transition Findings

In summary, the findings of the current study are mostly in agreement with the existing literature that transition can be a disruptive process for some veterans, which has the potential to cause a sense of distress that can reverberate through the family system and give rise to feelings of anxiety and worry in some CoV. In addition, some participants also told stories of their own struggles with transition and its implications for their sense of identity and belonging. The nature and extent of these difficulties appears to have been linked to their feelings of connectedness to the military and the degree to which these were impacted on by relocation during transition. As Demers (2011, p. 174) highlighted,

> "Identity is inextricably linked to community... and it is within community – where we see the similarities between ourselves and others and where others recognize, acknowledge, and respect our experiences – that we acquire a sense of belonging."

It is suggested that for children whose primary sources of belonging are within the military community, the separation from this context can pose challenges to their self-esteem and wellbeing. These factors may be felt more keenly by those CoV who transition during their adolescence, which can be a 'critical period' for identity development (Demers, 2011).

Military families are reportedly often well practiced at negotiating the many transitions of Forces life (Lester & Flake, 2013). However, the nature of the process of leaving the military is such that there may be added stressors on the family system such that they have not encountered before – e.g. a veteran's unemployment, or several family members adjusting to changes in their identities

simultaneously. As a result, it is proposed that leaving the Forces is a somewhat unique process and that families transitioning out of the military experience a period of potential vulnerability unlike the experiences of their military or civilian counterparts.

6.1.3   Stoicism and the Suppression of Emotion

A second finding that appeared to be present across all the narratives was that of the suppression, or 'masking', of emotion. Participants told stories of their unwillingness to express negative emotions, or even of an apparent sense of duty to suppress them. This phenomenon was alluded to somewhat in the literature review, with participants in two qualitative studies conducted by McCormack & Sly (2013) and McCormack & Devine (2016) describing tendencies to deny their emotions, viewing them as a sign of weakness, in a way that was reportedly modelled by their veteran fathers. Indeed, participants in the current study told stories of their fathers displaying relatively little emotion until after they left the Forces. This seemed particularly prevalent in the narratives of Audrey and Rita. Audrey told of feeling as though her father "didn't believe in emotions" at one point during his service, and Rita's 'we poem' indicated a strong family tendency to not discuss emotions, something she suggested may have contributed to the development of her illness.

However, the suggestion that a display of emotion is synonymous with 'weakness' did not appear to be evident in the current study. Instead, participants conveyed the idea that life does not stop when a parent is deployed, and so they had to learn to manage continuing with everyday life during periods of anxiety or distress. Indeed, the refrain "You just get used to it" was evident in all the narratives. In this way, participants indicated a sense of stoicism in their talk of masking emotions. This was not indicated within the original literature review. However, an additional, more targeted, search conducted in light of these findings has revealed existing research on this process of "emotional buffering" amongst MCC, which has been explored in terms of communication privacy management theory (CPMT).

Protective buffering occurs "when people hide concerns or deny problems in efforts to keep their own stress from affecting others" (Joseph & Afifi, 2010, p. 413). All the participants made references to 'masking' their emotions to maintain a feeling of stability within the family, which were taken to be examples of protective buffering. Similarly, the process of listening for the interplay between voices in the narratives revealed instances when 'I' switched to 'you' when emotions were expressed, or potentially negative experiences being reframed in a positive way, and these were interpreted to be possible examples of protective buffering in action. In relation to military families, CPM has been put forward as a framework for understanding how family members communicate during deployment (Owlett et al., 2015). CPM proposes that such families create a set of rules as to how to manage the sharing of information with a deployed parent. Protective buffering is one such example of this

information management, in that the serving parent is protected from "information that could cause additional worry or stress" (Owlett et al., 2015, p 144) that might detract from their focus on the mission.

Findings from the current study would suggest that this process of protective buffering can perhaps instil a habit of denying or diminishing negative emotions, which can seemingly continue into post-military life. Owlett et al. (2015) noted that this process of emotional buffering can pose problems for the application of a resiliency framework to MCC (and, arguably, CoV). This concept of resiliency will be discussed next.

6.1.4 Overarching Frameworks

It was found that there does not appear to be much by way of psychological theory in the limited literature regarding CoV. However, research on MCC and military families commonly draws on resiliency theory and ecological systems theory as frameworks for guiding discussion. These two theories were briefly outlined in Chapter 3 but will now be considered further in relation to their application to CoV. I will further explore the difficulties with the applications of resiliency theory as indicated by Owlett et al. (2015) and will propose that ecological systems theory may be a more useful framework regarding CoV at this time.

6.1.4.1 Resilience Theory and Difficulties with Its Application to CoV

The framework of resilience has been use to explain how some children and young people can maintain "sustained competence or positive adjustment in the face of adversity" (Easterbrooks et al., 2013, p. 100). These processes are typically thought of in terms of the interplay between risk factors, or challenges, and protective factors, which "buffer, interrupt, or prevent problems from occurring" (Greene et al., 2004, p. 76).

Easterbrooks et al. (2013) maintain that the processes of resilience operate in the same way for MCC as they do for their civilian counterparts. For example, Lester & Flake (2013) indicate that resilience in military children is promoted through individual characteristics, and their social networks with peers, school staff and others in their communities. However, Easterbrooks et al. also noted that MCC can face unique stressors associated with military life, such as separation because of parental deployment. That many MCC and military families often negotiate these stressors "as a matter of course" (Lester & Flake, 2013, p. 122) has led to the suggestion that a resilience framework has "compelling advantages" (Masten, 2013, p. 199) for understanding the experiences of MCC. It has been suggested that resilience may be best thought of as a fluid concept, with children sometimes showing more resilience in certain areas of their life than others (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Nonetheless, MCC and military families are often referred to within the literature as displaying what has been described as

'remarkable resilience' (Riggs & Riggs, 2011). Arguably, the participants from the current study have indicated that they have continued to navigate unique stressors associated with transition and could perhaps be described in a similar manner.

However, it is important to note that the application of a resilience framework to CoV, and indeed MCC, is not without its difficulties. Resilience has been defined in different ways within the literature such that is has been suggested that it has, to some extent, "become an empty word that can be filled with any meaning" (Van Breda, 2018, p. 2). There has been particular debate as to which outcomes constitute "positive adaptation" and are thus indicative of resilience (Masten, 2013; Shean, 2015). It is this debate that is implicated in Owlett et al.'s (2015) writings on emotional buffering in MCC, which gives rise to the question as to whether children who are unwilling, or unable, to express when they may be facing difficulty and to ask for help are in fact displaying resilience. The findings from the current study would suggest the same question could be asked of CoV.

In addition, several of the protective factors for military children identified within the literature often pertain to attitudes towards military life and a connection to the wider military community (Lester & Flake, 2013). There is some evidence provided by the findings of the current study to suggest that these previously protective factors may be a source of confusion and disruption for CoV during and after transition. For example, although all participants expressed a continued sense of pride in relation to their fathers' military service, Ayla in particular indicated that following transition she felt she had moved to an environment where this service was not necessarily understood or valued in the same way.

In the absence of greater understanding as to the experiences of CoV and how this combination of issues – emotional buffering and possible changes to what may have been protective factors in the past – a theory of resilience may not be the most appropriate framework for exploring and understanding the experiences of CoV at this time. In the existing literature regarding MCC and military families, theories of resilience are often considered from an ecological perspective (e.g. Greene et al., 2004). For the reasons mentioned in this section, I propose that a consideration of the ecological systems framework may be more helpful at this point in time for exploring CoVs' experiences.

6.1.4.2 The Bio-Ecological model

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory holds that development can be understood in the context of a system of relationships within a child's environment. The child is understood to be at the centre, surrounded by nested 'levels' of the social environment which interact with and affect one another to influence the child's development and wellbeing. According to Bronfenbrenner's model,

these levels of external influence are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Wimelius et al., 2017). Later evolutions of Bronfenbrenner's theory, namely the bio-ecological theory, also allowed for a greater consideration of the role of the child themselves in their development, as well as the 'proximal processes' of reciprocal interactions between the child and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). This discussion will focus primarily on the process and context elements of Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time model, to allow for a consideration of the military context. However, it is important to note that the other elements of this model are also applicable to the lives and experiences of CoV.

In this way, an adoption of a bio-ecological framework allows for a consideration of the wider systems in which a child is embedded, including the family, school, neighbourhood, local community and nation (Hutchison, 2014; Paley et al., 2013). O'Neill (2017) proposes that for MCC, it is possible that the majority of these contexts will be linked to the military community, and the findings from the current research suggest that this same assertion may be true for some CoV. For example, the child's mesosystem will include relationships with peers, family, and school staff and, as such, is relevant to the consideration of issues associated with belonging and changes within the family dynamic as discussed above.

Similarly, the macrosystem is concerned with interactions between mesosystems (e.g. communications between home and school settings). Paley et al. (2013, p 247) have suggested that such interactions occur "in the context of systems that may vary in their capacity to support" military families, and also that families themselves may vary in the "degree to which they are able to effectively access and make use of resources and support" in those contexts. They attribute these variations to the extent to which local communities appreciate and understand military culture. Findings from the current study would appear to be in line with this suggestion, as all participants described differing levels of familiarity within their schools and neighbourhoods regarding military culture, and subsequent variations in the amount of support they were able to access. For example, Sophia's mother continued to work on the military base and thus had continued access to informal support from the military community. Ayla reported moving to a context populated by those who had little understanding of military culture. According to Demers (2011) this lack of understanding can introduce an additional level of challenge in seeking and receiving support and Ayla spoke of feeling as though she received limited help from school staff. Rita and Audrey's stories, however, indicate that the military is not necessarily central in the micro and macrosystems for all CoV.

As noted previously, the findings from this study have highlighted the individual nature of each of the participants' stories. The Person element of the bio-ecological model allows for a consideration of

individual characteristics and the role these play in development and interactions with the surrounding contexts.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Time element of the bio-ecological model also accounts for the likelihood that all CoV will find themselves within changeable "historical, social, and cultural contexts" that will incorporate national government policy, department of defence practices and prevailing societal attitudes towards service members and veterans (Lester & Flake, 2013, p. 128). Ayla alluded to this when she spoke of feeling as though she had to explain and defend certain military practices.

6.1.5   Summary of Discussion Regarding RQ1

RQ1 was addressed through a Narrative Inquiry with four CoV. Findings from this research phase indicate that the experiences of CoV, and the ways in which they come to understand those experiences, are complex and varied. Transition was felt to be a central theme in all the narratives and, whilst all included stories of disruption and challenge associated with this process, the extent of the impact of these events varied between participants (and even between those in the same family). Participants' sense of belonging and identity, and the degree to which these were associated with the military community, appeared to play a role in the nature of the impact they felt as a result of transition. A second theme identified within the narratives was that of stoicism and a suppression of emotion seemingly associated with a process of emotional buffering. Stories of relationships between CoV and their immediate family members were apparent in relation to both these themes.

Although it is acknowledged that resilience theory provides one possible framework for helping to make sense of CoVs' experiences, it has been put forward that this may not be the most helpful construct to use with such a little-known group. Instead, I have proposed that ecological systems theory may provide an alternative framework for considering CoVs' experiences amidst their wider contexts.

Whilst only small scale, this research phase has resulted in findings that appear to indicate that some CoVs' experiences of transition and relocation may mean that they move in and out of vulnerability at different times in their lives and, furthermore, they may have distinct needs that are separate to those of their civilian and military counterparts. It is felt that these findings have some potential implications for EP practice, which will be discussed in section 7.5 of this chapter. First, however, I will discuss the findings from Phases 2 and 3 of the research.

6.2   RQ2: What Are Educational Psychologists and Trainee Educational Psychologists' Current Attitudes and Practices Towards CoV?

Influenced by my values as a researcher and my desire for the study to be of some use to the profession, RQ2 was linked to the secondary research aim of considering what the role of EPs may be

in relation to CoV. Considering the apparent lack of literature pertaining to this population, Phases 2 (online survey) and 3 (focus group) of the research were designed to gain some insight into EPs' current attitudes and practices relating to CoV.

6.2.1 Summary of Findings Relating to RQ2

Two consistent findings were identified across phases 2 and 3 of the research regarding RQ2. These were a perceived lack of confidence relating to knowledge of the lives and potential needs of CoV, and reportedly low levels of professional involvement with this group. However, survey results indicated that there may be pockets of knowledge about CoV amongst those who have had professional, or indeed personal, experience with this group. The focus group provided some additional insight into reports of limited involvement, as several EPs taking part expressed that they were uncertain about their experience of working with CoV, as questions about a family member's military service were not regularly asked during meetings with schools and parents. Similarly, the survey revealed that many respondents reported that, to their knowledge, the schools in their area do not routinely monitor CoV status.

Findings from the survey indicated that participants expressed a similarly low (albeit slightly higher) perceived level of confidence regarding their knowledge of the lives and potential needs of MCC. Despite an apparent lack of confidence in their knowledge of CoV, participants across both phases indicated an ability and willingness to apply psychological theory and relevant knowledge from other groups of children they felt may be somewhat similar, in order to begin hypothesising about potential experiences CoV may encounter. Several participants in both phases indicated that, reflecting on these hypotheses, they felt some CoV may have some distinct needs.

It is noted that there is possibly an element of bias in the sampling for these phases, in that those who self-selected to participate are likely to have an interest in the topic. Nonetheless, many participants expressed a desire for further training and guidance. Several of those who participated in the focus group also indicated that there were ways they felt they could change their practice in relation to CoV, such as supporting schools to monitor this population and asking about military service during individual casework with families.

6.2.2 Discussion of EPs' Current Attitudes and Practices Relating to CoV.

Phases 2 and 3 of the research indicated a mixed picture of EPs' current attitudes and practices relating to CoV. Overall, there appeared to be generally low levels of perceived confidence relating to CoV amongst those who participated, with some EPs seemingly representing pockets of knowledge. Analysis of the findings suggests that there may be two interconnected factors contributing to this picture.

Firstly, relatively low levels of perceived confidence were also reported in survey responses regarding MCC. Additional information gathered during the focus group indicated that this may be due to uncertainty about military culture in general. Secondly, survey responses indicated that, to the knowledge of the respondents, many schools do not often routinely monitor CoV status, and focus group participants reported not regularly enquiring about a family's possible links to the military during casework. Research has suggested that competence with cultural groups is promoted through experience (Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016). Indeed, it is possible that an invisibility of CoV is limiting EPs' knowledge of potential experience with the group, likely impacting on perceived levels of confidence. This, in turn, could further reduce identification of CoV by fostering an unwillingness to ask about a family's military connections. Participants in the focus group expressed concerns about their lack of knowledge in this area, and a fear of causing offence by using incorrect terminology. Similarly, it was noticeable that those who reported higher levels of perceived confidence with CoV and MCC in the survey also reported higher levels of professional and/or personal experience with these groups. This would seem to be in line with existing literature that holds there is a "cultural divide" between civilians and SMVs and their families (Keeling et al., 2016).

Interestingly, despite an apparent reluctance to enquire about military service, focus group participants indicated that this would be "significant information" that would perhaps influence how they would hypothesise about a child's circumstances. However, there were examples in both phases of the research of EPs not wanting to 'pathologize' veterans and their families. It was interesting to note that it was felt that exploring a family's military connection could be perceived as indicating it was felt to be a negative factor in the child's life. I wonder if this was indicative of the perceptions in popular culture of veterans as either "victims or heroes" (Phillips, 2020, p. 64), and that in the absence of a full appreciation of potential cultural and identity shifts associated with transition, there may be a perception that enquiring about military history implies the veteran is one of the "mad, the bad and the sad" (House of Commons Defence Committee, 2018).

Arguably, EPs regularly engage with families experiencing a wide range of circumstances, some of which they likely will not have encountered before. EPs operate in accordance with the guidance of the SEND CoP (Department for Education Department of Health, 2015) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), both of which promote a respect for families and children as experts within their own lives (Clark & Statham, 2005). Arguably then, the role of the EP is one of using theories and frameworks to guide the application of psychology, with a respect for individual circumstances that EPs gain an appreciation for through working collaboratively with children and families. Findings from both phases provided examples of EPs applying theory and knowledge of similar groups of children to hypothesising about the possible experiences of CoV. Thus,

the findings of this study indicate that EPs are likely to have knowledge of relevant psychology and theory, but an apparent cultural divide is perhaps posing a barrier to their confidence as to how best to apply it. The lack of relevant literature and research, and the subsequent hidden nature of CoV, appear to be compounding this issue, and several participants indicated a desire for further training and guidance that could potentially help overcome this issue.

The next section will consider the findings of all three phases of this study and their potential implications for the development of EP practice in relation to CoV.

6.3 RQ3: In What Ways, If Any, Can EPs and TEPs Develop Practice in Relation to CoV?

Due to an apparent lack of research focusing specifically on CoVs' experiences of transition, the question as to whether there may be a role for EPs to play in relation to CoV arose from drawing together findings of studies exploring adult family members' experiences, research on MCC, and relevant psychological theory. Thus, it was largely hypothetical in nature, based on supposition and theory.

This is only a small-scale study, but the findings of the research, in association with the existing literature on veterans and their experiences, suggest that transition has the potential to be a challenging time for CoV. Furthermore, it is possible that the implications of transition may be felt long after the point of leaving the military. As O'Neill (2017) has suggested, and has seemingly been supported by the findings of this study, the existence of additional stressors in the lives of CoV does not make them "vulnerable *per se*, but due to the context in which they live, they move in and out of vulnerability."

The increased possibility of vulnerability, coupled with the likelihood that stressors may span several contexts, would indicate that EPs could have a role to play in promoting an holistic view of the potential experiences of CoV. Whilst the current study does not represent the wider population of CoV, or indeed EPs, the findings from the research do allow for some tentative suggestions regarding ways in which EP practice might be developed regarding this group of children. These suggestions have been proposed in relation to the five key functions of EP practice identified during the introduction to this dissertation (Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017), and are made with the qualification that they are based on limited research and literature.

Research – Firstly, it is suggested that as scientist practitioners (Fallon et al., 2010), EPs have a role to play in contributing to research and literature regarding CoV. It is proposed that this research be conducted in line with the suggestions made by Nastasi (2014, p 77-78, cited in Nastasi, 2017) for culturally sensitive research involving children:

"capture children's perspectives or experiences in their own words, facilitate their communication with adults, provide opportunities to engage children in decision making [and negotiating reality], or facilitate child participation as co-researchers with adults."

Training – Arguably, there are two considerations to be discussed within this function. Firstly, that of training undertaken by EPs to improve their knowledge of the lives and experiences of CoV, and secondly, that of training delivered by EPs to other professionals.

As a profession, Educational Psychology has a responsibility to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of diversity of culture (Anderson, 2018). It has been proposed that the military is a discrete cultural group (Reger et al., 2008) and the findings of this study indicate that there may be a demand for training and awareness raising in regard to this and its implications for CoV. Respondents to phases 2 and 3 of this research have suggested such training could be delivered service wide within EPS', at conferences, or during initial doctoral training. The indication that there may be pockets of expertise within the profession also raises the question as to whether there is scope to further develop information sharing practices within and between services.

In regard to training other professionals, it is suggested that EPs can share psychological knowledge on SIT, as well as the concept of belonging, with school staff that could help them create environments in which CoV feel valued and supported. Similarly, they could also provide training on potential emotional buffering and "masking" by CoV to help ensure those who may be experiencing vulnerability are not at risk of being overlooked.

Intervention – The lack of research and evidence-base regarding CoV makes it difficult to discuss targeted interventions for CoV. However, research into other vulnerable groups of children have indicated the potential benefits of mentoring and provision of a trusted adult to building positive relationships with pupils (Roberts & Loucks, 2018). Faircloth (2009, p. 323) has suggested that "a sense of connection to key individuals" can promote wellbeing and a sense of belonging amongst pupils. In light of the findings of the current study regarding CoVs potential to feel misunderstood, and mask their emotions, there may indeed be a case for the recommendation of a key-adult with a sensitivity to military culture. Similarly, research on similar populations of children has highlighted the potential benefits of whole-school interventions to promote wellbeing which EPs are well placed to support (Roffey, 2016). Indeed, the literature review revealed an example of EPs aiding the delivery of an emotional health curriculum at small group and whole class levels in order to support MCC (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012).

It is also proposed that there may be a role for EPs in improving visibility and awareness of CoVs within schools, which can be an intervention in itself. EPs often work with settings at a systems level regarding policies and procedures (e.g. Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2012) and as such, are well placed to discuss the potential identification and monitoring of CoV within schools.

Assessment – Regarding assessment, I once again draw attention to the findings of this study that participants' narratives were individual and unique and can be recognised as experts in their own lives. I position this in light of the suggestion that EPs have "specific expertise" in gaining and exploring children's views (Ingram, 2013, p. 335). As such, I propose that a key element of assessment regarding CoV is one of exploring "their beliefs, attitudes, perceptions of self and social identity" (Ingram, 2013, p. 335) and considering these in light of relevant theory to explore factors that CoV may be finding challenging or protective in nature. Taking account of the possible issues around protective buffering, I also highlight Harding & Atkinson's (2009) suggestion that approaches based on Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) can be useful for exploring views.

Consultation – Finally, EPs are skilled at working holistically to consider a wide range of factors across school, home and community settings (Fallon et al., 2010) and Hogg, Hart & Collins' (2014) paper on their work with MCC has highlighted how working collaboratively with families through consultation can aid In the exploration of this 'whole picture'. Several researchers have suggested the use of ecomaps to help explore and understand how a child or family experiences each of the layers within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model (Hutchison, 2014), and this may be a helpful tool for use during consultation.

6.4   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the findings of all three phases of this current study, and discussed how they contribute to the answering of the three research questions. It has been suggested that CoV may be a distinct group of children who can move in and out of periods of vulnerability and, as a result, it is likely that there is a role for EPs in supporting them. Several suggestions have been made for how EP practice may be developed in relation to this group of children. The next chapter will consider the quality of this research and present my concluding thoughts.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.0   Introduction

This final chapter will consider the contribution to knowledge made by the current study, its strengths and limitations, and any implications for further research. A critical consideration of the study will also be presented, in terms of its performance against Yardley's (2000) quality criteria for qualitative research. Finally, concluding comments are presented.

7.1   Strengths & Contribution to Knowledge

The paucity of research regarding CoV has led to them being referred to as an "invisible" population (O'Neill, 2017). A review of the literature regarding CoV revealed that much of the research in this area has focused on the experiences of veterans and adult family members. Of those studies that have included a consideration of CoV, the vast majority have been concerned with those who have a parent suffering from PTSD. Many of these studies have been quantitative in nature, and none were conducted within the context of the UK.

To my understanding, this may be the first study to directly explore the experiences of CoV that has been conducted within the UK. Eliciting the voices of CoV directly was a primary aim of this research, and the adoption of a Narrative Inquiry allowed for the fulfilment of this aim. In addition, it allowed for a richness and depth to the information gathered that has allowed for insight into the possible experiences associated with being the child of a veteran.

The interaction between researcher and participants has been acknowledged as not only present but useful to gathering depth of data, in agreement with Gilligan's position (Gilligan & Kiegelmann, 2010). As part of the narrative analysis, I have included my own reflections in the findings, to be transparent about my thoughts and the interaction between myself and the participants.

This study has also demonstrated the usefulness of a multimethod approach for considering different aspects of a phenomenon and has allowed for the consideration of some ways in which EP practice may be developed in relation to an under-researched population.

7.2   Limitations of The Research

As with all research, there were limitations to the current study. Firstly, in this instance, the recruitment of participants reflected the difficulties associated with completing a timebound piece of research that involved members of an 'invisible' population.

The recruitment of CoV participants for Phase 1 of the research proved challenging. As they are not a monitored or recorded group, CoV are a difficult population to identify and access. In the absence of a charity organisation that was willing or able to support recruitment, the process of locating possible

participants had to be altered to one of snowballing via my existing contacts. Snowballing is a method of recruitment that is often used with hard to reach populations, but it is not without its limitations (Shaghaghi et al., 2011). Of the participants who did take part in Phase 1 of the current study, three of the four were associated with the RAF. Noting that several of my contacts who forwarded information about the study are currently serving in the RAF, it is possible that an element of bias was introduced in this regard. In addition, all the participants in Phase 1 were white females whose fathers were ex-Forces. The 2017 Annual Population Survey of veterans residing in the UK indicated that an estimated 99% of veterans were white, and 89% were male, suggesting that the sample was perhaps somewhat representative of the wider demographic. Nonetheless, in light of research that suggests there are different subcultures associated with the various branches of the Armed Forces (Petrovich, 2012) and that the experiences of CoV may vary according to their gender (O'Toole et al., 2018; Yager et al., 2016) and the gender of the veteran (Smith, 2004), it is important to note that the participants in this study were not necessarily representative of a wider population of CoV.

Similarly, the time-bound nature of the study meant that Phase 3 of the research, the focus group, was reliant on a convenience sample. As a result, all the EPs who took part were employed in the same Local Authority at the time of the research and, as such, the findings of the focus group may be reflective of the current working practices within that particular context.

As discussed in chapter 3 of this report, the purpose of qualitative research is often not one of generalisation (Cohen et al., 2018), but of recognising the value in unique cases. Nonetheless, as the current study was designed with the intention of contributing toward an evidence base that could be used to develop EP practice, it is important to note that the participants of the study may not represent the diversity of the wider populations.

A second limitation of the study, which may well have contributed to the difficulties with recruitment, was the use of the term 'veteran'. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, the UK has one of the most inclusive definitions of the term in the world, with other countries often requiring a minimum length of service or involvement in operations prior to eligibility for veteran status (Burdett et al., 2013). This has led to the official definition of the term being unpopular with some members of the Armed Forces community and the general public alike (Ashcroft, 2015). As a result, it has come to be used in accordance with different, unofficial definitions. For example, it has been suggested that many SMVs have adopted an understanding of the term as referring to someone who has been involved in conflict (Dandeker et al., 2006). Similarly, the public have been found to often use the term in relation to those who fought in the World Wars (Dandeker et al., 2006). Therefore, it remains

possible that some potential participants did not respond to the study's recruitment information, as they did not identify themselves or their loved ones as veterans.

A third potential limitation of the study was the use of young adult participants. Although it is felt that these participants were able to reflect on their experiences and provide a useful insight into how they felt these have continued to influence their adult lives, their views may not correspond to those of CoV currently attending school.

7.3   Further Research

This is an emerging area of interest, and it is likely that much more research is needed to improve understanding and practice in relation to this group of children. However, it is also important to note that CoV are an invisible population who can prove difficult to identify and recruit. Some areas for future research may be:

- Obtaining the views of school aged CoV.
- Exploring the experiences of the children of female veterans.
- Exploring the views of children of veterans who had an unplanned transition from the Forces.
- Exploring the experiences of children where both parents have served in the military.
- A more focused consideration of how CoV might be supported at school and in their local communities.

This study was specifically focused on hearing the voices of CoV directly. However, in the future, it may be interesting to triangulate this data with a study that also explores the views of parents and/or school staff.

7.4   Quality of the Research

The issue of assessing the quality of qualitative research has been the subject of "considerable discussion", as the appropriateness of using frameworks originally intended for quantitative studies has come under increasing scrutiny (Smith, 2004). In response to this debate, Yardley (2000) proposed the use of three broad principles as a framework for guiding the assessment of quality in qualitative research. These will now be considered in turn in relation to the current study.

7.4.1   Sensitivity to Context

The first of Yardley's (2000) principles is that of sensitivity to context. Yardley proposed that this principle can be considered in regard to the relationship between researcher and participant, particularly in relation to a consideration of any potential power imbalances that may occur. This principle was foremost in my mind during the design and implementation of Phase 1 of the research. Given my links to the topic, I was keen to use an approach that privileged the experiences of

participants and helped guard against the imposition of a researcher led agenda. As such, unstructured, narrative interviews were used so as to invite participants to tell the stories that they most wished to convey. I aimed to support participants to feel comfortable telling these stories by conveying my respect for them as experts in their own lives.

Similarly, in regard to Phases 2 & 3 of the research I aimed to put participants and respondents at ease through emphasising that levels of familiarity with the topic were likely to be varied, and that all contributions would be very much valued.

7.4.2   Commitment, Rigour, Transparency & Coherence

Yardley's (2000) second principle is composed of four elements. The first of these, commitment, can be demonstrated through an in-depth engagement with the topic, either professionally or personally. As has been described in this dissertation, the current research was borne out of my personal history with the veteran community and my professional training as an EP.

The second element, rigour, is described by Braun and Clarke (2013) as being concerned with the thoroughness of data collection. In this regard, during Phase 1 of the research, each participant was offered two interviews so as to allow for a greater depth of data, but also a period of time for them to reflect on the first interview and consider if there was anything else they wished to add. Phases 2 and 3 were designed to complement each other, allowing for a degree of both breadth and depth in regard to the data collected on EPs' attitudes and practices.

Transparency has been a particularly important factor to me throughout the completion of this research. Through a process of reflexivity, and the use of the Listening Guide, which requires a researcher response, I have aimed to be transparent about my own role in the co-construction of narratives. I have also intended to demonstrate transparency about analysis through my presentation of findings, providing examples of colour-coding and quotes to support themes.

Similarly, I have included details of my epistemological stance and approach to research to demonstrate coherence between the RQs and the chosen methods of data collection and analysis.

7.4.3   Impact and Importance

Yardley's (2000) third principle is related to the usefulness of the research and its contributions to theory and practice. This study has contributed to the evidence base regarding CoV and has put forward some suggestions as to how EP practice may be developed in relation to this group of children.

7.5   Concluding Comments

The primary aim of this research was one of eliciting the voices of CoV directly in order to hear their stories, and a secondary aim was to explore what role EPs may have to play with this group of children.

As has been noted throughout this dissertation, this study came about as the result of a combination of my personal and professional experiences, and conducting this research has given me cause to reflect on my values in both of these domains.

Throughout my training, I have tried to conduct my practice in such a way as is aligned with Shay's (2010, p. 4) advice – "before analyzing, before classifying, before thinking, before trying to do anything – we should *listen*." Conducting this research has reinforced my thinking in this regard and reminded me of the privilege EPs are afforded to listen and learn from families and each other in our work.

Whilst thinking about the process of listening and the role it played in this research, I have found myself reflecting on my insider/outsider status with this group, and to what extent it was implicated in my ability to hear these stories. Several researchers have suggested that a familiarity with military culture is essential for effective work with veterans and their families (e.g.Cole, 2014). I have found this somewhat disheartening in its implications for civilian professionals. Military culture is incredibly complex; even more so when the different subcultures are accounted for. My experiences of conducting these interviews has suggested that an insider/outsider role is more dynamic and fluid than perhaps indicated by such researchers. At times, I have felt very much aligned with my participants, talking about RAF practices that I am familiar with. At other times, as someone who lives on the fringes of these communities, I have felt almost fraudulent. I propose that perhaps the difference between myself and my colleagues who took part in the focus group is not a familiarity with military culture *per se*, but an awareness and confidence to explore its implications. This has given me heart, as Ingram (2013) has alluded to, EPs tend to be very good at eliciting the views of children and families.

The findings of this research have suggested that CoV encounter some distinct experiences, but that they can come to understand these in very different ways from one another. In light of this, perhaps the most important implication for the development of practice is for EPs to have an awareness of the possible implications of being a CoV and to explore this with them and during individual work, as well as to raise the profile of this group of children within the organisations and settings with which we partner. On that note, I give the final word of this report to Sophia, who when reflecting on what professionals most need to know about CoV stated simply, "just that it does affect the kid."

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Systematic Literature Search Protocol

A systematic search protocol was drawn up to address the broad question:

- What is currently known about the lives and experiences of the children of veterans?

Reflections on Difficulties with Establishing Search Terms

The lack of research relating to the British military context, particularly in regards to the families of serving military personnel and veterans means that it is commonplace to refer to an international literature base, and much of the research in this area has been conducted within the US. However, the inclusion of these studies introduced difficulties into the search process due to differences in the use of terminology. The term 'veteran' is used internationally, as it is being used here, to describe someone who has served, but is no longer serving, in the armed forces. However, in the US the term is also colloquially used to refer to those who have been deployed within a particular conflict – e.g. someone who was deployed to Iraq, but is still serving, can be referred to as an 'Iraq veteran.' In this way, the term can be used to refer to either a war veteran (someone who has participated in a particular conflict) or a military veteran (someone who has left the forces). In light of Ferrari's (2015) assertion regarding the importance of keywords, and notwithstanding the issues with the term identified previously, 'veteran' was too important a term to omit.

Similar issues arose in relation to the term 'family.' Its inclusion was deemed necessary so as not to limit the scope of the search, as it is often described as being inclusive of children, but in reality it is often used solely in reference to spouses and adult family members. Furthermore, those papers that purported to be studying family were often focused primarily on the veteran, with little reference to others.

The combination of these difficulties with keywords meant that exclusions based on titles or abstracts were not always possible, and many papers had to be read in full in order to determine if they met inclusion criteria.

The final combination of keywords used in the search was: veteran* or ex-serving or ex-force* or ex-military or former military or former serving AND child* or famil* or adolescen* NOT childhood.

Inclusion Criteria:

Studies were included in the review if they met the following criteria:

- Literature pertaining to the lives or experiences of the children of veterans
- Papers whose main focus was on an element of a veteran's life that may be related to their children's experiences – e.g. parenting or family systems.

Exclusion Criteria:

Studies were excluded from the review based on the following criteria:

- Literature not written in the English language
- Non-peer reviewed literature
- Literature concerned with non-military veterans (e.g. veteran teachers)
- Literature concerned with veteran end of life care

- Literature concerned with the veteran's own childhood
- Studies relating to family planning or child care
- Book reviews
- Research from non-ABCANZ countries

Appendix 2: Tables of Included Search Results

Name	Authors	Date	Country	Method	Theme	PTSD	Conflict
Second Generation Effect of Vietnam: Adolescent Children of Combat Veterans`	Dansby, V	1990	US	Mixed	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
Adolescent children of Vietnam combat veteran fathers: a population at risk	Dansby & Marinelli	1999	US	Mixed	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
Veterans' Perceptions of the Impact of PTSD on Their Parenting and Children	Sherman, Gress Smith, Straits-Troster, Larsen & Gewirtz	2016	US	Mixed	Parenting	Y	Not specified
Growing up with a father with PTSD: The family emotional climate of the children of Australian Vietnam veterans	O'Toole, Dadds, Burton, Rothwell & Catts	2018	Aus	Mixed	Child Experiences	Y	Vietnam
Impact of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder of World War II on the Next Generation	Rosenheck	1986	US	Qual	Family Functioning	Y	WWII
The impact of PTSD on veterans' family relationships: An interpretive phenomenological inquiry	Ray & Vanstone	2009	Canada	Qual	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
Distress and Growth: The Subjective "Lived" Experiences of Being the Child of a Vietnam Veteran	McCormack & Sky	2013	Aus	Qual	Child Experiences	Y	Vietnam

Title	Author	Year	Country	Method	Focus		Conflict
Childhood and the imposition of war: Self-blame, absolution/nonabsolution, and vicarious growth in adult children of Vietnam veterans	McCormack, L., & Devine, W.	2016	US	Qual	Child Experiences	Y	Vietnam
Returning to civilian life: Family reintegration challenges and resilience of women veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars	Leslie & Koblinsky	2017	US	Qual	Parenting	N	OEF/OIF
Impact of Canadian Armed Forces' Veterans' Mental Health Problems on the Family During the Military to Civilian Transition	Cramm et al.	2019	Canada	Qual	Family Functioning	Y	Not specified
Addressing Parent-Child Functioning Problems in Veterans with PTSD	Creech et al.	2019	US	Qual	Parenting	Y	Not specified
Incidence of Behavior Problems Among Children of Vietnam War Veterans	Parsons, Kehle & Owen	1990	US	Quant	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
Problems in Families of Male Vietnam Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	Jordan et al.	1992	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
Impact of Vietnam War Service on Veterans' Perceptions of Family Life	Hendrix & Anelli	1993	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Profiles of Vietnam Combat Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Their Children	Beckham et al.	1997	US	Quant	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
Impact of vietnam veterans' arousal and avoidance on spouses' perceptions of family life	Hendrix, Erdmann & Briggs	1998	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
The impact of posttraumatic stress disorder on partners and children of Australian Vietnam veterans	Westerink & Giarratano	1999	Aus	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
The adjustment of children of Australian Vietnam veterans: is there evidence for the transgenerational transmission of the effets of war-related trauma?	Davidson & Mellor	2001	Aus	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
Male War-Zone Veterans' Perceived Relationships with Their Children: The Imporance of Emotional Numbing	Ruscio, Weathers, King & King	2002	US	Quant	Parenting	Y	Vietnam
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms Among A National Sample of Male Vietnam Veterans	Samper, Taft, King & King	2004	US	Quant	Parenting	Y	Vietnam

The Relationship Between Combat Exposure and the Transfer of Trauma-like Symptoms to Offspring of Veterans	Suozzi & Motta	2004	US	Quant	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
PTSD Symptom Severity and Family Adjustment Among Female Vietnam Veterans	Gold et al.	2007	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
The Home Front: Operational Stress Injuries and Veteran Perceptions of Their Children's Functioning	Duranceau, Fetzner & Carleton	2015	Canada	Quant	Impact on child	Y	Not specified
Family Functioning in Recent Combat Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Alcohol Misuse	Possemato, Pratt, Barrie & Ouimette	2015	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	OEF/OIF
Intergenerational transmission of post-traumatic stress disorder in Australian Vietnam veterans' families	O'Toole et al.	2016	Aus	Quant	Impact on child	Y	Vietnam
PTSD and Physical Health Symptoms Among Veterans: Association with Child and Relationship Functioning	Sullivan, Barr, Kintzle, Gilreath & Castro	2016	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Not specified
Consequences of PTSD for the work and family quality of life of female and male US Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans	Vogt et al.	2016	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	OEF/OIF

Secondary Traumatization in Vietnam Veterans' Families	Yager, Gerszberg & Dohrenwend	2016	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	Vietnam
The role of PTSD, depression, and alcohol misuse symptom severity in linking deployment stressor exposure and post-military work and family outcomes in male and female veterans	Smith, Taverna, Fox, Schnurr & Matteo	2017	US	Quant	Family Functioning	Y	OEF/OIF
The intergenerational consequences of war: Anxiety, depression, suicidality, and mental health among the children of war veterans	Forrest, Edwards & Daraganova	2018	Aus	Quant	Impact on child	N	Vietnam

Reviews & Commentaries:

Name	Author	Date	Country	Theme
Exploring the impact of parental post-traumatic stress disorder on military family children: A review of the literature	King & Smith	2016	UK	Review
Is There Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma? The Case of Combat Veterans' Children	Dekel & Goldblatt	2008	US	Review
Further support for the families of Australia's war veterans requires a broad research strategy	Peach	2005	Aus	Commentary
Parenting with PTSD: A Review of the Research on the Influence of PTSD on Parent-Child Functioning in Military and Veteran Families	Creech & Misca	2017	US	Review
The impact of Miltiary Service on the children of veterans: A problem not to be ignored despite the uncertainties	McFarlane	2018	US	Commentary
Children of Military Veterans: An overlooked population	Sherman	2014	US	Commentary

Appendix 3: Application for Ethical Approval

SPS RESEARCH ETHICS

APPLICATION FORM: STAFF and DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.
- See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.
- All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.
- See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.
- Please stick to the word limit provided. **Do not attach** your funding application or research proposal.

Key project details:

1.	**Proposer's Name**	Stephanie Hopkins

2.	**Proposer's Email Address:**	*sh17888@bristol.ac.uk*

3.	**Project Title**	*An exploration of the experiences of the children of veterans.*

4.	**Project Start Date:**	*June 2019*	**End Date:**	*September 2020*

Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere. As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not require a NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) review e.g. does it involve NHS patients, staff or facilities – see http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/

If you are not sure where you should apply please discuss it with either the chair of the Committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Social care research projects which involve NHS patients, people who use services or people who lack capacity as research participants need to be reviewed by a Social Care Research Ethics Committee (see https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/social-care-research/). Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records (without informed consent) must be reviewed by a REC and the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care (NIGB).

Who needs to provide governance approval for this project?

If this project involves access to patients, clients, staff or carers of an NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation, it falls within the scope of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social. You will also need to get written approval from the Research Management Office or equivalent of each NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation.

When you have ethical approval, you will need to complete the research registration form:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/study-notification.html

Guidance on completing this form can be found at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/guidance.pdf. Contact the Research Governance team (research-governance@bristol.ac.uk) for guidance on completing this form and if you have any questions about obtaining local approval.

Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer. If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance (see http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/insurance/travel-insurance/).

Do you need a Disclosure and Barring Service check?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Criteria for deciding whether you require a DBS check are available from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about

You should specifically look at the frequency, nature, and duration of your contact with potentially vulnerable adults and or children. If your contact is a one-off research interaction, or infrequent contact (for example: 3 contacts over a period of time) you are unlikely to require a check.

If you think you need a DBS check then you should consult the University of Bristol web-page:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/dbs/

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5. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution. Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.

n/a

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6. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes		
No/Not yet		Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work. They will be provided with training and sign a detailed consent form.
Not applicable	**x**	

7. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor(s).

Dr Jak Lee

Please confirm that your supervisor(s) has seen this final version of your ethics application?

Yes	**x**
No	

8. Who is funding this study?

n/a

If this study is funded by the ESRC or another funder requiring lay representation on the ethics committee and is being undertaken by a member staff, this form should be submitted to the Faculty REC.

Post-graduate students undertaking ESRC funded projects should submit their form to the SPS Research Ethics Committee (SPS REC).

9. Is this application part of a larger proposal?

No	**x**
Yes	

If yes, please provide a summary of the larger study and indicate how this application relates to the overall study.

10. Is this proposal a replication of a similar proposal already approved by the SPS REC? Please provide the SPS REC reference number.

No	**x**

Yes

If Yes, please tell us the name of the project, the date approval was given and code (if you have one).

Please describe any differences (such as context) in the current study. If the study is a replication of a previously approved study. Submit these first two pages of the form.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant ethical issues and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or proposals which do not directly answer the questions.** Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

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1. **IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS:** Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants

Name: Stephanie Hopkins, Trainee Educational Psychologist. I will be responsible for all elements of the research, including data collection, analysis and write up.

Qualifications: BSc Psychology (Hons) Open University – 2008

Certificate in Therapeutic Counselling with Adolescents – Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education – 2015

Previous Research Experience: Whilst studying for my undergraduate degree in Psychology, I carried out a small-scale quantitative study. I also carried out a larger qualitative project exploring the experiences of members of the LGBT community in a small, rural university.

During the first year of the Doctoral course in Educational Psychology I undertook a paired research commission. The purpose of this research was to investigate how Educational Psychologists (EPs) in the commissioning authority went about collecting the view of Post-16 students during the statutory Needs Assessment process. This was a qualitative study which consisted of semi-structured interviews and an electronic survey, the results of which were subjected to thematic analysis.

This year, whilst on placement with a Local Authority I have taken part in a piece of research commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group to investigate the current counselling offer being provided by schools in the authority. This research was carried out with a fellow Trainee Educational Psychologist and consisted of the dissemination of an electronic survey and the analysis of the results.

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2. **STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]:** Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

The primary aim of this research is explore the experiences of children of veterans (CoV) as well as what is known within the EP profession about the needs of, and support that can be helpful for, this group of children. For the purposes of this research, the term 'veteran' is being used to refer to individuals who have served, but are no longer serving, in the British Armed Forces.

Research* has shown that veterans who were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have significantly worse mental health outcomes and alcohol misuse than those who continue to serve. The act of leaving the military can also result in a loss of support and have financial and housing implications for the family. Therefore, it is possible that the CoV are a discrete group with distinct needs.

The views of CoV are largely absent from the literature and, to this end, it is intended that this research will elicit the voices of young people directly. In this respect, the research will be conducted in a spirit of open curiosity in order to capture their narratives.

In the event that CoV are difficult to recruit in a safe, ethical manner, the research will instead explore the non-veteran parents' perceptions of their children's experiences.

Finally, the research aims to uncover what is known about the CoV in the EP community and how EPs feel they might develop their practice in relation to this group of children.

Research Questions:

1) How do CoV experience and understand their lives?
2) How do partners of veterans understand of their children's experiences?
3) What are EPs' current understandings of the experiences of CoV?
4) In what ways, if any, do EPs feel they could develop their practice in relation to the CoV?

*Stevelink, S., Jones, M., Hull, L., Pernet, D., MacCrimmon, S., Goodwin, L., MacManus, D., Murphy, D., Jones, N., Greenberg, N., Rona, RJ., Fear. NT. & Wessely,, S., (2018) 'Mental health outcomes at the end of the British involvement in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts: a cohort study. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 213(6), 690-697

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

(If you are undertaking secondary data analysis, please proceed to section 11)

3.	**RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]:** Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

The primary aim of this research is to capture the voice of CoV directly.

Plan A

I will attempt to recruit participants by means of volunteer sampling via charities who support veterans and their families (a list of charities to be approached is listed in Appendix 1) to ensure they have an established route to accessing support. Due to ethical concerns about the emotional maturity of participants and the

requirements for them to be able to reflect and express their experiences, only children and young people between the ages of 13-19 will be recruited.

Inclusion criteria:

- Have a parent who has served, but is no longer serving, in the British Armed Forces. This parent must have completed Phase II training as a minimum length of service.
- Be between the ages of 13-19
- Be a member of a family receiving support through a charity or support group
- Be located within the South West or South Wales.

Initial Meeting (Session 1)

I will meet with participants to discuss the aims and purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and informed consent. Participants will be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Interviews (Sessions 2-4)

I will meet with the participants at least twice to gather their narratives. A schedule for these interviews is included in Appendix 15. It is anticipated that only two follow up interviews will take place, but participants will be offered the opportunity for a third to discuss anything they feel has not already been covered. In order to capture the narratives of these children, unstructured interviews will be used. Participants will be given the opportunity to write, draw or use Dixit cards as prompts should they wish. Dixit cards show cartoon drawings of abstract situations. Some examples of Dixit cards are given in Appendix 16. These interviews will be participant led.

Final Meeting (Session 3 or 4)

A final meeting, lasting no longer than an hour, will be arranged to present I-poems to the participants and ensure that they feel that their stories have been accurately reflected.

Plans B

Should I be unable to recruit at least 3 children and young people directly, volunteer sampling will be used to recruit the partners of veterans. This will be done in the same manner as above, via charities, and by making school SENCOs in 15 secondary schools located in Somerset, North Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and BANES aware of the research project. If school staff feel that they may know of suitable families, they will be asked to disseminate the information leaflets on my behalf. This wider recruitment process reflects the likelihood that adults will have more established support networks and more resources to seek support should they need it.

Partners of veterans will be asked to take part in an interview that will last no longer than two hours. This may be spread over two sessions, each lasting an hour, if they wish. In order to keep the focus on the children of veterans, parent interviews will be semi-structured (please see appendix 20 for interview schedule)

Inclusion criteria:

- Be the partner of a veteran who has, as a minimum, completed Phase II training but who is no longer serving.
- Have children under the age of 19.
- Be a member of a family receiving support through a charity or support group
- Be located within the South West or South Wales.

Additionally (alongside Plan A and B whichever is used)

Firstly, Educational Psychologists' views will be sought via an online survey (using Online Surveys), which will be disseminated nationally to Assistants, Trainees, Associates, Main Grade, Senior and Principle EPs via EPNET – an online forum for Educational Psychologists.

Secondly, The Educational Psychology team within my placement authority, and other EP teams within the South West, will be contacted via email and invited to take part in a focus group. This will also be advertised on EPNET. The focus group will take no longer than 90 minutes.

4.	**EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY:** Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between March to July 2019. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

The survey for Educational Psychologists will be available for completion online between 1st July – 5th August.

Charities will be approached and asked to disseminate CoV participant information leaflets (Appendices 11 and 13) in July 2019. If enough participants have not been identified by September, charities and schools will be approached and asked to disseminate parent participant leaflets (Appendix 15)

If children and young people are recruited, initial meetings will take place between September and November of 2019.

Interviews will take place between November 2019 and March 2020.

The focus group with Educational Psychologists will take place in December 2019.

Final meetings with children and young people will take place in May 2020.

5.	**POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words]** Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

Participants – The participants will have the opportunity to tell their own stories to an interested listener. Any parents of CoV who take part will have dedicated, uninterrupted time to focus on and explore their understanding of their child's experiences. A support debrief information leaflet has been created (Appendix 19) This may help participants seek support after the interview. Similarly, Educational Psychologists who participate will have the opportunity to explore and reflect on their own understanding of this group of children and young people and how they might develop their practice.

Professionals – It is hoped that capturing the experiences of the CoV will improve awareness and understanding of this group of young people and add valuable information to ongoing discussions about how they might best be supported. It is my hope that this information might be used to prompt further studies that will inform policy and practice within the EP profession, LAs and wider educational context.

6.	**POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]:** What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example risk assessment form and guidance : http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/RA-gn.pdf and http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED

Example 1: Participants may be upset during the interview *Example 2: A participants may tell me something about illegal activity*	*Example 1: If a participant gets upset I will stop the interview at that time. I will give participants information about support services at the end of the interview.* *Example 2: The information sheet and consent form will warn of the limits of confidentiality and I will have a confidentiality protocol (submitted to the committee).*
Participants will be asked to talk about their experiences, and may become distressed during interviews.	- Young participants (under the age of 19) will be recruited via existing charities so that they have an established pathway to support. - Should participants become distressed during an interview they will be given the option to change the topic of conversation, take a break or stop the interview altogether. - I will be conducted my interviews in a sensitive sympathetic manner. Due to my doctoral training, and my previous training in counselling, I will be able to offer psychological first aid to participants. However, it will be made clear that I am not offering counselling. I will direct participants towards appropriate means of support (e.g. parents, charities) - Participants will be given an information leaflet containing details about where to seek further support.
Participants may not fully understand what is being asked of them.	Before any interviews are conducted, I will meet with participants to discuss the aims and purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and informed consent. Participants will be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
Parents may not fully understand what is being asked of their children.	A parental information leaflet (Appendix 13) will be provided to all parents of participants. For children under the age of 16, parents will be required to attend the initial meeting. Parents will be reminded that, should any further questions arise, they will have the opportunity to ask me at the beginning of the interview sessions if they are transporting their child. If they will not be present (e.g. if I meet the child in school) they will be encouraged to contact me via the contact details on the information sheet. They will also be reminded that my supervisor's contact details are also on the information sheet, should they have any questions they would like answered by someone other than myself.
Participants may feel pressured into participating	Information leaflets will be disseminated on my behalf by charities or school staff will ensure that charity and school staff are clear that there is no expectation on the people they contact to take part in the study, and this will be clear in the Info sheet. Interviews will only be scheduled after an initial meeting with myself has taken place. Informed consent and the right to withdraw will be re-established at the beginning of every meeting and interview. It will be made clear to the Educational Psychology team in my invitation email that there is no expectation that they will take part in the focus group.

Parents of participants may ask what their child has talked about.	The child's right to confidentiality will be discussed in the first meeting. The instances in which I might breach confidentiality will be discussed. (see below)
Participants may disclose safeguarding issues during the interview.	During the initial meeting, the right to confidentiality will be discussed, as well as what will happen if I consider there to be a risk of significant harm to the participant or anyone else.
	If something is disclosed, I will stop the interview and explain that I will need to pass on this information and to whom.
	With children and young people, I will follow the safeguarding procedure relevant to the charity that has helped me recruit the participant and inform their designated safeguarding lead.
	In the event of a safeguarding issue arising in interviews with parents, I will follow the above steps using the council's safeguarding procedure.
	I will inform the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) of the research so they are aware and prepared should any issues arise.
Participants may be concerned that they could be identified	This concern will be discussed with participants and parents in the initial meeting. They will be given the opportunity to ask any questions and have them answered.
	All identifying information will be removed, including names, location, and family details will be removed. Participants will be referred to by a pseudonym of my choosing, to avoid them selecting a name that may be recognisable.
	In recognition of the fact that military and veteran families often form close, tight-knit communities information that may be used to identify the veteran will also be removed. The branch of the military under which they served and any details regarding injuries will be removed. I will ask the family about any other possible identifying features in the initial meeting.
Educational Psychologists may feel that their knowledge or practice is being judged.	In the information sheet for EPs, it will be made clear that this is an emerging area of research and that the experiences of children of veterans are not widely considered.
	The focus group will be run in a solution-focused way, encouraging EPs to consider how they might apply their existing knowledge and skills to this group of children and young people.
Educational Psychologists may not feel comfortable discussing their knowledge and practice in front of their peers.	All EPs who are invited to take part in the focus group will be sent an information leaflet so that they are able to give informed consent to take part, should they wish to do so.
	The group will be asked to establish rules and boundaries for the focus group prior to its commencement. Focus group participants will be reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality after the focus group.
EPs may become distressed during the focus group.	As above, all EPs who are invited to take part in the focus group will be sent information leaflets so that they will be fully informed as to the subject matter of the discussion.

	All EPs taking part in the focus group will be advised to inform their supervisors that they are doing so and make arrangements for any impromptu support should it be needed.
	Any EP who becomes distressed will be offered the opportunity to leave the focus group. If they wish, they will also be given the opportunity to debrief after the focus group. They will also be provided with a list of charities they might wish to contact.
Due to the focus group mainly consisting of EPs from one authority, individual EPs may be identifiable from the transcripts.	This will be discussed at the beginning of the focus group and form part of the informed consent. (See Appendices 6 and 7)
Individual EPs may be identifiable from their survey responses.	Survey responses will be stored in accordance with GDPR and data protection guidelines.
	Responses will be anonymous, and questions about demographic data will be optional.
	Participants will be informed of their right to request that their data be withdrawn from the study, but that this might not be possible in the instance of an anonymous online survey.

*Add more boxes if needed.

7.	**RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]:** What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places, then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
Example 1: Interview at the participant's home.	*Fieldwork safety protocol will be followed. A colleague will know the start and approximate finish time of the interview. If there is no contact from the researcher, they will ring the researcher. If nocontact is made the confidential address details will be accessed and the police informed.*
The home environment may be unsuitable for interviews.	For my own safety no interviews will be conducted in the home. Interviews will take place in council offices, schools or community settings (e.g. community hubs or charity offices) with other adults in the building at the time.
Possible exposure to veterans, who may be more prone to aggression and angry outbursts.	Wherever possible, I will aim to get consent from both parents. Where this is not possible, the knowledge of the other parent of the interviews will be discussed in the initial meeting.

	Interviews will take place during normal working hours. I will follow Somerset's lone working policy – the LA administration team will be informed that I am conducting an interview, where and what time it should start/ end. Details of the participant and venue will be kept in a sealed envelope in the office. I will contact the office once the interview has ended. If this call is not made the office will attempt to contact me. If I do not respond a senior member of office staff will open the envelope and contact the venue. If I cannot be located staff will contact the police.
	Should I be faced with an aggressive parent, I will use my skills and training to de-escalate and calm the situation. I will be vigilant on my journey to and from the interview venue. I will not leave the venue with or immediately after the participant.
I will be working alone with children and young people and could be open to allegations.	I will ensure another adult from the venue knows where we are, and that the room either has a window, or the door is propped open. I have an enhanced DBS check.
Interviews may be emotionally challenging/distressing for me.	As this is an area of personal significance for me, I have discussed this at length with my thesis supervisor. I have put in place a number of emotional safeguards for myself. I have an open and honest dialogue regarding this with both my placement and my thesis supervisor.
	I have spoken to a small group of friends about my experiences as a partner of a veteran, so that they have some understanding and I can contact them should I need emotional support.
	I will keep a reflective journal and will stay attuned to my emotional state.

8. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]: How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be "obliged" to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so how will this be dealt with.	

Ideally, participants will be recruited through a charity acting as a gatekeeper. Initial contact has been made with a number of charities. Once ethical approval has been received, I will contact the charities listed in Appendix 1 and ask if they are willing and able to help with recruitment (Appendix 8). Once gatekeeper charities have been identified, they will be sent information leaflets (Appendices 11 and 13) and asked to disseminate these to the families of children and young people who meet the criteria. Gatekeepers will be reminded that involvement in the study is entirely voluntary.

If at least three participants have not been recruited by mid-September 2019, charities will be contacted again and asked to disseminate information leaflets (appendix 15) to the partners of veterans. SENCos of 15 secondary schools located in Somerset, North Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and BANES will be contacted and made aware of the research and provided with information leaflets to disseminate to any families they know of that have a parent who is ex-military.

The online survey will be disseminated via EPNET, an online forum for Educational Psychologists and Trainee Educational Psychologists. The focus group will be held in Somerset, and all Somerset EPs will be

sent an invite to this focus group. The focus group will also be advertised on EPNET and invitations will be sent via email to other Educational Psychology Teams in the South West.

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9. **INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]:** How will this be obtained? Whilst in many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be clearly justified. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought, you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate. If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method, then additional specific consent should be sought from participants.

Initial information relating to informed consent will be included in the information leaflets for parents and participants (Appendices 11 and 13) and consent forms. They will be asked to sign these at the initial meeting and collected then. Before any interviews are carried out, an initial meeting will be held with possible participants (and their parents, in the case of CoV under the age of 16). This initial meeting will allow me to introduce myself, explain the study, answer any questions and obtain informed consent. During this meeting I will discuss confidentiality, anonymity, data protection, the right to withdrawal, the nature of the interviews and safeguarding. Possible participants will be reminded at this meeting that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and they can choose not to be involved.

Consent will be reconfirmed verbally at the beginning of every meeting and interview. Participants will be reminded that they can stop the interviews and withdraw their consent at any time.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms), securely for twenty years.	x

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10. If you intend to use an on-line survey (for example Survey Monkey) you need to ensure that the data will not leave the European Economic Area i.e. be transferred or held on computers in the USA. Online Surveys (formally called Bristol Online Surveys) is fully compliant with UK Data Protection requirements – see https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/

Please tick the box to confirm that you will not use any on-line survey service based in the USA, China or outside the European Economic Area (EEA).	x

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11. **DATA PROTECTION**: All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation.

University policy is that "personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA".

Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months?
https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Yes	**x**
No	

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union?
See https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-brexit/data-protection-if-there-s-no-brexit-deal/the-gdpr/international-data-transfers/)

No	**x**	
Yes		If **YES** please list the country or countries:

Please outline your procedure for data protection. It is University of Bristol policy that interviews must be recorded on an encrypted device. Ideally this should be a University owned encrypted digital recorder (see http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/transcription/).

If you lose research data which include personal information or a data breach occurs, you MUST notify the University immediately. This means sending an e-mail to data-protection@bristol.ac.uk and telling your Head of School. See additional details at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/data-breaches-and-incidents/

The UK Data Protection Act (2018) include potential fines of up to €20,000,000 for not protecting personal data – so please provide details about how you plan to ensure the protection of ALL research data which could be used to identify a living person.

Survey data will be gathered through Online Surveys and stored on the University of Bristol's password protected server.

Signed consent forms will be scanned and saved to a file on the University of Bristol's password protected server. Paper copies will be destroyed in the confidential waste.

Interviews and focus groups will be recorded on an encrypted device and transferred to the University of Bristol's password protected server as soon as possible after the interview. Files will then be deleted from the encrypted device.

Audio data will be transcribed by myself and anonymous transcriptions stored securely on the University of Bristol server as PDFs at closed access level for 20 years. (This will be closed access due to the data being so specific to this small-scale research project) Each participant will be given a pseudonym, chosen by me. The transcriptions will be stored under the pseudonym. A note of the pseudonym will be made to enable identification, if necessary, for withdrawal.

Any drawings or writing created by the participants during the interviews will be scanned and stored securely on the University of Bristol's password protected server. Paper copies will be destroyed. Electronic files will be destroyed in September 2020.

Any email correspondence with participants and/or their parents will be stored on my password protected University of Bristol email address.

In the event that a participant wishes to withdraw from the study, their assigned pseudonym will be used to identify all of the relevant information. All information will be deleted along with email correspondence, interview recordings and transcripts. Any paper that is not already, will be destroyed in confidential waste.

Participants will be made aware on all information that they can request to withdraw their data at any time, but that this may not be possible after it has been anonymised.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	Yes	No
All my data will be stored on a password protected server	x	
I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/)	x	
If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol.	x	
Please tick the box to **CONFIRM** that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored in a secure storage facility. https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm	x	

Please outline your procedure for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Confidentiality is addressed in the information sheets that will be disseminated to participants and parents (appendices 11, 13 and 15). This will also be discussed in the initial meeting where I will explain the confidentiality protocol (appendix 17). It will be made clear during this meeting that the report will be written using a pseudonym, and any identifying data will be removed. I will ask if there is any additional information that the family feel could identify them (e.g. nature of any veteran injuries). It will be made clear to parents that what their child says in the interview is confidential, even from them, unless there is a risk of harm or the participant gives express permission for the information to be shared. Participants will also be made aware of their right to ask for their data to be destroyed.

Participants will be reminded at the beginning of every interview and the final meeting about confidentiality and their right to withdraw using the confidentiality script (appendix 18).

So that participant data can be destroyed if requested, details of participants and pseudonyms will be stored on the secure University of Bristol server. This will be deleted at the conclusion of the research. Email addresses will only be stored if participants wish to receive a summary of my findings at the end of the study. These email addresses will be stored securely on the University of Bristol server. This will be discussed in the initial meeting and confirmed in the last meeting.

13 Data Management

It is RCUK and University of Bristol policy that all research data (including qualitative data e.g. interview transcripts, videos, etc.) should be stored in an anonymised format and made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data.bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK Data Archive. What level of future access to your anonymised data will there be:

- Open access?
- Restricted access - what restrictions?
- Closed access - on what grounds?

Closed access – on the grounds that the data gathered is specific to this small-scale research project. This raises a number of ethical issues, for example you MUST ensure that consent is requested to allow data to be shared and reused.

Please briefly explain;

1) How you will obtain specific consent for data preservation and sharing with other researchers?
2) How will you protect the identity of participants? e.g. how will you anonymise your data for reuse.
3) How will the data be licensed for reuse? e.g. Do you plan to place any restrictions on the reuse of your data such as Creative Common Share Alike 2.0 licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/)
4) Where will you archive your data and metadata for re-use by other researchers?

1) Consent forms will be used to obtain consent for data preservation.
2) Participants will be referred to by a pseudonym. I will assign the pseudonym to avoid the participant choosing something that may be recognisable, like a nickname. All information that could be used to identify the participant will be removed from the transcripts, including the names of charities and support groups, and will be excluded from the report.
3) This data will be closed access
4) Data will be archived on the University of Bristol server.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

14. Secondary Data Analysis

Please briefly explain (if relevant to your research);

(1) What secondary datasets you will use?
(2) Where did you get these data from (e.g. ESRC Data Archive)?
(3) How did you obtain permission to use these data? (e.g. by signing an end user licence)
(4) Do you plan to make derived variables and/or analytical syntax available to other researchers? (e.g. by archiving them on data.bris or at the UK Data Archive)
(5) Where will you store the secondary datasets?

n/a

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS

15.	**DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]:** Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on? If so, in what format and under what conditions? What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.? .

For Plan A:

Transcripts of interviews with participants will be used to create "I-poems". The final session will involve checking out these poems with the participants to ensure they feel their stories have been accurately represented. Participants will be invited to comment on these poems and suggest changes they feel should be made. If changes are to be made, we will discuss how the participants would like to receive the final poem (e.g. by email or letter). Participants will be given the option, both at the first meeting and the final meeting, to receive a summary of my research findings. We will agree how they would like to receive this.

For Plan B:

Parents will be given the option to receive a summary of my research findings. We will agree how they would like to receive this.

The findings of my research will be written up as a full dissertation to be submitted as part of my Doctoral training in Educational Psychology. This will be available in the Arts and Social Studies library and EThOS.

Participants will be given the option, both at the first meeting and the final meeting, to receive a summary of my research findings. We will agree how they would like to receive this.

Support groups who act as gatekeepers will also be offered a summary of my findings.

As there will be a focus group taking place as part of the research, there will be some dissemination of ideas and literature to the profession during the research.

I intend to publish the findings of this study in a relevant British Journal and use them to inform training or future research.

16.	**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**: Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application: Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

Additional Material:	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Participants information sheet (s)	4
Consent form (s)	3
Confidentiality protocol	1
Recruitment letters/posters/leaflets	1
Photo method information sheet	0
Photo method consent form	0

Support information for participant	2
3rd party confidentiality agreement	0
Interview schedules and focus group topic guide	3

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the Committee will not look at this

SUBMITTING AND REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:

– To submit your application you should create a single PDF document which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email to sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

– If you are having problems with this then please contact the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk) to discuss.

– Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document. The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document. For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.

– Should the Committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly. If the Committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.

– Should your research change following approval it is your responsibility to inform the Committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.

Chair: Dave Gordon (dave.gordon@bristol.ac.uk)
Administrator: Hannah Blackman (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk)
Date form updated by SPS REC: January 2018

Appendix 4: List of Charities Approached Regarding Recruitment

- Army Benevolent Fund
- Barnardos – Families of Veterans Support Service (Service no longer running)
- Combat Stress
- Forces Children's Trust
- Forces in Mind Trust
- Help for Heroes
- PTSD Resolution
- Relate
- Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA)
- Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF)
- Royal British Legion
- Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC)
- Royal Marines Association
- SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity
- The Not Forgotten Association
- The Ripple Pond

The Ripple Pond and RNRMC were the only charities who felt able to help with recruitment, and they posted details of the study on their social media pages.

Appendix 5: Timeline of Recruitment and Research Phases

September 2019
- Ethical approval obtained
- Initial contact made with charity organisations
- Details of study published by on one charity's social media pages

October 2019
- Follow up emaisl sent to charity organisations
- Charity ethical application process completed
- Survey live online
- Ethical approval obtained for use of snowball recruitment via own contacts
- Survey reminders sent

November 2019
- Recruitment email forwarded to contacts

December 2019
- Survey closed

January 2020
- Ethical approval obtained to remove upper age limit
- Recruitment email forwarded to contacts with new age range

February 2020
- Reminder emails sent to contacts
- Ayla recruited. Both interviews with Ayla conducted one week apart.
- Audrey and Rita recruited Initial interviews with both conducted

March 2020
- Second interview with Audrey conducted
- COVID-19 lockdown
- Focus group conducted via Skype
- Sophia recruited
- Both interviews with Sophia conducted via telephone one week apart.

An Exploration of the Experiences of Children of Veterans

Research being conducted by Stephanie Hopkins, Trainee Educational Psychologist

Hello!

My name is Stephanie, and I am training to become an Educational Psychologist. This means that I visit schools and help children, young people and adults think about what is working well and is what is not working so well at school and at home.

As part of my training, I have the opportunity to carry out some research. I am really interested in finding out more about children and young people who have a parent that used to serve in the military but who doesn't anymore.

There is lots of research about people who have left the military, and some about their partners, but not very much about their children. I am looking for children and young people who have a parent who used to serve in the military (this might have been a long time ago!) but doesn't anymore so that I can hear their stories.

The information I get from this study might not help you, but I hope it will help other Educational Psychologists and other professionals understand more about children and young people like you and think about how we might support them.

It is completely up to you if you would like to take part. If you are interested, you might have some questions about what will happen. I will try to answer some of them here.

The study – What I'll be doing

I will be speaking to 3-5 children and young people and listening to their stories. I won't be asking any specific questions but listening carefully to what is important to those children and young people.

I will also be finding out what other Trainees (like me) and Educational Psychologists know about children and young people who have a parent that used to be in the military, and what they might do differently in the future to listen and help.

Once I have spoken to everyone, I will be putting together a report about what I have found out. If you do take part, don't worry, people will not be able to tell who you are from this report.

What I need help with.

If you are interested in telling me your story and want to take part… here's what will happen:

- <u>Introduction</u> - The first time I meet you will be to introduce myself. I will talk to you about my study and answer any questions you might have. If you still want to take part, I will have a consent form for you (and your parents if you are under 16) to sign. We will decide together when and where we will meet next. This could be at your house, at school (if they don't mind), or in a room at one of our council offices.
- <u>Hearing your story</u> – I will meet with you again twice or three times more to hear your story. Each of these meetings won't last longer than an hour and a half. I will listen to what you want to tell me and will only ask questions to make sure I have understood. I will record these conversations to make sure I remember all the details, but only I will hear these recordings. If you feel a bit stuck about what to say, I could show you some picture cards and ask you to choose some to talk to me about. I will also bring pens and paper in case it might be easier to draw or write something first before we talk about it.
- <u>Our last meeting</u> – Once I have heard your story, I will put the key bits together in a type of poem. I will bring this to show you to make sure I have got everything right. We will look at it together and you can tell me if there is something that I need to change. You will get a copy of this poem. It will be up to you if you want to keep this and if you want to show anyone.

Some other things you might want to know:

- You don't have to take part in this study if you don't want to. If you do decide to take part, it is okay to change your mind. I will check with you every time I meet with you that you still want to take part, but you (or your parents) can also contact me to tell me if you have changed your mind.
- You can ask at any time for the information I have from you to be deleted. This might not be possible though once it's been made anonymous.
- Only I will hear the recordings of what you have said. I will write up what has been said in something called a transcript. This won't have your name in, or anything that people could use to guess who you are. Every time we finish talking, I will check if there is anything you have said that you don't want me to write in the transcript. It's important to think carefully about this, as some parts of the transcript might go into my report. The anonymised transcript will be stored on The University of Bristol's secure servers for 20 years, in line with data protection regulations.
- When we meet, if you tell me something that means you or someone else are at risk of significant harm, I will have to tell someone, but I will let you know if this happens.

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- I have been given permission by the University of Bristol, School for Policy Studies, Research Ethics committee to complete this study. This is a group of people who decide if what I would like to do is well thought out and if it will cause any harm or upset.
- If you want me to, when I have finished the project, I will write to you to share what I have found.

Next steps

Thank you for reading all of that! If you are interested, please talk to your parent/carer about getting in touch with me. We would arrange to meet to have a chat and for you to ask me any questions before arranging to meet again on another date.

If you think you might want to take part, but still have some questions then feel free to contact me. I would love to answer them!

Thank you,

Stephanie Hopkins

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sh17888@bristol.ac.uk

If you want to ask further questions about the research to someone that isn't me, or if you have any complaints, please contact my research supervisor:

Dr Jak Lee

Jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk

University of
BRISTOL

An Exploration of the Experiences of Children of Veterans

Research being conducted by Stephanie Hopkins, Trainee Educational Psychologist

Child/Young Person Consent Form

Name: ……

Please tick the boxes below if you agree with the sentences:

<u>General:</u>

I have read and understood the Information Sheet ☐

I have talked to Stephanie about the project and have had the opportunity to ask any questions. I have had my questions answered in a way I understand. ☐

I would like to take part in this study. I understand that I can change my mind, without having to give a reason why, and ask to be withdrawn from the study at any time. ☐

I understand that I will be interviewed for up to an hour at a time, and that I can ask for the interviews to be stopped at any time. ☐

<u>My data:</u>

I understand that the interviews will be recorded, and that these recordings will be encrypted and stored securely. I understand that the transcript of my interviews will have all identifying details removed. ☐

I understand that the transcript will be written with a pseudonym, and my data will be kept anonymous and confidential. ☐

I understand that I have the right to request that all information held about me is deleted. ☐

I understand that what I say will be kept confidential unless Stephanie feels I, or someone else is at risk of significant harm. ☐

I understand that I can ask for parts of my interview not to be included in the transcript and my interview will be kept confidential UNLESS I say something that suggests I, or someone else, is at risk of harm.

☐

I agree to my interview being quoted in the final report, in a way which will not reveal who I am. I understand that this report may be published.

☐

<u>Future use and re-use of my information</u>

I give permission for my anonymised transcripts to be saved on the University of Bristol Server for 20 years in line with data protection regulations

☐

Signed: …………………………………………………………………...

Date: ……………………………………………………………………

Please provide details for me to contact you on (please provide parents details if you are under 16):

	Yes	No
These are my parent's details	☐	☐

Phone number ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Email ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Phase 1 Confidentiality Protocol

<u>Purpose</u>

This protocol details the approach to the handling of confidential information and interview data obtained during the research '*Exploring the experiences of the children of veterans: A narrative study',* a dissertation study being run as part of the Educational Psychology doctoral training programme at Bristol University.

Confidentiality is a fundamental element of research. Participants are being asked to trust the researcher with possibly sensitive information, and as such the researcher has a duty to ensure that there is a protocol in place to ensure that this data remains confidential and outline in what circumstances confidentiality may be breached.

<u>Researcher Obligations</u>

Stephanie Hopkins, the sole researcher in this study, will endeavour to maintain participant confidentiality at all times. This will involve:

- Only discussing confidential information with supervisors without any identifying features.
- Not discussing confidential information with parents, charity workers or school staff without the participants' consent
- Ensuring that interviews are recorded on an encrypted device and transferring audio files to a data protected server as soon as possible.
- Anonymising transcribed data with a pseudonym and deleting the original recordings as soon as they have been transcribed.
- Storing and disposing of confidential data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Only breaking confidentiality if there is risk of harm.

<u>Information disclosure: Risk of significant harm</u>

If during an interview, a participant discloses information which indicates that they, or someone else, may be at risk of significant harm, the researcher has an obligation to act on this information. If the researcher feels such a disclosure has been made, the participant will be informed that confidentiality will be breached, unless it would be unsafe to do so.

In the case of children of veterans, if a disclosure is made that leads the research to believe there is a risk of harm, the researcher will follow the policy and protocols of (charity) with (safeguarding officer) as the named contact point. Unless there is a safeguarding concern around informing the parent/carer, the named

Confidentiality script:

To be repeated at the beginning of each session:

'What we talk about today will be kept anonymous and confidential. This means when I write about these interviews, I will not use your name, or anything that means someone could work out who you are. I will also not be telling your (mum/dad/caregiver) details of what we talk about, or anyone at (veterans' families support service/school), unless you want me to.

The only time that I will have to break this rule is if you tell me something that makes me think you or someone else is at risk of harm. If this happens, I will have to tell (safeguarding officer), and maybe your (mum/dad/caregiver). I will have to do this to keep you safe. However, we can decide together how I will tell someone else, and whether you would like to be there, or if you would like someone else in the room. But I will always let you know if I will be telling someone else and will have to do it the same day. Apart from that, do you have any questions?

You can change your mind about taking part in this study at any time, and you won't have to give me a reason. Just let me know, and we will finish the interview straight away and won't do anymore. If you want to, you can ask me to delete everything that we have talked about so far.

Do you want to carry on?'

Who can I contact if I need support?

If you are feeling distressed and need to talk to someone urgently, the following charities can help:

Childline – Free, confidential telephone support for children 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on:

0800 1111

Samaritans – Free confidential telephone support for anyone, 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on:

116 123

Combat Stress – A free, 24-hour helpline for veterans and their families. They can be contacted on:

0800 138 1619

Forcesline – A free, confidential telephone helpline that provides support for ex-serving personnel and their families. They are available 09:00- 17:00 Monday-Friday. They can be contacted on:

0800 731 4880.

The Ripple Pond – A UK wide self-help support network for the adult family members of physically or emotionally injured Service Personnel and Veterans. The office is manned from 9.30am -2.00pm Monday to Friday. Emails and messages are checked throughout the day, evening and weekend. They aim to respond within 24 hours. They can be contacted on:

01252 913 021

Examples of Dixit cards

First Interview: Exploring the child or young person's perception of self.

Reminder of the purpose of the research and confidentiality script at the beginning of every interview. (5 minutes)

1) Problem free talk/Rapport building. (15 minutes)
   - How was your journey here today?
   - How old are you? What year are you in at school?
   - What is it like being at (school/college)?
   - Who lives with you at home? (Include pets!)
   - Is there anyone else important in your life?
   - Who knows you best?
   - What do you do when you are not at school?
   - Do you go to any clubs or groups? What do you like about these?
   - Show and explain resources and tools I have – Pens, paper, Dixit Cards, Slime, Puppet.
   - Explore the use of Dixit cards. Could they choose one to show how they felt about coming here today?

The self

"Today I would really get to know you better. These interviews are meant to give you the chance to talk to me about what you think is important, but sometimes it can be a bit tricky choosing what to talk about. Is there anything you would like to start with or anything you'd like me to know about you? If you're not sure where to start, I have some activities we can do" (30 minutes)

Give opportunities for narrative between activities. "Is there anything else you'd like me to know about you?"

2) Adapted Portrait Gallery using Dixit cards
   - Choose a card/draw/write something to represent the emotions of happiness, sadness, and two other emotions (child to choose).

3) Can they tell me choose a card/draw/write something to represent their life?
   Possible prompts:
   - Can they tell me about the card/drawing/writing?
   - Why did they choose it/draw it/write it?
   - What would they most like people to know about themselves?
   - What would they most like people to know about their lives?

Debrief, summary and check in about the key points I have learned from the interview. Have they said anything they don't want transcribed? Is there anything they would like me to do differently in the next interview? Normalising conversation – what are their plans for the rest of the day? (10 minutes)

Second Interview: Exploring how children or young people understand their lives.

Reminder of the purpose of the research and confidentiality script at the beginning of every interview. (5 minutes)

"Today I would like to find out a bit more about what life is like for you as the child of a veteran. Like we talked about last time, these interviews are meant to give you the chance to talk to me about what you think is important, but sometimes this can be a bit tricky. Is there anything you would like to start with or anything you'd like me to know about your family and your life? You can draw, write things down or use the cards if you want to, or you can just talk to me. If you're not sure where to start, I can ask you some general questions"

 (30 minutes)

Possible prompts:

Tell me about your family

Can you tell me about being the child of a veteran?

Is there anything else they want to draw/show/tell me? (10 minutes)

Debrief, summary and check in about the key points I have learned from the interview. Have they said anything they don't want transcribed? Is there anything we haven't talked about? Do you they want to meet for another interview? Would they like me to send them the findings from the research? If so, how?

Normalising conversation – what are their plans for the rest of the day? (5 minutes)

Dear (name)

I am currently training to become an Educational Psychologist. As part of my training, I have the opportunity to carry out a piece of research for my dissertation, and I am contacting you to ask if you might be able to help with recruitment for this study.

This research has been designed to try and improve understanding of the experiences of the children of veterans/ex-serving personnel. I will also be talking to Educational Psychologists to investigate how they might develop their practice in relation to this group of children.

If you are able to help me recruit participants, I ask that you forward the email below and the attached information sheet to any contacts you have who meet the following criteria:

-   Is the child of a veteran who has, as a minimum, completed Phase II training but who is no longer serving.
-   Is over the age of 13
-   Is located within the South West or South Wales.

You are under no obligation to forward this email, and you will not be contacted by myself again. If you do feel you are able to help, you are asked only to forward on the attached information and will not be required to do anything further. Should anyone reply to you for more information, please ask them to contact me with their queries. Please do not copy me into any emails you send or tell me who you have sent it to.

If you are able to pass on contact details for possible participants, and have their permission to do so, please return the attached form to me via email or in person.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and those who receive the attached information are under no obligation to take part in the study. I appreciate your respecting their confidentiality in relation to this decision.

Thank you for your time. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Stephanie Hopkins

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sh17888@bristol.ac.uk

If you want to ask further questions about the research to someone that isn't me, or if you have any complaints, please contact my research supervisor:

Dr Jak Lee

Jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk

Phase 2 Information Email

Dear Colleague,

My name is Stephanie, and I am in my second year of training at the University of Bristol to become an Educational Psychologist. As part of my dissertation research I aim to investigate understanding of the experiences of the children of veterans amongst the EP profession and in what ways, if any, EPs feel they could perhaps develop their practice in relation to this group of children.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'veteran' is being used to refer to individuals who have served, but are no longer serving, in the British Armed Forces.

A brief scope of the literature suggests that this may be a relatively new area of consideration for the profession, and so I have designed a survey in order to explore the current understanding of the experiences of children of veterans amongst EPs. This survey is voluntary and anonymous. If you have a few moments, I would be grateful if you could complete it, this should take no longer than 5 minutes of your time.

I am interested in the opinions of Assistants, Trainees, Maingrade EPs, Senior EPs, PEPs and Associates. It would be of great help if you could forward this email to any of your colleagues who may find it of interest but are unlikely to access it via EPNET.

If you choose to complete the survey, your data will be analysed and will be used in the write up of the project. All collated data obtained from this survey will be stored for 20 years on a Bristol secure server for 20 years where it will be made available to other researchers. You will have the right to request that your data will be withdrawn, however, this may not be possible for anonymous survey responses.

Thank you for your time. If you would like to discuss any element of this research with me, please do not hesitate to contact me. There will be a follow up focus group held in (location) in December. If would be interested in taking part in this, I would love to hear from you.

The survey can be accessed here (LINK)

Thank you,

Stephanie Hopkins

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sh17888@bristol.ac.uk

If you want to ask further questions about the research to someone that isn't me, or if you have any complaints, please contact my research supervisor:

Dr Jak Lee

Jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk

Phase 2 Consent Statements

I understand that my completion of this survey is voluntary.

I understand that my data will be collected and sto

I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore what EPs understand about the experiences of veterans and how practice in this area might be developed.

I understand that, after completion of the survey, I can ask for my data to be withdrawn from the study, but that this might not be possible as data is anonymised.

I understand that data from this survey will be used in a final report, and that quotes from open questions may be used in a way which will not compromise anonymity. I understand this report may be published.

I give permission for my data to be saved on the University of Bristol Server for 20 years in accordance with data protection guidelines.

1.   Are you:

- An assistant
- A trainee
- A maingrade
- A senior
- A principle
- An associate

2. Are you:

Male

Female

3. What is your age?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

Over 54

3. Which region of the UK do you work in?

Ireland

East

Wales

East Midlands

Yorkshire & the Humber

South West

South East

West Midlands

Scotland

North East

North West

Northern Ireland

London

Other (Please specify)

4. As an EP, have you ever been involved in supporting a child of a veteran?

        Yes, more than three times

        Yes, once or twice

        No, not that I know of

(If no, go to question 6)

5. Were you made aware that the child had a parent who was a veteran before your involvement?

        Yes, I was made aware

        No, I found out during information gathering

6. To your knowledge, do the schools in your area record and monitor if a child has a parent who is a veteran?

        Yes, consistently

        Most do

        Some do

        Not to my knowledge

7. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is very confident, how confident do you feel in your knowledge of the experiences and needs of children of veterans?

8. Does your knowledge come from (please tick all that apply)

        Personal experience

        Professional experience

        Training

        News articles and other reports

        Journal articles

        Other (please specify)

9. . On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is very confident, how confident do you feel in your knowledge of the experiences and needs of children who have a parent that is *currently* serving in the armed forces?

10. Does your knowledge come from (please tick all that apply)

        Personal experience

        Professional experience

Training

News articles and other reports

Journal articles

Other (please specify)

11. Do you feel the needs of the children of veterans are distinct from those of a child with a parent who is currently serving in the armed forces?

Yes

No

I don't feel I know enough about it

12. What, if anything, would help to increase your confidence in your knowledge of the experiences of children of veterans?

(Open question)

13. Do you have any comments?

(Open question)

Thank you for your participation. The results of the survey will be posted on EPNET after analysis.

An Exploration of the Experiences of Children of Veterans

Information Sheet for focus group

Dear Colleague,

My name is Stephanie, and I am in my third year of training at the University of Bristol to become an Educational Psychologist. For my dissertation I am carrying out research to explore the experiences of the children of veterans. For the purposes of this study, the term 'veteran' is being used to refer to individuals who have served, but are no longer serving, in the British Armed Forces.

There is an increasing amount of research being conducted into the experiences of ex-serving personnel, and of their partners. However, there is a significant gap in the literature around how the children of veterans' experience and make sense of their lives. To this end, this study has been designed to capture the stories of these children and young people in the hope that they can be used to raise awareness of this group and inform best practice.

I also aim to investigate the understanding of the experiences of the children of veterans amongst the EP profession and in what ways, if any, EPs feel they could perhaps develop their practice in relation to this group of children.

For this second part of my research, I am planning on carrying out a focus group with 6-8 EPs to explore what is currently understood about this group of children, and how existing knowledge and psychology might be applied for their support.

This focus group will be recorded, transcribed by myself and analysed for themes. All data will be anonymised. The analysis and write up of this group will form part of my report on this study. Anonymised quotes may be included in this write up.

This focus group will take place in (location) and on (date & time). I would be grateful if you would consider participating in this. The focus group will last for no longer than an hour and a half. All those who take part in this group will receive a summary of my findings from the study.

All comments made during the focus group will be kept confidential unless they indicate that someone may be at risk of significant harm, in which case local safeguarding procedures will be followed and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed. Anonymised data obtained during this focus group will be stored for 20 years on the University of Bristol secure servers and will be made available for other researchers.

You are under no obligation to participate in this focus group and should you choose to take part, you have the right to withdraw at any time. You can request that your data be withdrawn and destroyed at any time, but this may not be possible after data has been anonymised.

This is an exciting opportunity to discuss how EPs might use their skills to meet the needs of a relatively hidden group of children. If you would like to take part in this focus group, please email me at sh17888@bristol.ac.uk. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions

Thank you,

Stephanie Hopkins

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sh17888@bristol.ac.uk

If you want to ask further questions about the research to someone that isn't me, or if you have any complaints, please contact my research supervisor:

Dr Jak Lee

Jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk

University of BRISTOL

An Exploration of the Experiences of Children of Veterans

Research being conducted by Stephanie Hopkins, Trainee Educational Psychologist

Name: ………

Please tick the boxes below if you agree with the sentences:

General:

I have read and understood the Information Sheet for Educational Psychologists. I understand the purpose and aims of the study.

☐

I understand that my participation in this focus group is voluntary, and that I can change my mind and ask to be withdrawn from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

☐

I give my consent to take part in a focus group with Stephanie Hopkins to explore what EPs understand about the experiences of veterans and how practice in this area might be developed.

☐

Use of information:

I understand that the focus group will be recorded, and that this recording will be encrypted and stored securely. I understand that the audio recording will be transcribed and that the transcript of the focus group will be stored securely and will be anonymised.

☐

I understand that Stephanie will only breach this confidentiality if something is said that suggests someone is at risk of significant harm.

☐

I understand that I have the right to request that all information held about me is deleted.

☐

I understand that anonymised quotes from the focus group may be included in the report and I understand that this report may be published.

☐

<u>Future use and re-use of my information</u>

I give permission for my anonymised data to be saved on the University of Bristol Server for 20 years in accordance with data protection guidelines

☐

Signed: …………………………………………………………………..

Date: ……………………………………………………………………

If you wish to receive a summary of the findings of this report, please provide an email address.

Email …………………………………………………………………………………

Focus Group Topic Guide

Introduction.

Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Review of Purpose

The purpose of this element of my research is to learn more about how Educational Psychologists might develop their thinking and practice in relation to the children of veterans. The term veteran in this context is being used to refer to those who have served, but are no longer serving, in the UK armed forces.

Review of confidentiality and right to withdraw

What is said today will remain confidential, unless there is a concern that someone may be at risk of harm, in which case it will discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Quotes from today's focus group may be used in the final report, but they will be anonymised.

Please respect one another's right to confidentiality.

I will be recording today's discussion on an encrypted recording device. This will be transcribed by me, and the audio files will be destroyed as soon as the transcription is finished. Anonymised transcriptions will be stored on the UoB secure server.

You may refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. You can ask that your data be withdrawn from the study up until the completion of analysis (1st May 2020)

Self-care reminder

This can, at times, be a distressing topic, please be aware of your own wellbeing needs during this discussion. You are free to leave the focus group at any time, should you need to. I will be available after the focus group has ended to talk to, or you may want to talk to your supervisor or a colleague.

Logistics

The focus group is expected to last about an hour but will take no longer than an hour and a half. Housekeeping etc.

Ground rules

Please speak one at a time.

When you do have something to say, please do so. There will likely be different levels of familiarity with the topic, everyone's opinion is valuable.

We are not trying to gain consensus but explore everyone's views.

1. I'm curious first of all about people's familiarity with the topic, and their understanding of the lives of children of veterans.
   - Does anybody have experience of this area, either professionally or personally, that they'd be comfortable to discuss.
   - If not, has there been anything in the media that people are aware of?
   - Is there anything we might be able to draw from the literature on children of serving personnel?

2. What is the role of the EP in helping to support the children of veterans?
   - How might the application of psychology be best used? What theories and models could be useful when thinking about the children of veterans?
   - Can we take anything about what we know about parents with mental health difficulties; substance misuse issues; ambiguous loss…
   - Is there anything we might draw on from positive psychology?

3. How might EPs develop their practice in relation to CoV?
   - Is there training that might help?
   - Systemic work? Systems around monitoring?
   - Is it part of routine information gathering? Should it be?

47 I: Mmm #00:06:32

48 P: And my Dad was abroad, so she had to move all of us (...) the house (...) with absolutely nothing. #00:06:35

49 I: Oh gosh #00:06:37

50 P: But I quite liked the, sort of, military group... moving around. I found it a lot easier to make friends and, sort of, everyone/ You know what's going on with everyone a bit more I guess... In that, you know if there's a parent who's been away or, there's just that threat of having to up and move again. That was probably the biggest impact, because they've got a bit better at trying not to post you abroad anymore and trying to keep you in one place for a little bit longer. #00:07:06

[handwritten note:] Common ground - Easier to make friends.

51 I: Yeah #00:07:07

ere very much used to people just coming and going , what I see now with where I work and what I saw when le, you know, wait until the end of the year... or staying he way through... it was very strange to me. #00:07:22

[yellow sticky note:] "Shock" repeated. We were a RAF family. moved to "not military at all" Difference - "All these were people who had been with their friends all the way through school" "It was very strange to me" "It was such a foreign concept"

concept (laughter) #00:07:24

Yeah, you mentioned it was a culture shock, can you t that? What was that like? #00:07:30

rying to think when did we... we moved May time. I think the summer holidays to come out, and then, sort of ks to settle. Well, it would have been eight weeks, up North are two weeks earlier. Um, so we came out 12 hours moving South... My Dad had come down earlier, because he had to come in for (...) like training, for the new job. So, it was just my Mum and my brother and the pets. I remember desperately cleaning the house at midnight because the whole march-out process is just so bizarre to try and explain to somebody who's never been through a march-out (laughter) #00:08:20

[handwritten note:] Unique military experience

[handwritten note:] ☀Difference

57 I: Yeah (laughter) #00:08:20

58 P: It's not like when you leave a rental place and you know, you can have a little bit of dust here and there, or leave the walls whatever colour you painted them, so... we were marching out at about midnight. Still cleaning for that. I remember, obviously, I was the eldest, so I had to help my Mum with that. #00:08:38

59 I: So you were a part of that #00:08:38

4

I was like 10

I mean, that was a culture shock

I was born in Scotland

I moved, we moved down to (Town) which is a really, like, just not military at all

These were people who had been with their friends all the way through school

That was the hardest thing, I think, for me

I had never lived in the same place for like, more than 4 years at this point

I actually ended up repeating a year because of the way the, um, birthdays work in Scotland

my brother and I fell in that gap

I remember being sat in a class going

I literally watched this documentary/video thing last year.

I remember being picked up

I don't know why, I just have this very clear memory

I think I was doing (...) an afterschool club

I just remember being absolutely caked in mud

I thought we were going two days later

You couldn't really make any firm plans

because you didn't really know where you'd be

I was posted when I was 18 months

All I know of that posting is... what I've been told

we went back up, when I was 5

I'd just started... I think I was in Year 1

I'd done Reception

like I said, the Scottish system is very different

I jumped up a year at that point

I was five when we moved back up

We came out when I was 10

I just remember

I know when we came South I was like 18 months old

I quite liked the, sort of, military group

I found it a lot easier to make friends

You know what's going on with everyone a bit more I guess

you know if there's a parent who's been away

they've got a bit better at trying not to post you abroad anymore

trying to keep you in one place for a little

What I see now with where I work

What I saw when I went to (Town)

people, you know, wait until the end of the year or staying in the same school all the way through

it was very strange to me

I'm trying to think

I think we were trying to get to the summer holidays to come out

I remember desperately cleaning the house at midnight

I remember

I was the eldest

I had to help my Mum with that

I was a big part of that one

I moved at the end of Year 5

I had one year left of primary school

I moved and went from one year left of primary school to the youngest in middle school

I went in to Year 5

I should have been up in Year 6

I really remember struggling

I remember making some questionable decisions

I wanted to be, sort of, accepted by people

It didn't help, that I had an accent

I just remember, being a bit like 'woah, this is different to, you know, the rural highlights of Scotland'

I think as well, adjusting to the work was different

I think, possibly, because I moved down a year

I think potentially I felt there was less academic expectation on me

I remember...

I've got some strong memories of sort of doing things in the first couple of weeks where they'd like, try and get the baseline and assess where you are

And um, not doing as well as I knew I could do

'That's amazing' and me being like, actually, it's not

I knew I was quite academically able

I remember looking at boarding school at one point

My Mum's Dad was military…. I know she went to boarding school

I liked the military aspect

I still see it

I've now been out for longer than we were in

I still see it as a big part of my life and my identity

I don't want to go down that route myself

there's a definite community feel, even when you're no longer part of it

you can sort of, relate to that, and have that conversation

I know what you're talking about, I can relate

I think that was the biggest thing when we moved

I just had nothing in common with these people I was making friends with

I had some issues not long before we moved

I was refusing to go to school

I think I felt concerned that that would continue

So I tried far too hard to fit in

I never really got in to trouble.. much

But I did make some questionable choices

Who I was hanging out with

How I was trying to impress

I definitely struggled (...) to just adapt, to everything

I felt I had almost more time to talk to people and make friends

I wanted to make good friends that I knew I could talk to

I was at the age as well

I was trying to maintain contact with some of my friends that I had previously

I've got some of them on social media now

I was in a small-ish school

I was the oldest in the school

I was one of the brighter ones in the class

Then we came down, and went into, it was a four form entry school

I suddenly had to navigate between classes

you get put into the sets

I didn't really understand it, just sort of went with the flow

I hated repeating things

If I had maybe, because I was more able

had I been challenged...

because I coasted my way through

I sort of hit, midway through A-Levels

Before I went 'Aaah, I really need to do some work'

I hadn't really learnt how to do it

What if I had been pushed more when I was younger?

Would I have learnt to work?

It was so easy because I'd done it all before

I think, I think it made it interesting with the friend

In Scotland, I was very much the youngest

I was a December baby, so I was one of the most young

moving down to England, I became the oldest

I was trying to relate and associate with my friends that I was quite close to in Scotland

who were almost a year older than me

my new friends who.. a lot of them were a good six, seven months younger than me

I wonder whether that had any impact

I always said that people just seemed to grow up faster

I don't know if that's the culture

I really struggled in terms of that relating

I don't know... all this makeup stuff that you're talking about

I mean, I started over effectively

I chose what school I wanted

off I went

I think, the experience I've had of trying to make friends and of moving around a lot actually helped with that

I was one of the people who found it easier to settle

because I had that experience

I think that's the only time I've ever gone through a school transition as well. You know, with everyone else...

I'd never done that before.

I could really pick almost

what I thought would be best for me,

and choose somewhere I wanted to be

you start to think about GCSEs,

and who I wanted to be around

I don't really want to go to that one

I spent a fair bit of time thinking about boarding or private

I think, because I related so much to my Mum and her experiences of growing up

I spent, we spent a lot of time researching,

I did, on the internet

I think, it was the first time that I had a choice

I really wanted to make sure it was a good one for me

... I got my qualifications and then I left again for sixth form

I went to a different school, because the options weren't right for me

I didn't know what I wanted to be when I went there

it had to be somewhere that I could get myself to. Transport wise.

I ended up cycling

it had to be one where I was happy to get myself to

I think that was one of the things that we were brought up

if you want to go and do it, and you're capable of getting yourself there

I think there was that level of trust in us

I remember one of my friends' Mum being terrified the first time we went in to town

that difference in independence I feel

I was allowed to make my own mistakes

I was allowed to go out and spend time with them

I was never really restricted

I guess, people never really came back to mine

I was always at theirs

It was a lot easier for me to get permission

birthday parties and things like that I found interesting

a lot of them would want to go and do... would want to go to town shopping

I could do that on a Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon no problem

they didn't tell me what I could do

I was literally that child that did literally everything every evening

I had such a busy schedule

I was allowed to travel on my own

I remember getting a bit of advice on friendships

I would sit there and feel annoyed

or feel…aaah, I don't have any friends

I definitely did struggle

I had a group of friends initially when I started

I think, as we were so close to the summer holidays

I think it was a bit of a struggle full stop

I basically got to the point where I was like

You know what, I'm just going to be myself

I did a couple of, sort of, questionable decisions

I was like…I don't really enjoy the feeling associated with all of that

I'd sort of decided

I didn't need to try so hard

I mean, every girl wants to be popular

That was never going to be me

I was too much of a swot

Once I'd accepted it was never going to be me

I felt a lot more, sort of... outgoing

Well, if we're not RAF anymore, then what are we?

I didn't necessarily have that identity to hold on to and my confidence definitely took a knock

I was a lot more quiet in class

I did all my extra-curricular stuff

You're like an entirely different person in school and out of school

I sort of, learnt how to keep my head down

I never really got that confidence in school back

I think, I do wonder, if it had anything to do with the whole identity

I didn't have one at that point as much as I used to

The military takes up a big part of who you are as a group and how you relate to people

I remember being

I think we came down South sort of Easter time to have a look at properties, and then we moved in the May

I remember being very grumpy with my Mum

I was meant to have like a dance recital

You get very, very good at putting things in to boxes and moving them

I'm great when it comes to packing

I can do it in like 10 minutes

I think I felt like I had to basically start all over again

I'm the one in my family with the Scottish birth certificate

I did have an accent at the time

I don't really remember too much about the initial period

I know how I felt and bits and pieces but the first sort of six months I think were a bit of a blur

Who actually am I within the concept of this town?

"Where are you from?"

I couldn't answer that question

It's just wasn't a question I could answer

I was the new novelty at school

I think I just got very bored of answering questions...

I got fed up of trying to explain myself

I had to validate my experiences because they were just so different

there were a couple of staff I struggled with

I mean, I remember one in particular

I wouldn't use the method that he had taught everybody

I was using the method that I had been taught

he told me I'd fail my SATs if I used my method

... I didn't have many dealings with them

I kept myself to myself

I know my brother struggled a bit with teachers

I just turned inwards and self-destructed

school was just that part of the day that you just had to go to, get through

if you are busy you don't have time to think

Now, I'm not very good at sitting in an office...

I liked the RAF aspect of where you live isn't fully military

you're used to people coming and going

That was quite a nice balance, I think

I had friends who were both military and civilian

I never lived on base

I spent a lot of my time on the base

I think, not being on the base was probably better

I think that's where the RAF is quite nice

. I know the army is much more, it's just... army

I guess, it's who you hang around with isn't it?

I think that's why it's important to have that mix of people

I learned how to entertain myself

I guess we're going to go and learn how to do something today

I had far too much energy as a kid

I was also that kid that ended up in A&E a lot

f I was by myself in the park, I'd be trying stupid things

I wasn't, sort of, one for sitting inside

I mean I was a kid whose parents both worked full time

so you've got to find something to fill the time

I had a couple of friends whose parents were great

I did an after school club

I did various dance lessons, swimming lessons, ice-skating

if I'm doing something then I'm not sat

It's why I started working so early. To just do something.

I've done mostly, it was mostly sports based.

I've done... gymnastics

I did a lot of dance

I picked up a lot more, local things. (Town) is quite big on watersports. kayaking, rowing, that kind of thing

I started working as soon as I was 16

I just.... wanted to be busy

I'd be forever coming home and going "Oh, can I try this?

can I do this?

I was hopeless at sticking to one thing

I was too busy trying everything

The whole who am I? Trying to find something

I was always the sporty one, and always the swot

I was much more comfortable with the boys

I was kicking a football around the playground with them

that was where you'd find me

I have no idea if there's any support for that type of thing

I mean, there was nothing when we transitioned out

I don't think there was any support really

I've probably gone round and round in circles.

I think the biggest points for me were when Dad came out of the RAF, and then sort of like, how long it took to settle, and the sort of academic side and the school change... it was all just a bit crazy

I mean being in, I guess it's what you're used to, because you grew up with it

I didn't really know any other way of living until I had to

I mean, I've always identified as a military kid I think

I mean, the military life, it's just really interesting

That's probably where it'll still be part of my identity

I understand

I still try to keep that

I feel I have a part, and almost a responsibility, to explain

I feel there's just a responsibility

I'm a cub leader now

I guess that's where the identity still comes

it was very much a part of my identity, because it's all I knew

I imagine

when I came out I wanted to move myself as far away from it as possible

Having that, as something I identified so strongly

I probably tried to move it away for a while

I know I definitely struggled

I think age probably played a bit of a role

I imagine if we'd come out

when I was a little bit older

I would have been more aware of other people

I would not have liked to have moved just before exams

I remember, there was always a discussion around him coming out

I think there was probably discussion

I was aware

I knew that he was applying

I think as well is when I sort of went okay, this is actually happening.

I think, I'm not sure

I don't think they give you much notice

we're quite spontaneous people, as a family

I wonder how much of that is possibly linked to the ability to just have to get on with it

I'm probably the one who likes to plan the most

I think, there's sort of, the spontaneity

it's just the ability to adapt is probably something that I gained from that experience

you don't know when someone is going to be posted

you don't know when your friends are going to move on

you don't know if your Dad is going to go abroad

You just have to get on with things

I assume they probably thought parents would have some aspects of that

moving South I don't think they knew what to do with us

I think it's very uncommon to move so quickly without even looking at schools

I remember the receptionist seemed very shocked

I'm used to it

You go to your school, you take your PE kit on the first day, just in case

Support? There wasn't any

Knowing what I know about the system

I wouldn't say there's any groups out there explicitly just for kids coming out

, nowadays, it would probably be sort of, I'd imagine there would be an ELSA

mean I imagine as well, you have a couple of schools who have the family workers

\ it's a family unit thing, I think

I think that's probably lacking

I remember explaining the Scottish school system to people over and over again

it might be improved now. But I don't really think it is

I mean, there's more emotional support in general

I know I really struggled

I was not somebody who would have been picked up even nowadays

I masked most of it

I think actually quite a lot of military kids are really good at masking

you can't say things

you've got a parent abroad, you can't show everybody that you're upset

You pick it up from whatever parent's left, they will be masking it

you do it as well

that's what you think is normal

you mask it as well

I probably, yeah, awful for masking my emotions

I just pretend they're not there

I've got a bit better over the last however many years

sixth form, I would think, before I started really thinking actually, it's okay to have a range of emotions

I was like, always the strong person

I could never have any problems

I'm listening to everybody else's

I want to just fix it and make it alright for everybody

the, sort of approach I had, of carrying on regardless

that's what you had to do

what you learned to do

you just carry on regardless

you're a military kid, or a military family

you have to

Dad goes away

I don't think we really spoke to my Dad at all

you still have to get up the next day and go to school

The military was I think is just, very much to just carry on

I think that's probably why you see so much about vets

I was like

Well, I understand civilian life

I understand that, in a way of life

it's just the awareness, I think.

I mean for me, coming out, there was nothing

I didn't even know who

if I'd wanted to talk to somebody

I wouldn't have known where to go

I'm not sure my teachers knew what to make of me

I'm still not sure there's anything in this sort of area

"They're children, they'll be alright."

I mean, I was eventually

I was lucky

I was very nearly a school refuser at the point we moved

I think it comes up mostly in conversation as I've got older

I had a friend who had a lot of army... wannabe army officer friends and there's obviously the usual sort of banter

I mean obviously, we don't like the army. We don't like the navy

it's that sort of identity, I guess, that you've held on to

I still don't feel like I've necessarily laid down roots

I don't think I'm necessarily any worse of for it

I think that's down to the people I had around me

I know some people who would have not have coped

you do learn to depend on each other and other families who are military

I had issues in Scotland for a good year or so

When you're new

you're the novel item aren't you

you're novel and everyone wants to talk to you

I had sort of more issues with bullying

I was too much of a goodie two shoes to bunk off

I definitely would have quite happily

I probably would have struggled more so than a lot of people

The bullying South was a lot more to do with things I considered more of an identity

I don't talk to anybody from middle school

I didn't follow them through upper school

I went somewhere else

I'd learned to stand on my two feet a bit better

I was... sneaky

I'd just sort of learnt to keep my head down

I don't view it as particularly happy

I had to go to it and get on with it

I know some people who look back on school as a great time

I definitely had stronger friends that weren't from school

I spent most of my time with

it's just one of those things you have to get through

I think because I struggled

I started to realise that actually, things are quite different when you're not in that environment anymore

I know my parents felt the same way

I think my Mum struggled a lot

I definitely have strong feelings about what happened when we came out

I was probably depressed

I spent a lot of time just not doing very much

I was fine when I was there

when I got there

but I was very emotional, like at home

In school, I was quiet and didn't join in with anything.

I was very emotional

I was the older one

you have to look out for little brother

I'd instruct him on how to behave

. I definitely went after a couple of...

there were a couple of girls in the year between us that were pretty grim to him

I went after them a couple of times

I'd hit my brother a few times

I'm the only one who's allowed to do that

I think there was a lot of...

I took a lot of the pressure to try and keep our troubles away from whatever my parents were going through

as much as I disliked him

I could beat up a few people for him if I wanted to..

I'd gone through it all

I would just try and like, let it bounce,

I went after them

I guess that identity

I learnt to ditch the outward showing of that quite quickly

I went through it first

I watched him go through it

I was awful to him

I clearly didn't do anything awful

you adapt I think and adjust to what it now looks like

I've got to deal with my issues

I think we're, well yeah, we all live wherever we live now.

that was when I think I needed the most external support

I was like, talk to my Mum when I was finding my own identity

I was struggling at home

then I would be struggling at school

I just didn't have anybody to talk to

I really did struggle

I just didn't know where to go or who to talk to

I guess maybe having at least some idea of where to look online might have helped

Appendix 11: Audrey's I-Poem

I think I've had quite a good experience since he's been out

To have him here for birthdays, especially...

I think he missed like, five in a row for me

I don't think we had necessarily... like... a bad experience

It's all I've known

I'd say it's a bit more weird for him

It was a good experience. It was... it was never bad

I think it's just more the fact that we had our own house away from it

I think I just got used to it

Then as you get older, you learn a bit more

And you understand a bit more

Whereas when you're younger, you don't really understand

I mean, he still goes away   they're only short trips now

You don't really have the need to get used to him being away

You get used to it

You get home from school and you don't expect him to be there, and he is there

I used to get the bus home from school

Him taking me there and picking me up, it just wasn't... it didn't feel right

You get used to it

When I was younger, it's like dinner was done and I was getting ready for bed

I got older, it got a bit more like... just waiting for him to come home

I don't think we ever had that where he was home before us

You've kind of got to learn a new routine of doing everything, instead of what you've been doing for sixteen years

I got used to it

Now it's quite nice to have him sat there waiting for you to come home.

I had all my GCSEs so he'd take me to that

I think it felt weird to him too

I don't know what the word is

I think he just got a bit annoyed

I never really saw him during the day

To see him before I went to school and then him be there when I was finished, it was weird but it was also nice

I think he was also getting frustrated

I think it was more that me, my Mum and my sister were going out

I think, he was just getting a bit

It got a bit annoying

I think we did more together

You never knew when he was going to have to go

You don't have to worry about that and he'll just.... he'll be there, so you can make plans

I think it brought us closer, as a family

I would go to my Mum because she was the one who was just always there

My Mum would always be there when I finished school and then... she wasn't

I definitely thought it brought us closer

I think she prefers being able to not have to worry

Mainly me, because I'm the youngest

How I was going to get home

He's normally there when I get back

I just wasn't used to that

You kind of get used to it after a little while

I don't quite know what he does...

I've never moved

I think we were lucky

I don't really know how living on the base works

I've never moved

I think the change is probably more for him

I think it was pretty much the same for me

I just went to school   It was more the summer holidays

I was just kind of used to being by myself

I was normally used to being with like a grandparent or something when I was younger

I got older I stayed by myself

Him being there everyday, I was a bit like.... sometimes you want to be by yourself

Then I started college

I was just there everyday, so it didn't really feel too different

The first experience I have of him going away

I was,

I don't remember it,

I always get told it by my Mum,

I think I was 3 or 4 months

Worrying if I was actually going to be able to be around my Dad

I hadn't really had, I'd only had my Grandad

If I was going to... recognise him

I remember... he was meant to be there for my birthday, my 15th birthday, and then he got the call

I think birthdays and Christmas are the hardest

I think I was just grateful

I did actually have him

I knew that he'd come home

I think for me to still have my Dad in my life

I think I just felt quite lucky

I just got used to it

It was more of a relief I think

I think it was more of a relief for all of us that he'd actually got the job

He'd be a bit down about it, so you'd have to try and... make him feel a bit more positive

I felt, it did make me feel a bit sad

It brings you down a bit

You try

You don't want them to feel like that... try to make them feel positive

You can't show them that you're worrying

I was just... I need to cheer him up a bit

You've got to... talk positive

You know... it's kind of hard

I'm more used to... my Mum being more upset

I've seen him cry once

I wasn't really used to him showing any sort of feelings or emotions

I only remember one Christmas where he wasn't there

I think I got a bit emotional

I was in secondary school

I was the only one in my year that had a military Dad

None of the friends I have now have had military Dads

Since I've been in College, he hasn't really been in the military

I don't really mention it

In Secondary school, primary school, it was a bit more of a big thing for me

I think I was the only one in primary school as well

I think I was a bit more upset when he went away

People would start asking why I was upset

I'd tell them

You're a service child

You get a bit more support through school

You get like free school trips

They give you all your books

In case you move

I think it's just because I was upset every time he went away, people just find out

I got to college and he wasn't really in the military

I just... never mentioned it

I don't know. I don't really talk about it much anymore

I don't really know what's come up about it

I haven't spoken about it with new people

I did like it

 I just didn't

I didn't like it if teachers would mention it

For me, like... that everything was prepaid

I just don't really like a big deal being made out of it

I knew they were all prepaid

I knew I'd just give the form back

I didn't have to worry

I would have to kind of just tag along

We didn't really have a lot of time to go out and get all the books

I'd have had someone who could actually take me

I was going to get them

I didn't need to stress about getting them

I didn't really see the support in primary school

You don't really get as many supplies there

I remember

I remember he came back

I was getting ready to leave and one of my friends ran in saying that my Dad was here

The only thing I can remember was him just being there when I finished

I think I cried

I was the first one who got to see him

I felt a bit.... special

I don't think I'd ever really had that before where he'd surprised me

That's one of the main memories I've got

I can't really remember

I did mention to some teachers that he'd gone away

I was worried

I spoke to a teacher about that and they tried to reassure me

I don't really remember any other support

I don't really think I've mentioned it as much

I probably didn't understand it as much

I don't think I needed the support as much when I was younger

I didn't really understand stuff

I think mainly having our own home was a big contributor

I'd been used to it since April as well

I had a little bit of time to adjust

I don't really know what would make it steady

I think it... I don't know really

I knew he was going to come out

I was going to school and stuff

You're still doing your everyday routines so you just kind of adjust back in that

I don't really like change

I literally do the same thing everyday

I think, being able to still do the same thing everyday like go into school

You kind of don't think about it as much

You kinda knew you were going to get birthdays back

That's what I was most excited about

The one thing I was looking forward to the most

I was kind of like "Are you actually going to be there or are you going to end up going away?"

I think I'm a bit more like, jealous of the fact that he's always there for my sister's birthday

I think it was just nice to actually have him there

Rather than having a picture of him on Facebook with a little sign saying Happy Birthday

I got that for five years

I got used to the little sign

He almost missed my 18th

I made a fuss

My 18th was the one birthday I didn't want him to miss

I don't mind if he misses...

I won't be there for my next birthday anyway

I'm going to go to Uni

I'll be by myself

I just wanted him there for my 18th

I was just like... really wanting him there for my 18th

I was quite happy

I kind of got a bit emotional

I thought that he was just going to be there for every birthday

It kind of felt like he was still... it felt like old times

But then when he actually managed to change it

I didn't know he would be able to do that

I think there's a lot of things that have happened in the time that he's come out

That have brought us closer together as a family I think

It's good, I think, yeah

I think we're just able to talk more together

I was always worried to talk to him

I would always go to my Mum

I don't think he believed in emotions at one point

I think I just found it weird

It didn't affect me too much

I was still getting on with going to school

I didn't really think about it

It made you worry a bit

You were kind of hoping he got something

You kind of worried for him

It didn't affect me too much

It just felt really weird to have him at home before I even...was there

I'd never had that before. It was something to adjust to

I was just worrying about him stressing and worrying that he was alright

I think it was worrying him and it started to worry us

I think he was just winding himself up a bit

It hasn't really affected me too much

It kind of stresses you out

You don't worry too much, he's just stressed

I don't know how to explain it... you just kind of know when he's stressed

You kind of tell him he's stressing over nothing

You kind of laugh at it, but if it was something actually serious,

I'd probably take it a bit more seriously...

You've kind of got to teach him about, what to wear

I have definitely seen him change a bit with emotions...

I kind of think that when you're in the military

You don't really have the time to get in touch with your emotions

I think he was just used to shutting it away

I think it's probably that he's not seeing what he used to see

You'd ask him about it and he'd just shut it down

He would never even let you mention it

When he went to Iraq.... I never knew

You'd ask him and he wouldn't respond

He either went before I was born or when I was young

I think it was me still being in my normal routine

I was kind of still going to school

I think if I wasn't going to school, and I was at home with him everyday, that would be weird

I'd be used to being by myself

I'd be used to him going to work

I think me still being in my routine was kind of good

I don't really know what else

Instead of having my Mum take me to school and me getting the bus home, it was just my Dad doing it

I don't think he'd ever done it before

I used to get dropped off in town and then have to get the bus

I think there was one other person whose Dad was in the Navy

I think, it kind of allowed you to disconnect

Instead of still being in the military environment even when you're at home

I think that did help

You weren't part of that environment, you were just a normal one.

I went with him to work sometimes

I quite enjoyed that

I used to just go and sit with the dogs

I'd just entertain myself

I'd just sit there and I'd draw

I got too old for going, so I stopped

I did enjoy it

If I had an INSET day, or if I was maybe ill

I'd like ask to go

I'd just go with him

I found it quite interesting.

I used to sit... and stare out of the window

I found it quite interesting to sit there and watch them

I was kind of just fascinated by all of that

I kind of just... got used to it

I got to that age

I could stay at home by myself

I would just stay home and do work

I used to go to... they used to have, for his squadron, some meet ups at the cricket club

I used to go to that with him

I like it

I used to do that

You get to go in the (Aircraft), which is great

I did used to really enjoy it

It kind of got to the point where there was nothing for me to really do there

It would be, better off if I was at home

I never really went as much

I don't really think I went in his final couple of years

I got over it.

I never really mentioned it

I might of mentioned it

It was never really something that I liked to bring up

I don't know why

I felt like if I brought it up people might make a fuss

I liked it to be like my own little thing that no-one else really knew

I posted a picture for prom

I had to delete it, because he was in his uniform

I didn't really like to share it that much

I was just kind of used to it

It's the only thing I've ever known

I've been told from a young age to not make a big deal out of it

It didn't really bother me not talking about it

Sometimes when you talk about it, it just makes you a bit sad.

I was just kind of, liked, because I was her sister

I knew that if there was a teacher that I needed to say anything about it...

I could say it to him

I never really needed to.

I don't think there'd be much of a change

I'd probably just be less worried about him now than I was back then

I think that's the only thing that's kind of changed

I worry less

I worried about what would happen to him when he went away

Now, when I worry about him, he's actually at home

You kind of worry that like, maybe something is wrong, but then it's kind of, it's not the same kind of worry.

I wasn't going to have to be stressed about the bus before my exams

I was worried about if my bus was going to be late but... he took me everyday

I had an operation after he left, which meant that he was at home with me,

No-one was worrying about who was going to look after me.

I went to college

I just kind of forgot about it

I'd only just started

I was still in the phase of trying to get used to college

I was still trying to get used to that

I was kind of just focusing on myself and what I needed to do, rather than him

I kind of just left that to my Mum

I don't really know what I did

I think I just kind of, tried to ignore it

You kind of just, when someone else is stressed it just kind of naturally stresses you a bit

I wouldn't mention it to him

I knew it would stress him out

I had to kind of try and ignore it

I don't think there was anything that made it easier

I'd just block it out.

I haven't ever moved

I've only ever lived in the same house.

I think it made it a bit easier

I think it made it a bit easier for her, not having to drop me off

I was having to get the bus home

I got to school on time

I'd be able to do that with my Dad.

When I was younger

I thought she was in full time work

I didn't realise she wasn't in full time work until I was older

She discussed it with me

I was the one that it was going to affect most

Making sure I was alright.

Appendix 12: Rita's I-Poem

I think, when my Dad left, it was like... a massive change

I actually found it, I found it so emotional

I felt like, there was always pride in me

I didn't really get what he did.

I still didn't really understand

That was definitely something that I struggled with

when I was younger

I would think why is everyone else's parents around?

I didn't get why he would have to go away

I had my Mum, but I didn't understand

I was obviously so young

I can't remember

I was frustrated at times

I got to the stage where I realised

I understood more

for me

the type of person I am, a tiny bit of resentment.

I didn't get it

I didn't understand

I.. got frustrated

When my Dad was away I used to get bullied

a catch-22 for me

Getting older, I understood more

It turned from this resentment to this pride

I thought if he's like he is with us at home, he must drive everyone insane

That actually wasn't the case

I spoke to loads of people

I was able to understand the impact

I was talking to some people

how old was I? I think I was 20 when he left

I think... I think he struggled

It drove me insane

I think a few people get that their parents aren't in the Forces anymore and it's just like, it's such a big... adjustment

I was so grateful when he got a job

I think that's the one thing I have noticed throughout

regardless of whether I was 14, 20, whatever

how you feel is just... not necessarily discussed

I've been ill the past…

I've been ill since I was 14

I know my Dad really struggled with it

I've definitely noticed, because they are so logical

I was in treatment

I was with someone whose partner is also in the Armed Forces

Put everything into these boxes… whereas like, I don't.

I feel like maybe if we would have spoken about it then it might have been different

it's kind of like what you grow up being used to

That doesn't mean that I would do it any differently

I would say my Dad really struggled

He cannot fix my problem

I haven't ever moved around

I hadn't moved

I stayed grounded and at the same schools

I've never moved out of the house

Which I'm grateful for

I think if I'd been upped and moved and upped and moved, it would have made it so much worse

I am proud of him, very proud of him

I think, oh my God, if he didn't go back into that job.

I don't know what we'd have done.

I don't think they can not do anything

I know he found it difficult

I think a lot of people have it,

When you go away for a prolonged period of time

Then you come back

But everyone else is functioning fine without you

I know when he would come home

That kind of adjustment period that you go through for a little while

I think is very much the same as when he left

I know I'm the same

if I then sit at home and don't really have much purpose or structure to my day

I really struggle

I irritate people

I'm quite like my Dad

I will wind people up

I think him and Mum clashed quite a bit

I did say "Please tell me that you guys are not going to get divorced"

He doesn't go away for months... but you kind of expect it to happen

You're kind of like oh, he'll be going soon, but he never goes

It was definitely like a massive transition for the whole family

I don't even know what he was doing

I left school and went straight into work

I was at College all the time, or in Year 11 and then at College

I was out...

I commuted to (Town)

I was out all day everyday, so he was kind of by himself.

I think, from that... again it's that, put into a box

I think that's the case for a lot of things

You just close the box

We just don't talk about it.

Whereas like, for me, or other people... it's like everything kind of connects to form different things

When you bring something up

We just don't talk about it

If you talk about anything that I've been through this year

We don't need to talk about that. That can make things difficult

If I was at home

Which I have been for the past God knows how long

I wasn't there all the time

I moved out

I wasn't.. I wasn't there

I moved home just before Dad started work again.

I would find the same thing,

"What do I do? What's going on?"

I think that's like only natural

an adjustment for a family to say the least, I think.

I wasn't there, so, I was there for some of it, but not all of it

I think it was like, it was like a control battle

I struggled too

I did worry

You just pick up and it just becomes like... this is what's going on, that's fine.

I'm very glad that that happened.

I don't know how much longer I could have coped with it,

I don't know what it would have been like if he didn't get a job

I do worry about what he would have done.

It changed from when I was younger to when I got older

When you get older you also realise the risks

You don't necessarily realise when you are younger

As I became older, I became more proud

I was really proud

I remember, I've always been proud of him

I would say more so when, after he retired.

I was still like "What do you do?"

I was still like, I don't really get it

I know he's been to certain places

Even now, I'll always be like "Yeah, Dad works in the military"

You get those questions

I didn't have any friends whose parents were in the military

I didn't have that

I didn't really know anyone that was going through the same thing

I'm still proud of everything that he has done

I'm very proud of my Mum

I think that a lot of the time

I think a lot of people forget

I think a lot of people forget

I think there's always like that, kind of always, forgotten in a respect

I think that is forgotten sometimes

It's all behind the scenes stuff I think

I think my Mum sometimes

"You wouldn't have been able to do it without that"

I do completely get what she's saying

I was working

Where I've been ill

I've been in and out of treatment

I rely on my parents

more than I used to

Than I did a few years ago

my Dad will work at home with me

My Mum has worked at home with me

them putting the effort into me

to make sure that I was fine

I am 22, but I do have to rely on my parents

I'm still not fully recovered

Still? I don't know

Maybe it's different for me

I'd not lived at home, then lived at home.

I was horrible

I have Anorexia so

I put my parents through hell

I didn't eat

when I was 14

I wasn't eating

I was very sick

I hadn't eaten for God knows how long

I saw him upset

I've definitely noticed, he gets very frustrated

He couldn't fix me

He couldn't make me better

That's what I've given him, a problem that is difficult

I was sick quite a lot

He couldn't take me to treatment

He couldn't bear to leave me

The second time, he actually dropped me off

Which was actually what I needed

I am hard to be around

I still struggle

I don't know

I wouldn't have had it any other way though

I wouldn't.

I definitely wouldn't have had it any other way

I wouldn't change it.

I had a good childhood.

I had a lovely childhood

I wouldn't have wanted my Dad to do anything else

I don't know, it's just my Dad

I wouldn't change him for the world

because of like where, where Dad works, I still feel like he's in the military

I don't feel like he's not

I still think he's like in the military

which I think is good

I think it's just because it's what we know

the same stuff that I still don't get

I can't really think of anything else to say

I don't really think about it a lot, it's just life

I think if we'd have moved round it would have been different

I'm like, kinda grateful that my Dad didn't do that

I struggle with not being in control

I know I struggled with certain things

If I would have moved around

I would have really not coped with that

This is what we all know

I'm still, not as good

that's fine, because I'm not well

I'm still at home

sometimes Dad stays at home with me

sometimes my Mum stays at home with me

I've been removed from the family

I've been in treatment

I feel like, I'm that person

I feel like my Dad felt

I was the person that was taken out and then had to be put back in

I can kind of relate

I came back in after going

I felt that adjustment in trying to fit back in

I'm kind of adjusting back in

I'm very grateful

I chose to fight

I'm very grateful that my family have supported me

My family are really good

It's a lot better, it's a lot different, than when he wasn't working.

You can definitely feel the difference between the two, completely

I can tell you that much

I can't believe how quickly time goes

I wasn't there all the time

the times I was there, I was like "Oh God"

I definitely became "I'm fine"

"there's nothing wrong with me" put it in a box

I would just say I'm fine

I did learn that from Dad

I think some of it, it is, from my Dad

It's just easier to numb feelings, which is what I've done

I know it's what my Dad does

I felt so sorry for him

Which is what I find difficult

that's what I used to do

I can't do that anymore

I feel like I've said what I needed to say.

Appendix 13: Rita's We-poem

We kind of came along

We just don't do emotions

We don't talk about that

We don't really... We don't really

If we would have spoken about it then it might have been different

Some families are like "Oh, we talk about all of that all the time."

We don't.

We never moved around.

I don't know what we'd have done.

When we were younger to the same age

We just got on with life

We knew, we knew he wasn't there

We had all been doing it

We've lost someone

And we just don't talk about it

We just don't talk about it

We don't need to talk about that

We came along when Dad was still away

We had to adjust into it

How we would have coped

We probably would have all moved out (laughter)

We didn't go to the school where a lot of the military children went.

We didn't live on base

I didn't really know anyone that was going through the same thing as we went through

We're a lot older

We had that adjustment period

it's what we know

That familiarity of what we know

If we'd have moved round it would have been different

Stay where we were

This is just what we know

Whereas this is what we all know

We have to deal with it in a similar way

Appendix 14: Sophia's I-Poem

I think, probably

I don't know

I can't remember

How old was I?

He came out when I was in Year 7 and went back in when I was finishing 6th form.

Not 6th form, I was finishing Year 11.

I spent a lot of time with him

I really struggled when he went back into the army

I'd spent so much time with him

I was really emotional when he went back in

I was like "Ah, okay then, see you later."

I thought it was really weird

I'd never been like that

I mean, it wasn't horrible struggling

I was quite emotional about it

I'd spent quite a lot of time with him whilst he'd been off

I was in year 7

and he got back in when I'd just finished Year 11.

I just remember it being so weird

I remember moving out from camp

I don't think I struggled too much

I don't know

I think he went to America

I did like it because, because I was going into a different school

I don't think it was as scary for me

it wasn't like I was leaving loads of my friends.

I mean

I've moved around like, every three years of my life

I think, you just adjust quite well

I think anyway

I look back on myself and I'm like.

I always compare myself to other people

I feel like because I was an army kid

I just sort of look at it very different

Adjusting to something like that wasn't too much for me

I don't remember it being too hard in the slightest.

I think there was loads of trouble just with work and stuff

I think my Mum kind of expected him not to be away as much

I think she just thought "Right, he's going to be home now."

I know it was quite a difficult time

Me and my sister, I think, were kind of oblivious to it

I think it was quite a difficult time for my Mum and Dad

I don't remember it being really hard in the slightest

I know that my Mum... I think my Mum found it the hardest.

I think I just missed the fact that

when you're on camp, it's just... you just walk out and you feel safe

I think that was the one thing that was really different.

I'd just finished my GCSEs

I had a whole summer with him

I spent a lot of time with him

I think at that point he'd been in and out of... he was trying to find... he had his own business

I think it was sort of the first time in my life that my Dad had been home constantly.

I remember the first time he came in when he was about to go back in to the Army

he came in in his uniform

I think I got really emotional about it

I felt really proud

I was really sad

I've been so used to him being home.

I get so many people like

I think my Mum is probably the same

I get lots of people being like "Do you not find it really horrible your Dad being away?"

I'm like, I don't really know any different to be honest

You get used to it

I just got used to being with my Mum.

I don't think I can really remember anymore.

I'd lived in Army accommodation my whole life

We moved into a really nice house

I could walk to school

I could walk to shops

I did really like it

I can do whatever I want now

I could

I could see that we were potentially going to live in it for longer.

I, yeah so, it was obviously a really big change

it was me leaving school, leaving my little Army school, close knit community

I don't remember it being too much

I remember it being, it was probably really scary for me

I think I just adjusted really well to it

I just.. you just do that as an Army kid

You just adjust to it.

The people I'd hang out with on camp

There was one girl that I knew from primary school

I think that made such a huge difference

I had someone that I could go to school with

when I went up to High School

I think that's what helped me a lot

I had someone in town, that I could spend time with

I did

I became really, really close with her

I could walk to school with my friend

I still had all my friends there.

How did I feel about it when I moved?

I think I was really sad

I'd had my friends living over the road

I went in Year 5, left in Year 6/7

I think that was quite hard

you live in each other's houses when you live on camp

I don't think it was too horrible

I still had the advantage of my Mum working up on camp

I would go back on camp

I would go on the school bus with my friends to go to their house

I think, also, because they had gone up to the same high school as me, it wasn't too much of a difference

I was only losing the house

I was only leaving that, losing that

I still had the same, all the people

I just remember my two closest friends that I would always spend my time with were, they were moving to the same school.

I don't know

I look at it now and see...

I remember when I was a kid

I remember the first day that we moved up on camp

I think like, everyone becomes friends

I remember, we'd just hang out with everybody.

I loved that

I always say

I wouldn't have it any different

I know so many people...

I've got friends all over the world.

you are such... it's such a close-knit community

you have your childish fallouts and stuff like that

I don't know

you get on with it

I remember when we lived in Germany

I remember, you'd walk out on the door... in the summer, everyone, all the parents would be out on their doorsteps

You'd know your neighbours so well

you'd always be in and out of the houses

I loved that

I'm so glad that I had a childhood that was like that

It's so nice that I kind of got to do that

I didn't, I didn't just get to know kids my age

I got to know their parents really well

I've got loads of the parents of the kids that I used to go school with

I have them on Facebook

I can see what they're doing and all that

the whole atmosphere and community of being on the camp, I really enjoyed

I definitely really enjoyed.

I think it was quite hard

you've gone from

you can go out at whatever time

You've got everyone

you've got little kids and you've got older kids

I don't know, you don't feel vulnerable

you don't feel like anybody could approach you

you come into town

I mean, our town is really lovely, it's fine

you had a little bit more restrictions.

you couldn't go out until this time at night

I'd be a bit more scared of going to certain places

I think that with the age that I was as well

you stopped going out and playing out as much when I started high school

you'd just go and meet up with your friends instead

I think it was quite hard, moving from there

I still liked it

it was something different I'd never experienced before.

I'm pretty sure he went to work in America first

I'm pretty sure it was America.

I think it was (city) so he went to (city) first

I think, and he worked in (city) for I don't know how long

I think that was in (city) maybe

then he went over to America

I don't think it was too different

I think it was just the fact that we were potentially go and move over there

I think it was more exciting that he was living in America

I remember we did a little, my parents now class it as like a budget holiday.

I don't think I remember it as being crazy different

It's something that I'd experienced... My Dad being away

I don't think he... I don't think he came home in that time

I think he stayed in America for the 18 months

But I don't remember it being really hard

I don't remember it being too hard on my Mum

I don't know if that's because I was so young

I didn't really talk to my Mum about that kind of stuff

I don't think I really thought about how I felt about my Dad being over there

I think I was just more proud and more excited

My Dad works in America. I get to go to America.

I always kind of.

"Oh, that's probably because I'm an Army kid."

I look at, I always feel that I look at things very differently

I always refer to myself as an Army kid

I think... I don't know why

I've been... kind of out of that kind of side of it

I don't really class myself as an Army kid now,

I think it's just because that's how I grew up

I can't, yeah.. maybe it is part of my identity. Slightly.

I don't think so

I just noticed...

... I think it became more clear, that I was an Army kid

how different I was to other kids

For the first time in my life I was

so almost for the first time in my life when I understood it

I was mixed with kids that weren't

I had a few, but it was nowhere near as many.

you change friendship groups when you go up to secondary school

you meet new people

I think... I don't think it changed...

I didn't stop identifying as an Army kid

but I, I felt like I was a lot, it showed a lot more

because of how I dealt with friendships

I've never been a person to need people

I'm quite independent

I kind of, I don't know... I'm glad I am

I honestly credit it to my childhood

I'd only ever have my Mum, my Dad and my Sister

It was a good thing I think.

how I dealt with situations I think

I had, I'd had the friends that I'd had

I wasn't glued to them

I'd go off and find other friends

for the first year of secondary school...I probably did

I stayed with people

I stayed in a friendship group

People that I went to primary school with, so that were Army kids, and then people that weren't

I stayed with them for probably about a year

I kind of, started being with other people who weren't Army kids.

I remember being older

even now, I will speak to people

I'll be like "Why do I feel like I'm getting on with them so well? I don't understand it"

I'll be like "So you're an Army kid!"

I don't understand how it.. it just kind of works

I don't know how they're so different, but they just are

I would kind of compare it to how I look at Army and life and stuff

I'm quite easy going

I just had my Mum and Dad and my sister at some points

you become so, so close

Me and my Sister growing up

she's my best friend

I love her to pieces

I don't know, we've learnt to live with each other like that.

I look at other people who have got that

I think it must... it has to be how we've grown up, I guess.

I remember it always being really good

I think my Mum probably thinks that me and my Sister probably struggled

I don't ever remember my Dad being away that much

but I know that he was

I think, it's kind of in the back of my mind that it's never been a problem

you just kind of get used to it

I think it just brought us closer as a family

you counted down to your Dad getting home

I don't remember it being a really bad thing.

It was never a negative thing, I don't think, my Dad being away

I think it just brought us close together

I think my parents made such, they did such a lot with us

I always remember doing a lot as a family

I don't feel like I missed out

I feel like I gained more than others

I was really lucky.

I think it took a while

I know that certain things in his life

I know that when he first... was like home for good... he really struggled

I think that was a real struggle

I definitely... it was weird having him home

I think it was probably a lot harder on my Mum.

I know he couldn't stay in the house by himself

I just remember he couldn't be at home by himself

I remember he ended up

I was probably about 15

I worked in a little farm shop

I remember he was doing their website

He was like "I can't be at home" so he just went down to the farm shop.

It was nice for me and my sister because it was like "My Dad is there."

I think that's why I struggled so much when he went back

I was just very emotional about it

I know he'll be 10 times happier

I know my Mum will be happier.

It was just when I finished my GCSEs

I was with him all of that summer

I was just about to go into 6th form

I wasn't particularly changing environments

I think it was just that I'd had such a long time off

I was going into something a bit, a bit different

I was not going to be at home all the time like I had been over the summer, and with him either

I don't know why

I didn't realise I was that close to him

I now know, because me and him are very, very similar

we did quite a bit together

we'd go and do stuff together, which was nice

I don't know, if he was popping to Homebase and doing one of his DIY things

I'd always go with him

Wherever he'd go, I'd always go with him

I think that's why

I spent so much time with him

I just remember being quite emotional about it

I am a bit emotional like that

But I didn't realise I was emotional like **that.**

just a bit of a shock to the system I think.

I think so

I think I did

I had a friend who, she wasn't Army

I remember being quite close with her

I had a boyfriend, and I think he was quite supportive over it

My Mum as well, she made sure that I was okay

I don't think it affected my sister as much as me

My Mum was really good to me... and made sure that I was okay.

I don't know...

I think he went through a mid-life crisis slightly

I don't know the ins and outs of it

I know a lot of stuff went on

I think it was.. it was like PTSD

It wasn't until that that I ever knew he ever suffered from anything like that

I know now

I think it's quite a lot of Army men, I hear

I dunno...

I thought, I think it was really weird

I'd never seen, I've never ever seen my Dad kind of like... be sad

I've never seen him angry and I've never seen him sad

I think to see him during that kind of... period

I'd always seen him as such a positive person

I noticed.

I was so happy that he'd gotten back in

I knew that it was something that he wanted

it was something that we all knew..

I don't think he ever had... negative thoughts

I don't think it was ever really hard-hard on him

I never knew what he experienced or how he felt about it

I think it's just that I've grown up

I can understand it a bit more

I can kind of... understand when my Mum is telling me about it

I didn't know that until the last few years

I understand him a little bit more now

I understand what he's gone through

I don't think

I just know that he does get sad, every now and again

I'd always seen him as being such a positive person

It probably just made me realise... oh yeah... he is normal.

never changed anything about how I felt, or looked at him

I thought, it's just what he's been through.

I think it was just, it probably became quite a lot

he didn't have a job, so I think that's why it became so tricky

I know that she really struggled

he kind of turned to me and would open up to me about it

Which, I appreciated, but it was also kind of hard.

I think...

I'm a barber

I speak to a lot of squaddies..

I think when people actually go out there, they end up struggling

I think... especially when my Dad got out

I don't think there was as much support for people getting out of the Army

I feel like when people are on civvy street, you do, you only care about yourself

Whereas when you're in the Army

you're all in the same boat and you always look out for the other people.

I don't reckon I knew it back then

I reckon... now I look back on it

I think if it had been when we lived in Germany

I think I would have struggled a lot more

I was changing, going from a different school anyway

I think my Mum really... it was just weird for her

I think she just really missed it.

I, I look back on it now and I swear when I would have lived up on camp

I don't remember coming out into town

if you wanted to go to the shop you could nip up to the Spar

If you wanted to go to the cinema, the cinema was on camp

I only had one friend who lived outside of camp and I probably went to her house

I was only like Year 7 at the time, I was still young.

I feel like the whole thing that goes with the Army, everyone sticks together.

I was, when we were really little

moving to the (town) school is the first place I ever remember going to a place that wasn't just Army kids

I started in Year 2, we were only there for 18 months

I think we struggled quite a bit trying to adjust to that

I was obviously so young

I don't know, I didn't really think of it as being that different

now, looking back, I'm like, yeah, that was probably a lot different for me.

I'd never been to a school that was like, no Army kids really.

I don't think it's been too bad, because I've kind of grown up in it now

I've kind of been in the civvy world

I think for my Dad that's where he really struggled with it

For me, I don't think it... it hasn't changed too much

I've just known that people are very different.

I've only been to four schools in my life

I've known have gone to like 21

You just kind of get on with it, I think

I feel like people who don't move that often would probably find, I don't know, they'd probably... find it really, really difficult

I don't, I quite enjoy moving

I've lived in houses for 3 years for my whole entire life

I know that, because I'm still living at home

I know that I'm not going to stay in this house for that long

I've probably only got a year or two left

I think because it's Mum and Dad's own house now, it's not so bad, because we can change it

You get bored of it

When you get bored of something you can change it

, but with all the Army houses, you get bored with it

you can't do anything to decorate how you want to

so you just end up getting restless.

I'm like, I'm settled in (town) now

I'm quite a home bird now

I just want to find a house and settle down for a long time now

I'm pretty happy

I'm just happy to settle

I think I've become a person who, I like to change stuff a lot

I don't like it when it's all just the same all the time

I think that's probably to do with being in the Army.

I'm quite independent

I don't need people

I've never relied on friends or anything like that

I have my family

I'm really close to my Mum, my Dad and my sister

I just don't have the need to have a massive group of friends

I have a small group of friends

I don't feel, I just don't think I can deal with the drama from it

I think that's from moving around

You don't have friends there for that long

I'm quite independent in that way.

I just can't deal with girls the majority of the time

I've always stuck with boys

I've moved every three years, I've not had to deal with drama for too long

I'll just be best friends with boys instead

I'm happy with just having my family

I have one friend who I try and see every month

I only have one day a week where I can see anybody

I work Saturdays and I have Sunday, Monday off

I find it really difficult to try and juggle everybody

I try and juggle my Mum, my Sister, my boyfriend and my friend all on the Sunday

I have a friend who's very chilled and she's like "We'll just go out for dinner once a month"

That's fine with me.

I don't feel like I'm lonely

I don't look at it like that, because, I never seem to be lonely

I've always got someone to speak to if I need it

I'm really close to his family as well

I look at them as my friends

I don't need anybody else

I'm pretty content how I am.

I don't like it when a friendship, where it's really full on

That just becomes too much to cope with I think

I've never really had that

That's one thing, when I went up to the Highschool

I found really weird, was how people had grown up together and had been best friends all that time

That was weird to me

I don't think I really liked it that much

I don't think I liked it

I was just like "no", it became too much

I'd never had that before so, I didn't need it

I did have close friends but, the majority of the time, my close friends had always been Army kids

They were on the same level as me

I just kind of... I think I just kept myself to myself

I was never too bothered about it

If one of my Army friends ended up getting into a really good friendship

I'd probably hurt for a little bit but then I would just kind of get over it.

I probably would have come home and told my Mum

I'm quite open

I can't hide my emotions

If I'm sad, I kind of have to get them off my chest

I'll cry or something like that

If there was something wrong and I hadn't coped at school

I probably would have told my Mum

I think about it now

I never see kids playing out

As a kid I always playing out

I was always with different people all of the time

I think that's just because I lived on camp

I kind of notice it now

I look back on it and I see kids that age

I'm just like, I never see kids out

I do notice

I think it must be an Army thing.

I almost feel like they kind of grew up faster than I did

I don't know, you like... maybe you're just exposed to a little bit more when you're not in the Army

you're not exposed to kind of people going out and drinking from a young age, or smoking, or any of that

I feel like maybe my friends kind of, they were exposed to that a lot more

I think their kind of attitudes to that were different to mine

Maybe I was a little bit like, I don't know, a little bit more closed to it

I didn't really understand it

It wasn't until I was older that I was actually into it.

I was fine, it was great.

I'm so glad I was an Army kid

I always look at it as a positive thing

I got to know all these different people.

Appendix 15: Examples of Initial TA Codes

Code	Text	Sources/Refs
Experience working with MCC	Rebecca: It was a quite a long time ago… was it Iraq, I think, and our service were quite involved with supporting the schools around that… I have that kind of experience… and I remember doing some work with families. Dave: As a teacher, there were some children who had parents in the military. Rebecca: And that's reminded me actually, with the (school)… They asked for a bit of flexibility in EP time because of the movement of children in and out of school.	
Personal experience of MCC	Dave: Growing up as a child I was quite close to a base, so I went to school with some children whose parents were in the military	
Reported limitations & uncertainty of experience with CoV	Rebecca: I think that was my only experience in that sort of field Dave: But not veterans as such, to my knowledge. Aaraon: I've had no experience, as far as I know. So, it's all new to me. Niamh: That's probably the extent of my knowledge of what it's like, very, very limited. Dave: Some veterans have suffered with that, a little, limited knowledge on that. But I don't know what impact that actually has on their children. I'd imagine it would be pretty difficult, but I haven't heard… I haven't read anything about that. Rebecca: I don't think I know very much about it. Lisa: I don't have any experience, so me trying to have a chat about that probably would have been inappropriate and I would have bodged It badly. So, I can fully understand why they wouldn't want to engage. How can I talk to them about something… my knowledge is so limited about?	
Difficulty identifying CoV	Lisa: I suppose it's interesting in terms of whether we would know… in terms of how we would ever identify… how we would ever know	

• Discussion Point
• Link focus group to wider socio-political context Lack of monitoring of CoV, and 'victims or heroes'. Lack of awareness of transition and lifestyle changes.
(Braun + Wilkinson)

• LATENT:
Invisibility of CoV

Hypothesising / Wondering Aloud
Relevant knowledge

Limitations + uncertainty
Difficulty identifying CoV
"How would we ever know?"
CoV and pupil premium
"I guess we didn't differentiate the means or why they were pupil premium"
Difficulty identifying MCC
"I think perhaps we wouldn't necessarily know"

LATENT:
Lack of confidence / Anxiety
Fear of getting it wrong
Making Assumptio[ns]
"You don't want to put forward a view that could actually be quite judgmental"
Questioning own competence
"How can I talk to them about something my knowledge is so ..."
Questioning thinking
"I didn't really think about it at the time"
"I don't know whether I kind of dealt with that in the right way"

Gaps in knowledge
Desire Need for increased awareness
"I think as a service we probably need some awareness raising"

...ing on military bases
"I'm just thinking about those parents who live on bases"

Role of EP
- Information sharing
- Hypothesising
Sharing guidance/ info
"Something that we could pass on to schools"

Possible difficulties for CoV
"That could have been really difficult for families"

Releve[nt] kn[owledge]
Consid[er] wider "I suppo[rt] the psy[...] around develo[...]
Posi[...]
"Pote[...] like re[...] flexi[...]

Potential Difficulties Associated with CoV status
Repetition of diagnosis.
CoV as a vulnerable group
"It does seem that the things that would make life difficult would not immediately drop away"
Difficulties faced by veterans
Veterans in the media.
Talking about veterans who are homeless

• Personal and Professional experience with MCC
Experience working with MCC
Personal experience of MCC
"Growing up as a child, I was quite close to a base"

MCC and CoV as vulnerable
MCC and CoV as resilient

MCC Difficulty
"Looking at the resilience checkli[st]

...distin[...] group
"It's just part of the picture"
"They might have certain shared characterist[ics]

Relevance of CoV status to hypothesising
"It's one more thing to think about"