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**Unpicking social work practice skills:
An interactional analysis of engagement and
identity in a groupwork programme
addressing sexual offending**

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2019

Declaration

I, Eve Mullins, declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Parts of this work have been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Social Work Practice and Criminology & Criminal Justice*.

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Abstract

The importance of the working relationship between people who have offended (clients) and criminal justice social workers (practitioners) as a vehicle for promoting rehabilitation is increasingly recognised. To build and maintain effective working relationships practitioners must demonstrate key practice skills, including empathy, warmth and respect. Previous research has used quantitative methods demonstrating links between aggregated categories of practitioner skills and outcomes post intervention, and qualitative research interviews retrospectively exploring individuals' views of compulsory supervision or intervention. However, this research has not clarified how these skills are demonstrated in interaction, how they function to promote engagement or the potential micro-mechanisms of change which contribute to rehabilitation and desistance, i.e. the cessation of offending. To address these gaps, I used the innovative qualitative methods of discourse analysis and conversation analysis to examine what happens when practitioners and clients talk to each other, what happens in the 'black box'.

I analysed video-recordings of twelve groupwork sessions from the groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending in Scotland, 'Moving Forward: Making Changes'. This rolling programme works with adult men convicted of sexual offences, legally compelled to attend. Five practitioners and eighteen clients participated in the study. I transcribed and analysed the video recordings in detail using discourse analysis, specifically discursive psychology, and conversation analysis. These methods enable a micro-level examination of the talk-in-interaction, to consider what people are doing in their talk and how they are doing it, e.g. how practitioners demonstrate empathy.

In the analysis I demonstrated the tacit practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect are evident in talk as actions that maintain co-operation in interaction and build solidarity; i.e. managing face, handling epistemic authority and facilitating empathic communion. I further outlined some of the conversational resources practitioners used to 'do' these actions, promoting engagement whilst pursuing institutional goals. Through this talk, practitioners shape and direct how clients tell the story of who they are, although clients can resist this. In this way clients' narrative identities were actively and collaboratively constructed and negotiated in the talk-in-interaction. Aspects of identity considered to promote desistance, e.g. presenting a good core self or a situational account for offending, were presented, encouraged, developed and attributed. Talk about risk also contributed to the construction and negotiation of clients' identities. Practitioners and clients expected clients to demonstrate they are aware of and attending to the risks around their behaviour, highlighting risk discourse as central. Risk in this sense was used discursively to demonstrate change and agency over the future, establishing a non-offending self. However, risk talk could challenge clients' self-image and threaten ongoing engagement.

This study highlights the suitability of discourse analysis and conversation analysis to access the 'black box' of criminal justice social work intervention. Routine and common-sense practice skills were made visible, making these more accessible to practitioners to reflect on and develop more responsive and reflexive practice. Finally, criminal justice social work interventions are sites where clients' narrative identities are constructed, as such potential sites for developing non-offending identities. This study highlights this process is inherently and necessarily relational. In developing forward looking self-stories, which encapsulated features of desistance and risk, narratives of rehabilitation were constructed at the interface of the client and the institution.

Lay summary

In this study I look at how criminal justice social workers (practitioners) engage men convicted of sexual offences (clients) during a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending, with the aim of reducing their likelihood of reoffending. Central to working with this client group, as with anyone convicted of any type of offending, is developing a good working relationship. There are several necessary skills to do this including showing empathy, warmth and respect. However, it is not clear how practitioners show empathy, warmth and respect in their interactions with clients. These skills are 'common-sense' but also very difficult to pin down. Previous research has looked at ideal categories of these skills, e.g. through checklists, and how they are associated with good outcomes from criminal justice social work interventions, or interviewed people to get their views on their experience of criminal justice social work intervention. In this study I examine how practitioners and clients build good working relationships using these skills in their conversations with each other, and what this might achieve in relation to considering risk or reducing reoffending.

To do this I have used the methods of discourse analysis and conversation analysis. These methods are particularly suitable for closely examining what people are doing when they are talking. Rather than seeing language as a direct route into people's minds, e.g. their thoughts and feelings, these methods treat language as achieving social actions, allowing us to explore what people are actively doing with their talk, for example inviting someone to dinner or avoiding a compliment, and how this is dealt with in the conversation. They also allow us to consider how people present who they are in their interactions. For example, a teenager in trouble with the police might describe themselves as not bothered or tough to their friends but sorry and contrite to their parents. In this way we use language to do things, including creating our identity. This is important because in order to stop or desist from

offending it is proposed people who have offended, including sexual offences, develop a new non-offending identity.

To undertake this study, I analysed twelve video-recorded sessions of the national groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending in Scotland, the 'Moving Forwards: Making Changes' programme. In total there were five practitioners and eighteen clients participating in the study. All the clients were adult men who were legally required to attend the programme. I transcribed the video-recorded sessions in detail, including noting things like pauses, breaths, when people spoke quickly or hesitated. This level of detail allowed me to look closely at what was going on in the discussions in the groupwork sessions.

Through the close examination of talk I outlined how the practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect are demonstrated in the interactions between practitioners and clients, particularly in ways that encourage ongoing cooperation in the conversation, which I propose builds to establishing effective working relationships. This is achieved by showing respect for the client's self-image and independence, their rights to know more about their own life and experiences, and understanding of and support for their feelings and the meanings they attach to their experiences. I showed how, through the demonstration of these skills, practitioners encouraged clients to create stories of themselves consistent with non-offending identities; that is separating their offending behaviour from who they are, where they are a good and redeemable person. Furthermore, I highlighted that talking about risk is central in these sessions, where talking about risk is also a way for clients to show they have changed in being aware of what influenced their offending, and how they can guard against this in the future. However, talking about risk can also challenge how a client is presenting themselves in that interaction, e.g. not seeing their alcohol use as an issue, possibly resulting in the client becoming defensive or disengaging which could jeopardise the working relationship.

In this study I demonstrate that the methods of conversation analysis and discourse analysis allow us to examine and make visible the 'common sense' practices in criminal justice social work interventions so we can see how practitioners engage clients in the ways they speak to them. Furthermore, the findings of this study highlight that in criminal justice social work interventions, such as the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme, the ways clients describe themselves, their offending and their futures are discussed and negotiated. As such, through interactions in these interventions clients can be supported, encouraged and facilitated to create an identity consistent with people who have moved away from offending behaviour. This identity highlights the client is a good person, who is responsible for their past wrongs, understands the circumstances in which these happened and is able to move forward to live a safe and harm free future.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank the clients and practitioners who agreed to participate in this study, and ultimately made it possible. Furthermore, I would like to thank the whole programme team for being so welcoming, encouraging and supportive throughout the whole process – your support was invaluable and definitely kept me sane during the days of endless transcription. I would also like to thank the Local Authority, Risk Management Authority and Economic and Social Research Council for their financial, academic and practical support.

Thanks also to my supervisors, Dr Steve Kirkwood and Professor Bill Whyte, for your support and advice (and counselling from day one!). Particularly to Steve, thank you for creating this project and giving me the opportunity to do it. It has been a steep learning curve, but I feel I have benefitted massively from your considerate, calm and grammatically thorough guidance. I have really enjoyed working with you both and I appreciate your time, wisdom and patience in helping me undertake this study and produce this thesis.

Thank you to Dr Eric Laurier, Dr Sue Widdicombe and the members of SEDIT, the members of DANASWAC and the EMCA doctoral network whose analytical insights supported me in developing my thinking for this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Chris Trotter for supporting my trip to Monash University during the PhD and giving me insight into the quantification of social work practice skills.

Furthermore, I am very grateful for the extremely helpful, stimulating discussions with and ongoing support from my social work and criminology colleagues in academia and practice, including, to name but a few, Briege Nugent, Louise Brangan, Ariane Critchley, Nic Souter, Kate White, Sarah Fletcher, and Sarah Linton. Thanks also to my previous managers, Julie Jessup and Margaret Brewer, who were central in supporting me to pursue this PhD in the first place and, with all my previous colleagues in Midlothian Council, encouraged me throughout.

A big thanks is due to all my friends and family for sticking it out with me – the ups, the downs and the plateaus - and being unwavering in your support, encouragement, and confidence in me when I had little in myself. I particularly want to thank my parents for their determination and conviction, some of it seems to have rubbed off, and my sister Ruth for her many pep talks. I feel very fortunate to have such cheerleaders in my life.

Finally, and most importantly, Paddy – you’ve been amazing. There should be a support group for the partners of doctoral students. Thank you for sustaining me and being my biggest cheerleader. It means the world to me.

Without all of these people, and many others, I could not have begun this journey or stuck with it. I am very grateful for all of their support and contribution.

Contents

Declaration	iii
Abstract	v
Lay summary	vii
Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction	3
Ch. 1: Literature review	9
Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model	11
Desistance paradigm	22
Good Lives Model (GLM)	36
The working relationship and effective practice skills	41
Local context	53
Conclusion	56
Ch. 2: Methodology	61
Why a naturalistic, qualitative approach?	61
Data	65
An interactional approach	72
Analytic Strategy	81
Summary	93
Ch. 3: Tools of engagement	95
Doing <i>face-work</i>	97
Managing epistemic authority	101
Creating empathic moments	103
Previous interactional research	105

Question design	110
Alignment and affiliation	126
Formulation	133
Summary.....	145
Ch. 4: Co-constructing desistance identities	151
Offending behaviour as situational	153
‘Core self’	167
Constructing generative pursuits	176
Summary.....	184
Ch. 5: Risk-talk	189
How risk is talked about in interaction.....	192
Risk-talk: doing the business of the group	204
The trouble with risk-talk	220
Summary.....	240
Ch. 6: Discussion.....	245
Accessing the ‘black box’	245
Key practice skills and engagement	249
Co-constructing narratives of desistance	256
Co-constructing narratives of rehabilitation: the role of risk-talk	260
Application to social work practice	265
Limitations and future research	269
Reflections	276
Conclusion	282
References.....	285
Appendix A: Participant information sheet and consent form for clients.....	331

Appendix B: Participant information sheet and consent form for groupworkers...	337
Appendix C: Transcription notation	343
Appendix D: Unhelpful Thinking Styles handout	345
Appendix E: MF: MC Programme module structure.....	347
Appendix F: Risk factors included in current risk assessment tools	349

Introduction

‘How do you work with someone convicted of sexual offending?’ Working as a criminal justice social worker and undertaking this research, this is a question I have been frequently asked. This question can indicate the questioner’s disgust for the person due to their sexual offending behaviour, or their interest in what is effective or what the process is, depending on the person and the conversation. Sexual offending is a deeply emotive, contentious and taboo subject publicly and politically in the UK, and arguably most societies today, where the stereotype of the intractable, deviant, high-risk and predatory male stranger targeting vulnerable children prevails (McAlinden, 2007, 2016). People convicted of sexual offences are often vilified and ‘othered’ by the media (DiBennardo, 2018; Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007; Marshall, 1996; McAlinden, 2016; McCulloch & Kelly, 2007). They become subject to a range of policies and legislation purporting to manage the risk they pose to society, which may inadvertently increase risk of reoffending through further stigmatising and isolating individuals (Levenson, 2018; McAlinden, 2007, 2010). Contrary to the often ostracising consequences of these responses, building a positive relationship to support change is how you work with people convicted of sexual offences to promote their desistance, i.e. the process of stopping offending, and reduce reoffending (Laws & Ward, 2011; Marshall, 2005).

‘The relationship’ is at the core of all social work practice as the medium through which intervention can bring about change in client circumstances (Baldock & Prior, 1981; Hennessey, 2011; Trotter, 2006). More recently, coming out from under the dominance of the ‘what works’ debate, the vital importance of the working relationship in addressing sexual offending has been heralded (Drapeau, 2005; Marshall & Serran, 2004; Ward & Maruna, 2007). Demonstrating warmth, respect and empathy is considered central to building effective working relationships in criminal justice social work (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005). In this way

practitioners treat clients as people to be worked with, not problems to be addressed, risks to be managed or 'monsters' to be condemned (Marshall, 1996, 2005; Ward, 2014). However, how these skills are communicated falls under the rubric of tacit knowledge, difficult to explain due to their taken-for-granted common sense quality making them simultaneously obvious and vague. This leaves the process of building effective working relationships as somewhat self-evident (Baldock & Prior, 1981; Juhila & Pöso, 1999b). In my experience, this process is not self-evident, but at times very daunting, complex and difficult to manage. An increasing recognition of this in criminal justice social work has prompted calls for greater skills training (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Marshall, 2005; Marshall & Serran, 2004; Raynor & Vanstone, 2018).

Previous research has identified those practice skills associated with good outcomes in addressing offending behaviour generally and sexually (e.g. Marshall et al., 2002; Raynor, Ugwu-dike, & Vanstone, 2014; Trotter, 2000), and those considered important by practitioners and clients (e.g. Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2014; Rex, 1999), using quantitative and qualitative methods. The methods used have mainly involved identifying skills on an inventory or checklist and linking these to distal outcomes or conducting research interviews. This research however has not clarified how these skills are done in practice, and particularly how they are done in the discussions between practitioners and clients. As Baldock and Prior (1981: 19) note 'when social worker and client meet, whatever else they may be doing, most of their time is spent talking to one another'. Talking is the primary mode of engagement in practice addressing sexual offending. However, how talk is being used as a relationship building resource and to what ends has remained in the 'black box' of criminal justice social work practice. In this thesis, using the fine-grained methodologies of discourse analysis and conversation analysis to explore the talk in sessions of a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending, I aim to address this gap in research.

In the first chapter I review the relevant literature around the working relationship in criminal justice social work (equivalent to probation in many other jurisdictions) and rehabilitation. In particular, I discuss how this has been contextualised and conceptualised in the three main paradigms currently influencing interventions with people who have offended: the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model, the desistance paradigm and the Good Lives Model. I review the research regarding the practice skills identified as central in forming effective working relationships. I argue these have remained empirically obscured, highlighting a gap in research of how working relationships are built and maintained in this context and what they achieve. Finally, I outline the local context of this study, the Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF: MC) programme for addressing sexual offending in Scotland (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a), before describing the research questions and aims.

In chapter 2, I outline the interactional approach I have taken in this study, describing my process of data collection using naturally occurring interactions, i.e. interactions that would occur without researcher input, and process of analysis. In particular, I argue the qualitative research methods of discourse analysis, as discursive psychology, and conversation analysis are especially well suited to the aims of this study as they are interested in what is happening in interaction and how. These methods treat language as constructive and performative, rather than a neutral representation of reality. I give definitions of some relevant analytical concepts and illustrate how I have applied these methods in this study, commenting on the influence of my professional experience as a criminal justice social worker.

In the first empirical chapter, chapter 3, I explore how the relationship building skills of empathy, warmth and respect are evident in the interactions during the sessions of the MF: MC programme. More specifically, I consider how these skills are evident as actions in conversation which promote cooperation and engagement. I illustrate

how the groupworkers display these skills as cooperative actions through certain conversational resources.

In chapter 4 I illustrate how features associated with the narratives of people desisting from offending identified in *post hoc* research interviews are evident as co-constructed in talk between practitioners and clients. These features include providing a situational account for offending behaviour, describing a positive 'core self' and having a sense of meaning in life or generativity. It is evident here that ongoing engagement in interaction facilitates the negotiation of how clients describe themselves and their offending behaviour to be both accountable for their behaviour and able to account for their behaviour in a manner that preserves their humanity. Furthermore, I highlight the essential role of the other, i.e. groupworkers and other group members, in tackling the interactional and moral dilemma of constructing a narrative of desistance.

In chapter 5 I discuss how risk is talked about in the sessions of the MF: MC programme noting this is pervasive and mutual, as practitioners and clients both actively orient to topics, indicators and stories of risk. In this way risk is positioned by the group as central to the business of the group. I highlight that risk-talk is used as a resource by clients and practitioners to enable clients to demonstrate they are aware of and can account for their past behaviours but have agency and control over their future conduct, in line with the narratives of people desisting from offending. In this way, risk-talk can be used as a resource to construct a narrative of rehabilitation. I illustrate the difficulties in risk-talk, and the role of key practice skills as actions which promote engagement and cooperation in navigating these difficulties.

The final chapter brings together the methodological and theoretical conclusions and implications from this study, specifically: 1) the abstract key practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect are evident as actions in talk which promote engagement, by building cooperation and solidarity in interaction, which is necessary for building working relationships; 2) desistance narratives are co-constructed in these interactions, highlighting criminal justice social work interventions are potential sites of narrative reconstruction; 3) talk about risk is a central feature of the group, and inevitably contributes to the construction of clients' narratives where it can be used as a resource to demonstrate change. Importantly, these features of interaction allow clients to re-story how they describe themselves, their past (including their offending) and their futures in ways that encapsulate features previously identified in desistance narratives and wider aspects of risk, to co-construct narratives of rehabilitation. I advocate for discourse analysis and conversation analysis as effective methods for accessing and examining the 'black box' of criminal justice social work practice. Finally, I outline some practical applications of this study, discuss limitations and potential avenues for future research and reflect on the research process.

Ch. 1: Literature review

Since the beginning of the 21st Century there has been a re-emergence of the central role the working relationship, between criminal justice social workers or probation officers (hereafter practitioners) and people who have offended, as the cornerstone for effective engagement and rehabilitation (Raynor & Vanstone, 2015). Although a fundamental element of rehabilitation work with people who have offended since the first forms of probation, the importance of this relationship was marginalised by policy and political preoccupation with risk assessment, accredited groupwork programmes, evidence-based practice and case management approaches at the end of the last century (Burnett & McNeill, 2005). Effective working relationships are now considered crucial in supporting people to move away from offending (Hunter, Farrall, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2017). The quality and nature of the working relationship is a core feature of the three dominant paradigms currently influencing interventions to address general and sexual offending in Scotland and the UK more widely: Risk-Need-Responsivity model (Bonta & Andrews, 2016), desistance paradigm (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; McNeill, 2006) and the Good Lives Model (Ward & Maruna, 2007). The different theoretical underpinnings of these models have influenced the context in which the role and function of the working relationship has developed.

Throughout the literature on effective practice with people who have offended there are many terms used interchangeably for working relationship, including therapeutic alliance, working alliance, supervisory relationship, counselling, and casework relationship. There are different origins and definitional foundations for these terms, however they are often conflated within the literature (Burnett & McNeill, 2005). Here, for ease, I will use the term working relationship to refer to the interpersonal engagement between people who have offended and the practitioners responsible for their mandatory supervision, whether on a one to one

basis or in groupwork. For brevity and clarity, I will use the term client when referring to people who have offended in the context of the working relationship. I have chosen to use the term client as opposed to 'consumers', 'service users' (McLaughlin, 2009) or 'men' (Harris, 2016) for two reasons; this is the term used by the practitioner participants of my study, and it is the term I prefer in my own professional practice. However, I recognise this term is problematic, as it has connotations about the nature of the relationship, and the individual's agency to access and use services, which is particularly constrained in the context of involuntary engagement, such as that which is court mandated. There is a wider debate about the terms we use to describe people who are in receipt of social work services (see McLaughlin, 2009).

In light of the importance of the working relationship, research has sought to identify the factors necessary to build an effective working relationship, including the key interpersonal skills or practice skills of practitioners (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Hart & Collins, 2014). To examine key practice skills of practitioners, previous research has used quantitative and qualitative methods including meta-analysis (Dowden & Andrews, 2004), document analysis of case files (Trotter, 1996), examination of audiotapes (Bonta et al., 2011; Bonta, Ruge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Trotter, 2012) and videotapes (Marshall et al., 2002; Raynor, Ugwudike, & Vanstone, 2014) of interviews or sessions between practitioners and clients, direct observation (Trotter & Evans, 2012) and interviews with practitioners and people subject to probation or supervision (Bracken, 2003; Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2014; Rex, 1999; Burnett, 1996). Echoing counselling and mental health literature, the importance of the interpersonal skills in building effective working relationships has been highlighted including, amongst other factors, practitioner demonstrations of empathy, respect and warmth (McNeill et al., 2005). Previous research has observed the key practice skills necessary for building an effective working relationship, however their actual demonstration in practice has not been detailed. Qualitative research interviews and document

analysis provide an inevitably retrospective view, whilst quantitative methods, such as checklists, gloss over the nuance and complexity of interaction in creating aggregated categories. However, as Baldock and Prior (1981: 19) astutely observe, 'when social worker and client meet, whatever else they may be doing, most of their time is spent talking to one another'. Yet how practitioners use their talk as a relationship building resource to express these interpersonal skills has not been examined, leaving the discursive mechanics of the working relationship in the 'black box'.

In this literature review I will examine how the working relationship has been conceptualised and treated in the three major paradigms influencing current approaches to addressing sexual offending behaviour: Risk-Need-Responsivity model, desistance paradigm and the Good Lives Model. I will then discuss how key practice skills as building blocks of effective working relationships have been examined in the literature regarding interventions with people who have offended. It is notable that much of this literature draws on findings from a general offending population (e.g. crimes of dishonesty, drug related offences, violent offences) rather than evidence in relation to addressing sexual offending. I will highlight where these findings diverge, or where evidence specific to sexual offending behaviour is relevant. Recidivism studies of people who have committed sexual offences indicate that general reoffending is more common than sexual reoffending (Lussier & Cale, 2013; Lussier & McCuish, 2016; Soothill, Francis, Sanderson, & Ackerley, 2000), and given a primary aim of supervision is to reduce reoffending (Scottish Government, 2010b) the wider literature base is pertinent.

Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model

Founded on an impressive empirical evidence base, the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model outlines the principles of effective practice for addressing general offending behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). It is

the dominant model influencing rehabilitation practice and policy developments in the Anglophone world (McNeill, 2009a). The Risk principle highlights that the level of risk of reoffending, as assessed by actuarial tools, should be matched to intensity of intervention. The Need principle states any intervention should target those dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs predictive of offending. Criminogenic needs are factors which are predictively linked to risk of offending but are changeable and therefore dynamic e.g. employment, peer associations. Finally, the Responsivity principle advocates interventions should be based on known effective methods, i.e. cognitive behavioural treatment, and tailor these to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the individual (Bonta & Andrews, 2016), referred to as general and specific responsivity, respectively (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). It is under the responsivity principle that the importance of the working relationship and its constituent interpersonal skills are outlined.

Interventions based on these principles have been noted to be effective in addressing sexual offending behaviour as well as a general offending (i.e. Hanson, Bourgon, Helmus, & Hodgson, 2009; Looman & Abracen, 2013). Dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs specifically related to risk of sexual reoffending have also been empirically identified e.g. sexual preoccupation, hostility towards women (Beech, Fisher, & Thornton, 2003; Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007). These identified criminogenic needs have informed the development of actuarial risk assessment tools to assess likelihood of re-offending, identify the factors predictive of re-offending for an individual and inform structured professional judgement. For example, those used widely in Scotland are, in relation to general offending, Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004), and in relation to sexual re-offending, Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) (Thornton, 2007) and Stable & Acute (SA07) (Hanson et al., 2007) (see appendix F for breakdown of risk factors).

However, interventions based on the principles of RNR have been criticised for over-emphasising risk management, general treatment approaches (i.e. cognitive behavioural techniques) and groupwork as the most effective treatment modality, leading to prescriptive, manualised and homogenous 'one size fits all' groupwork programmes (Marshall & Serran, 2004; McNeill & Whyte, 2007; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Brown, 2004). People who have offended are placed as passive actors to be controlled and/ or fixed by a programme (McNeill, 2009b). In policy and organisational development, this focus has partially obscured the importance of the working relationship between practitioners and clients as a conduit for change in client's behaviour, identity or circumstances (Maruna & LeBel, 2010; McNeill et al., 2005). The emphasis on risk management and public protection was seen as replacing the traditional rehabilitative ideal of probation (Kemshall, 2003), a seemingly unintended consequence of which is the interests and wellbeing of people who have offended, particularly those considered high risk, being conceived of as at odds with community safety (Ward & Maruna, 2007). This consequence is contrary to the philosophy of the RNR model itself, which proposes to promote rehabilitation and reintegration for the mutual benefit of the individual and the community (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Furthermore, the language of risk responsabilises the individual, dismissing the role of wider societal structures in criminal behaviour, and reduces the person down to a collection of risk factors to be managed (Kemshall, 2003). RNR based interventions are criticised for viewing clients through a distorted and limiting lens of risk, a view which clients are expected to internalise to be considered reformed (Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008). Polaschek (2012) notes that the politicised nature of criminal justice may have resulted in the principles of RNR being refracted into practice, where the emphasis on risk (risk assessment, risk management and treatment of risk factors i.e. criminogenic needs) represents the political agenda. However, the criticism of the RNR model being too focussed on risk management is further exacerbated by the limited theoretical and empirical development of the Responsivity principle of the RNR model compared to the other two (Laws & Ward, 2011; Looman & Abracen,

2013; Polaschek, 2012; Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Wilson & Yates, 2009).

The emphasis on risk in the translation of the RNR model into criminal justice intervention programmes reflects the wider rise in the discourse of risk and public protection in society towards the end of the 20th century (Robinson, 2016). As Kemshall (2003: 15) notes this rise in discourse of risk is reflective of a 'preoccupation with risk rather than with the proliferation (or otherwise) of risks'. The legislative and policy developments around addressing sexual offending, and other high profile offending behaviour, in the UK and beyond clearly demonstrate this rise of concern with risk and risk management, and the politicised and normative nature of the criminal justice system (Kemshall & Wood, 2008; McAlinden, 2007; McCartan, 2014). Measures introduced over the last three decades include extended sentences, civil and criminal restriction orders (including Order of Lifelong Restriction), vetting schemes, registration and community-based multiagency partnerships developed to manage the risks posed by people who have committed sexual offences. Notably these measures go beyond punishment and rehabilitation, but aim to pre-emptively prevent further offending based on the assessment of possible future risk of harm, raising ethical issues around the tension between an individual's human rights and wider public protection (McAlinden, 2010; Williams & Nash, 2014).

Sexual offending is a harmful, emotive and complex issue, which gathers a large amount of media and public interest. However, there are many misconceptions about sexual offending and risk, which fuel a stereotype of all people who have committed sexual offences being a homogenous group of intractable, permanently dangerous male strangers (Harris, 2017; Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007; Williams & Nash, 2014). Consequently, developments in law, policy and practice which emphasize risk management are driven by a political agenda which is

highly influenced by public misperceptions about sexual offending with potentially adverse consequences, i.e. inadvertently increasing risk of re-offending, harassment of people misidentified as perpetrators. The impact of these socio-legal and public pressures can undermine establishing an effective working relationship, as practitioners are required to fill a policing role in the interests of public protection and there may be wider pressure to be seen to be punitive (Dealey, 2018). However, practitioners' values and preferences impact how risk management is operationalised in practice and can mitigate the punitive potential of risk management policies (Bullock, 2011).

The implementation of interventions, and the consequent role of the working relationship, based on the RNR model have then been undoubtedly impacted by this wider context, and there are areas of further development necessary including developing a better understanding of what factors might be protective against reoffending (Polaschek, 2017) and the causal links between dynamic risk factors and offending (Heffernan & Ward, 2018; Ward & Beech, 2015). However, this model has increased our understanding of what works to reduce reoffending in developing an evidence base for effective approaches to rehabilitation. Importantly, rather than being contradictory, the agenda of risk and the agenda of rehabilitation developed together, influencing each other in criminal justice social work or probation (Robinson, 2016). Practitioners have long recognised the importance of the working relationship to support change with people who have offended, whilst also acknowledging the need for risk assessment and management (Burnett, 1996). Although comparatively underdeveloped, under the Responsivity principle the RNR model aims to delineate the conditions under which this relationship can motivate change to reduce reoffending. Before further outlining these conditions, I will discuss the role of groupwork as given its dominance in RNR based interventions it is a central site of the working relationship.

Groupwork

The RNR model resulted in a marked rise in the use of groupwork programmes for addressing offending behaviour and it is currently the most common modality of intervention for addressing sexual offending behaviour, albeit often augmented with individual sessions (Hartstock & Harper-Dorton, 2009; Ross, Polaschek, & Ward, 2008; Serran, Marshall, Marshall, & O'Brien, 2013; Ware, Mann, & Wakeling, 2009). It is in this context that the working relationship has primarily been considered in relation to addressing sexual offending behaviour (Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Harkins et al., 2012; Marshall et al., 2003; Marshall, 2005). Furthermore, it is in the context of a groupwork programme that the current study is situated. Previous meta-analysis, of primarily cognitive behavioural treatment (CBT) based groupwork interventions addressing sexual offending, has indicated clients who receive treatment are less likely to reoffend than those who don't (Hanson et al., 2002; Schmucker & Lösel, 2015). The meta-analyses included studies where the intervention comprised of groupwork and individual work. More recently, a robust evaluation of the prison-based groupwork CORE Sexual Offences Treatment Programme (SOTP) in England and Wales, which is based on the RNR model, found that treatment increased recidivism rates (Mews, Di Bella, & Purver, 2017). This cast doubt internationally on the effectiveness of treatment programmes for sexual offending. However, Gannon and colleagues (2019) have since conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of psychological treatments for sexual offending and identified robust reductions in reoffending, even when the Core SOTP evaluation is included in the analysis.

Despite the dominance of groupwork, little empirical research has been done to demonstrate the superiority of this modality over individual work in effectiveness for working with people who have sexually offended, with benefits and risks inherent to both (Looman, Abracen, & Fazio, 2014; Mann & Fernandez, 2006; Serran et al., 2013; Ware et al., 2009). Individual work is considered more idiosyncratic, allowing for tailored delivery of intervention, increased confidentiality

and greater opportunity to deal with client specific issues, e.g. anxiety, embarrassment (Abracen & Looman, 2004). However, groupwork may provide a unique opportunity for peer challenge, positive feedback and support, a relatively natural platform for practising social skills amongst peers, and a therapeutic intensity not available through individual work (Mann & Fernandez, 2006; Ware et al., 2009). Moreover, groupwork is considered to be more efficient and cost effective (Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Mann & Fernandez, 2006), which raises some concern about the appetite for groupwork being motivated for pragmatic reasons rather than evidence of treatment efficacy (Maletzky, 1999).

In their comprehensive review of the literature regarding treatment modalities (i.e. group or individual) for addressing sexual offending, Ware and colleagues (2009) noted only one study conducted by Di Fazio, Abracen and Looman (2001) which aimed to compare the efficacy of modality. Using a 5 year follow up, they noted that there was no significant difference in reoffending rates between clients who undertook a full treatment programme (group and individual sessions) and those who received individual treatment. Furthermore, they advocated for individual treatment as appropriate for certain clients assessed as unsuitable for groupwork, in keeping with the Responsivity principle, i.e. delivery style as consistent to the learning style of the client (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). However, this study is limited in a number of ways: participants were not randomly allocated; the frequency, duration, intensity and content of the treatments differed; the groupwork programme included individual treatment so it was not a pure comparison of two alternatives; finally, the community environment in the prison was purposively designed as therapeutic, which may have mitigated any difference between the modalities anyway (Ware et al, 2009).

In a later study, Looman and colleagues (2014) aimed to counter some of the previous methodological issues to compare the relative efficacy of group versus

individual treatment in prison. They matched the participants in the 'group' and 'individual' cohorts on offence type and risk level, although they highlighted the limitations of this process in that the clients in individual treatment were selected as unsuitable for group treatment due to psychiatric difficulty or intellectual impairment, and the programme content was adapted accordingly resulting in lower intensity of treatment. Again, no difference in recidivism rates was found, leading them to conclude that rather than both modalities being equally effective, the use of individual treatment is more suitable for certain clients as per the Responsivity principle. Another potential explanation for the lack of difference may be due to what Frost, Ware, and Boer (2009) note as a lack of comprehensive, systematic application of groupwork theory and principles to work with people convicted of sexual offences. They highlight this results in wide variation in practice and also in the work being done on an individual rather than a collective basis, as a series of one-to-one interactions that just happen to be in a group setting.

The importance of responsivity in addressing offending behaviour cannot be overstated. Recidivism studies have noted the Responsivity principle was the most powerfully predictive of positive treatment outcomes and reduced recidivism for people who have committed sexual offences, both in relation to sexual and non-sexual recidivism (Hanson et al., 2009). However, Looman and colleagues' (2014) study still falls sort of being a pure comparison as all clients received an element of individual treatment. Conducting a randomised control trial with this population is practically and ethically contentious, given the relatively low numbers of clients participating in treatment, low rates of sexual recidivism, the mixed modalities of most treatments offered and the ethical issues of constructing a control group along with political reluctance for this method (Ware et al, 2009; Mann & Fernandez, 2006). Marshall and Marshall (2010) also question the value of randomised control trials in demonstrating effectiveness, highlighting the difficulty in controlling for external factors and the massive variation between programmes and practitioners. Subtle or nuanced individual factors may not be measurable or

replicable from aggregated scoring. It is clear further research is necessary to allow for more robust conclusions as to the comparative efficacy of these modalities. This debate would benefit from moving beyond the individual versus groupwork treatment to what works for whom. Furthermore, outcomes of intervention for addressing sexual offending behaviours beyond recidivism rates would no doubt enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of interventions, group or individual, e.g. attrition rates, treatment changes, client satisfaction.

Drawing from a wider research base in other fields (i.e. psychotherapy, substance misuse services, health), in clinical and non-clinical populations, little difference has been found between the two approaches in terms of effectiveness of treatment as measured by primary outcome, i.e. reduction in symptoms, cessation of target behaviour (Serran et al., 2013; Ware et al., 2009). In their review, Ware and colleagues (2009) concluded that the benefits of groupwork may be particularly relevant to people who have committed sexual offences given the known deficits of this population, i.e. poor social skills, marginalisation. That is, this population may benefit from the interpersonal interaction to test and enhance social skills, from the support and shared experience of being stigmatised, and the opportunity for vicarious and interpersonal learning. However, as they note these benefits of the group process are debateable, sometimes assumed, and need to be tested empirically. Marshall and Burton (2010) however cite there is evidence to show group treatment can be more effective than one to one work in clinical literature. Notwithstanding their advocacy of group treatment, Marshall and colleagues (Marshall & Burton, 2010; Serran et al., 2013) highlight the processes of treatment that impact effectiveness regardless of modality should be the focus of research. Treatment processes, such as practitioner characteristics, have been given steadily increasing attention in research over the last decade (Mann & Fernandez, 2006) as well as seeping into the professional, academic and policy discourses of criminal justice interventions. Findings in clinical literature highlight the importance of the working relationship and the practitioners' characteristics, demonstrated through

key practice skills, in facilitating client change have been found across one-to-one and groupwork interventions (Marshall & Burton, 2010). The interpersonal skills necessary for groupwork echo those in one-to-one work, with one of the primary differences being the role of promoting and facilitating group cohesion (Beech & Fordham, 1997; Frost et al. 2009; Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Marshall et al., 2003; Serran et al., 2013).

The RNR model and the working relationship

As noted in the beginning, it is in the context of general responsivity that the working relationship is outlined in the RNR model, described as ‘a warm, respectful and collaborative working alliance with the client’ (Bonta & Andrews, 2007: 5). In respect to relationship skills, Bonta and Andrews (2007) highlight that practitioners should be respectful, collaborative, open, enthusiastic, empathic and employ motivational interviewing techniques. Motivational interviewing is a directive, client-centred counselling style which encourages people to identify and resolve their ambivalence to their behaviour to elicit behavioural change (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Expressions of empathy, through reflective listening, are central in motivational interviewing to engage the client in a working relationship. In the RNR model the interpersonal relationship is highlighted as necessary, in tandem with structuring skills (i.e. the use of prosocial modelling, reinforcement and problem-solving), to teach people new behaviours through cognitive social learning techniques with the aim of reducing reoffending (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Although this assertion was not explicitly stated in Andrews and Bonta’s original outline of the RNR model in 1994 (Polaschek, 2012), it is evident in Andrews and Kiessling’s (1980) earlier foundational work as one of the five Core Correctional Practices (CCPs) designed to increase the therapeutic potential of rehabilitation programmes (cited in Dowden & Andrews, 2004). The other four CCPs are effective use of authority, anti-criminal modelling and reinforcement, problem solving and use of community resources. In their meta-analysis, Dowden and Andrews (2004) noted there was evidence the CCPs were effective in reducing

reoffending although highlighted many studies they included did not detail the practitioners' characteristics, resulting in a liberal coding strategy. These relational aspects of effective practice are well supported by research evidence from disciplines of psychology and mental health, specifically psychotherapy (i.e. Castonguay & Beutler, 2006).

Research into effective relationships in RNR influenced interventions with people who have offended, generally or sexually, demonstrates an empirical link between treatment benefits and the demonstration of key interpersonal skills in both one-to-one and groupwork interventions (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Levenson & Prescott, 2014; Marshall & Serran, 2004; Raynor & Vanstone, 2015). Practitioners' skills in engaging with people who have offended, i.e. being warm, open, respectful, empathic and collaborative, are identified as central to the process of rehabilitation, along with programme content and the selection of the clients (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Marshall & Burton, 2010; McNeill, Bracken, & Clarke, 2009). I will discuss the specific skills identified by previous research later in this chapter. Much of this research is quantitative, using checklists to identify instances of demonstrations of such skills i.e. empathy, respect, and linking them to recidivism rates or pre and post treatment change indices (i.e. Marshall, 2005; Raynor & Vanstone, 2015; Trotter & Evans, 2010). There have also been qualitative studies drawing on retrospective interviews with practitioners and clients to explore their experience of supervision (i.e. Farrall et al., 2014; Harkins, Flak, Beech, & Woodhams, 2012; Rex, 1999). Some research has highlighted the low consistency with which practitioners demonstrate these skills, linking this to the low rates of effectiveness identified (Bonta et al., 2008; Trotter & Evans, 2012). Furthermore, in their recent meta-analysis, Chadwick, Dewolf, and Serin (2015) noted when practitioners were trained on the CCPs the clients they supervised were less likely to reoffend. As such, there is a call for training on these interpersonal skills rather than just manualised homogenous programme delivery (Bonta et al., 2008; Marshall & Serran, 2004) or assuming these skills come naturally to the practitioner. The latter

underestimates the influence of practitioners' personal views and values regarding offending behaviour on their practice, particularly sexual offending (Lea, Auburn, & Kibblewhite, 1999). However, none of these studies have directly examined how these interpersonal skills are demonstrated or received in the interactions between practitioners and clients or how these skills might contribute to reduced reoffending in supporting clients to stop or desist from offending behaviour, a primary aim of rehabilitative interventions.

Desistance paradigm

Criminal justice interventions and policy in Scotland and the UK have been more recently influenced by findings from research on how and why people, who have persistently offended, stop or desist, recognising interventions should aim to assist processes which support their desistance rather than merely control risk (Maruna & LeBel, 2010). Solely attempting to control risk is unlikely to result in people sustaining a non-offending lifestyle (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). Desistance is widely recognised as a process, rather than a one-off event, marked by relapse and ambivalence (Weaver & McNeill, 2015). However, the vacillating nature of this process presents a problem in determining what desistance is, as it is not clear how long one has to have abstained from offending behaviours, or how persistent their offending should have been (Harris, 2014b). Given the variation and diversity between types of offending, pathways to desistance and individuals who have offended, there can be no theoretical silver bullet which accounts for the aetiology of desistance from all offending (Weaver, 2012).

To account for desistance as a process of change, theories distinguish between primary and secondary desistance from offending (Maruna & Farrall, 2004), and more recently tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2016a); that is behavioural based change, identity based change and social or community based change in terms of a sense of belonging. Identity based change is proposed to be foundational to longer

term desistance, as opposed to shorter periods of non-offending due to behavioural lapses. Nugent and Schinkel (2016) note that regardless of desistance being primary or secondary, if the individual's change is not recognised, accepted and supported in the relationships with the people, community and structures around them, including presumably practitioners with whom they interact, sustaining a non-offending lifestyle is incredibly difficult.

However, little is empirically known about how the working relationship in criminal justice interventions relates to the desistance processes of people who have offended, as the majority of research on desistance has focussed on how individuals have ceased offending naturally, that is by themselves without intervention. Studies that have looked at the impact of criminal justice interventions and/ or the working relationship have highlighted people who have been subject to supervision or probation consider their relationship with the practitioner a relevant factor in their desistance (e.g. Farrall et al., 2014; McAlinden, Farmer, & Maruna, 2016; Rex, 1999). Advocates of a desistance paradigm for criminal justice intervention suggest we draw on our understanding of what factors promote desistance and seek to apply these in practice with clients as a catalyst to prompt and sustain this process (Anderson, 2016; Cluley, 2004; Farmer, McAlinden, & Maruna, 2016; Farrall & Maruna, 2004; McNeill, 2006). In light of this I will discuss the factors that have been identified as prompting and promoting desistance from general and sexual offending before considering the proposed role of the working relationship in this process.

[Desistance from general offending](#)

Desistance research has proposed three primary explanatory elements of desistance; maturation, social processes or opportunities, and individual agency, including identity change. Currently it is recognised that desistance is the result of a complex interaction between these three elements (Göbbels, Ward, & Willis, 2012;

Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Serin & Lloyd, 2009; Weaver, 2012). The essential role community and social supports play in facilitating desistance has been highlighted more recently (i.e. Carlsson, 2012; Farrall et al., 2014; King, 2013b). There is a wealth of research looking at desistance from general offending, a full review of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. As such I will outline some of the most prominent, before discussing the literature examining desistance from sexual offending.

People age out of offending behaviour, as such it is normative for people who have offended, generally and sexually, to desist (Farrington, 1986; Hanson, Harris, Helmus, & Thornton, 2014; Hanson, 2018; Ward & Laws, 2010). The social processes that accompany maturation, such as marriage and employment, appear key in prompting and promoting desistance. Using offending records, and latterly interviewing 52 of the participants, Sampson and Laub (2003) followed the trajectories of 500 individuals displaying delinquent behaviours as youths, i.e. at 7 years of age, into their sixties. They highlighted social processes function as informal social controls, where, at the right stage in life, the consequent social roles, e.g. husband, father, employee, are inconsistent with offending behaviour and thus promote desistance. Tracking change over the life course, longitudinal studies, like this one, are prospective and provide a picture of change over time, avoiding the pitfall of bias sometimes seen in retrospective accounts (Silverman, 2016). In this study, such social processes were identified as key opportunities, or 'turning points', for individuals to separate themselves from their criminal past, by 'knifing off' (Sampson & Laub, 2003). However, Maruna and Roy (2007) argue 'knifing off' is too severe, proposing desistance involves an individual reconstructing their past rather than amputating it so they can develop a coherent life story.

Using life story interview techniques Maruna (2001) systematically compared the self-narratives of 30 people identified as desisting from offending with a matched

group of 20 people who were considered actively offending, or persisting. The participants all had a history of offending, i.e. more than one recorded episode, were primarily involved in general, e.g. theft, violence, rather than sexual offending, and the majority had at some point issues with substance misuse. Such narrative research methods allow the retrospective exploration of individuals' experiences of offending and desistance, highlighting the role of perceived agency in the process of desistance (Silverman, 2016). This approach is interested in identity as an internal story or narrative people construct to provide a meaning, coherence and purpose across their lifespan (Maruna, 2015; McAdams, 1993; Vaughan, 2007).

Narrative methods have become a dominant approach in criminological research in exploring identity and criminality, including desistance, through the perspective of actors in the Criminal Justice System such as clients and practitioners. The development of a coherent life story is considered key to the longer term, secondary or identity based desistance (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Maruna & Farrall, 2004), where the individual is thought to take on an identity that is incompatible with offending behaviour, and aligns with future prosocial aspirations (Maruna, 2001; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009; Rocque, Posick, & Paternoster, 2016). More recently, a quantitative longitudinal study has suggested that identity and preference change precede and predict changes in offending behaviour, and are causal to desistance (Rocque et al, 2016), implying it is not the social process (e.g. marriage) itself, but the readiness to take on the identity the social process offers. However, determining, measuring and interpreting abstract concepts such as identity is problematic for researchers (Maruna, 2001). Identity has been a topic of ongoing interest in the social sciences, particularly how identities are shaped and develop over time and how they influence behaviour. In this way identity is not fleeting but dynamic in providing continuity of self over time and space (Rocque, Posick, & Paternoster, 2016). Although it is accepted people may present themselves differently in different contexts there is an underlying

assumption that identity is stable and internal, rather than interactionally constructed (Benwell & Stokoe, 2016; McAdams, 1993).

Maruna (2001) identified differences in the self-narratives of those desisting from offending and those persisting with offending, suggesting elements of what could be considered a desisting identity. The central features of a desisting narrative appear to be a somewhat exaggerated sense of control over one's future, the establishment of core beliefs that indicate a 'true self' which subscribes to conventional mores, and a desire to be productive and useful, i.e. a sense of generativity. Importantly, the stories of the desisting participants appeared to be a reappraisal of their past, so their current desistance grows from their past indiscretions, allowing them to maintain a coherent sense of self and project a prosocial, meaningful future. These are referred to as redemption scripts. Those persistent in offending on the other hand appeared to read from a condemnation script, considering themselves victims of circumstance and there was a sense of determinism in their stories that life just happened to them and will continue to do so.

Drawing parallels with research and therapy regarding depression, Maruna (2004) identified those participants desisting from offending were also more likely to attribute positive life events to stable, internal and global factors and negative life events to unstable, external and specific factors, and vice versa for persisters. For example, in reference to getting a job, those desisting might say 'I worked really hard for this and am clever so deserve this job' whereas a person persistently offending might say 'my brother got me the job, I will probably get fired when they find out about my offences'. Interestingly, both groups appear to speak to their past in a passive manner, as though it 'just happened', where the key difference appears to be how agentic they are in their descriptions of their present and future (Maruna, 2001). This supports Paternoster and Bushway's (2009) assertion that it is not enough to hold a projection of the future self as 'feared' or not desired,

although a necessary factor to initially motivate change, for desistance to be sustained an 'imagined' realistic and possible positive future self is essential. Maruna (2001) maintained the interviews in his study, although retrospective accounts of the past, demonstrated the activity or process of desisting for the participants, in actively storying their identity, rather than retrospective accounts of events that prompted desistance. However, although Maruna (2001: 8) notes 'self-narratives are developed through social interaction' he only attends nominally to the socially interactive context of the research interview itself which risks decontextualizing the identity being presented (Kirkwood, 2016).

Through examining interviews, questionnaires and official data about individuals with previous offending behaviour, Giordano and colleagues (2002) concluded it is the interaction between the person and the environment that enables desistance. They note a person can only take on a non-offending identity when they have made certain cognitive shifts. Firstly, they must develop an openness or readiness to change. Secondly, have exposure to and positive attitudes towards available opportunities to change, such as the 'turning points' noted by Sampson and Laub (2003), e.g. employment, marriage. They then need to shift their identity to be able to make change and integrate this into who they are, as per Maruna (2001), before finally reappraising their attitude to criminal behaviour. Although there is some question as to whether people need to make a conscious cognitive shift in order to desist from offending (Harris, 2014a; Laub & Sampson, 2009), Giordano and colleagues' work (2002) highlights that individual agency or social processes are not sufficient in themselves, but it is the interaction between these that enables desistance.

Importantly, there must be a desirable identity socially available for people to desist, one which is also socially acceptable to the people and structures around them (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, Lebel, Mitchell, & Naples, 2004; Willis,

Levenson, & Ward, 2010). Without this, the benefits of desisting from offending may not outweigh the potentially significant and painful losses, e.g. means of income, social status, friendships, and as such it may not be worth it (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). Both Carlsson (2012) and King (2013b) highlighted the importance of the wider social context in enabling and ratifying desistance, from the narrative accounts of Swedish men who had offended in their youth and English 'early desisters', respectively. However, as noted above, the public, policy and political responses to sexual offending particularly often result in the segregation and marginalisation of individuals. As such these responses may hinder desistance and inadvertently increase risk by cutting off access to the opportunities for and availability of a desirable non-offending identity for people who have sexually offended (Harris, 2014b; Weaver & Barry, 2014; Willis et al., 2010).

Desistance from sexual offending

In comparison with general offending, there is significantly less research considering desistance from sexual offending, although recently there has been more interest recognising the widening gap between the empirical knowledge of and the socio-legal response to sexual offending (Lussier, Harris, & McAlinden, 2016) and reclaiming a criminological perspective on sexual offending from the previous dominance of psychology (Lussier & Beauregard, 2014). The majority of people who have committed sexual offences do not reoffend sexually, and the age-crime curve for sexual offending broadly reflects a trajectory closely resembling the age-crime curve for general offending (apart from people who have committed non-contact internet offences) (Laws & Ward, 2011). The age-crime curve refers to the age distribution of crime across the population, where offending behaviour peaks in early to mid-20s and then declines (Rocque, Posick, & Hoyle, 2016), although recent evidence indicates changes in this pattern (Matthews, 2018). Recognising the similarities in this trend between general and sexual offending there has been a move to reframe addressing sexual offending in the language of desistance, from the dominant language of risk assessment and management. Theoretically and

empirically, research on desistance from sexual offending has primarily focussed on whether the elements that prompt and promote desistance from general offending apply to sexual offending, and it provides a mixed picture.

Some of the research suggests similar factors influencing desistance from general offending apply to desistance from sexual offending, i.e. strong social bonds, employment, constructing a non-offending identity, access to social networks (Farmer et al., 2012; Harris, 2014a; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Laws & Ward, 2010; McAlinden et al., 2016). In their retrospective analysis of 556 people convicted of sexual offences and subject to probation, Kruttschnitt et al. (2000) found those with stable employment histories who were involved with a treatment programme addressing sexual offending were more likely to desist from offending. They cited a social control effect but were unable to fully untangle the underlying mechanisms. They also found marriage, another proposed strong social control (Laub & Sampson, 2003), had no impact, although noted that they did not capture the quality or duration of the marriages in their sample. Lussier & McCuish (2016), looking at the general reoffending rates of 500 men once convicted of a sexual offence, noted neither marriage nor employment was statistically related to desistance. Desistance happened in the absence of a prosocial intimate relationship or stable employment. They did highlight that those men surrounded by positive social influences were less likely to re-offend generally or sexually, but noted that these were in relation to pre-existing social influences rather than a change in social influences.

In an exploratory study Farmer, Beech and Ward (2012) examined the self-narratives of 10 men convicted of sexual offences against children, 5 of whom were considered to be desisting and 5 of whom were potentially actively offending. Participants' sense of belonging, i.e. being involved in a community group, as well as expressions of redemption, i.e. being able to see positive outcomes from negative events, and agency contributed to their proposed desistance. Harris (2016)

conducted three waves of narrative interviews with a total of 60 men convicted of a range of sexual offences to explore the concept of desistance from sexual offending. Initially, in her analysis of the first 21 life history narrative interviews, she highlighted the role of cognitive transformation (Harris, 2014a), similar to that posited by Maruna and colleagues (Maruna, 2001; Maruna & Roy, 2007). Participants restructured their narratives, recognising they caused harm, and portrayed themselves as agentic in pursuing a non-offending future where redemption is possible. The proposed desisters of these studies highlighted treatment for addressing sexual offending as the key turning point in helping them understand their behaviour and prepare for the future (Farmer et al., 2012; Harris, 2014a).

However, in the two later waves of her study, of cumulatively 45 and 60 men, Harris (2015, 2016) noted that many of her participants appeared to be successfully desisting in the absence of informal social controls or cognitive transformation. This reflects the low recidivism rates of people who have sexually offended, despite barriers and stigma severely limiting their opportunities to access conventional roles that might support desistance (Göbbels et al., 2012; McAlinden, 2007). Furthermore, for most people sexual offending behaviour appears to be a short-lived phase rather than evidence of a persistent, long term pattern of sexual offending (Lussier & Davies, 2011). This raises questions about delineating between an 'old' offending identity and a 'new' non-offending identity, where a large portion of sexual offences are primarily committed individually and in secret (e.g. incest, child sexual assault, child pornography) and as such the person's sexual offending behaviour is unlikely to be part of their existing public identity. As such the process of cognitive transformation may be how the individual preserves their 'old' non-offending identity whilst somehow accounting for their 'new' offending behaviour.

A potential method of achieving this integration is noted in Farmer, McAlinden and Maruna's (2016) thematic review of 32 self-narratives of men convicted of sexual offences against children. Echoing Maruna (2001) they noted it is the separation of behaviours from the 'core self' that appeared to distinguish those considered to be desisting (n=25) from those not yet established as desisting (n=7). Moreover, the men not considered to be desisting appeared more likely to state they had deviant sexual desires, an internal and stable state, although it is important to note that the sample size is likely too small to draw firm conclusions. Importantly, the 'desisters' seemed to hold situational rather than internal factors as primarily causal for their offending, rejected the label and identity of 'sex offender' (and its consequent implications of deviance and intractability), and projected a new future self where they are in control of their lives and have a clear sense of purpose and planning for the future (Farmer et al., 2016; McAlinden et al., 2016). In this way the participants 'put the past behind them' (McAlinden et al. 2016: 11), where work and relationships seemed to be central to their prosocial positive self although not considered to be 'turning points' or 'hooks for change' as they are not new opportunities. It is proposed this strategy of attributing cause to external factors may help to manage the shame and stigma attached to sexual offending, which can be a hindrance to the personal and public acceptance of a non-offending identity, by separating the behaviour from the 'true self' (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Maruna, 2001). This echoes Braithwaite's (1989) strategy for effective reintegration of people who have offended back into society, where the behaviour is censured without shaming the person, resulting in their ability to engage with social norms and not be outcast.

Contradictorily, Kras and Blasko (2016), in their interviews with 28 men in prison for sexually related crimes, found no evidence that those desisting had a sense of agency over their future, although their participants being in custody may have impacted this. However, they similarly reported their desisting participants' explanations of their offending behaviour were a 'unique combination of both

responsibility taking and externalization of responsibility' (Kras & Blasko, 2016: 1746). This excuse making behaviour, Maruna and Mann (2006) note, is normative, contrary to the prevailing belief in public discourse and often programmes for addressing sexual offending (Ware & Mann, 2012). Explanations of offending behaviour as the result of external situational circumstances are instead unduly pathologised in criminal justice settings as denial, justification and minimisation and indicators of increased risk of reoffending (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Maruna & Mann, 2006). Alternatively, desistance from sexual offending may at least be prompted by dissociating one's self and identity from the status of 'sex offender' (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Waldram, 2010). Hulley's (2016) findings from her interviews with 15 men self-reporting desistance from sexual offending and living in the community support this. She highlights her respondents all neutralised their offending behaviour, from total denial to denial of elements, i.e. not causing harm, proposing this was to reduce their culpability and manage their self-presentation. The protective function of denial has been explored elsewhere (see Blagden, Winder, Gregson, & Thorne, 2014; Maruna & Mann, 2006). Here the men's neutralising strategies are noted as aiding desistance as they fend off the negative perceptions associated with the label 'sex offender' and enable the construction of a non-offending prosocial identity.

Research on desistance from sexual offending provides a mixed picture, where in some circumstances some of the elements identified as prompting and promoting desistance from general offending, appear applicable, e.g. employment, identity change, sense of individual agency. In others, desistance is noted despite the absence of these factors. This inconsistency echoes that previously noted in the earlier general desistance literature, given the diversity of offending behaviour, people and circumstances there is no one pathway out of all sexual offending. However, it is proposed by applying the knowledge we do have to criminal justice interventions may increase desistance from sexual offending behaviour (McNeill, 2006).

The working relationship in the desistance paradigm

Ultimately, little is empirically known about how the practitioner-client relationship in criminal justice supervision influences desistance from general or sexual offending, although it is considered pivotal (McNeill et al., 2005; McNeill, 2006). McNeill (2009b) outlines in order to effectively promote desistance practitioners must fulfil three roles: a counsellor who motivates, an educator building the person's capabilities and an advocate enabling opportunities. The working relationship, built through the key practice skills of warmth, empathy, respect and 'therapeutic genuineness', is positioned as central to fulfilling these roles (McNeill et al., 2005). 'Therapeutic genuineness' is a concept from Rogers' (1957) person centred therapy. It refers to practitioners' ability to be open, honest and congruent with clients' experience.

McNeill (2006) notes the inherently relational aspect of desistance, stating in order to make behavioural change people need to feel safe and secure in trusting relationships, including in their relationship with their probation officer. The working relationship then may be a site for people to reconstruct their narrative identity (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Maruna & LeBel, 2010). Rex (1999) highlighted that in the context of a warm, encouraging, fair and caring working relationship clients saw practitioners' advice as evidence of genuine concern for their well-being and they were motivated by this to address their behaviours. Farrall (2002; Farrall et al., 2014) and King (2013a), both looking at general offending populations, posit that criminal justice interventions may help people reflect on certain parts of their lives and encourage them to engage with social opportunities to desist. It may be the belief demonstrated by practitioners that people who have offended can successfully change their lives leads to greater self-belief by ratifying their efforts (Farrall et al., 2014; Maruna et al., 2004). This process may provide the opportunity to negotiate and construct new identities, or facilitate access to and engagement with 'turning points' (Giordano et al., 2002; Harris, 2014a). Furthermore, echoing Braithwaite's (1989) idea of reintegrative shaming, in hating the sin, but loving the

sinner, the working relationship may enable the separation of the client's offending behaviour from how they see themselves. Finally, the relationship potentially functions in motivating people who have offended to engage with the content of interventions, enabling them to learn the skills needed to desist from offending (Ward & Maruna, 2007), although it may be long after their supervision that they are able to put these skills into action (Farrall et al., 2014).

As noted above, research on desistance from sexual offending specifically pointed to the positive impact of treatment addressing sexual offending on desistance, noted as a potential 'turning point' in itself (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Harris, 2014a). Harris (2016) suggests treatment programmes addressing sexual offending provide a specific desistance narrative which aligns with Maruna's (2001) redemption script, although she did not look at the content or nature these programmes. In this desistance narrative people acknowledge the harm they caused, the risk they pose and the life experiences precipitating their offending, before accepting their agency to live a future offence free life using the tools learned in treatment. However, she notes it is problematic where the individual's account of their offending doesn't fit with this script. She highlights that some of her participants appear to be 'talking the talk' rather than 'walking the walk', in that they were using jargon and phrases from treatment in a way that appeared superficial. How Harris has distinguished these, however, is not clear as she notes all her participants were desisting from sexual offending, so they were all 'walking the walk' to some degree whatever the narrative evident in the research interviews.

However, within treatment programmes for sexual offending there is a possible tension between clients' narratives, which may be providing a situational account, and programme requirements for clients to take full, unequivocal responsibility for their offences (Kras & Blasko, 2016; Waldram, 2010), despite the lack of evidence linking denial to risk of recidivism (Blagden et al., 2014; Dealey, 2018; Maruna &

Mann, 2006). This tension may hinder the initial construction of desistance narratives (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016), and undermine the development of a working relationship (Dealey, 2018). Both Auburn and Lea (2003) and Waldram (2010), considering prison-based treatment programmes for sexual offending, highlight that cognitive distortions are not something people have but instead 'analysts' categories', or a deductive lens used to classify clients' talk or behaviour in particular ways. 'Cognitive distortions' is a psychological concept which has been popular in literature around offending and treatment as an umbrella term for attitudes and beliefs people use to justify, minimise, rationalise and support their offending behaviour. Maruna and Mann (2006) highlight the issues with this concept in relation to offending behaviour, both in terms of definition and application, particularly where *post hoc* explanations for offending are cast as causing or allowing for offending. Waldram (2010) noted cognitive distortions appeared to be manufactured in the interactions by therapists as an aim and agenda of the CBT approach of the programme rather than evidenced in the narratives of the clients. He called for a narrative approach to treatment which complements CBT, recognising evidence of its effectiveness, which does not decontextualize participant's offences but places them within the broader context of their lives drawing on the moral potentialities a person is demonstrating rather than a focus on their moral deficits. This approach echoes elements of desistance research, and the ethos of the Good Lives Model which I will outline next, separating the person from the offending behaviour and avoiding pathologising individuals, who will inevitably stop offending.

Again, like Maruna (2001), Waldram (2010) recognises the interactive and intersubjective nature of the construction of such narratives however seems to place the 'story' his participants constructed in research interview as a purer representation of their 'autobiography', with little consideration of the influence of research interview context. Arguably, the contentious nature of holding an identity as a 'sex offender' will influence how the participants in any study about sexual

offending behaviour choose to present themselves and their offences in the research interview (Presser, 2004). As such it is important to consider the interactive context in which such 'desistance identities' are being presented and constructed. Furthermore, it is important to consider how criminal justice interventions, which aim to promote desistance, might prompt and promote the development of desistance identities in the working relationship.

Good Lives Model (GLM)

The Good Lives Model (GLM) is a strengths-based approach to rehabilitation of people who have offended which has increasingly influenced the development of programmes for addressing sexual offending behaviour, internationally. In 2014, Scotland introduced the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' (MF: MC) groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending which is, partially, theoretically informed by the GLM. This is the context of the current study. The GLM is grounded in positive psychology, which focuses on personal growth to enable people to lead a satisfactory life rather than solely concentrating on diagnosing and managing mental illness (Seligman, 2002). It is underpinned by the primary assumption that people who have offended 'want a better life, not simply the promise of a less harmful one' (Ward & Maruna, 2007: 141). Resonant with desistance research, Ward and colleagues (Göbbels et al., 2012; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Willis, Prescott, & Yates, 2013) assert the management of risk is not sufficient for the rehabilitation of people who have offended, although clearly necessary.

Drawing from a range of disciplines, Ward and Maruna (2007) propose all people desire or seek the same basic goals in life, or primary human goods. These primary goods are valued aspects of human functioning and living, i.e. actions, characteristics, states of mind and experiences which are inherently beneficial and as such sought for their own sake. Primary human goods include: (1) life (including

healthy living and optimal physical functioning, sexual satisfaction), (2) knowledge, (3) excellence in play, (4) excellence in work (including mastery experiences), (5) excellence in agency (i.e. autonomy and self-directedness), (6) inner peace (i.e. freedom from emotional turmoil and stress), (7) relatedness (including intimate, romantic and family relationships), (8) community, (9) spirituality (in the broad sense of finding meaning and purpose in life), (10) happiness, and (11) creativity (Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Willis et al., 2013). Although we seek all of the primary goods to some degree, depending on who we are and what we value in life we will prioritise some over others. Offending behaviour occurs when people try to achieve primary goods in antisocial and harmful ways, referred to as secondary goods, e.g. using violence and coercion (secondary good) to achieve the primary good of intimacy (Ward & Maruna, 2007). In order to desist from offending, people must have prosocial opportunities and means to achieve primary goods. Risk management strategies can cut people off from the possibility of achieving primary goods, which is likely to frustrate and demoralise people, increasing the risk of re-offending (Laws & Ward, 2011).

Ward and colleagues (Laws & Ward, 2011; Ward & Laws, 2010; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward, Yates, & Willis, 2012; see also Polaschek, 2012) position the GLM as augmenting and complementing the RNR model, as it incorporates risk and promotes living a better life through supporting individuals to achieve their goals in a prosocial manner. In this way the GLM framework is proposed to operationally integrate the principles of the RNR model with desistance research, through its holistic approach and conceptualisation of criminogenic needs (Laws & Ward, 2011). However, others have argued such augmentation may be unnecessary were the principles of RNR more accurately articulated, fully developed and applied faithfully in practice (i.e. Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011; Looman & Abracen, 2013).

Centrally, the GLM approach argues the factors precipitating or perpetuating offending behaviour are not necessarily the same as those precipitating or perpetuating desistance from offending behaviour. As such, focussing on criminogenic needs may not promote desistance. Criminogenic needs are conceptualised instead as indicators of obstacles, internal (e.g. intimacy deficits) or external (e.g. lack of employment opportunities), to achieving primary goods (Ward & Maruna, 2007). Secondary goods then are expressions of dealing with these obstacles. For a simplified example, the secondary good of shoplifting could indicate seeking the primary goods of life or happiness, stealing for sustenance or thrill, respectively. In both instances unemployment may be an identified criminogenic need, which potentially led to the offending behaviour in the first place. However, attempting to address employment without considering the function of the shoplifting is unlikely to result in desistance. In the former, the interaction of the primary good of life with other primary goods, i.e. relatedness in terms of family commitments, may indicate a lack of available flexible employment opportunities as an obstacle. Whereas the latter may indicate an internal obstacle of thrill-seeking or impulsive behavioural traits, which is likely to negatively impact the ability to maintain employment and moreover, employment may not fulfil this primary good. Holistically exploring the function of people's offending behaviour then in terms of what it is trying to achieve goes beyond addressing criminogenic needs, allowing 'turning points' or 'hooks for change' to be recognised and taken advantage of in promoting the appropriate, prosocial acquisition of primary goods. This conceptualisation of criminogenic needs as indicative of obstacles to primary goods may indicate a possible transition point from crime acquisition to crime desistance, the 'time period where the offender and the ex-offender overlap' (Serin & Lloyd, 2009: 347). Identifying the function of the offending behaviour may support criminal justice interventions in catalysing this transition to desistance process (Ward & Laws, 2010). In developing an understanding of the primary goods valuable to the individual, practitioners are guided in how to effectively engage and motivate people in a process of change, supporting them to achieve primary goods in

prosocial ways whilst also attending to risk (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Wilson & Yates, 2009).

GLM and the working relationship

The importance of the working relationship is explicitly noted in the GLM as a fundamental vehicle to motivate and engage clients in treatment to address general and sexual offending behaviour (Laws & Ward, 2011; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Brown, 2004). Currently, the nature and quality of the working relationship is primarily theoretically informed by psychological and mental health literature. It also draws empirically from research around what is effective practice in RNR based interventions and regarding the impact of interventions on desistance, both of which are also heavily influenced by psychological and counselling research. As such, relationship building skills noted previously, such as empathy, warmth and respect, are deemed essential (Marshall et al., 2002, 2003; Marshall, 2005; Ward & Maruna, 2007). A positive working relationship is suggested to be protective against treatment attrition, which is linked to higher rates of recidivism (Hanson et al., 2007; Willis et al., 2013). In a case study discussion of the application of the GLM in working with a man convicted of violent offences deemed to be high-risk, Whitehead, Ward and Collie (2007) implied the practitioner-client relationship was important in using the GLM model to engage with and motivate a client previously considered intractable. They did not elucidate further on the essential elements of this relationship. Dealey (2018) outlines the possible benefits of using the GLM model to work effectively with people who deny committed sexual offences, drawing on McNeill's (2006) outline of a desistance paradigm to note the importance of a collaborative, empathic and genuine working relationship to achieve this. She further highlights the challenges for practitioners in working with people who have committed sexual offences; feeling disgusted, identifying with the client, feeling victimised by the client, and fear of sexual arousal.

These challenges, as well as practitioners' negative attitudes and values, can adversely impact how practitioners interact with clients, hindering the development of an effective working relationship and negatively affecting clients' self-concept, a concern Ward and Maruna (2007) criticise previous research for ignoring. Particularly, practitioners may face a dilemma between wanting to support clients to change whilst also wanting to morally condemn them (Laws & Ward, 2011). This is especially relevant in relation to sexual offending, where the behaviour is generally considered abhorrent (Dealey, 2018; Ward, 2014). This may result in further shaming people convicted of sexual offences, who are already arguably shamed and stigmatised by socio-legal measures, as well as punitive and reviling public attitudes (McAlinden, 2007). Shame may jeopardise engagement with treatment programmes (Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & O'Brien, 2009), increase risk of re-offending (Tangney, Stuewig, & Martinez, 2014) and is certainly a barrier to a good life, in judging oneself as a bad person rather than someone whose actions were bad (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Sandhu and Rose (2012) noted in their review that practitioners reported holding empathy allowed them to maintain positive and caring attitudes towards their clients who had committed sexual offences, as they were able to see them as people and not just as their offending behaviour.

Although theoretically grounded, there is very limited empirical evidence in support of the GLM (Willis et al., 2013) and even less in elucidating the role of the practitioner-client relationship specifically in the GLM. As its uptake into programme development and delivery is relatively recent, the conclusions that can yet be drawn empirically are limited. Studies undertaken indicate promising yet modest results. For example, Harkins et al. (2012) undertook an evaluation of a GLM based module and compared it to a traditional relapse prevention module in a treatment programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour, which was primarily grounded in the RNR approach with a focus on criminogenic needs. They found a modest difference in how clients and practitioners described the approaches, where the GLM approach was noted as more positive and future

focused than the relapse prevention module. There were a number of methodological issues with this study including size of the sample, lack of clarity about participants, and difficulty in measures. Furthermore, it is possible the effectiveness of a GLM approach may be undermined where it is simply added to a risk-oriented programme, as there is potential conflict of approaches (Willis et al., 2013). However, the modest results may not indicate a lack of effectiveness of the GLM, instead they may imply that the GLM framework is simply explicitly outlining existing tacit practice skills and knowledge. That is, practitioners in both modules may have already been demonstrating the necessary interpersonal skills to enable collaborative and meaningful exploration of the higher function of clients' offending behaviour, and the obstacles, or criminogenic needs, to achieving their aims, working in a future-focused and strengths-based way to encourage desistance. As such studies of effectiveness of the GLM approach may fall foul to the pitfalls of studies of the effectiveness of any approach, where the treatment design is measured over the treatment delivery, in terms of the practitioners' interpersonal skills and the working relationship, even though the latter has more influence on outcome and is more difficult to control for between groups (Marshall & Marshall, 2010).

[The working relationship and effective practice skills](#)

General psychotherapeutic and counselling literature highlights the importance of the working relationship in facilitating behavioural change (Bordin, 1979; Horvath, 2001; McNeill et al., 2005; Rogers, 1957). This insight has influenced effective practice policies with offending populations, in relation to both general and sexual offending, across the three dominant paradigms outlined above (McNeill et al, 2005; Marshall et al, 2002; Andrews et al, 1990). However, as noted previously, this insight is not new for practitioners who have attempted to maintain the importance of the working relationship in an environment overwhelmingly concerned with actuarial risk assessment, manualised practice and accredited programmes (Bracken, 2003; Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Hart & Collins, 2014). Drawing heavily

from psychotherapy and counselling literature, the concept of the working relationship is greatly influenced by Bordin's (1979) dominant model of the working alliance. Bordin's (1979) working alliance is characterised by a cohesive bond that facilitates collaborative work on tasks towards mutually agreed goals. He proposes that the profile of working alliance will vary across different settings, due to the different demands placed on the relationship but that all share three elements: tasks, goals and bond. Ross et al. (2008) assert the simplicity and intuitiveness of this model has resulted in its uncritical acceptance as foundational in clinical psychology. They note Bordin's (1979) model is limited in scope, explanatory depth and accuracy, as it does not elucidate the underlying mechanisms, the influencing factors or how to account for emerging evidence such as the importance of therapist characteristics. Moreover, they highlight this acceptance has resulted in a focus on measuring the relationship between the working alliance and treatment outcome, but limited consideration of how the working alliance develops and the determinants of this. They propose examining this within rehabilitative work will give increased insight due to the specific constraints, systemic and personal, on working with offending populations.

Practitioner skills necessary to form a working alliance or working relationship have been examined across psychotherapy. Patterson's (1984: 437) meta-analytic review of this literature concludes that the necessity for practitioners to display empathy, respect and warmth is 'incontrovertible'. These skills, amongst others drawn from psychotherapeutic research findings, have been examined in the context of effective practice with people who have offended, i.e. to reduce recidivism, generally and sexually (e.g. Beech & Fordham, 1997; Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Marshall et al., 2003; Raynor et al., 2014; Trotter & Evans, 2012). It is important here to distinguish between the possible therapeutic nature of the relationship between the practitioner and client, and an intervention being therapeutic. Despite being heavily influenced by psychological research and concepts, rehabilitative interventions, as one to one supervision or groupwork, in

Scotland and the UK more widely are primarily delivered by criminal justice social workers or probation officers and prison officers, rather than clinical psychologists or therapists, especially community-based interventions. However, these practitioners 'share a similar goal in working with people to influence changes in their behaviour, associated mental states and social circumstances' (Burnett & McNeill, 2005: 233). Whether the treatment is strictly therapeutic, i.e. delivered by psychologists or therapists, or not, the working relationship necessary to facilitate change is similar (Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Marshall et al., 2003; Sturgess, Woodhams, & Tonkin, 2015).

Research on the necessary skills to build a working relationship appear to broadly distinguish between relationship building or personal skills and structuring or professional skills, which includes behavioural and cognitive techniques as well as skills to set up and structure the meeting, e.g. clarifying the purpose of the meeting, discussing confidentiality, ensuring the setting of the meeting is appropriate (i.e. Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Raynor et al., 2014; Trotter & Evans, 2010; Trotter, 1996). Relationship building skills can include open, warm and enthusiastic communication, demonstrating attention, concern, respect, empathy and warmth. Structuring skills can include prosocial modelling, problem solving, and motivational interviewing techniques. Studies appear to differ in how they determine, define and categorise these practice skills, reflecting the broader lack of consensus about the definition of terms. This is perhaps unsurprising given the normative nature of some of these skills, however the issue is rarely addressed in rehabilitation research. As such there is a lack of consistency and coherence across studies. To address this, many studies do claim inter-rater reliability. However, as the raters are often from the same research establishment it is likely they have a generally shared, if not the same, understanding of social and cultural norms making inter-rater reliability perhaps unsurprising.

The inconsistency of definitions is evident, for example, between two studies examining skills in one to one supervision with general offending behaviour. Trotter and colleagues (Trotter & Evans, 2010; Trotter, 1993) in Australia and Raynor and colleagues (Raynor et al., 2014; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012; Jersey Supervision Skills Study) in the UK, both developed coding frameworks to identify key practice skills in probation, and link them to reoffending rates. In relation to the skills of empathy, Trotter and Evans (2010) note this as a distinct, standalone, relationship building skill in their coding framework. Whereas Vanstone and Raynor (2012) code empathy explicitly as a subcategory of the structuring skill 'motivational interviewing', although refer to it within the guidance under their denoted relationship building skills, i.e. 'effective use of authority (develop rapport and empathy)' (p36) or 'quality of verbal communication (empathic listening)' (p13). Although both frameworks include reflective listening as a manifestation of empathy, Trotter and Evans (2010; 2012) also incorporate here reframing difficulties in non-blaming terms and offering appropriate information, i.e. support services. In the Jersey Supervision Skills study (Raynor et al, 2013; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012), there is no such further exploration of features of empathy, with these elements captured under other skills.

Furthermore, terms used to denote skills or personal characteristics that are needed for building good relationships with people who have offended differ across studies, although appear at times to be used interchangeably and at other times are presented as a list of common-sense factors. For example, McNeill et al. (2005) refer to warmth, empathy, respect and therapeutic genuineness, Bonta et al. (2008: 23) call for 'positive, warm and respectful relationship[s]' where Dowden and Andrews (2004), referencing a training manual developed by Andrews and Carvell (1998), provide an extended list of characteristics including humour, warmth, genuineness, empathy, engagement. Perhaps is it the common-sense nature of these interpersonal skills that make them so hard to clearly define, but so easy to

recognise as we, as humans, have a shared knowledge of these elements of everyday interaction that constitute positive relational experiences.

The interchangeability or possible conflation of terms, which are inevitably intertwined, is problematic as it is not clear what constitutes these skills or how to identify them in other settings. Furthermore, the literature base informing effective practice skills in criminal justice practice has drawn primarily from a non-offending, clinical population where transferability is questionable. For example, a more directive approach was found to be positively correlated with effectiveness in relation to working with people convicted of sexual offences, contrary to evidence with a non-offending population (Marshall, 2005). Also little explicit consideration has been given to the impact of the mandatory context, the physical setting (i.e. prison or probation office) or the practitioner's dual role inherent in working with involuntary clients (Ross et al., 2008; Skeem, Loudon, Polaschek, & Camp, 2007), factors which may qualitatively affect how skills such as respect, empathy, and warmth are both demonstrated and perceived, with a knock on effect on developing a working alliance or relationship. As such there is a potential departure from the psychotherapeutic and counselling literature, particularly in the skills necessary to maintain the dual functions of care and control, where practitioners may see clients as in need of punishment rather than counselling (Harkins & Beech, 2007), struggle to respond empathically in light of the offending behaviour (Dealey, 2018) or be constrained by the demands of the system (Ross et al., 2008).

Most rehabilitation research has looked at practice skills during one-to-one interviews, which is possibly in response to the increased use and promotion of manualised groupwork programmes, rather than in groupwork where the research focus appears to have been on evaluating the effectiveness and integrity of the overall programme. Furthermore, it has primarily considered general offending rather than sexual offending populations (Murphy & McGrath, 2008). However,

there are two relevant sets of studies regarding processes, including therapist skills, in groupwork programmes for addressing sexual offending behaviours: Beech and Fordham (1997) and the studies undertaken by Marshall and colleagues (Marshall et al., 2002, 2003; Marshall & Serran, 2004; Marshall, 2005). Beech and Fordham (1997) sought to measure the factors which influenced the therapeutic climate of groupwork programmes for addressing sexual offending. Using a scaled measure, they looked at relationships within the group, personal growth of members, and structure of the group. They particularly commented on the need for the practitioners to have a helpful and supportive leadership style, to encourage expression of feelings, instil a sense of hope and establish desirable group norms. They do not explicitly note the relationship skills necessary to do this. Marshall and colleagues (Marshall et al., 2002; Marshall, Serran et al., 2003) undertook two of the only available studies specifically examining therapists characteristics in treatment addressing sexual offending behaviour. Looking at videotapes of treatment sessions, they identified and coded several therapist features, including empathy, warmth, a rewarding style, directiveness, and being non-confrontational. These were linked to positive changes in clients' perspective taking, coping skills, and relationship difficulties.

Mostly the skills deemed as effective in groupwork addressing sexual offending behaviour appear to be the same 'common-sense' relationship building skills and structuring skills as one-to-one work, although undertaking a wider remit of facilitating group cohesion alongside working relationships with individual clients, again echoing psychotherapeutic literature (i.e. Yalom, 1975). As noted above previous research has explored the specific skills deemed necessary for building effective working relationships. Those relationship or personal features most regularly noted in the literature regarding rehabilitative work with people who have committed general and sexual offences, and explicitly advocated for in practitioner guidance in Scotland (McNeill et al., 2005), are: empathy, warmth, respect and therapeutic genuineness. I will further discuss these practitioner features to

consider how they have been positioned, conceptualised and identified in previous research as this has informed my professional understanding of these skills, and guided my initial observations in this study. Furthermore, I will highlight how these skills manifest in practice remains largely unspoken. I will also briefly comment on some of the skills, noted as behavioural, structuring or professional, identified as important.

Personal skills

Empathy

Empathy, or being empathic, is noted as central in terms of relationship building throughout the literature on practitioner skills (Andrews et al., 1990; Bonta et al., 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Marshall & Serran, 2004; Marshall, 2005; McNeill et al., 2005), although only Marshall et al (2002) found this feature to be predictive of positive outcomes with an offending population. The consensus appears to be that expressions of empathy enable good relationships between practitioners and clients which is a necessary precondition for effective treatment or intervention although not by itself positively correlated with reduced recidivism (Bonta et al., 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Raynor et al., 2014; Trotter, 1996). Despite the frequency with which it is referenced, empathy as an operational construct is not defined in most of the literature. This may be due to the tacit nature of this concept as, with reference to warmth and empathy, Marshall (2005: 114) stated, 'no comments are required on these two features as they are, or should be, familiar to readers.'

However, there is more detailed guidance about how empathy is defined and manifests in both the Jersey Skills Supervision Checklist manual (Vanstone & Raynor, 2012) and Trotter and Evans' (2010) guidance for measuring skills of Juvenile Justice Officers. Trotter (1999) outlines empathy as understanding clients' point of view and feelings, manifested as reflective listening. This includes

paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, reframing, and orienting responses i.e. 'uh-um', 'yes', 'hmm' (Trotter & Evans, 2010). Vanstone and Raynor (2012: 18) draw specifically on a definition of empathy used in Motivational Interviewing (see Miller & Rollnick, 2002) where empathy is also framed as 'skilful reflective listening' which enables the practitioner to understand the client's perspective and feelings without judgement, blame or criticism. Marshall et al (2003) in their literature review of process variables in the treatment of men convicted of sexual offending, note empathy has been an extensively researched therapeutic construct found to be positively correlated with desired treatment outcomes across different therapies and different populations. They note empathy not only as the ability to understand another's feelings, which might be considered cognitive empathy or perspective taking, but also to relate to them, which may be considered affective empathy or a vicarious emotional experiencing.

Warmth

Although acknowledged and indeed mentioned as central in most research and guidance on practitioner skills, e.g. Andrews et al. (1990: 376) call for an 'interpersonally warm and sensitive' relationship, this skill has rarely been explained or expanded upon. Vanstone and Raynor (2012: 35) in their checklist for measuring supervision skills give some hint in saying 'Displays warmth (not stiff/ cold/ formal)'. Marshall et al (2003: 210) provide an outline of their understanding of this term as reference to 'the accepting, caring, and supportive behaviour of the therapist' who is friendly and personable, further elaborating that warmth is often confounded with other therapist features, i.e. empathy, respect, support. Truax and Carkhuff (1967), in relation to counselling, outline warmth as demonstrating you value the whole person, as opposed to only focussing on presenting behaviour. This aligns with the ethos of Braithwaite's (1989) reintegrative shaming and the desistance paradigm, of valuing the person whilst censuring the offending behaviour. Again, it may be that how to demonstrate 'warmth' is presumed known to people as

socialised beings, but also more specifically may be considered, for people choosing to work in this field, to be a personality trait rather than a communication skill to be learned (Bonta et al., 2011).

Respect

The development of mutual respect is noted as a core relationship skill across the literature about rehabilitation (Bonta et al., 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; McNeill et al., 2005) and across almost all schools of counselling and psychological treatment (Marshall et al., 2003). This includes listening to the client, not being distracted, not being sarcastic, rude or dismissive (Raynor et al., 2014). In their review of treatment process variables, Marshall et al (2003) note respect demonstrates to the client they are valued, as well as modelling desired behaviour. Similarly to Truax and Carkhuff's (1967) definition of warmth, practitioners may demonstrate respect by showing they value the client whilst condemning the offending behaviour. However, Marshall and colleagues (Marshall et al., 2002; Marshall, Serran et al., 2003) did not find respect alone significantly correlated with positive outcomes. They questioned whether it can be considered as a standalone factor as it tends to go with genuineness, warmth and support which together are believed to be influential in forming a good working alliance or relationship.

Therapeutic genuineness

The concept of therapeutic genuineness is borrowed directly from counselling literature, specifically Rogers' (1957) client centred therapy, however it is also central to many other psychotherapy approaches. It refers to the practitioner's ability to be authentic in the interaction, sharing their emotional reactions to clients' problems or situation where appropriate. Being authentic in the relationship is proposed to contribute to the establishment of a bond, a central tenet to the working alliance (Bordin, 1979), and constitutes the trusting, non-judgemental

working relationship (Hart & Collins, 2014). In relation to addressing sexual offending behaviour, Marshall and colleagues (Marshall et al., 2002; Marshall et al., 2003) identified and measured the expression of genuineness from therapists in a groupwork programme. They did not find this element to be as strongly predictive of therapeutic benefits as others, i.e. empathy, warmth, directiveness and rewardingness. However, as noted in their literature review, this aspect has been conflated with respect (Marshall et al, 2003) and given the focus on practitioners being aware and expressing emotions where appropriate, this factor could also be conflated with, for example, empathy and warmth. Trotter & Evans (2010), for example, include the elements of what may constitute therapeutic genuineness in their coding framework under 'nature of relationship', i.e. open and honest, articulate perception of clients' feeling and problems, self-disclosure where appropriate, use of humour, non-blaming approach, optimism, enthusiasm and engagement. Vanstone and Raynor (2012) in the Jersey supervision skills study make note of therapeutic genuineness, however although there is an implication the practitioner would be authentic within the relationship this is not explicitly measured. Moreover, they highlight the difficulty in measuring and replicating these abstract concepts of effective practice skills (Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). It appears the concept of therapeutic genuineness has to some extent in rehabilitation practice and guidance become subsumed into a definition of what constitutes a good working relationship, conflated with the skills of empathy, warmth and respect, which may be a departure from its origins.

Professional skills

Prosocial modelling and Rewardingness

In Australia, Trotter (1996) examined whether Corrections Officers' use of prosocial modelling, problem solving and empathy with adults who had committed offences, demonstrated by content of case file records, was linked with lower rates of recidivism. Evidence of prosocial modelling techniques being used was particularly

seen as predictive of lower rates of recidivism. This included rewards, encouragement and reinforcement for the client's prosocial expressions or actions as well as modelling prosocial behaviour and attitude i.e. being punctual, polite, understanding clients' point of view. Prosocial modelling also indicates displays of respect and empathy.

In a later study applying this understanding to the supervision of young people convicted of offending behaviour, 117 interviews between practitioners and clients were observed and coded (see Trotter & Evans, 2010). Again, prosocial modelling was noted as linked to lower recidivism rates, although particularly when combined with 3 other skills; problem solving, role clarification and quality of relationship (Trotter, 2012). Dowden and Andrews (2004) also found in their meta-analysis appropriate modelling and reinforcement to be associated with lower offending rates, like Trotter's pro-social modelling concept this construct involves active positive reinforcement of a desired behaviour and staff modelling desired behaviours. Raynor et al.'s (2014) Jersey based study concerning practice with adults who have generally offended corroborated the findings of these previous studies. Bonta et al (2008) did not find prosocial modelling and practices such as reinforcement related to rates of recidivism. However, they noted these practices were only in a minority of the supervision interviews they viewed, possibly accounting for the lack of correlation found.

In relation to groupwork addressing sexual offending, Beech and Fordham (1997) noted the role of the practitioner to establish prosocial group norms and model effective interpersonal interactions, including encouraging peer to peer interaction, advising this promotes group cohesion. Although not specifically looking at prosocial modelling, it implies this skill is also necessary in groupwork to achieve positive outcomes. Marshall et al (2003) do not outline prosocial modelling as a factor, however do note the importance of the therapist modelling respect,

emotional coping, and other interpersonal skills. Furthermore, Marshall et al (2002) found rewardingness to be predictive of therapy benefits for participants of a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending. Rewardingness appears conceptually aligned to the indicators of prosocial modelling outlined by Trotter and Evans (2010), i.e. positive reinforcement, and rewarding and encouraging positive prosocial goal seeking behaviour. Centrally for Marshall et al (2002), in predicting effectiveness, was the client's perception of this behaviour as rewarding.

Directiveness

Marshall et al (2003) found directiveness and offering advice to be positively correlated to positive outcomes in their study of practitioner skills in groupwork for addressing sexual offending. Again, drawing from therapeutic literature, they note that directiveness is important in establishing good working relationships and specifically cite Proctor and Rosen's (1983) report that such directiveness is expected by clients. Furthermore, they highlight directiveness as more common in cognitive-behavioural approaches as clients are encouraged to practice and display certain behaviour during and between sessions, i.e. roleplay, homework assignments. Such approaches are shown as effective in RNR research. Importantly, Marshall and colleagues (2002, 2003) highlight the need to be responsive to the client and situation as directiveness can be detrimental particularly where there is client resistance. Beech and Fordham (1997) noted the importance of leadership style, and noted although direction may be useful in facilitating active participation overall, directiveness where deemed controlling was unhelpful. Bonta et al (2008) combined directive and structuring factors including prosocial modelling and reinforcement with encouraging skills practice, giving homework assignments, active antisocial discouragement and relapse prevention, which aligns with Marshall and colleagues (2003). Bonta et al (2008) found specific directive factors did not predict recidivism, although again commented that the lack of instances of these behaviours in their audiotapes may account for the lack of significant association.

Their subsequent study found that following training, 51 recruited probation officers demonstrated more frequent use of cognitive behavioural techniques, which may highlight a directive approach, which in turn was related to lower rates of recidivism of their clients (Bonta et al., 2011).

In summation, although there is a consensus as to the importance of personal and professional skills in promoting a working relationship, which is essential for behavioural change, there is less agreement and clarity about what these skills look like, particularly the personal skills. This is possibly due to their common, every day, normative nature, making them simultaneously obvious and vague. Aggregating the qualities of a skill for categorising and coding gives an ideal concept of that skill, which is not capable of fully elucidating the various realities of how that skill materialises and wrongly assumes the homogeneity of that skill across settings (Horvath & Muntigl, 2018). Furthermore, Horvath and Muntigl (2018) note the difficulty in abstracting the demonstrations of these skills from their interactional context is that you lose the essence of understanding their appropriate responsiveness. That is, by decontextualizing the talk you cannot see how the skill was effective in that instance. As such, it is important to understand how these relationship building skills are evident in the interactions between practitioners and clients to further understanding how they might contribute to building a working relationship (Ross et al., 2008).

Local context

Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF: MC) programme

In Scotland a new rolling groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending was introduced nationally in 2014, in prisons and community-based settings. The 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' (MF: MC) programme is theoretically, partially, based on the Good Lives Model (GLM) approach in content and delivery (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). It consists of both groupwork sessions

and individual case management. In the community these aspects are usually delivered by different people, where the practitioner conducting the individual sessions and case management holds the overall legal duty to supervise the person who has offended under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 section 27. The clients are Court mandated to attend, and as such considered involuntary clients.

Reflecting the proposed complementary relationship between the GLM and the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, the MF: MC programme is nested in the wider risk management processes of the criminal justice system. This programme proposes to tailor the content to the specific criminogenic needs of the client as determined by appropriate empirically supported risk assessments for both general (i.e. LS/CMI; Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2004; Bonta & Andrews, 2016) and sexual offending (i.e. RM2000, SA07; Hanson & Thornton, 2000; Hanson et al, 2007). As per the RNR model, the risk assessments inform risk management measures, i.e. level of monitoring and supervision by all agencies, as well as indicate the potential pathway to offending for that individual. In line with the GLM, this pathway identification opens up the exploration of the primary goods important to that individual and contributes to them identifying what goods they wish to attain and how to do this in a positive, appropriate manner, i.e. making a Good Lives Plan. All clients have to complete a number of essential modules on the programme, e.g. 'Introduction to thinking styles and self-management', following which they will complete certain optional modules chosen based on the criminogenic needs identified for the client, e.g. relationship skills module (see Appendix E).

The aim of this programme is the reduction in risk and increased community safety, through the appropriate supervision of men convicted of sexual offences, and the increase in clients' wellbeing, by increasing their capacity to attain their life goals (or primary goods) in prosocial ways, ultimately resulting in their desistance. Whilst the GLM approach is proposed to theoretically underpin the MF: MC programme,

different modalities are recommended to achieve the goals identified, e.g. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Schema Focussed Therapy, mindfulness, motivational techniques, behavioural modification and potentially pharmacological input (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). Although there is a move away from addressing cognitive distortions in this programme, reflecting the difficulties with these as discussed above, there remains a focus on addressing clients' thinking influenced particularly by CBT and Schema Focused Therapy models. CBT assumes cognitions affect behaviour, where in order to change offending behaviour the individual needs to change their thought processes, attitudes and beliefs. Schemas are considered to be structures containing attitudes, beliefs and assumptions which direct cognitive activity such as the processing of events (Maruna & Mann, 2006). Both approaches are concerned with targeting the individual's cognitive processes to promote behavioural change. The manuals for the MF:MC programme situate schemas as thinking styles (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013: 10) and state the programme '...should aim to assist offenders in understanding their characteristic thinking patterns which contributed towards the decision to use anti-social behaviour in any situation' (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013: 50). This conflation is not unproblematic, however beyond the scope of this discussion.

Assisting clients to identify, understand and change characteristic patterns of thinking or schemas, referred to as 'unhelpful thinking styles', which are considered supportive of offending behaviour is a central activity of the programme to achieve its aims (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). The centrality of addressing thinking styles is evident in the programme's structure and delivery, where there are two modules, one essential and one optional, focussing on 'thinking styles'. Moreover, the essential module 'Introduction to thinking styles and self-management' is chronologically the second module all programme clients will complete following the initial entry module (see Appendix E). Understanding thinking styles and self-management is placed as foundational to allow engagement

with the subsequent modules, and threaded through the whole programme (Scottish Government, 2013, 2014b). The guidance and manuals for the MF: MC programme explicitly place the working relationship, through demonstration of key practice skills, as paramount to engage clients and achieve the programme's aims (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). However, there is little further guidance on the interpersonal processes involved in building an effective working relationship.

Conclusion

The working relationship is considered central in rehabilitation of people who have committed offences, general and sexual, in the three dominant paradigms in criminal justice social work intervention: Risk-Need-Responsivity model (RNR), Desistance paradigm, and the Good Lives Model (GLM). Several personal and professional skills have been identified as necessary to build an effective working relationship, with clinical, non-clinical and offending populations. Empathy, warmth and respect are highlighted as essential personal or relationship building skills, although these are particularly evasive to explicit definition, possibly due to their ordinariness and normativity. Therapeutic genuineness has also been identified as a necessary skill, however, as explored above, is difficult to disentangle from other relationship building skills. There has been little exploration of how these relationship building practice skills are demonstrated in the interactions between practitioners and clients to build and maintain this relationship, or how these skills are used in negotiating the ambivalence hypothesised in the process of desistance, arguably a primary aim of intervention.

The wealth of meta-analytical research supporting the RNR principles of effective intervention with people convicted of offending, including sexual offending, has generally focussed on the content of programmes and selection of clients (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). The wider discourses of risk and public protection have somewhat

obscured the importance of the working relationship, instead emphasising risk assessment and management which widely remains a primary focus of rehabilitative interventions (McNeill, 2016b), including the MF: MC programme in this study (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014b). As such, distinctly less is known about how the working relationship between practitioners and clients contributes to the effectiveness of interventions, although research indicates it does (i.e. Farrall et al., 2014; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Marshall, 2005; Marshall & Burton, 2010). This research has primarily used quantitative renderings of practice skills or retrospective interviews, neglecting to explore the process of building the relationship. Desistance research has mostly focussed on natural desistance, i.e. without formal intervention, noting the interplay between age, social processes and identity as central. Features of personal narratives promoting desistance have been identified such as having a sense of agency about the future, separating the offending behaviour from a moral 'true self', and wanting to give something back in terms of generativity. Studies looking at the impact of criminal justice interventions on desistance have mainly used narrative interview methods exploring participants' experiences. These studies, particularly regarding people desisting from sexual offending behaviour, highlight the importance of interventions as a 'turning point' and a space where new identities can be constructed to promote desistance (i.e. Farmer et al., 2012; Harris, 2014a, 2016). The working relationship, and its constitutive key practice skills, is highlighted as a conduit for change in such desistance research although how this unfolds within the intervention remains unclear (Farrall et al., 2014).

The current approach to addressing sexual offending behaviour in criminal justice intervention in Scotland, the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme, is partially based on the GLM. Proposing to bridge the gap between RNR and desistance research through the GLM, Ward and colleagues (Laws & Ward, 2011; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward & Laws, 2010) advocate for a positive approach to rehabilitation that focusses on supporting clients to achieve

their life goals in prosocial and safe ways, seeing offending behaviour as an indicator of the use of inappropriate means to attain these. Again, the working relationship is placed as central to motivate clients to effectively engage in treatment. This approach is theoretically supported however has limited empirical evidence. As such, how the therapeutic relationship in this field contributes to client engagement and subsequent effectiveness of treatment is currently empirically unknown although, echoing RNR and desistance research, is presumed to be key.

Given the centrality of the working relationship between practitioners and clients in the rehabilitation of the latter, empirically and theoretically, across all three of the dominant paradigms, it is perhaps surprising there has been limited examination of how the building blocks of this, as identified key practice skills (i.e. empathy, warmth, and respect), are demonstrated *in situ*. Qualitative interviews or quantitative coding strategies cannot unravel the process of building the working relationship, being retrospective and abstractive, respectively. How the relationship building skills are evident in the interaction has remained in the 'black box' of supervision. Regardless of the underpinning model of intervention, i.e. RNR, desistance or GLM, the practice of supervision is fundamentally discursive, it revolves around practitioners and clients talking. It is primarily through talk, and related elements of interaction, i.e. gesturing, that the necessary practice skills are demonstrated and the working relationship is built. Furthermore, it is through this talk tasks and goals to address criminogenic needs are agreed upon, desistance identities are proposed to be fostered and risks related to offending are discussed, assessed and managed. In light of this, in the current study, I examine the talk between practitioners and clients in relation to the following research questions:

- 1) How are the key practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect, as effective practice for relationship building, demonstrated by practitioners and responded to by clients of the MF:MC groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour?

- 2) How are the processes of identity change, hypothesised by research and theory on desistance from offending, evident in the interactions between practitioners and clients of the MF: MC groupwork programme?
- 3) How is risk talked about in interaction in sessions of the MF:MC groupwork programme?

In pursuing answers to the above questions, the aims of this study are: 1) to explore the 'black box' of criminal justice social work practice by applying qualitative and fine grained methods of discourse analysis and conversation analysis to interactional data from the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour; 2) to identify how key practice skills are evident in the interactions between practitioners and clients; 3) to identify how the demonstration of key practice skills contributes to the construction of non-offending identities as posited by desistance research; 4) to contribute to knowledge and training in effective practice in criminal justice social work.

In this study, I have taken an interactional approach, using the qualitative research methods of discourse analysis, specifically discursive psychology, and conversation analysis to analyse naturally occurring data, which refers to events or interactions that would have occurred without researcher influence (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). These methods are essentially concerned with how participants make sense of their own environments in interaction, i.e. 'member's methods' (Blaikie, 2010; Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1983; Hall, Juhila, Matarese, & Nijnatten, 2014). I will outline my methodological approach to addressing these research questions in the next chapter. Also, in the next chapter (Chp. 2) and the first empirical chapter (Chp. 3) I will discuss relevant literature from the fields of conversation analysis and discursive psychology which informed and situated my analysis in this study. It is important to note that this study was a collaborative PhD studentship developed by my supervisor Dr Steve Kirkwood in collaboration with a Scottish Local Authority and the Risk Management Authority. It was developed from a pilot project

undertaken by Dr Kirkwood using this methodological approach in examining desistance processes and criminal justice practices (see Kirkwood, 2016). As such there were certain established parameters for this study; the use of conversation analysis and discourse analysis to examine the interactions, the site of the data being sessions of the MF: MC programme and broadly the study exploring criminal justice social work practice skills and desistance. The research questions outlined above were developed from this original proposal.

Ch. 2: Methodology

In this chapter I will outline the methodological approach I have taken. I will justify and explain my naturalistic, qualitative approach, and my process of data collection. I will then outline the methods of conversation analysis and discursive psychological, before explaining my analytic procedure and strategy in this study to examine the interactions between practitioners and clients of the MF: MC groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour.

Why a naturalistic, qualitative approach?

As outlined in the literature review, previous research looking at practitioner skills for building effective working relationships with clients has relied heavily on quantitative methods and qualitative research interviews. However, both of these approaches necessarily obscure the interactional processes at play in constructing the working relationship. As such I propose to take a naturalistic, qualitative approach, which is interested in examining how people behave *in situ*.

The quantitative methods used to explore criminal justice practices, such as that used by Marshall et al. (2002), Raynor, Ugwu-dike, and Vanstone (2014) and Trotter and Evans (2010), have involved developing an operational definition of the selected practitioner characteristics or skills, coding audio or video recordings of interactions between practitioner and clients for these skills, and considering if the frequency of displays of the skills are statistically linked to pre-determined outcome measures such as recidivism rates, or pre and post treatment measures. There are a number of concerns in relation to the reliability of recidivism rates as a measure of intervention effectiveness due to the limits of the Criminal Justice System including: the impact of political and public context on conviction rates, the low report rate of sexual offences, the reported time lapse between age of onset and age at first

arrest for sexual offences, and also the low rates of recidivism amongst those convicted of sexual offences (Almond, McManus, Worsley, & Gregory, 2015; Looman, Abracen, Serin, & Marquis, 2005). Notwithstanding these limitations, quantitative methods have demonstrated links between rehabilitation interventions, the defined practice skills and desistance from offending. However, they do not explain how the practice skills are demonstrated or perceived in the interaction between the practitioner and the client, or moreover shaped by the interaction. Rendering the practitioner skills as numbers glosses over the nuances and subtleties of talk, as well as concealing clients' active role in the interaction. Furthermore, how the skills are actively constituted, defined and understood by practitioners and clients within their interaction is not attended to (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Taylor, 2001). Instead researchers' definitions are given priority and mapped onto the participants' experience.

Similar criticisms are levied at studies using qualitative research interview methods (e.g. Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2014; Maruna, 2001; Rex, 1999). As retrospective accounts, interviews do not explain how practice skills are demonstrated in interaction, but how the interviewees wish to describe these skills in relation to the current social context in which they find themselves: the research interview. That research interviews are sites of social interaction themselves, Potter and Hepburn (2005) note, is rarely recognised in research using these methods, where the influence of the interviewer and the context of the interview is so often edited out. Furthermore, they note two common problematic assumptions underlying research interviews: that the interviewee can faithfully describe social processes or causal relations, and their use of psychological or cognitive terms (i.e. feel, think) describes an inner experience (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). These assumptions fail to account for the different stakes and interests of the interviewee and the interviewer, and the actions of talk, for example how people use language to 'do' desirable self-presentation (Goffman, 1959; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). As Heydon (2008) noted in her analysis of police interviews with suspects, regardless of

the veracity of guilt or innocence, the suspects had a motivated interest in presenting themselves as less culpable, whilst the police had a stake in constructing a causal story with the suspect as the protagonist.

In qualitative research interviews, the stake and interest of the interviewer in particular is often under analysed. As such, it is unclear what impact the interviewer's contributions have on the interviewee's responses and interaction (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). The interview set up or questions indicate the stake and interest of the interview, and by proxy the interviewer. What they are asking and how they are asking it shows the interviewer's stance, or footing, towards the topic (Levinson, 1988), as well as towards the interviewee. As such the interviewer may flood the interview with particular social science categories, topics or agendas (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). For example, Carlsson (2011) notes that questioning people about 'turning points' in relation to desistance is likely to influence their responses, eliciting evidence for 'turning points'. In her interviews with 27 men convicted of violent offences, Presser (2004) observed the men resisted being put in the identity category of 'offender', suggested by the interview topic, by instead presenting justifications to construct moral accounts for their behaviour (e.g. self-defence, defending a woman). She noted they presented themselves as accountable to what they believed she knew and elicited her affirmation of the narrative identity they were presenting as moral or normal, for example through evoking her social position as a woman or expertise as a researcher. The self-narratives of her respondents and the social interaction site of the interview were mutually constructing and contingent, highlighting that "self-narratives are developed through social interaction" (Maruna, 2001: 8).

Language is not a passive device; instead it achieves social actions (e.g. inviting, persuading, denying). People use language to construct their realities, and in turn are constructed by them, rather than reflect an objective true reality (Berger &

Luckmann, 1991; Liddicoat, 2011; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Thoughts, feelings and concepts, including the narrative identity of individuals, are constructed conversationally within the parameters of the research interview, rather than the interview uncovering stable, enduring, underlying cognitive processes driving people's actions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Presser, 2004). In this way research interviews, although helpful in considering how narrative identity and experience is conversationally built in this setting, cannot attend to the research object of interest here: how relationship building skills are evident in the interactions between practitioners and clients. Furthermore, it is how these skills are co-constructed and understood by practitioners and clients in interaction that is pertinent rather than how researchers, or the participants for that matter, choose to define them *a priori*. This is particularly important as it is the client's perception of the practitioner's behaviour and skills that appears to be paramount, rather than the practitioner's belief that they are demonstrating appropriate characteristics (Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003).

In order to explore how relationship building practice skills are evident in interaction – that is, how they are demonstrated, received and constructed between practitioners and clients – I have taken an interactional approach using the naturalistic, qualitative research methods of conversation analysis and discourse analysis. These methods are related to the theoretical frameworks of ethnomethodology and social constructionism. They are particularly suitable for considering interaction as they are concerned with how people negotiate conversation moment-by-moment. I will further discuss the theory underpinning these methods and my analytic strategy. First, I will clarify the data being examined in this study.

Data

The data source

In order to look at the interactions between practitioners and client *in situ* I used naturally occurring data. Naturally occurring data is data that exists regardless of the research (Silverman, 2016). Naturalistic, qualitative research methods are interested in how people behave in natural settings, rather than a research contrived situation such as a research interview (unless of course you are interested in interaction in research interviews). As such the use of naturally occurring data is considered most appropriate (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In this study, I had access to video-recordings of groupwork sessions from the national programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour in Scotland, the 'Moving forward: Making Changes' (MF: MC) programme, in one Scottish Local Authority, a collaborative partner of the ESRC PhD studentship. The aims and context of the MF: MC programme were outlined in the previous chapter. I did not create these interactions for research purposes but observed the natural interactions in this setting. Furthermore, the sessions were routinely recorded by the programme delivery team for internal quality assurance, so would also have been recorded without my involvement. An added benefit of this is that the participants were aware of and familiar with being recorded, which may have lessened any possible self-consciousness in relation to being recorded for research purposes.

I had access to significantly more video-recordings of the groupwork sessions than was feasible for me to use in the timeframe of this PhD research. I used video-recordings from 12 sessions, taken from a period of 5 months from January 2016 to May 2016, at which point the MF: MC groupwork programme had been running across Scotland and in this Local Authority for a little under two years. The recordings of the sessions varied in length from 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 hours and 45 minutes, adding up to approximately 28 hours of interaction. Only the session

content was recorded, where the camera was turned off during breaks and immediately at the end, as such no incidental interaction outwith the session structure was captured. I chose 4 sessions from each of the 3 groups that consented to participate in the study, to allow for a broad analysis of interactions across the groups rather than draw heavily from one group. Beyond this, the primary reasons influencing my choice of what video-recordings to use were pragmatic; quality of recordings and consent. The sessions were filmed from a fixed-point camera, which resulted in participants not being in the frame in some recordings. Furthermore, some footage was blurred and the speech muffled or inaudible. As such I chose the recordings with the best sound and visual quality. Furthermore, as the MF: MC programme is a rolling groupwork programme, new clients subsequently joined after the 5 month period who had not consented to participate in the research. Given I had more video-recordings than I could use, I chose not to approach these new clients for consent to access the video-recordings of sessions outwith this 5-month period. Other influencing factors will be discussed later in relation to my analytic strategy.

Participants

Five Criminal Justice Social Workers, who facilitate the MF: MC groups in this area, and eighteen clients of the groupwork programme consented to me using the video footage of sessions they were involved in for the purposes of this research.

Of the Criminal Justice Social Workers, three were female and two were male. The approximate average length of experience working in the specialised service for addressing sexual offending was 7.5 years, with an approximate average time working professionally in social work of 18 years. One of the facilitators was a senior practitioner, the other four were general grade. All were trained in the delivery of the MF: MC programme at the same time, in 2013. Where possible the facilitator dyad in any group was male-female, although this dyad was primarily female-

female in one of the groups. The rationale behind mixed gender dyads is to model positive social role and relationships.

In relation to the groupwork clients, all were male and over eighteen years of age. All had been convicted of at least one sexual offence and were all legally compelled through a Court order, i.e. community-based order or licence post release from custody, to attend the MF: MC group. The offence and victim type varied, including offences against male and female adults and children, both known and unknown to the participants. Harkins and Beech (2007) note research is acknowledging differences between those who have victimised children and those who have victimised adults, as such groups with people who have committed similar offences may have a different dynamic to groups where the nature of offences is mixed. It is not clear which is more effective, groups with mixed or homogenous types of offences, where the former may encourage interaction and challenge of beliefs, and the latter may result in more group cohesion due to the shared nature of offending histories. In this study, the nature of the offences committed by the participants was varied, including accessing child pornography, incest, rape of adult, abduction and rape of adult, indecent exposure, sexual assault of a child, intention to abduct and sexually assault a child.

The groups consisted of two practitioners facilitating the group and between a minimum of four and a maximum of seven clients. The numbers were not consistent over the groups as clients missed groups due to illness or other commitments, e.g. Court dates, completing the groupwork programme, recall to prison.

Consent and confidentiality

I received ethical approval from the University of Edinburgh and the Local Authority who agreed to partake in this study. The Local Authority involved were a collaborative partner in my ESRC studentship and as such had a vested interest in the project. There were several considerations to take into account in this study including the sensitivity of the topic of sexual offending, the limits of confidentiality and the vulnerability of the groupwork clients.

There were two types of participants in this study; clients and practitioners. In relation to obtaining consent, different approaches were used to attend to the separate possible motivations and constraints on agency of each group. All clients and practitioners were given an information sheet, and all participants signed a consent form (Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively). With regards to the practitioners, I considered they may feel their practice was being evaluated (Hepburn & Potter, 2004) or they may feel coerced into participating given the Local Authority was a collaborative partner in the project. I met with the practitioner team where I explained my research goals and aims, discussed potential risks and my proposed methods of disseminating any findings. I clarified this study was not an evaluation of their practice and that it was independent from the Local Authority, so there would be no repercussions if they declined to participate. I further offered to meet with practitioners individually, or as a team, to answer any questions or concerns they may have. They were fully informed of their right to opt out at any point. I conducted the data collection on site, and throughout this eighteen-month long process I had many informal conversations with the practitioners about the progress of the research and answered any questions or concerns they had. Rather than being reflective of one point in time, consent here was an informed, ongoing, dynamic conversation. All the practitioners in the team gave their consent to participate in the study.

At the time the data collection, 2016, there were four MF: MC groups running weekly. I sought written consent from the groupwork programme clients directly with three of the groups and the practitioners sought it on my behalf from a fourth group. Due to clients' legal compulsion to attend the MF:MC programme and given the wider stigma attached to sexual offending, clients may have felt forced to give consent or that participation in the study may impact their legal status (Hearn, Andersson, & Cowburn, 2007). Considering this, in discussion with the practitioners, the preferred approach was for me to seek consent in person at the end of a groupwork session where I was introduced by the practitioners. This allowed me to clarify that both the research project and I were independent from the service or legal processes the clients were involved with. I further clarified their right at any stage to opt out of the research and provided the clients with my contact details. In relation to the fourth group, the practitioners, as gatekeepers, suggested it was inadvisable due to the dynamic of that group for me to approach them directly. The practitioners themselves outlined the research to the clients of this group, and reported the clients declined to participate. Given the indirect method of my data collection, i.e. watching video-recorded sessions, I did not have ongoing contact with the clients and as such did not have a natural opportunity to revisit their willingness to participate. However, in 3 of the video-recordings after I met them, clients referred to my PhD project in the group, highlighting their awareness this was ongoing. Furthermore, they were aware they could approach the practitioners facilitating their group to opt out if they wished to.

Confidentiality is a pertinent issue in conducting qualitative research with people who have committed offences, general and sexual, as they may inadvertently incriminate themselves in disclosing an offence that has been unreported or future intention to harm (Cowburn, 2005). There is an obvious tension between the moral obligation to protect the public from harm, the participants from harm of self-incrimination and the function of research to generate further knowledge (Butler, 2002; Cowburn, 2005). Given the indirect method of my data collection any such

disclosures fell to the remit of the programme service to manage as part of their risk management procedures, which all clients were made fully aware of, as such this was not a concern in this study. Consideration was given to the possibility a client might be identifiable in public from the research. People who have committed sexual offences are often stigmatised and marginalised in society, and at risk from vigilantism (McAlinden, 2007). The Local Authority required I transcribe the video-recordings on site, and these were kept in a secured room. As such the image and sound were not shown outwith this site. Names and any identifying features were anonymised in the transcripts. However, echoing Cowburn (2005) I was unable to guarantee that no-one would be able to identify them, particularly professionals in this field given the number of clients the service works with and the geographical size of the catchment area. However, it is unlikely members of the public will be able to identify individual clients. The limits of confidentiality and the measures taken were fully explained to the clients in seeking their consent.

Confidentiality could also not be guaranteed for the groupwork practitioners, due to the small size of the service, and that Criminal Justice Social Work is a small professional community in Scotland. Names and identifying features were anonymised, however, through a process of elimination other professionals may be able to guess practitioners' identity. Practitioners were made fully aware of these limitations.

My data

The data in this study were my transcriptions of 12 selected video-recorded groupwork sessions. Beyond the pragmatic factors, which video-recordings I was interested in or had a 'hunch' about was inevitably influenced by my education, values and professional experience as a social worker (McMullen, 2011; Wetherell & Potter, 1988). For example, I chose to focus on sessions including exercises regarding clients' previous experiences, e.g. discovering needs module assignments

such as life history or people in my life (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a), rather than sessions which involved more educational content, e.g. healthy sexual functioning, as in my professional experience the former elicits more obvious opportunities for demonstrating warmth, empathy and respect. Furthermore, I selected sessions where I found the discussions to be interesting in both content and action, e.g. interlocutors navigating the delicacies of the interactions, clients resisting certain attributions, practitioners persuading clients of certain perspectives. I watched approximately 20 videos (in full or part), and through a combination of pragmatic and personal factors selected 12 for transcription.

Transcription is not a neutral process. As outlined by Psathas and Anderson (1990) it is a series of choices including what parts of interaction to record, how to record them and how to capture that in written form. All these choices then necessarily transform the original object, directly influenced by the researcher's interests and theories. In line with convention for conversation analysis, and more recently discursive psychology, I used the Jefferson (2004) system of transcript notation (Hepburn & Potter, 2004; Taylor, 2001). This is a highly detailed system that aims to provide a close representation of the sequential speech interaction, albeit necessarily selective, rather than what are often standardised, denaturalised scripts devoid of hesitations, repetitions, intonations and other nuances of speech (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Wooffitt, 2005). Given the level of detail this system entails, it is highly time consuming. As such I first transcribed the 12 selected sessions at a less detailed level, preliminarily identifying sections of interaction to focus on, where effective practice skills appeared present, as well as noticing other interesting elements being discussed, e.g. use of identity, expressions of shame or topics of risk or safety. Even this less detailed level of transcription took between 6 and 10 hours per hour of video-recording depending on the sound quality. Then I transcribed identified sections in more detail using the Jefferson (2004) system, to enable closer analysis. This was an iterative process, as I will

outline in more detail below (Silverman, 2004; Taylor, 2001), repeatedly viewing the video-recordings and reviewing the data to identify similar instances of interaction or times when the observed phenomenon might be sequentially expected but did not occur.

An interactional approach

In taking an interactional approach I have used the methods of discourse analysis, particularly discursive psychology, and conversation analysis to examine the interactions within the groupwork sessions. The term discourse analysis incorporates a number of diverse but cogent approaches used to investigate how talk and text constitutes lived realities within discernible social and cultural contexts (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Taylor, 2001). Here I used the approach of discursive psychology. Discursive psychology is interested in how people construct their realities in everyday life through talk, and to what ends, and, often, draws on the fine grained methods developed in conversation analysis to examine this (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These bottom up approaches differ for example from critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian, or post structural, discourse analysis which focus on how wider discourses, often in historical, institutional texts, support and maintain power ideologies (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001).

However, the boundaries and relationships between bottom up and top down approaches is contentious. Advocates of a purely bottom up approach argue against drawing on wider cultural and contextual information as it merely imposes researchers' views rather than examining how people are constructing their realities (Schegloff, 1997). Others argue, as researchers and people, we inevitably bring our wider understanding to bear on the analysis, and need to attend to this (Billig, 1999). Even Potter & Wetherell (1987) who wrote the seminal text advocating a discursive psychology approach as a challenge to the prominent

cognitive psychology approaches at the time have parted ways in this debate. Potter has moved closer to a pure conversation analysis approach focusing primarily on the evidence from micro-level conversation and not drawing on wider macro discourses which are not explicit in the interaction at hand as an explanatory resource (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). On the other hand Wetherell (1998: 405) argues for the need to contextualise and position micro-level conversation within the prevailing macro discourses, e.g. gender, race as a 'critical discursive social psychology'. My methodological approach is most aligned with Wetherell's (1998), as it will consider the micro-level interactions in the groupwork sessions in the context of the macro-level discourses influencing the aims and objectives of criminal justice social work interventions, outlined in the previous chapter.

I will outline the methodological approaches of discursive psychology and conversation analysis, before explaining my analytic strategy in this study.

Discursive psychology

Discursive psychology emerged in challenge to the dominant cognitive approaches in psychology, which treat human action as driven by stable, enduring, individual cognitive attributes, e.g. attitudes, beliefs, values. Instead, Potter and Wetherell (1987), influenced by constructionist approaches and the potential of methods such as conversation analysis, proposed these phenomena are constructed through social interaction. Language in social interaction is considered the primary medium for the creation, negotiation and construction of reality. As such language is not a lens into an individual's inner cognitive world, but actively constructs concepts and thoughts, creating shared meaning (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Discursive psychology focusses on how people interactionally use language performatively to achieve social action, affecting and being affected by the social context e.g. using professional jargon to make claims of expertise which is endorsed

by the institutional setting and renews it. In this way discourse is the topic of analysis rather than a resource to make further analytical inferences.

Discursive psychology is further interested in peoples' use of psychological language constructively and performatively; positioning themselves interactionally, constructing an account of themselves and facilitating attribution of power (Edwards & Potter, 2005; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Silverman, 2006). Words such as know, believe, think, feel, as well as emotional state words (i.e. happy, angry, annoyed) describing actions, events, people and so on, are used to construct and 'manage psychological implications', e.g. agency, intent, cognitive distortions (Edwards & Potter, 2005: 242). People also use metaphors and synonyms in a similar manner (Edwards & Potter, 2005), drawing on culturally pervasive discourses within their interactions in achieving social action e.g. blaming, justifying (Edley, 2001; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; McMullen, 2011; Wetherell, 1998). Previous criminological research has noted how people use socially available discourses, such as discourses of masculinity like 'hard man', 'rebel', 'father', to justify their offending behaviour and situate their identity (e.g. Gadd & Farrall, 2004; Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2004). However, as noted above this research has not considered the influence of the context within which these discourses are drawn on, and to what ends (Presser, 2004). For example, a young person accused of assault is likely to give a very different account speaking to their friend than to the police, and, in turn, to be asked very different questions.

Attending to such performative use of language is pertinent in this study as people who have persistently offended are proposed by desistance research to engage in a reconstruction of their past identities to desist from offending (Maruna, 2001), identities that are primarily available to us through the individual's narrative. Also it is through the language of criminal justice interventions that risk-encoded identities for clients are stipulated, proposed to create an identity of a person who is always

at risk of re-offending (Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2007). Furthermore, the display of relationship building skills of warmth, respect, and empathy in interaction is performative, and this study is concerned with how these displays are constructed and how they impact the ongoing interaction. For example, through empathic and congruent expressions practitioners may attribute clients with certain mental states, that is certain attitudes, beliefs, feelings and so on, to endorse the construction of an optimistic, agentic and accountable identity and promote orientation to potential opportunities to change, i.e. 'turning points' (Giordano et al., 2002; Sampson & Laub, 2003).

However, discursive psychology, alongside other discourse analysis approaches, is criticised as an 'anything goes' analytical approach (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2003; Silverman, 2006). Antaki et al (2003) defend discourse analysis as a rigorous, systematic, defensible approach which has been undermined by the mislabelling of research which falls short of achieving such rigour, i.e. studies using summaries, selective quotes or in treating findings as surveys. Discursive psychology predominantly uses the processes of conversation analysis to empirically study talk-in-interaction, as the everyday performative use of language to construct reality (Hepburn & Potter, 2004; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Schegloff, 2007; ten Have, 2006).

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) is concerned with how people 'do' talk, what they are doing with their talk, and how this impacts the ongoing interaction, investigating this by rigorously and systematically analysing the turn-by-turn sequence of talk (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Wooffitt, 2005). In CA the focus is on how the people in the conversation are making sense of it, by looking at what they orient to, and how they orient to it in relation to their interlocutor(s) (ten Have, 2007; Psathas, 1995;

Wooffitt, 2005). Building on the work of Harvey Sacks (1995), conversation analysts have identified a number of fundamental structures which make conversation orderly, some of which I outline below. Put simply, conversation is orderly as speakers take turns in talking and respond in conditionally relevant ways, e.g. a greeting usually provokes a return greeting (Liddicoat, 2011; Schegloff, 2007; Wooffitt, 2005). The rules of conversation are considered social 'common-sense' to people, or members (Goffman, 1982; ten Have, 2007). These 'common-sense' interactional techniques are considered both general, in that they are observable across different interactions, and specific as they can be adapted to fit the local context (Wooffitt, 2005; ten Have, 1990). The agenda of CA is to make visible and analyse the haecceity, or 'thisness', of social interaction, centrally examining 'how members themselves make sense of what is said' (Psathas, 1995: 52). I will briefly outline some basic structures and their terms in conversation analysis: turn taking, sequence organisation, turn design and preference. These concepts have underpinned my approach to analysing the interactions in the groupwork programme sessions.

Turn taking

A turn is an utterance of talk. It can range from a single *mhmm* to a lengthy string of many sentences, as when people tell a story (Liddicoat, 2011). It can even be silence at a time when a person would be expected to speak (Drew, 2012). People 'do' things with their turns, e.g. inviting, greeting, advising. Importantly a turn is contingent on what has been said in the previous turn, and places conditions on what should be said in the next turn, or how the recipient can respond (Drew, 2012). As such turns-at-talk are 'context shaped and context renewing' (Heritage, 1984:242).

People take turns talking; this is normative and fundamental to interaction (Goffman, 1982; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Importantly, as each turn is

contingent on the prior and constrains the next, turn taking involves close co-ordination (Clayman, 2013). There might be a setting specific structured format to the organisation of turn taking, such as in news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002), or it might be unstructured like everyday talk. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1974) work untangled the difficulty in understanding how turn taking is organised. They described turns as built out of *turn-constructive units (TCU)*, or components that make up the complete turn, including linguistic and paralinguistic resources. A TCU is a segment of speech that in itself can be heard as complete in terms of prosody, action and/ or grammar, as such it could be one sentence within a longer story, or one word (e.g. 'really?'). It is at the end of a TCU that a speaker can be heard to be finished their turn, socially indicating that someone else would be entitled to speak. This is referred to as a transition relevant place (TRP). Speakers can then select the next speaker, by name, gaze, indexicality, or next speakers can self-select. This system underlies interaction, and when it is disrupted it creates difficulties in the interaction that then need to be managed *in situ*.

This system also allows us to analyse what people are doing in interaction and how they are doing it, through following their closely co-ordinated, mutually contingent and context specific, turn-by-turn conversation. We analyse this through next turn proof procedure, where the analysis of what a turn-at-talk is doing is based on the response in the next speaker's turn (Edwards, 2004), e.g. an invite is only constituted as an invite where it is responded to as such by acceptance or refusal in the next turn. Importantly, Edwards (2004) notes this is a member's procedure, as conversation participants continually monitor what has been said in the prior turn to check understanding and respond in a conditionally relevant way.

Sequence organisation

As noted, a turn-at-talk is contingent on the prior turn, and creates conditions for the next turn, creating the closely co-ordinated practice of turn-taking. This further

creates a sequence of turns connected to and dependent on each other. A basic unit of a sequence is referred to as an 'adjacency pair' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973: 295). These are matched reciprocal actions, for example question-answer or offer-acceptance/refusal. It is through this sequential progression that we demonstrate our understanding of each other's talk, that is by giving a relevant response people demonstrate their understanding of both the action and content of the prior turn. There is a wide body of literature regarding the mechanics of sequence organisation, a review of which is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Schegloff, 2007; Stivers, 2012). However, these foundational adjacency pair sequences can be expanded upon to lay the foundations for success in achieving the desired social action of the talk and maintain cohesion in the interaction; for example, checking if someone is free before extending an invitation, saving you both the possible embarrassment of refusal. For the purposes of this study I am interested in a central question in CA: 'why that now?'; that is what action is an utterance or turn 'doing' at a specific point in the sequence of talk (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973: 299).

Turn design

A central tenet of CA is that speakers design their turns to 'do' some action, selecting the words and utterances to construct one or more TCUs to achieve that action. Drew (2012) notes three significant principles that shape turn design: sequence, action and recipient, i.e. '*where* in a sequence a turn is being taken; *what* is being done in that turn; and to *whom* the turn is addressed' (Drew, 2012: 134, emphasis in original). Again I want to highlight this is a necessarily simplified outline of the complex topic of turn design (see Drew, 2012; ten Have, 2007). Due to its contingent nature, a turn should be said or designed in a way that fits with the sequence to demonstrate its connectedness to and cohesiveness with the ongoing interaction. Where a turn is not fulfilling its obligations to the prior talk people will repair or correct it, usually within the turn or in the next turn. Repair is a technical term in CA which refers to how trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding talk is

dealt with in interaction to allow the progressivity of the talk (Kitzinger, 2012; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Trouble in interaction includes: not hearing or being heard, misusing or mispronouncing a word, using the wrong word, the recipient not understanding or misunderstanding (Kitzinger, 2012). Examples of repairs include: changing words mid turn (e.g. 'are you free on Fri- Saturday?'), repeating utterances, recipients pointing out the trouble needing repair (e.g. saying 'what' when they haven't heard, or repeating a word 'Saturday?'). It is basically a way of dealing with anything that is getting in the way of the interaction progressing smoothly.

People design their turns-at-talk, linguistically and paralinguistically, to achieve certain kinds of actions, usually in a way to try to maximise both the success of the action and cooperation in the interaction, embedded in and contingent on the sequence (Clayman, 2002; Drew, 2012; ten Have, 2007; Liddicoat, 2011). For example, in order to accept or reject an invitation, you have to first receive it. In declining, the design of your turn would likely include hesitations and an account for your refusal, as a dispreferred response which I will outline next (Pomerantz, 1984b), allowing you to successfully complete your action of refusal and politely maintain cooperation in the interaction.

Finally, people design their talk in respect to who they are talking with; this is called recipient design and is central to interaction. The same action (e.g. inviting, enquiring) will differ subtly but significantly in how it is said, depending on who it is being said to, reflecting the relationship between the interlocutors (Drew, 2012; Schegloff, 2000; ten Have 2007). People orient to the intended recipients in producing their talk, and actions, making it relevant and understandable to them, e.g. using knowledge they share or attending to information in their talk the recipient does not know.

Preference

Preference refers to the idea that in interaction people follow implicit, conventional principles as to how to act and react, where there are preferred ways and dispreferred ways (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2012). A curious example of this is in relation to compliments, where even though giving a compliment is considered a positive action, and they are designed to be accepted, the conventional response is to reject or downplay them (Pomerantz, 1978). As such, these principles place structural, normative and moral constraints on people across a wide range of domains in interaction (e.g. repair, turn taking, initiating and responding). These multiple constraints might be aligned or might clash, as in the case of responding to compliments where structurally it prefers acceptance but normatively, rejection. CA research has demonstrated features of preference in specific domains, for example in terms of repair it is preferable to correct the trouble in your own talk, than for someone else to correct it (Schegloff et al., 1977). Preference in relation to initiating and responding actions is particularly relevant in relation to this study.

As I have stated, turns-at-talk set conditions on the next turn as to what a relevant response would be. Also, turns-at-talk are designed to achieve certain actions, contingent on their sequential positioning and in relation to the intended recipient. Turns then are designed to direct the recipient to give a relevant response that favours the action in the speaker's talk. For example, accepting or declining are both relevant responses to an invitation, however an acceptance would, generally, be considered the preferred response (Pomerantz, 1984b). Preferred responses are usually delivered in a quick and uncomplicated manner, whereas dispreferred responses are characterised by delay, mitigations, prefaces and accounts. In the case where a dispreferred response is evidently on the horizon the speaker may repair their talk to anticipate that, switching the preference structure. In this way people work to maintain social solidarity; that is, to promote cooperation in the moment-by-moment interaction and reduce or avoid conflict (Clayman, 2002).

Turn taking, sequence organisation, turn design and preference are core concepts of CA that have guided my analysis in examining the turn-by-turn sequence of talk in the sessions of the MF: MC groupwork programme, to see what people are doing in their talk and how they are doing it. Although originally interested in everyday interactions, CA has been extensively applied to analysing interactions in a number of institutional settings, e.g. doctor-patient interactions (Heritage & Robinson, 2011), police interrogations (Heydon, 2008; Stokoe & Edwards, 2008), child helplines (Hepburn & Potter, 2007), mediation services (Stokoe, 2013a), health visitor home visits (Heritage & Sefi, 1992), AIDs counselling (Peräkylä, 1995), psychotherapy sessions (Peräkylä, Antaki, Vehviläinen, & Leudar, 2008) and interactions in social work settings (Kirkwood, 2016; Symonds, 2017). These studies have highlighted the core concepts of CA are also evident in institutional interaction, but note institutional settings shape and are shaped by conversational practices specific to those settings (Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage, 2005; ten Have, 2007). I will further outline and discuss previous CA literature regarding engagement in the working relationship in institutional settings in the first empirical chapter (Chp.3), where it situates and informs the rationale for my analysis in this study. Firstly, I will outline how I have used CA and discursive psychology to examine the talk-in-interaction in this study.

[Analytic Strategy](#)

Taking an interactional approach

Discursive psychology and CA are both interested in how members of society ‘do’ interaction, using language to achieve social action, e.g. advising, requesting. Respectively, they are concerned with how people use words to construct realities and the mechanisms through which they do this. This is not to say a reality independent of perception doesn’t exist – CA is particularly agnostic about the nature of reality (Wooffitt, 2005) – but that any objective reality is necessarily subjectively represented, primarily through language (Berger & Luckmann, 1991;

Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Reflecting their ethnomethodological foundations, discursive psychology and CA propose to examine how the 'pre-givens' of everyday life are constructed and understood by people in interaction, i.e. 'members' methods' (Hall, Juhila, Matarese, & Nijnatten, 2014; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; ten Have, 1990; Wooffitt, 2005). The compatibility of these methods in exploring interactions as they unfold has been demonstrated in previous research, including in social work. For example, Hall and colleagues (2014) have explored how particular topics such as resistance, categorisation, advice giving and accountability are constructed and negotiated through talk-in-interaction between social workers and clients across a variety of social work settings. I will outline four examples of interactional research combining these methods in criminal justice settings: Juhila and Pöso (1999b), van Nijnatten and colleagues (van Nijnatten & Stevens, 2012; Van Nijnatten & Van Elk, 2015), Auburn and Lea (2003) and Kirkwood (2016).

Juhila and Pöso (1999b) analysed interactions in assessment appointments for court sentencing between probation officers and clients. They highlighted practitioners' language choice, influenced by institutional discourse, evoked preferred confirming responses, possibly without clients being aware of the institutional agenda. Clients were categorised, typified and constructed in interaction and subsequent written records based on these responses. Juhila and Pöso (1999b) highlighted the importance of making 'taken-for-granted' practice visible, to acknowledge the pervasive influence of the wider institutional agendas and promote critical reflection on practice. Van Nijnatten and colleagues (van Nijnatten & Stevens, 2012; Van Nijnatten & Van Elk, 2015) analysed 22 video-recorded interactions between probation officers and juveniles being supervised in the Netherlands in relation to young peoples' participation in conversations with their probation officers and to examine how care and control is managed in interaction, respectively. In the former, van Nijnatten and Stevens (2012) highlighted although the probation officers reported young peoples' low participation in conversation was due to their lack of motivation to engage, analysis of the interactions illustrated practitioners'

dominance of the discussions left little opportunity for young people to meaningfully engage. Furthermore, the lack of clarity in relation to practitioners' dual role of care and control, or support and monitoring, created a conflict between encouraging self-disclosure and young people protecting themselves from further incrimination or intervention, hindering engagement. In the later study, van Nijnatten and van Elk (2015) highlighted the young people worked to manage how they were being categorised in conversation with their probation officers, particularly when the stakes are high, e.g. talking about 'risky' topics. They noted communicating care and control in the interactions was delicate, but ultimately beneficial in supporting the young people to achieve autonomy, including social responsibility.

Auburn and Lea (2003) used a discursive psychology approach drawing on CA methods to analyse the narratives of three men convicted of sexual offences in a prison-based groupwork programme. Their aim was to challenge the dominant idea of internal cognitive distortions, i.e. inaccurate thinking patterns that influence offending behaviour. Instead their analysis identified the 'skilled use of descriptive rhetoric by speakers to construct a moral position' within the interaction (Auburn & Lea, 2003: 294). They noted the men discursively navigated the expectations of treatment compliance alongside a narrative which mitigated their responsibility, through referential presentation of a scenario that positioned them as a passive actor in the events preceding the offence. There are clear echoes here with narratives of men convicted of sexual offending both who were considered to be desisting and possibly persisting, as discussed in the literature review (e.g. Farmer, McAlinden, & Maruna, 2016; Kras & Blasko, 2016). Interestingly, Auburn and Lea (2003) did not note the contingent influence of the practitioner's responses, although included them in the presented transcript, on the co-construction of the men's narratives. These studies outlined demonstrate practitioner and client performative use of language in constructing and positioning client identity relative to macro discourses of risk, accountability and morality. Furthermore, they highlight

the need for critical reflection on micro-level interaction as sites for, possibly unwittingly, perpetuating repressive and oppressive structures.

In the pilot project that informed this study, Kirkwood (2016; Kirkwood & Laurier, 2014) took an interactional approach to exploring desistance narratives in criminal justice social work settings, particularly a mandatory groupwork programme addressing domestic abuse behaviours. Practitioners and clients in this study negotiated the attribution of prosocial narratives, consistent with those posited by desistance research, through their talk-in-interaction. At times, clients demonstrated ambivalence to these narratives. In response, practitioners oriented to this ambivalence and through subtle language shifts, and drawing on other group members as narrative resources, promoted positive change. Importantly, Kirkwood (2016) demonstrated that these methods of analysis are able to explicate those aspects of interaction which have been previously considered difficult to empirically access within criminal justice social work. However, he highlights, given the nature of the methods and the size of the study, drawing conclusions on the effectiveness of the intervention was not possible.

These studies and the present study share the same underpinning assumptions, which characterise discursive psychology and CA: 1) talk achieves social action; 2) interaction is orderly, and as people have a shared understanding of this order our interactions are determined by it and perpetuate it; 3) through talk we construct reality, consistent with a social constructionist perspective, and 4) how people are constructing reality, and making sense of interaction can be seen on the conversational surface (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1982; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Liddicoat, 2011; ten Have, 1990; Wooffitt, 2005). Building on previous interactional research, particularly Kirkwood's (2016), my study aims to look into the 'black box' of criminal justice social work practice by examining how the key relationship building skills of empathy, warmth and respect are constituted in the turn-by-turn

talk-in-interaction between practitioners and clients in the MF: MC groupwork. I consider how these skills promote cooperation and engagement, central to developing a working relationship. Furthermore, I explore how constructions of identity or behaviour highlighted by desistance research, such as expressions of hope or agency (De Vries Robbé, Mann, Maruna, Thornton, & Robbé, 2015), and by research relating to risk of re-offending, such as negative social influences or substance misuse (Hanson et al., 2007), are evident in the interactions. Particularly, I consider the interplay between the key practice skills and the negotiation of these constructions, in considering how the key practice skills are discursive tools to engage clients in constructing non-offending identities, in the prevailing context where discourses of risk dominate criminal justice practice and policy.

Identifying concepts

As noted, both discursive psychology and CA argue for considering how concepts, such as empathy, identity, respect or risk, are interactionally constructed in talk rather than seeing them as internal objects which manifest in talk. Previous research looking at interactions in criminal justice rehabilitative interventions have primarily developed definitions to identify and measure practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect and then looked for examples of those definitions in the interactions (e.g. Marshall et al., 2002, 2003; Trotter & Evans, 2010; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). Conversely, discursive psychology and CA informed interactional approaches, such as in this study, rather than going from definitions of these skills and looking for their manifestation in interaction, use 'interaction analysis to critically explore and perhaps respecify' these definitions (Hepburn & Potter, 2007: 99). Here, expressions of empathy, warmth, and respect are considered concerns for the practitioners and clients, practically and locally produced and managed in the interaction. Analysis of these interactions can then elucidate the ways in which this local production and management is achieved, rather than imposing a general idealised framework.

CA, and to some extent discursive psychology, suggest it is not necessary to define terms as how people make sense of the interaction will be observable through their utterances and orientations (ten Have, 1990; Wooffitt, 2005). Ideally these approaches aim to avoid any imposition of *a priori* theoretical categories or concepts by not pre-selecting topics of study instead responding to what topics are produced in members' interactions (Hepburn & Potter, 2004; Psathas, 1995; ten Have, 2007). In the case where there is a particular topic identified as the focus for the research, as is the case here, Hepburn and Potter (2004: 173) advocate for considering a setting or a set of practices rather than setting a research question, moving from the traditional focus on "how does X influence Y?" to the question 'how is X done?'. This is congruent with my approach in this study. Instead of asking 'how do practitioner skills influence behaviour change?' I am looking at questions such as: how do practitioners demonstrate empathy, respect and warmth? How do clients respond to these demonstrations? How do clients and practitioners negotiate narratives of identity? How do clients and practitioners talk about risk? In this way it is how these concepts are understood and made relevant by the clients and practitioners that is of interest, rather than how I define them. This echoes Blaikie's (2010) advice that the definitions of concepts that members demonstrate in context can inform their definition in abductive research.

However, this approach does not guide me in how to initially identify the practice skills that are of interest here. Also, it does not reflect my normative knowledge of these skills, personally and professionally. In recognising these difficulties, I used loose ideas of these practice skills to initially inform where to focus in the data and refined these based on members' methods. I approached identifying risk discourse and desistance narratives in the same way, drawing on my professional knowledge of risk assessments and the programme content, and research around desistance. Blaikie (2010: 119) refers to this as a 'sensitising tradition'. These loose understandings were influenced by my cultural, personal and professional understanding and the literature, outlined in the literature review. This is

particularly pertinent regarding practice skills in criminal justice social work interventions, given that this literature has influenced the Scottish approach to how the working relationship should be understood and developed in practice (see McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005). I also used my familiarity with the 'shop talk' of criminal justice social work (ten Have, 1990). This helped me to identify these skills in practice, as possibly mundane, and as such less obvious, features of this setting and also in their possible departure from the guidance. Furthermore, my familiarity with the institutional vernacular helped me identify the institutional agenda and 'taken for granted' practice. This familiarity can however be problematic in a number of ways, including ascribing intentionality, which I will address further below in outlining the process of analysis. As my iterative process of analysis progressed, previous CA research, particularly concerning empathy in interaction, further influenced my identification of the practice skills. This previous CA research will be discussed in the next chapter (Chp. 3) in relation to how it informed the analysis.

Process of analysis

In order to analyse the talk-in-interaction using discursive psychology and CA, researchers are advised to 'bracket' off their preconceptions, putting them to one side, to fully attend to the orientations of the participants in the unfolding interactions (ten Have, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Liddicoat, 2011; Wooffitt, 2005). The practicality of this is however unclear, with some contention about the definition of this method, its appropriateness, at what point bracketing is to be undertaken, i.e. data collection, analysis, and whether it is even possible given the necessary influence of the researcher at every stage of research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Given my experiential professional understanding of criminal justice social work it was difficult to bracket off my preconceptions, particularly as I continued practice as a criminal justice social worker throughout the PhD study so switching hats from practitioner to researcher was challenging. It inevitably

influenced what I noticed and oriented to in the data, as did my ongoing interactions with the groupwork facilitators, my research questions and my general professional and personal interests.

As such, to encourage reflexivity in my analysis I employed ten Have's (1990, 2007) analytic strategy: using my member's knowledge, analysing the turn-by-turn talk, critically questioning the basis of my analysis and grounding it empirically in the data. Firstly, I used my 'common-sense' competence, based on my member's knowledge, to make sense of what was going on throughout the sessions and in specific instances of interaction. I engaged in a limited form of 'unmotivated looking' (Liddicoat, 2011: 70). Unmotivated looking refers to a process of immersing yourself in the data and being open to what is present rather than inspecting the data to find instances of hypothesised phenomenon. This was limited as the research questions and my own values and understanding influenced what I 'noticed' in the data; it was not possible to be completely neutral (Liddicoat, 2011; ten Have, 1990). However, I was conscious to look beyond what I instinctively and immediately recognised as indications of practice skills, desistance narratives and risk discourse. Drawing on previous discursive psychology work, I was interested in language which performatively positions people and constructs identity such as psychological state words, metaphors, change in pronouns and the conjunction 'but' (Edley, 2001; Edwards & Potter, 2005; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; McMullen, 2011). This led me to notice a variety of other interesting actions, such as advice giving, expressing shame, resisting questions, offering a different perspective and so on, that supported a broader analysis of the ways practitioners engage (or fail to engage) clients in interaction. Furthermore, the limited instances I saw of textbook demonstrations of practice skills (i.e. Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Trotter, 2006) particularly helped this, as it required me to focus on what was happening in the interactions as opposed to what I believed should be happening, further prompting me to question my value-laden expectations.

Through repeated viewings of the 12 video-recorded sessions, with my transcriptions of the sessions, I developed increasingly granular codes to categorise the actions and activities in the talk of the practitioners and clients. These codes were iteratively informed and refined through increasingly close analysis of sections of the data, looking at how these grosser identified actions were achieved through examining turn taking operations, the organisation of sequences, turn design, repair and preference structure (ten Have, 2007). In turn, this informed more precise identification of micro-level expressions and sequences, pointing to instances that were not identified from the initial viewings and highlighting corrections in the ones that were. Through this iterative process I was able to build a picture of the patterns of talk-in-interaction that accomplish different actions in the groupwork sessions (Liddicoat, 2011; McMullen, 2011; ten Have, 2007). I also looked for deviant cases, that is instances that did not conform with the patterns identified, as these cases can challenge the generalizability of claims, but also they highlight the normative patterns of interaction by showing how the deviance creates difficulties in the interaction which then has to be dealt with (Edwards, 2004; Potter, 2004).

I will briefly outline this process in relation to looking at empathy. Prior to transcription I watched the video recordings through, making notes about themes in the interaction, clear actions, and things that I noticed or found interesting, e.g. when empathy becomes advice-giving. As I transcribed the video-recordings, orthographically in the first instance, I made more detailed notes, and questioned the data and my understanding, e.g. how were open questions, advocated as best practice (i.e. Trotter & Evans, 2010; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012), potentially problematic in their projected constraints? I coded large sequences as overall displays of empathy based on my personal and professional member's knowledge of empathic expression, where practitioners or clients displayed a cognitive or emotional understanding of a client's experience, e.g. 'that sounds very frustrating',

sighing, or where a client's response indicated they perceived an empathic response. I also coded sections where I felt there was an absence of empathic expression, where something else happened in response to a client's action of showing an emotional stance in their talk. Following this, I did a more detailed, albeit abridged, analysis across the identified instances of empathy (or absence of empathy) using the CA concepts outlined to unpick participants' orientations to each other's talk and to identify some of the actions in talk that constitute empathy in interaction, e.g. telling a story, active listening, summarising, checking out with the client. Selecting extracts relevant to the development of my analysis, I transcribed these in greater phonological detail and closely examined the turn-by-turn sequence of talk, returning repeatedly to the video recordings to check my understanding. Using this understanding from closer analysis, I further scrutinised the video-recordings and my data, refining the process of coding instances of empathy under these more specific actions, returning to select relevant extracts to transcribe in higher detail for closer analysis through CA methods. Again re-watching the video recordings, I was then able to identify these constitutive actions in the case when the overall sequence had not appeared initially to me to be empathic, to consider what happened, noting the different normative constraints on empathy in this settings and how these are dealt with in talk. The analysis was an iterative and abductive process.

Ten Have (2007) proposes using an iterative, critical questioning process, to question the source of the researcher's knowledge. As such I continually questioned the basis of my understanding of practitioners' and clients' actions in the talk and examined the talk closely for empirical grounds to my 'common sense' understanding. I was conscious of not presupposing wider contextual issues were locally relevant in the interactions, and instead looking to the sequence of talk for their presence. As noted, discursive psychology and CA maintain talk is not a window into the mind, and we cannot ascribe intention to people's talk without it being oriented to as understood in that way in the ongoing sequence of talk (Potter

& Wetherell, 1987; ten Have, 2007). However, due to the ambiguous nature of talk this is tricky, as in talk meaning is often implicit, suggested at, and, importantly, adjustable or deniable. As such, the meaning, which the members may share an understanding of, may not be clarified or made explicit in the interactions available to the researcher. Schegloff (1984: 50) refers to this as an 'overhearer's problem', as the talk has not been designed for the researcher and as such there are ambiguities where they do not share knowledge with the participants. As a social worker in this field, I share professional knowledge with the practitioners of criminal justice social work practice, the risk assessment and public protection processes regarding both general and sexual offending in Scotland and the MF: MC programme. This knowledge helped me unpick some of the difficulties of ambiguity and indexicality, and pursue these across sequences of talk to elucidate them. However, this familiarity also led me, especially in the beginning of the analysis process, to assume certain things are being discussed or certain actions undertaken in the absence of evidence in the talk-in-interaction. To address this, I iteratively questioned my assumptions, consciously identifying and 'bracketing off' my preconceptions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Psathas, 1995; ten Have, 1990; Wooffitt, 2005). I also worked closely with the video-recordings and my data to systematically examine the members' orientations, through next turn proof procedure (Edwards, 2004). This process supported me to empirically ground my findings and avoid ascribing underlying intentions or beliefs.

Primarily, I have sought to evidence my analytic claims through securely anchoring them to the orientations of the practitioners and the clients in the interactions in my data, which is the principle, and arguably most important, method of validating this type of research (Potter, 2004; ten Have, 2007). Furthermore, bringing data to meetings of the Scottish Ethnomethodology, Discourse, Interaction & Talk (SEDIT) group, at the University of Edinburgh, and to the Discourse and Narrative Approaches to Social Work and Counselling (DANASWAC), an international yearly conference, has significantly helped me evaluate, develop, and validate my

analytical claims. Data sessions in groups like these are a conventional and useful way of learning and doing data analysis in discursive psychology and CA (ten Have, 2007). My supervisors were further reflexive resources in this process (McMullen, 2011; ten Have, 1990; Tufford & Newman, 2012), and watched some segments of the video-recordings with my data to consider the empirical grounding of my analysis. As is also convention, I have presented extracts of my data here to be transparent in my analysis and allow readers to make their own analytical judgements. Such transparency is essential for accountability and validation in CA and discursive psychology (Antaki et al., 2003). The extracts used to demonstrate my analysis, over the next three empirical chapters, were chosen for their clarity and brevity in representing a larger sample of similarly identified patterns. It is important to note however that the relationship building skills of empathy, warmth, and respect as well as discussions around identity and risk are ongoing, extending across lengthy sequences of interaction, across sessions of the groupwork programme and in the practitioner and client interactions outwith the recordings. As such I am limited as to what I can present, and claim, in the confines of this thesis.

As a further note on the presentation of the extracts in this study, to maintain anonymity I have changed the names of the clients, anonymised any defining features, e.g. city or street names, and left the groupworkers denoted by G#. I decided to use names rather than letters to identify clients as it is easier to read for the analysis and across the thesis. However, names evoke certain characteristics, e.g. age, class, race. I have tried to pick generic names where possible, apart from in instances where I thought the culturally common name relevant for a particular client might threaten their confidentiality. Also, in relation to CA, there is an argument that pseudonyms should remain close in linguistic features to maintain the integrity of the talk, e.g. have the same number of syllables. I have attempted to maintain this integrity also. Due to the small number of practitioners, I felt they would be identifiable in managing the constraints of choosing pseudonyms so chose

to leave them as G# (1-5). Finally, the extracts are labelled based on the group, the session number and the timestamp of the video, e.g. Group B: Session 2: [v1: 23.45].

Summary

In this chapter I have justified my naturalistic, qualitative approach to examine how practitioners display key practice skills, identified by previous research as essential for building effective working relationships, in sessions of the MF: MC groupwork programme. I have described the source and process of gathering my data, the transcriptions of 12 video-recorded sessions. Furthermore, I have outlined the theoretical and analytical framework to my interactional approach to analysis in this study, specifically the use of the methods of discursive psychology and conversation analysis. Due to their theoretical underpinnings these methods are particularly suitable for analysing the moment by moment interaction to see what people are 'doing' with their talk and how they are doing it. Here the talk-in-interaction between the practitioners and clients is the topic of analysis. Discursive psychology highlights how people performatively use language to construct identity and position themselves in relation to each other and wider discourses. CA provides a systematic approach to examine the performative use of talk through its features; turn-taking, sequence organisation, turn design, repair and preference structures. These methods can be complementary, although at times also divergent depending on the strands compared (Hepburn & Potter, 2004). Finally, I have described my use of these methods to analyse the interactions in my data, noting the influence of my personal and professional knowledge, beliefs and values on my research choices.

In the next three chapters I will outline my findings from this analysis. The first empirical chapter will outline how practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect were displayed in my data. In this chapter I also discuss previous CA research regarding the working relationship and empathy. This literature is discussed in the

first empirical chapter to firmly ground the explication of the concepts I identify as central to engagement in the interactions during the sessions of the MF: MC programme, i.e. *face-work*, epistemic authority and empathic moments. The second will describe how narratives of desistance are negotiated in the interactions, and the use of relationship-based practice skills. Finally, I will highlight how risk discourse is prevalent in the interactions and the role of practice skills in navigating this. It is important to note however, these topics of practice skills, risk and desistance are necessarily intertwined in the talk between practitioners and clients, as you will see. Separating them out falsely implies they are dealt with independently of each other, and as independent concerns, by members in the talk-in-interaction. Presenting them in this way instead reflects the separation in the general literature, as reviewed in the literature review.

Ch. 3: Tools of engagement

In this chapter I will examine some of the interactional resources groupworkers use to demonstrate warmth, respect and empathy to engage clients of the MF: MC programme. As outlined in chapter 1, warmth, respect and empathy are considered key practice skills for engagement and building effective working relationships in criminal justice social work. Although there is no clear consensus in the definitions of these skills, they are commonly understood across the studies looking at rehabilitation in criminal justice, as discussed in the literature review. I have used these common understandings as loose definitions to identify instances of these skills, as per the explanation in chapter 2. Warmth is the practitioner's accepting, caring and supportive behaviour, particularly valuing the client as a person separate to evaluating their behaviours. Respectful behaviour is about conveying to clients their feelings, rights and wishes are valued, where they are appreciated separately to any disapproval of their behaviour. As per chapter 1, there is clear similarity between these definitions, and these skills are often co-founded (Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003). Empathy is about demonstrating understanding and being able to relate to another's experiences.

Previous interactional research using CA methods has explored how the working relationship, or alliance, is constructed through features of talk rather than categorising skills, in other institutional settings. Categorical systems, e.g. checklists, dominant in rehabilitation research on practice skills, give somewhat idealised examples of skills but, as proponents of interactional research highlight, these are individualistic conceptions which miss how these skills are locally and collectively produced in interaction (Horvath & Muntigl, 2018; Pudlinski, 2005). Using the process outlined in chapter 2, I analysed the interactions of the MF: MC programme to see how practitioners demonstrate warmth, empathy and respect sequentially and collaboratively in interaction with clients. In undertaking the analysis informing

this chapter, my initial coding strategy was to identify the actions in talk which, drawing from the common understandings, indicate the practice skills, such as demonstrating support, care, acceptance, understanding, and personal value. However, these actions were not as explicit as I expected, in that I was able to identify them broadly but on closer approach they appeared to evaporate. I had a sense the practitioners were demonstrating these skills but struggled to anchor them to the data.

The interactional display and construction of the practice skills of warmth, respect and empathy happens over lengthy sequences of talk and across different meetings, which contributes to their vaporous quality. In light of this, informed by previous CA research which I discuss in this chapter, I looked at how the interactions progressed through features of talk, e.g. turn design (specifically initiating actions), alignment, affiliation and formulation, and how groupworkers maintained engagement, or not, in the interactions through these features. Through this focus it became evident that the key practice skills of warmth, respect and empathy are evident as the practical and cooperative achievements of doing *face-work*, managing epistemic authority and creating empathic moments. These actions are necessary for cooperation in the moment-by-moment interaction and fundamental to creating social relationships (Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 2011; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Weiste, 2015; Goffman, 1967; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). Generally in interaction we make efforts not to embarrass each other, or claim we know more about the other's life than they do, and we each try to show our understanding of and connection to what the other is talking about (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1963, 1967; Heritage, 2011, 2012a; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). These efforts create solidarity in interaction and in relationships. Empathy, warmth and respect are conceptualised as features and components of these broader cooperative actions.

First, I will explain the concepts of *face-work*, epistemic authority and empathic moments, using examples from my data. I will then outline some previous research on the conversational resources used to engage clients and build working relationships. I discuss this literature here to situate the analysis in this study within the wider body of CA literature on working relationships and empathy in institutional interactions. Finally, I will demonstrate how warmth, respect and empathy are expressed through the following conversational resources: question design, alignment, affiliation, formulation.

Doing *face-work*

Goffman (1967) proposed the concept of *face* as the self-image that people project contingent on the structures of social interaction and the local context. He stated people are invested in their own *face* and that of others. *Face-work* refers to the 'actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with *face*' (Goffman, 1967: 12). It is an active and cooperative effort people make to preserve and respect their own and each other's *face*, maintaining their sense of autonomy and solidarity in conversation. Essentially maintaining *face* is not considered an objective in interaction, but a condition of it. As such, *face-work*, as the maintenance and protection of each other's self-image and autonomy, is an inevitable and crucial aspect of any interaction and produces orderly communication (Viechnicki, 1997).

There are two aspects of *face*: *negative face* and *positive face* (Brown & Levinson, 1987). *Negative face* is concerned with the desire to do what you want, unimpeded, and have your autonomy and prerogatives honoured and respected. Being instructed or directed can threaten this, including for example being asked to speak about something specific, like offending behaviour, in a particular way. *Positive face* is about the desire to have a favourable self-image that is validated by others. Criticism, negative evaluation, even disagreement can threaten *positive face*.

Benwell and Stokoe (2002) highlighted even in university tutorials, where *face-threatening* acts are institutionally and culturally expected, and as such the normal rules of politeness might be considered suspendable, people do *face-work* to maintain their own and others' *face*. Actions like hedging (e.g. saying 'sort of', 'kind of'), mitigating challenge, providing accounts, and drawing on common ground do *face-work* as they soften any directiveness, respect the other's ownership of their experience, reduce the difficulty of a dispreferred response by making the preference less rigid, and encourage cooperation.

The concept of *face*, particularly as expanded by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their politeness theory, has been criticised for being individualistic and reflective of Western cultural norms (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). However, Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini (2010) highlight this criticism is likely due to a conflation of Goffman's concept of *face* with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. Considering the concept of *face* in its own terms, they note, can accommodate cultural-specific elements, particularly when considered in terms of interaction as these elements are necessarily locally and practically managed by the interlocutors. However, as they point out, this approach is not unproblematic where there is potential theoretical incoherence between the individualistic and intention-based model of *face* in Goffman's conceptualisation and the social constructionist perspective of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology. They propose a shift to considering the notion of *face* in line with social constructionism, which is how it is treated here.

Clayman (2002) demonstrated *face* is evident in talk through sequence organisation and preference structures, as outlined in chapter 2, which are both general across interaction, and specific, being context dependent. That is, as turns are contingent on prior turns which project preferred responses, speakers are demonstrating their rights to speak and their self-image in that instance. Recipients can then affirm the speaker's *face* by agreeing, accepting and supporting the actions of the speaker's

talk. This management of *face* in talk is evident in the general orderliness of talk. *Face-work*, as valuing, supporting and affirming a person's self-image and autonomy in the moment-by-moment interaction, clearly resonates with the skills of warmth and respect (Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967).

In the context of the MF: MC groupwork sessions, there are ample opportunities for clients' *face* to be threatened, as it is a court-mandated programme with directive content to address sexual offending behaviour, which is generally considered morally reprehensible. The groupworkers' *face* may also be threatened, for example in appearing to collude with clients, or limiting their possible desire to condemn the person (Dealey, 2018; Ward, 2014). As such *face-work* is pervasively evident throughout the groupwork sessions and central to maintaining engagement in the ongoing interactions. Extract 1 below is an example of *face-work*, where Calum's description of his 'temper' (ll. 1-2, 4-5, 7-8) contradicts with that of the groupworker. The sequential preference would be for G3 to agree and affirm Calum's description of his temper.

Extract 1:

Group B: Session 4: [V2: 32.01]

1 Calum it takes a lot to push me to a level I can handle the
2 temper for so long
3 G3 but then it builds
4 Calum when I ken I've done anything wrong and actually I've
5 just don't wanna go there
6 G3 mh hmm
7 Calum the temper did get out with me eh cause I stood up he
8 said it's your round (I was like you wanna fucking)
9 G3 I- I guess we picked up before about em how you can be
10 quite easily irritated you were saying [before
11 Calum [well
12 Frank [((nodding))

13 G3 about how you're impatient (.) yeah
14 Calum it takes a lot to push me
15 G3 ah hah
16 Calum an awful lot

It is at lines 9 and 10 particularly we see the groupworker's effort in producing her dispreferred turn, and deal with the consequent threat her challenge poses to Calum's *face*, his self-presentation of having a high threshold before becoming angry. She does this by downgrading her certainty ('I guess', 'we picked up before': l.9), hesitating ('I- I'; 'em'), using a conditional verb ('can be'), downgrading temper to irritated (l.10) and impatient (l.13), and situating her challenge as consistent with Calum's previous *face* ('you were saying before': l.10). This positions the described behaviour as possible rather than definite, consistent with Calum's previous report and within his epistemic domain. All of this serves to mitigate the threat to Calum's *face*, from G3's dispreferred response and its subsequent constraints. Her action is encouraging Calum to agree with her assessment that he is easily irritated.

However, this mitigation can pose a risk, as we see here, where Calum can reject G3's characterisation of his temper, asserting his current *face* (l.11, 14, 16). There is a discrepancy then between the *face* Calum is currently presenting, and G3's report of his previous *face*. This discrepancy could itself be *face-threatening*, as it holds him to account and requires him to deal with the incongruence. Here, however, the groupworker does not further challenge Calum, but instead moves into a listening position with a minimal utterance 'ah hah' (l.15). This further respects Calum's self-image in the interaction and his rights to knowing his own feelings, avoiding direct confrontation and leaving the topic to be picked up again at a later stage. This approach is in keeping with that of motivational interviewing in managing resistance, as advocated for by rehabilitation research (e.g. Vanstone & Raynor, 2012; McNeill et al, 2005). Groupworkers' efforts to respect clients' self-presentation and autonomy is at times in tension with the groupworker's *face*,

institutionally and morally, where they have a responsibility to dispute discourse which is considered untruthful, antisocial or risk indicative. This can result in conflict or passive resistance, and groupworkers use some of the conversational resources that will be discussed later to mitigate this.

Managing epistemic authority

Heritage (2012a) outlines that in interaction people have differential access and rights to knowledge relative to one another – their epistemic status – and through the design of their talk they demonstrate this – their epistemic stance. He notes although epistemic stance and status are usually congruent, there may be interactional reasons that result in these being divergent. Managing people's epistemic rights and responsibilities in interaction is relevant to managing *face* in interaction, as people are held accountable for what they know, how they know it and whether they have the rights to describe it, e.g. is it first-hand experience (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). People are usually afforded 'privileged access to their own experiences and as having specific rights to narrate them' (Heritage & Raymond, 2005: 16; Heritage, 2013b). However, this is not always the case, particularly in institutional contexts, for example in doctor/ patient consultations the doctor's epistemic authority as an expert is privileged over the patient's experiential knowledge in making a diagnosis (Heritage, 2013a). A further example is in therapeutic settings, where therapists are entitled to propose clients' experiences are different to what they say (Voutilainen & Peräkylä, 2014).

Here, the groupworkers have rights and access to epistemics of expertise in relation to sexual offending and the MF:MC programme, as well as institutional knowledge of their clients from official records. However, regardless of their possible epistemic status, at times the groupworkers' stance is less knowing or their knowing is tentative, for example using phrases like 'I'm picking up', 'I was thinking' or hedging i.e. 'kind of', 'maybe'. This is evident in Extract 1 line 9. A more extreme example is

Extract 2 below, where G1's turn over lines 1-7 is replete with hedging and low modality phrases ('I think I've picked up', 'seems to', 'perhaps', 'sort of', 'kind of'), and also hesitations and filler ('you know'). His stance is then clearly positioned as making a suggestion to Alan as to the origin of his beliefs regarding authority and checking this with him rather than telling him how it is. In designing his turn in this way, G1 also mitigates the threat to *face* of a dispreferred response. That is, in making a suggestion G1's 'knowing' wouldn't be called into question, and Alan can disagree, based on G1 picking it up wrong.

Extract 2:

Group C: Session 1: [V2: 21.50]

1 G1 yeah em we-eh-well I think I've picked up (.) from all
2 the things you've said Alan are you know that this
3 seems to link in to perhaps a few of eh authority
4 figures ahm that almost you were sort of sort of eh
5 disillusioned or at least disappointed by how
6 ineffective you found them to be and that's eh kind of
7 helped [to shape
8 Alan [yeah
9 G1 [this belief
10 Alan [yeah I think disillusioned and disappointed
11 are bang on words yes yeah

Groupworkers reducing their claim to the knowledge in this way can promote engagement as it invites the recipient to elaborate in the next turn, where a more knowing stance invites the recipient to confirm the assessment or suggestion usually heralding the end of the sequence (Heritage, 2013b). Furthermore, it demonstrates respect for clients' ownership of their own narratives, rather than imposing the groupworkers' or institutional narrative, recognising clients should be afforded greater epistemic status around their experiences, thoughts and feelings than the groupworkers (Weiste, 2015). However, the groupworkers also have

deontic authority, i.e. their rights to determine what is forbidden and what is allowable (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012), as institutional representatives of legal and moral norms. As with *face-work*, a tension can result between the client's position and the groupworker's position, which Waldram (2007) has highlighted as a conflict between the client's narrative and the institutional narrative, where, in his ethnography of a prison based treatment programme, the latter is prioritised at the expense of meaningful engagement. In this study, this tension is negotiated in the talk, as outlined below, to avoid client disengagement and construct a mutually acceptable narrative.

Creating empathic moments

How people tell their stories or news demonstrates their stance or their take on it. This stance then makes a reciprocal empathic response relevant, normatively one that supports or takes up the teller's stance (Stivers, 2008). For example, in Extract 3 below Frank is describing a potential new flat. Frank's description suggests he is keen on the flat and excited about it, upgrading from nice to beautiful (l.1), adding more granular detail ('an empty flat', 'beautiful bay window', l. 3) and 'oh::' (l.4) as a news marker to his plans and a display of his excitement about the new flat. G3 takes up Frank's stance, and upgrades it responsively to Frank, from 'oh good' (l.2) to the response cry 'oh wow' (l.6). Response cries are proposed to be the most empathic available response, as it implies direct access to the teller's experience (Goffman, 1978; Heritage, 2011).

Extract 3:

Group B: Session 4: [V1: 14.05]

1 Frank It's a nice place, like a beautiful place
2 G3 oh good

3 Frank and it's an empty flat and it's got a beautiful bay
4 window. It's oh:: I could just do something with that
5 there
6 G3 oh wow

Frank's news on his flat was prompted by an earlier question from the groupworker, asking Frank for an update of his week during the standard check-in period at the start of the group ('how about for yourself Frank? anything?'). Practitioners make various 'conversational contributions smoothly urging the other person to "doing opening," which means to give that kind of knowledge that makes a common production of "empathy" possible' (Buchholz, 2014: 2). As such, opportunities for empathy are built up over the interaction, and can be promoted or restricted by the interlocutors through their turn-taking practices (Buchholz, 2014; Muntigl & Horvath, 2014). These contributions engage clients in an essential institutional task in the MF: MC programme, and arguably in social work practice more generally, drawing out clients' affective narratives about their own experiences, behaviours or thoughts to identify and address problems. Drawing out clients' narratives makes empathic responses relevant in the interaction, although not always appropriate. Furthermore, engaging with people's narratives beyond their offending behaviour, through empathic responses, is noted as demonstrating value for them as a person (Ford, 2018; Waldram, 2007). Again, this echoes descriptions of warmth and respect.

After hearing someone relay an emotive first person account, Heritage (2011) considers it a moral obligation for recipients to agree with the teller's evaluation, take up their stance and to affirm their reported experience in respecting their ownership of the experience. He proposes this action creates 'moments of empathic communion', that are central to creating social relations and to social solidarity (Heritage, 2011: 160). However, he further outlines this creates a dilemma for the recipient; the expectation to support the teller's stance without having

epistemic access to their experience or possibly even a lack of subjective resources to be congruent with their experience. I propose in this case a third constraint arises, the institutional, moral and legal appropriateness of endorsing a teller's stance for example in the instance of implicit or explicit anti-sociality. Again, a tension is present.

Doing *face-work*, managing epistemic authority, and creating empathic moments are proposed as fundamental to creating social relationships and social solidarity (Clayman, 2002; Goffman, 1967; Heritage, 2011; Weiste, 2015). As such, I am interested in how these actions are done in the context of the MF: MC groupwork sessions to build working relationships where there are moral, legal, institutional, professional and personal tensions. The key practice skills of being warm, respectful and empathic are evident in interaction as constituting and being constituted by these actions. Here, I analyse how these mutually constructing actions are pursued in the talk-in-interaction during MF: MC groupwork sessions through the following features of talk: question design, alignment, affiliation, and formulation. These features have been identified in previous interactional research, which I will outline below, as conversational resources or actions which can promote cooperation and solidarity in the ongoing interaction.

[Previous interactional research](#)

There has been a substantial body of interactional research looking at institutional practices and how they are accomplished in interaction, e.g. eliciting patient concerns in GP consultations (Heritage & Robinson, 2011), health visitors giving advice (Heritage & Sefi, 1992), getting information for a child protection referral on a helpline (Hepburn & Potter, 2007) (for further discussion of institutional talk see Antaki, 2011; Drew, 2003; Drew & Heritage, 1992b; Ehrlich & Freed, 2009; Heritage, 2005). The discursive practices that contribute to building a working alliance or relationship have also been examined in different settings, particularly therapeutic

ones. This research has highlighted the role of initiating actions, alignment, affiliation and formulation in engaging clients and building working relationships. There are similarities with features of everyday conversation that promote positive cooperative relationships, but also, due to the institutional nature of these interactions, significant differences.

In everyday conversation people design their talk to promote cooperation in the ongoing interaction and reduce conflict or discord, which builds solidarity and positive relationships (Clayman, 2002). Cooperation is achieved in interaction through supportive actions, such as alignment and affiliation, contingent on the initiating action, e.g. accepting an invitation would be cooperative as it aligns with the action of inviting, and affiliates with the request by agreeing. Misalignment and/or disaffiliation threatens *face* and social solidarity (Heritage, 1984; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013). Preference structures, as outlined in chapter 2, evidence this tendency towards cooperation, as dispreferred actions, which are disaffiliating, are designed to mitigate any threat to social solidarity, strengthening social relations (Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013). This was evident in Extract 1, where the groupworker made efforts in the design of their turn to reduce any threat it posed. Clayman (2002: 230) highlights that people 'exploit' sequence organisation and preference structure to suppress discordant actions and promote harmonious ones. This tendency towards cooperation in interaction is also evident in institutional interactions.

Initiating actions, such as questions, constrain the possible responses based on their preference structure. In institutional interactions, the relationship between the professional and layperson is asymmetrical, and as such the professional is almost always doing the initiating action, e.g. asking questions, making assessments (Drew & Heritage, 1992a). Professionals' initiating actions exert pressures on the solidarity, although they might not be aware of it. For example, Muntigl and

Horvath (2015) noted in their analysis of a family therapy session that the therapist's apparently innocuous information request about the absence of the son created disaffiliation between the therapist and the mother. MacMartin (2008) highlighted the problematic nature of optimistic questions, i.e. questions that affirmed client's strengths, abilities, and successes, in sessions between trainee therapists and clients. Clients tended to resist these, by not answering or using various deflecting strategies, resulting in a strain on the collaboration between the therapist and the client. Examining initial calls to parents from a social work parenting programme service, Symonds (2017) highlighted in a minority of calls practitioners diverted from the administrative task of processing the referral, pursuing more personal information about the difficulties at home. He proposed the practitioner's delicately worded question began a process to incrementally build engagement with the parent by drawing out their narrative, a process that continued through the actions of alignment, affiliation and formulation. Practitioners' initiating actions, such as how they ask questions, can undermine or support the construction of the working relationship.

Weiste (2015) notes the prosocial tendency towards cooperation in interaction is beneficial to building working relationships in therapeutic settings. However, she highlights the possible conflictual nature of challenge and disagreement, necessary to therapeutic goals of change, may threaten the positive working relationship. In her analysis of 70 audio-recorded psychotherapy sessions, Weiste (2015) outlined the discursive practices of supportive and unsupportive disagreements, where the latter resulted in a rupture in the working relationship that then needed to be addressed. Non-confrontational challenge is noted as effective in maintaining working relationships when addressing sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003). Voutilainen, Peräkylä, and Ruusuvuori (2010) in their analysis of a single cognitive psychotherapy session note how addressing misalignment in the session can be a therapeutic resource, and strengthen the therapeutic relationship. Muntigl and Horvath (2014) examined how clients and therapists in six

Emotion-focused Process Experiential Therapy sessions managed disagreement in the working relationship to return to solidarity.

In these studies, the therapists (and clients) attempted to repair the working relationship by adjusting their talk to achieve alignment and affiliation. Weiste (2015) particularly highlighted therapists validated the client's emotional experience and their ownership of this. Another strategy was to frame the challenge as a puzzle to be solved, rather than a display of expert knowledge (Horvath & Muntigl, 2018). These strategies echo the idea in rehabilitation work and motivational interviewing of rolling with resistance, as outlined in chapter 1 (see Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). Furthermore, they are both noted to demonstrate respect in acknowledging the client has privileged and primary access to their experiences, managing epistemic authority. However, Voutilainen and Peräkylä (2014: 1) note there is an 'epistemic "twist"' in therapy settings as the therapist is entitled to challenge the client on their understanding of their experience.

Aligning and affiliative responses have been identified as creating space for, and encouraging clients or patients to tell their story in social work interactions (Symonds, 2017), palliative care appointments (Ford, 2018), and child protection helplines (Hepburn & Potter, 2007). Furthermore, they demonstrate understanding of and support for the speaker's storied experience (Heritage, 2011; Stivers, 2008). In this way they are proposed to demonstrate empathy and create empathic opportunities. Ford (2018) also highlighted that encouraging and listening to a patient's story beyond the medical task at hand acknowledged their personhood, indicating warmth. This echoes the ethos of the GLM and desistance paradigm, advocating for people to be seen as more than an inventory of risk factors or their offending behaviour. Alignment and affiliation are identified as conversational resources and actions for building working relationships.

Formulation is a very common way in therapeutic settings to display an understanding of clients' experience, akin to the notion of empathy, and interpret clients' talk in therapeutically relevant ways (Antaki, 2008; Voutilainen, 2012; Weiste & Peräkylä, 2013). Although not specifically examined previously in terms of its contribution to cooperation and solidarity in the working relationship, formulation is noted as an important way for people to demonstrate and clarify they share a congruent understanding of the ongoing interaction (Heritage & Watson, 1979). This sense-making method is necessary to progress cooperation, and as such solidarity, in interaction. Formulations can demonstrate to the client that the practitioner listens and understands them (Voutilainen & Peräkylä, 2014), proposed key to relationship building in criminal justice social work settings (Burnett, 2004; Trotter, 2006; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). Muntigl and Horvath (2014) noted clients can disagree with therapist's formulations, and then it is incumbent on the therapist in the next turn to address this disagreement, usually immediately moving to re-affiliation. They, and Weiste (2015), highlight disaffiliation can be used as a therapeutic resource to explore the client's problem, however not in the context of confrontation but with sensitivity to the client's epistemic rights.

Furthermore, using formulation to shape clients' talk achieves the institutional aims of making something in their talk 'therapizable', which warrants intervention, and encourages clients to transform their story (Antaki, Barnes, & Leudar, 2005: 634). Symonds (2017) reported social work practitioners formulated or gave a selective summary of parents' narratives showing they listened and understood, and orienting parents to the aims of the service. Likewise, Hepburn and Potter (2007) noted call handlers on a child protection helpline formulated crying callers' mental states, an empathic response, as a way of progressing the call to elicit enough information for a referral to social services. As such formulation can both demonstrate empathy, as showing an understanding of the speaker's experience, and progress the institutional goals of the interaction.

The research here highlights the role of initiating actions, alignment, affiliation and formulation in promoting cooperation and engagement in interaction, which builds social solidarity necessary for positive relationships (Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013). These actions are constructed and organised through the basic CA concepts of turn-taking, sequence organisation, turn design, and preference structures to achieve cooperation, as outlined in chapter 2. In institutional interactions, given the asymmetry of the relationship between the professional and the layperson, the professional is commonly the one undertaking these actions, e.g. asking questions, making assessments, evaluating responses, and the layperson commonly responding. As I will demonstrate here, through these resources the actions of being warm, respectful and empathic are visible in the interaction, as practitioners (and clients) engage in *face-work*, manage epistemic authority and create empathic moments.

Question design

There is a myriad of initiating actions in conversation, and it was not possible in the scope of this thesis to examine all of those in my data. I have chosen to focus on question design as asking questions is a central and prevalent initiating action in social work practice. Questioning appears as the most common-sense way to draw out narrative, to get someone to tell their story, which, influenced by desistance research, is central to the MF: MC programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a). Questions are very common in institutional interactions (Drew & Heritage, 1992a), and as with other institutional contexts (e.g. medical, journalism), the agenda and goals of the specific social work context shape the questions asked and thus the available answers to give (Hayano, 2013; Heritage, 1984). There is a wealth of interactional research examining different types of questions, their functions and interactional consequences across different languages, a review of which is beyond the scope of this thesis (for more see Freed

& Ehrlich, 2009; Stivers, Enfield, & Levinson, 2010; Hayano, 2013). Utterances can be understood and treated as questions in interaction regardless of their grammatical format and can be treated as requests for confirmation or information, depending on the epistemic status of the conversation participants (Heritage, 2013b). Here I will discuss how, in balancing client engagement and the institutional agenda, the groupworkers use questions to elicit, direct and unpick clients' stories and their meaning. In attending to issues of *face*, epistemic authority and the obligation to respond empathically, groupworkers' actions can be warm, respectful and empathic. However, these actions are constrained due to the institutional tensions specific to this context, i.e. where the client's position and the institutional or groupworker's position are at odds for example if a client's stance is implicitly or explicitly antisocial and the groupworker expresses their deontic authority or withholds empathic expression, as outlined above.

Softly directive

Questions are a powerful tool for controlling the conversation (Sacks, 1995), as they set an agenda (which can be broad or narrow), convey presuppositions and impose constraints on the recipient to respond in a preferred way (Hayano, 2013). This is particularly true of questions in institutional contexts where it is the professional who primarily asks the questions and the client who answers them (Drew & Heritage, 1992a). In the MF: MC groupwork sessions and in the pre-session homework exercises, questions are used to encourage clients to tell a story, in a directive manner bounded by the question's agenda, presuppositions and constraints which in turn reflect the institutional agenda. For example, 'What happened just before the offence?' is a question in assignment 7 of the Discovering Needs module (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a: 133). Looking at Extract 4 below demonstrates how questions, even open ones (i.e. who, what, why, where, how), constrain the response. After Craig has described that he will be disclosing his offences to his girlfriend, and stating he intends to give her space to

think, G4's question, '*how might she feel?*', sets a topical agenda (what is being talked about), i.e. *her* feelings, as well as an action agenda (what the speaker is doing with the question), i.e. asking Craig to address *her* feelings. It presupposes his girlfriend will have some feelings in relation his disclosure and the future of their relationship. Finally, it places the expectation that Craig will provide an answer, and one that will accept the presupposition and attend to the question's agendas i.e. provide an answer about *her* feelings, which he goes on to do.

Extract 4:

Group C: Session 1: [V5: 18.44]

1 G4 how might she feel?
2 Craig like (1) under pressure to give me like like an
3 [answer
4 G4 [right

In how we ask questions we also demonstrate our epistemic stance, appearing to have more or less knowledge about the topic (Hayano, 2013; Heritage, 2013b). In Extract 4, G4's question suggests she has minimal knowledge about Craig's girlfriend's possible feelings and due to his closer relationship with his girlfriend, respects Craig has more access to this and it falls within his domain of knowledge (Raymond & Heritage, 2006). Using '*might*' acknowledges that the girlfriend herself has primary access, and Craig can only speak to his presumed or hypothetical knowledge of her feelings. As such G4's question suggests her stance, and possibly her status, is unknowing and Craig's status as knowing. However, given G4's institutional and professional status as someone who delivers a treatment programme to address sexual offending behaviours, she is also likely to have some general knowledge and a hypothesis about the impact of disclosure of sexual offences on new partners, indicated by her response, 'right' (l.4). Craig's pause on line 2 may also indicate he is thinking about the 'right' answer for G4's question.

How G4's question is designed, that is how it has been built up, is to do a certain action, i.e. prompting Craig to consider his girlfriend's feelings, and to be understood as doing this action by Craig (Drew, 2012). It is directive and specific, as all questions are to a greater or lesser extent. Through their questions groupworkers orient to certain aspects of clients' talk, making these relevant and accountable over other possible aspects. Alongside the other features of talk, this results in sculpting the story or how clients describe their experiences, behaviours, thoughts and feelings.

However, this directive action is possibly *face-threatening* in terms of both *negative face* (autonomy) in its action, and *positive face* (self-image) in its content (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Groupworkers will aim to soften the directiveness, to mitigate this threat, by adjusting how they word their questions. For example, in Extract 5 below G1 repairs or corrects his question in the middle from 'do you see that' to 'perhaps looking back was that a coping strategy' (1.5-6) in response to Brian's description of his alcohol use at the time of his offending.

Extract 5:

Group B: Session 3: [V6: 10.26]

1 Brian and I'd just sit there absolutely with three bottles
2 of wine for a tenner at Asda and
3 [I'd sh:: ((mimes drinking))
4 G3 [((nodding))
5 G1 Ok (.) and eh do do you see that- perhaps looking back
6 was that a coping strategy.
7 Brian Yes. It was definitely. Cause I didn't cry at the
8 funer- and because they were in their bed I used to
9 just sit and drink in front of the computer and I
10 started using porn.

Both questions would be considered declarative, or closed, warranting a yes/ no response. In repairing the original beginning G1 moves to a less knowing stance, away from a potentially direct assessment that strongly prefers a confirmation (i.e. 'do you see that perhaps was a coping strategy/ was how you coped'), to inviting Brian to elaborate in making that assessment himself ('was that a coping strategy'). Although still with the preference for agreement, the latter format is less *face-threatening* as the presupposition (i.e. that alcohol use was a coping strategy) is less firm and the action is less confrontational. Brian has more room for manoeuvre; he could account for his alcohol use in another way. With the question's original beginning, if he disagrees, he risks being seen as not recognising his alcohol use was a coping strategy before the groupworker's assessment or worse that he does not recognise it now. The first challenges his self-image or *face* of being seen to be aware, whilst on top of that the second also places him in direct disagreement with the 'expert' assessment. Both could result in interactional (Pomerantz, 1984b) and institutional (Waldrum, 2007) trouble.

The final question also respects Brian's epistemic right to make the assessment that his previous behaviour was a coping strategy, albeit still a difficult suggestion to reject, over G1's right of expertise in this instance. G1's repair avoids possible trouble maintaining cooperation and social solidarity, as Brian agrees with G1's question and its presupposition. The groupworkers design and repair their questions to respect and protect the client's self-presentation or *face*, whilst still pursuing an institutional agenda and protecting their *face*. Furthermore, they balance their rights as experts to assess clients' circumstances with clients' privileged access to this by framing their turns as suggestions rather than clear assessments. This reframing demonstrates the client's stance is valued and respected, by not, seemingly, imposing the groupworkers' view. It is pertinent to note, however, the groupworker positioning themselves as less knowing can be interactionally problematic for engagement. For example, where the client has

already displayed their stance towards an event, a less knowing response may indicate trouble in the interaction, in indicating the groupworker did not hear or understand the client's already stated stance, or they did not agree with it. This would be *face-threatening*, challenge the client's epistemic authority and it also withholds a clear empathic, supportive response. This is evident in extract 27, in chapter 5. Whatever the source of the trouble in the interaction, it would need to be dealt with for the interaction to continue.

Although questioning is inherently directive and places constraints on the responder, groupworkers in this study attempted to moderate the potential adverse impact of this on the ongoing cooperation in the interaction, by taking a less knowing stance and avoiding direct confrontation. This strategy attends to concerns of *face* and epistemic authority, which respect and value clients' personhood while also pursuing the institutional agenda. Furthermore, it creates space for clients to tell their story, as will be outlined next. This is in keeping with the programme ethos to take a non-confrontational approach, demonstrated as more effective in engaging clients in a process of change (Marshall, 2005; Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013).

Eliciting client's stance

Taking a less knowing stance, groupworkers' questions and the programme materials invite clients to elaborate and tell their story. In the telling clients then demonstrate their stance or take on it, creating the opportunity for empathic moments. This is evident in extract 6(a), during an exercise regarding healthy relationships, as G4 is asking for Ethan's stance, his view of his own expectations.

Extract 6(a):

Group A: Session 1: [V4: 14.32]

1 G4 W- thanks for that Fraser. What were your
2 expectations- looking back what were your expectations
3 .hh [from
4 Ethan [Just to have a happy family like my [dad has
5 G4 [n- w- eh

The first iteration of the question in extract 6(a) 'What were your expectations' (ll.1-2) indicates G4 has less knowledge about the topic than Ethan. This is repaired to specify the question's action as asking Ethan to reflect on his expectations ('looking back' - l.2). In specifying the past, providing a temporal distance between then and now, G4 is being sensitive to and respecting Ethan's *face*. This allows for separation of potentially problematic past attitudes or behaviours from an evaluation of Ethan's present self, as well as promoting the possibility of change. Groupworkers regularly delineate between the past, the present and the future, a conversational tactic that aligns with the notion of warmth (i.e. viewing the person as a whole, rather than defined by their past offending behaviours) and the construction of non-offending narrative identities as will be discussed in the next chapter. G4 doesn't complete her question, although it might be heard as complete, as Ethan's turn overlaps (l.4), providing a very generic and broad answer as if the question was 'what were your expectations of relationships'. However, we can see some trouble with this answer in G4's interruptive perturbations (l.5). This is attended to in extract 6(b), where G4's question is more directive. She recycles her question (ll.6-7), specifying its agenda (i.e. asking Ethan to reflect on his own expectations of his partner) and presuppositions (i.e. that he had expectations of his partner which, by implication of undertaking an exercise to focus on how to build healthy relationships, were somewhat problematic), which constrains Ethan to give a relevant answer. Even with these constraints though people can resist or deny the agenda and presuppositions of questions (Hayano, 2013) .

Extract 6(b):

6 G4 What were your expectations from the person you were
7 in the relationship with.
8 Ethan to be honest to be there when I- when I needed. Em. I
9 did offer- she- she was working at the start and I
10 said keep on working. She stopped herself and then she
11 said to me >ah her mum kicked her out and this and
12 that< that's how she moved in with me em and I took
13 her on and she had no clothes so I bought all this and
14 I went shopping with her and that's how we moved in in
15 the first place. Em. But what I'm- my understanding
16 was she had a choice to go out and do what she wants.
17 She never. She stayed in. eh.
18 (2)
19 For me she was maybe a bit too young (.) eh maybe
20 immature. That's the right word to use. Em and I ne- I
21 seen it at one point and I did say to her and we did
22 split at that point but then we got back together
23 again in a couple of weeks

This complete question prompts Ethan to tell his side. However, even with the mitigation of positioning his expectations in the past, the presupposition in this question is possibly *face-threatening*. The implication, inherent in undertaking this optional module entitled Relationship Skills, is that Ethan has some difficulties regarding intimate relationships, and in relation to his offences, i.e. rape of someone he described as being his girlfriend, which has been discussed just prior to this extract (n.b. the victim of Ethan's offences is not the 'she' referred to in extract 6(a-c)). To counter this threat, Ethan positions his expectations as normative by evoking a commonly accepted relationship characteristic, someone 'to be there' when he needed (l.8). He further resists the implication his expectations, or his behaviour for that matter, may have been problematic by respecifying his (ex) partner's behaviour (ll.9-17), age and maturity (ll.19-20) as problematic instead. G4's question (ll.6-7) encourages Ethan into 'doing opening' in eliciting a narrative that indicates his stance. However, Ethan's stance resists both the agenda and

presuppositions of G4's question, maintaining his *face*. This is problematic as his stance appears to be blaming of his ex-partner, which is both contrary to the programme aims of taking responsibility for yourself and your life goals, and maybe indicative of antisocial attitudes. However, this does not result in interactional trouble. Instead, in extract 6(c) below, G4 readjusts her approach in light of Ethan's *face-saving* act, maintaining cooperation.

Extract 6(c):

21 G4 mh hmm and how were you coping. I hear what you're
22 saying (.) you know in regards to in
23 [looking at the partner
24 Ethan [pfhhhhhhhhh it was messed up
25 G4 about she was immature she was perhaps not,
26 Ethan mature enough for [myself
27 G4 [grown up so how
28 Ethan yeah
29 G4 how were you- (.) what what was going on for you? How
30 were you dealing with some of the frustrations and .hh
31 disagreements that were were occurring.
32 Ethan a lot of it was working
33 G4 hmm
34 Ethan I was constantly working
35 G4 ((nodding))

G4's extended turn over this sequence skilfully reorients to the agenda of her enquiry, to encourage Ethan into 'doing opening' about his expectations of his partners in relationships rather than focussing on his (ex) partner's behaviour. G4's turn at line 21 could be described as an ancillary question (Jefferson, 1984), that is a question that does not provide an empathic response in support of the teller's stance where perhaps one would be expected in the interaction, but instead asks a related question about the matter. Ancillary questions can be an interactional resource to demonstrate empathy. However, Heritage (2011: 164) considers them

as at the least empathic end of the spectrum of available interactional resources to respond to people's personal accounts as they do not show support for the teller's stance, and furthermore 'require the teller to address the agenda in the questioner's question'. However, in asking 'how were you coping' (l.21) G4 appears to validate Ethan's report of the situation, that there was something to 'cope' with, before she explicitly outlines his stance (ll.21-23, 25) without endorsing it ('I hear what you're saying'; ll.21-22). Here, in acknowledging his stance she is being respectful of his epistemic rights to his own experience (Weiste, 2015), and that from his perspective there was something to cope with (Kitzinger, 2011). This preserves his *negative face* to have autonomy over his story, and *positive face*, that he had normative expectations. In seeking to understand Ethan's perspective, G4 demonstrated reflective listening, noted as an empathic expression (Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Trotter, 2006; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). Furthermore, she is being warm and respectful in acknowledging he is a person with his own feelings and thoughts, without judging him negatively for these (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967).

Due to this sensitive bridging, G4 changes the topic focus through a sequence of open questions, i.e. 'so how...' (l.27, 29), without provoking resistance. Vanstone and Raynor (2012: 36) note this tactic as 'effective use of authority'. As such, without supporting Ethan's stance, G4 forces a shift in focus through her *wh*-questioning sequence (ll.29-31). Echoing the initial question, this clearly sets the agenda as requesting Ethan to focus on his behaviour. In using reflective listening to incorporate Ethan's perspective, G4 has done a stepwise move, that is connecting different topics to smooth the transition in talk from one to the other (Jefferson, 1984), to encourage Ethan into 'doing opening' in the direction of her question's agenda.

This line of questioning in extract 6(c) is more effective than the initial questions (ll.1-2, 6-7) in prompting Ethan to talk about his behaviours and attitudes as they

are less *face-threatening* and as such less problematic for Ethan to answer. As such, G4 and Ethan have re-aligned and re-affiliated in their conversation. However, that is not to say the latter questions were better than the first, so to speak. It is beneficial to elicit accounts which demonstrate clients' attitudes as these can be and are often further explored at a later point in the same session or referred to using reported speech in a subsequent session, in a bid to sculpt clients' narratives. For example, in this instance the groupworkers go on to link Ethan's account to his wider attitudes and values about family and family roles, which in turn lead to him discussing the qualities he values in a partner and his expectations. G4's readjustment to Ethan's response moved to maintain cooperation in the interaction, and importantly Ethan's engagement as he then goes onto describe his behaviour (from line 32 onwards).

There may be situations where direct disagreements which constitute *face-threatening* actions are unavoidable and appropriate, e.g. challenging explicitly antisocial behaviours. However, in my data these are rare. Generally, disagreements or challenges were more likely to be supportive, where the groupworkers worked persuasively, often with the group, to achieve congruence between their view and the client's (Weiste, 2015). In this way groupworkers promoted cooperation and engagement in the interaction. I identified only three instances of direct *face-threatening* challenges in 28 hours of interaction, and in them groupworkers made conversational moves to return to cooperation and solidarity, including attending to issues of *face* and epistemic authority. It may be, and it is my professional experience, that highly concerning behaviours are dealt with outwith the group setting by the groupworkers or the individual case managers. This may be due to there being higher stakes in relation to losing *face* in the group setting for both groupworkers and clients, where the groupworkers may lose control of the normative culture of the group. Establishing desirable group norms is considered an essential task for groupworkers to achieve group cohesion, proposed essential for effectiveness, which requires helpful and supportive leadership (Beech & Fordham,

2008). It might be that losing *face*, through getting into a confrontational argument for example, may result in groupworkers losing credibility in the eyes of clients and their leadership being undermined. As such the group may form new norms as the roles are re-established.

Ancillary questions

Ancillary questions were quite common in these interactions; these are questions that are related to but do not directly deal with the action of the previous talk (Heritage, 2011; Jefferson, 1984). They are considered a possible empathic response, albeit a limited one (Heritage, 2011). Three ways ancillary questions are used in these interactions are: (1) to direct the narrative in an institutionally relevant way, (2) explore the client's story and its meaning, and (3) to encourage group participation and engagement. The first of these functions is evident in extract 6(c) above as G4's ancillary questions serve to redirect the topic of conversation, to focus on Ethan's behaviour which is relevant to the exercise at hand. Furthermore, it directs the discussion away from the possible antisocial stance Ethan is demonstrating in complaining about his ex-partner in extract 6b. This is achieved through withholding a clear empathic or supportive response to his 'complaining' and instead shifting the focus. In this way groupworkers avoid getting into arguments with clients that could threaten engagement (Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). Extract 7(a) below demonstrates a common use of ancillary questions in the MF: MC groupwork sessions, to explore the client's story further. Here Adam has been telling the group about an argument he had with his mother at the weekend.

Extract 7(a):

Group A: Session 4: [V1: 13.41]

1 Adam so I kind of bubbled up
2 G2 yeah

3 Adam hh and then eh she found where it- she knew it was so
4 it's eh I got a little bit frustrated with her.
5 G2 ah hah
6 Adam I get frustrated with her.
7 G2 ah hah ah hah
8 Adam Just very [frustrating.
9 G2 [And how do you show that. (.) What
10 happens.
11 Adam hh We just have arguments
12 G2 hmm
13 Adam Doesn't get too heated but it's like hmm eh hmm like I
14 told you it's not there you know it's only me that's
15 doing it
16 G2 hmm
17 Adam you know but it doesn't seem to be such a bi- but it
18 does seem to link in with where the past has come from
19 G2 hmm
20 Adam and there's still trust issues there
21 G2 ok
22 Adam you know you know it's
23 G2 Hmm
24 Adam whether she trusts me or not I just think it's [easy
25 G2 [is
26 your mum- is your mum able to say that at all or is
27 that just your kind of feelings [about
28 Adam [that's just my
29 feelings
30 G2 about what's underneath that yeah
31 Adam I always seem to be the one that's wrong
32 G2 ok

After a lengthy story about the nature of the argument (not shown), G2 does not give any empathic resonance with Adam's description of being frustrated with his mother where it might be usually expected, for example at lines 5, 7, or 9. Adam appears to be looking for support from G2, or someone else, as he increasingly upgrades his complaint from 'I got a little bit frustrated', to 'I get frustrated', to eventually 'just very frustrating'. However, still at line 9 G2 doesn't clearly and

directly empathise with his stance. For example, she could say 'of course', 'oh it sounds really difficult' or 'that's so frustrating' to show her congruence with his reported experience. Instead G2 asks a related reflective question about how he expresses his frustrations, further exploring Adam's story. This question accepts he has frustrations but withholds clear support for Adam's story so far. Ancillary questions make some aspect of clients' previous talk relevant, in this case Adam's expression of his frustration, and prompt clients to expand on their story about this aspect. The aim of such exploration is to expose any underlying issues (Trotter & Evans, 2010; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012; Vehviläinen, 2008), particularly those potentially relevant to the institutional task, e.g. identifying and addressing unhelpful thinking styles, highlighting the difference between the client's current and past state, or future state (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a). Clients most commonly expand on their stories, as Adam does here from lines 11 to 24. Again, instead of supplying what might be a normatively expected empathic response at lines 25 to 27, G2 asks another ancillary question. This time her question serves to clarify how Adam knows there are 'trust issues', further eliciting his stance which could, and often does, contribute to a later interpretation or formulation by the groupworker of his experience (Vehviläinen, 2008). Furthermore, this questioning demonstrates warmth in further prompting Adam to expand on and explore his story, which acknowledges and respects his personhood as more than his offending or risk factors (Ford, 2018).

It appears across my data that ancillary questions are also somewhat expected, as potentially evident at the end of extract 7(a). On line 30 G2 appears to be completing her question from lines 25 to 27, as seen from the repetition of 'about', i.e. 'or is that just your kind of feelings [about] about what's underneath that'. Adam already answered this question on lines 28 and 29. However, Adam treats it as another ancillary question - 'what's underneath that?' - providing another answer on line 31. As such, withholding an unequivocal empathic response in order to further explore or unpick the client's story and its meaning through ancillary

questions appears institutionally relevant and is oriented to by participants in this context. This action also treats some aspect of clients' talk as worth exploring, co-constructing it as something relevant to treatment (Drew, 1998; Vehviläinen, 2008) as well as contributing to the meaning of the story by introducing different perspectives.

Finally, ancillary questions are used to encourage participation from other group members, particularly to elicit empathic responses. For example, directly following from extract 7(a), extract 7(b) below illustrates this use of ancillary questions.

Extract 7(b):

33 Adam However [I'm sure that's not
34 G2 [This sound familiar to people. Does anyone,
35 Adam Not unfamiliar in normal [situations
36 G2 [ok
37 Adam but
38 G2 But is it sounding familiar for folk in terms of- yeah
39 I'm thinking about yourself Ben in terms of your
40 relationship with your parents.
41 Ben hmm
42 G2 too- Does that kind of bubble up sometimes.
43 Ben aff:: bubbles up all the time
44 G2 ok heh heh

Following from his extreme case characterisation of always being wrong (Pomerantz, 1986) in extract 7(a) (l.31), Adam appears to be beginning to downplay that here (l.33). However, he does not finish his utterance as G2 again asks an ancillary question, this time asking the group if they have had a similar experience (l.34). She is seeking a parallel assessment or second story; these are 'my side' assessments where the responder describes a similar experience that supports the stance of the teller's description and demonstrates understanding (Pomerantz,

1980). Second stories are an efficient conversational resource used to demonstrate empathy (Heritage, 2011; Sacks, 1995). This action is confirmed over lines 38 to 40, where G2 does not accept Adam's answer (l.35), repeating her request before selecting and directing Ben to answer. Echoing Adam's words (extract 7(a), l.1), 'bubble up', at line 42 G2's question engages with Adam's story in requesting a second story, or a supportive stance, from Ben. Notably her question remains tentative ('kind of' 'sometimes'; l.42), respecting Ben's epistemic authority over the domain of his family, and possibly his *negative face* given he did not fully take up the role of answerer on line 41. Ben's response on line 43, with an opening response cry ('aff:::') (Goffman, 1978) and an extreme case formulation ('all the time') (Pomerantz, 1986), offers resounding support, legitimizing Adam's story and demonstrating this is a shared and common experience. This produces a moment of empathic communion, where the nature and meaning of Adam's experience and his stance towards it is affirmed (Heritage, 2011).

Arguments between parents and adult children are stereotypical, and the groupworker likely also has had a relatable experience and could give a second story but she doesn't. Furthermore, as Ben has previously discussed issues with his parents, G2 is aware he has had difficulties so could just refer to them. By asking this ancillary question G2 encourages group participation and encourages other group members to demonstrate empathy, which given their shared backgrounds of being convicted of sexual offences may enable them to be more congruent with each other's experience (Frost et al., 2009). Also parallel assessments or second stories from groupworkers, in their institutional or professional role, may not be appropriate as they can shift the focus from the client's personal experience to the groupworker's personal experience which is contrary to the institutional task (Ruusuvuori, 2005). A shift to the personal experience of another group member however remains within the bounds of what is expected in the sessions. Groupworkers regularly enlist other group members to engage with and support each other, not just in relation to eliciting demonstrations of empathy through

ancillary questions but at other times to give feedback to each other on their exercises or to help a group member who may be struggling to answer a question. These actions facilitate active participation by all members, and in promoting cooperation and solidarity between group members possibly contributes to creating cohesion in the group (Frost et al., 2009).

Questions are used by the groupworkers to encourage clients into 'doing opening', to tell and explore their stories of their experiences in ways that elicit their stance and create opportunities for empathic moments. These moments can then be co-constructed, through groupworkers producing supportive responses (as I will discuss below) or by encouraging other group members to demonstrate empathy, as demonstrated in extract 7(b). On the other hand, where the client's stance is problematic or *face-threatening* to the groupworker, e.g. expressing antisocial attitudes or indicative of risk, these moments can be sidestepped or directionally altered to avoid conflict and resistance whilst support and empathy for the client's stance is withheld (e.g. extract 6(a-c)). This is a display of the groupworker's deontic authority, as in directing the conversation they decide what is allowable and what is not. Through their questions, and other conversational resources, the groupworkers softly guide the direction of these stories, and as such contribute to the co-construction of clients' narratives by focussing on certain aspects and not others. This gently directive action and expression of deontic authority encourages and reinforces prosocial views. Carefully attending to issues of *face* and epistemic authority in the question design promotes engagement and demonstrates warmth and respect, as people's personhood and rights to their own experiences, thoughts and feelings is respected.

Alignment and affiliation

Alignment and affiliation are closely related terms in conversation analysis, and the actions they denote are considered essential for the smooth running of interaction

and ongoing social solidarity, as they demonstrate cooperation and participation in the interaction (Clayman, 2002; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, 2008).

Alignment refers to the cooperation with the interactive activity in progress, whereas affiliation refers to demonstrating understanding of and support for the action and stance another person is taking in their turn of talk (Stivers, 2008; Stivers et al., 2011). When the client's stories are on the right track, as directed by the groupworkers, these resources are used to encourage and support clients in their action of storytelling and their stance towards the meaning of their story.

Alignment

When people speak they are doing an activity (e.g. asking a question, greeting someone, extending an invitation) and these activities call for a contingent, reciprocal response (e.g. providing an answer, returning a greeting, accepting or declining an invitation) (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). When the respondent provides the expected or called for type of response they are 'aligning' with the speaker's activity or project (Stivers, 2008), as they are cooperating with it structurally. Stivers (2008) showed that when a person is telling a story, the listener aligns to this project by allowing the speaker to have the floor to complete the story and demonstrating listening using continuers, such as *mh hmm*, *yeah*, *uh huh*, at points where they could feasibly take a turn talking, i.e. at the completion of a turn constructional unit (TCU), as outlined in chapter 2. This is evidenced in Extract 8(a) below during an exercise called 'stepping stones' where Alan has been asked to reflect on how his thinking style impacted how he managed a difficult work placement interaction with a supervisor. The use of continuers urges the client into 'doing opening', by moving the interaction into a space where Alan provides an affective narrative, showing his stance, making the co-construction of empathy possible (Buchholz, 2014).

Extract 8(a):

Group C: Session 1: [V3: 25.41]

1 G4 you know yeah she was- but how (.) how did you- were
2 you then able to (.) remain focussed on that that (.)
3 offered you an alternative way of dealing with the
4 situation,
5 Alan .hh yea:h
6 G4 or did it just reinforce ach [no.
7 Alan [Well how it impacted on
8 me. It was it was very stressful for me.
9 G4 yeah hmm
10 Alan eh I'd been unemployed for quite a while you all know
11 I've been coming to the group for all that time and
12 this was the first breakthrough a possibility of doing
13 something.
14 G4 °hmm hmm°
15 Alan I'd done no voluntary work at that point. I'd no paid
16 employment and then a placement comes through.
17 G4 hmm yeah yeah
18 Alan And I thought oh this could be an opportunity. We all
19 knew it wouldn't lead to paid employment that was made
20 clear but at least it was something to go on the CV.
22 G4 hmm hmm

Prior to this extract, Alan was complaining about the supervisor's behaviour. G4's question (ll.1-4) directs Alan to focus on his own behaviour, rather than his supervisor's, in line with the programme agenda (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a). Here G4 offers an alternative question however (l.6) as Alan does not answer her initial one. G4's readjustment of her question could be seen as doing *face-work*, minimising the possible challenge of Alan not having considered alternative ways of managing the situation, and the possibility of him not answering. However, the question on lines 1 to 4 is also pretty confusing and its topical agenda isn't clear. Alan's response may demonstrate this confusion, as he respecifies the question (ll.7-8) with a *well*-preface indicating the answer is not

straightforward (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). This *well*-preface could also indicate Alan is beginning a story here, as requested by G4 (Heritage, 2015). However, at the end of line 8, Alan's turn can also be heard as finished, in terms of prosody, grammar and action, having asked and answered his own question. By keeping her utterance designedly short at line 9, G4 demonstrates the understanding that Alan's story isn't complete (Schegloff, 1982) and encourages him to expand (Muntigl & Hadic Zabala, 2008). Her use of continuers (ll.9, 14, 17, 19) show active listening, which is key to empathic communication as it allows the other's stance to be heard (Koprowska, 2014; Trotter, 2006; Trotter & Evans, 2010). G4's minimal conversational contributions are at points where Alan's turns could be heard as complete, when a slot for the next speaker opens up. Instead of taking up this slot, G4's actions align with Alan's activity of storytelling by giving him the floor (Stivers, 2008).

Alignment happens when clients are on the right track in telling their story; it is an institutionally validated narrative direction focusing on the desired topic. Aligning with Alan's activity demonstrates respect in orienting to Alan's right to control the direction of his narrative, albeit temporarily (Symonds, 2017) and in a way deemed appropriate to the context (Fitzgerald & Leudar, 2010; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). Encouraging the telling of a story builds to the possibility of a common production of an empathic moment, where the groupworker, or another group member, can demonstrate support and congruence with the teller's stance. This is achieved through affiliation.

Affiliation

Affiliation is when the listener demonstrates their support of the action being pursued and the stance of the speaker (Stivers, 2008). The concept of affiliation has been explored in conversation analytic research to consider the features, resources and sequential placement of affiliation and disaffiliation in talk (Lindström &

Sorjonen, 2013). This research highlights actions that affiliate or disaffiliate are ‘conveyed through a complex interplay of multiple factors’ including prosody and syntax in relation to the initial action, and the movements and gestures of the interlocutors (Lee & Tanaka, 2016: 3). Affiliative responses are not always relevant in interaction (Stivers et al., 2011), nor are they always appropriate, for example when a customer is making a complaint to a service (Jefferson & Lee, 1981).

Affiliation in interaction demonstrates understanding of and support for the speaker’s stance and normative action, and as such can form an empathic response. Stivers et al. (2011: 21) note that ‘affiliative responses are maximally pro-social when they match the prior speaker’s evaluative stance, display empathy and/or cooperate with the preference of the prior action’. (Stivers et al. (2011) note prosocial in their study refers to cooperation in the micro-level interaction and is not about adherence to wider social norms.) Heritage (2011) suggests listeners use different resources to affiliate in responding to stories of personal experience, for example, response cries (e.g. ‘oh’, ‘wow’) or describing a similar experience in second stories as noted above, along a gradient of potential empathic responses. Extract 8(b), a direct continuation of 8(a), shows G4’s affiliation as a way of constructing an empathic moment and demonstrating empathy, or her understanding of Alan’s stance towards his experience.

Extract 8(b)

23 Alan and (.) could have had a reference from it so this
24 looked like a good positive (.) So I went in there but
25 actually it was it was in the New Year I had had a
26 terrible cold and a cough. I was actually told to go
27 home after the second day cause I was .hh
28 G4 mh hmm I [remember that
29 Alan [I was ill
30 G4 yeah

31 Alan I went back and then there was this stressful
32 situation (.) I was trying trying to prove myself and
33 I'd already had days off sick. (heh) eh (.) It over
34 stressed me [it's true
35 G4 [um hmm ((nodding))
36 Alan and when I'm stressed I don't see things with
37 G4 yeah ((nodding))
38 Alan maybe as [clear a view
39 G4 [((nodding))
40 Alan as I might
41 G4 um hmm
42 Alan otherwise, (.) eh I'm stressed she's stressed
43 [fheh hehf
44 G4 [yeah yeah and you're both phff ((gestures with
45 hands))
46 Alan and everything went tits u(h)p (heh heh) fexcuse my
47 [Frenchf hah hah
48 G4 [n:::o well that's fyea(h)hf
49 Alan fyeahf
50 G4 and maybe that was one of the unhe(h)lpf(h)ul thoughts
51 that went through your mind at the time
52 Alan yeah
53 G4 oh oh well what's the point this has gone tits [up
54 Alan [yeah
55 yeah ((nodding))

G4's utterances at lines 28, 44, and 48 show she understands and supports Alan's affective stance (Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, 2008). The utterance at line 28 is particularly interesting, and a common occurrence across the groupwork sessions, as it speaks to both a previous knowledge of one another but also in drawing on the psychological concept of remembering G4 is evoking this previous knowledge to verify Alan's account. Furthermore, it demonstrates she was listening before. Stivers (2008) also noted that nodding is an affiliating action, claiming access to and understanding of the teller's experience, which G4 is doing at key points in Alan's story about being stressed (ll.35, 37, 39). The affiliative work here does more than just agree with Alan's affective stance, it endorses his stance and

contributes to the building of the story in this way, to its humorous culmination of the story on lines 42, 43, 46 and 47. G4's elongated 'n:::o' at line 48 is a response cry (Goffman, 1978), which, as noted above, conveys a strong sense of empathic affiliation through its prosody, positioning and claim of direct access to the described experience (Heritage, 2011). Here G4's response cry goes to directly support Alan's description of his experience, that things went tits up, negating the need for his apology. Furthermore, G4 echoes Alan's bubbling laughter (ll. 48, 50), continuing the joke. In this way she has managed to stay in tune interactionally with both Alan's affective stance through the story and converge with how he is telling the story at completion. Her affiliative actions achieve empathic communion, as she is demonstrating understanding of and congruence with Alan's stance.

In getting in on the joke with Alan, G2 then easily goes on to interpret Alan's description as a possible unhelpful thought as she builds on the congruence of that empathic moment through beginning her turn with a conjunction implying it is an extension of Alan's previous talk ('and', l.50), continued bubbling laughter and drawing from Alan's own words, 'going tits up' (l.53). This interpretation links Alan's story and stance then to the institutional agenda of the exercise to reflect on Alan's thinking styles. Furthermore, it subtly reframes Alan's story, where instead of Alan identifying as an active responsible agent whose circumstances were legitimately stressful, in G4's interpretation he is passive with a sense of determinism ('what's the point', l.53). Alan's quick, overlapping and repeated 'yeah' and his nodding demonstrate his clear agreement with G2's interpretation of the meaning of his story. G2's affiliation respects Alan's epistemic authority over his own experience, but allows her to also reformulate it in a manner relevant to the specific exercise, i.e. identifying characteristic ways of thinking which influenced offending behaviour, underpinned by attitudes, beliefs and assumptions (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013).

Alignment and affiliation achieve solidarity in interaction and promote ongoing cooperation. These actions also promote engagement in encouraging clients to tell their stories, and to tell them in a manner appropriate to the sessions of the MF:MC programme. These actions can demonstrate warmth, respect and empathy, in valuing the client's personhood through their respecting their *face*, allowing clients to tell their experience, and demonstrating understanding and support for that experience. They are *face-saving*, preserving both negative and positive face in accepting the client's action of telling their story and the self-image they are presenting within that, respectively. Furthermore, they respect clients' epistemic authority over their own story. However, as noted above, they also enable groupworkers to then go on to interpret or formulate clients' experience to achieve different interactional goals, which I will discuss further next. Importantly, it is not always appropriate for groupworkers to align with or affiliate with clients' actions, for example as noted in extract 6 (a-b). This will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Formulation

Formulations are 'utterances that show understanding of the previous speaker's turn by proposing a version of it' (Weiste & Peräkylä, 2013: 300; Heritage & Watson, 1979). They contribute to the ongoing cooperation in the sensemaking participants do in conversation by giving a gist of the conversation or account so far, or by picking out the implications or upshot of it (Heritage & Watson, 1979). As they are closely associated with the previous speaker's talk, formulations can promote engagement because they indicate the groupworker 'hears' the client and understands their account, demonstrating empathy. This is similar to the concept of reflective listening, which is when a person's response 'makes a guess as to what the speaker means' (Miller & Rollnick, 2002: 69). Reflective listening is considered central to best practice in criminal justice settings, including this one, as a way of demonstrating empathy and understanding (Hart & Collins, 2014; McNeill et al., 2005; Rex, 1999; Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a; Trotter, 2013; Trotter & Evans, 2010; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012).

Importantly however, formulations are not a neutral repetition of preceding talk, but necessarily transform it as they preserve some aspects and delete others, which has implications for the ongoing interaction (Antaki, 2008; Heritage & Watson, 1979). For example, in extract 8(b), G4's upshot formulation (ll.50-51, 53) directs Alan's account to fit with identifying his 'unhelpful thinking styles'. As outlined in chapter 1, 'unhelpful thinking styles' are considered to be characteristic patterns of thinking which contributed to the decision to behave in an anti-social way in any situation, not only illegally. Identifying and addressing 'unhelpful thinking styles' are central activities in the MF: MC programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). G4's formulation here works to construct certain elements of Alan's talk as treatable or 'therapizable' (Antaki et al., 2005: 634), i.e. his thoughts, in that moment over other potential ones, e.g. managing stress, needing to prove himself.

Furthermore, G4's formulation here does some implicit work to reframe Alan's preceding account, and also possibly any subsequent one, in suggesting an interpretation through the lens of this 'thinking style'. This formulation refocuses Alan's talk to fit the exercise at hand, i.e. how his thinking style impacted his management of a difficult interaction, and enables the groupworkers to then go on to ask Alan to generate alternative thoughts (not shown). It also reframes his role or identity in the event from active to passive. In this way formulations influence the direction of the ongoing interaction, in guiding what is focussed on next, and contribute to the co-construction of identity and stance in interaction, in promoting certain outlooks over others. The selective process of formulation makes clients' talk relevant to the institutional context and its goals (Antaki, Barnes, & Leudar, 2005; Auburn, 2010; Symonds, 2017; Vehviläinen, 2008).

Formulations are however candidate readings or suggestions proposed by the groupworkers, or other group members, which can be confirmed or rejected by clients, and as such there is an interactional risk involved. Confirmation is the

strongly preferred response. However, as Muntigl and Horvath (2014) noted, in their study looking at interactions in therapy settings, clients may disagree or reject a formulation when it transforms their talk too much, rendering it not relevant to the client's stance, or when the client chooses to pursue their own agenda and not engage with the therapeutically relevant direction the formulation imposes. To manage the possibility of rejection, groupworkers attend to *face*, epistemic authority and demonstrate an empathic understanding in their formulations. The following three extracts will outline how formulations work to promote relational and programme engagement, whilst moving talk in an institutionally relevant direction.

Demonstrating empathy

Formulations can be a form of empathic reflection (Muntigl & Horvath, 2014; Ruusuvuori, 2012). Through formulations groupworkers can demonstrate they have an understanding of the client's overt or implied emotional or mental state by reflecting on the affective meaning of the client's previous talk (Ruusuvuori, 2012). For example, in extract 9 below, Brian is explaining his experience of needing to borrow money from his mother to buy his son's Christmas present.

Extract 9:

Group B: Session 1: [V2: 24:41]

- 1 Brian cause we had just- she'd just booked it online had to
2 go pay for it in the shop and in the back of the car
3 and I was thinking sh- that made me feel quite bad
4 quite small
5 G1 hmm
6 Brian So I would say that's probably the personalisation
7 labelling myself an idiot
8 G1 mh hmm ((nodding))
9 Brian with it coming to that

10 G1 °oh right°
 11 Brian and that that that eh ma- i- o- It was more than made
 12 up for on Christmas day seeing the wee boys face (.)
 13 when we rolled out his new bike and ((hands in the
 14 air, exclaiming face)) waaaah. Big cuddle. That was
 15 great but actually going to- picking it up it made me
 16 (.) emasculates probably the wrong word but that sort
 17 of I didn't feel like a [dad cause I wasn't buying it.
 17 G1 [((nodding))
 18 Yeah so it kind of links into what you see as eh being
 19 your role ah and maybe feeling disappointed with
 20 yourself.
 21 Brian Oh yeah
 22 (1)
 23 Really really disappointed the first Christmas where
 24 I've not been able to go out and physically spoil my
 25 son

Brian is displaying his emotional and mental state about this experience through his account, i.e. feeling 'bad' and 'small' (ll.3-4), 'labelling myself an idiot' (l.7), 'emasculates' (l.16), 'I didn't feel like a dad cause I wasn't buying it' (l.17). G1's formulation on lines 18, 19 and 20 provides the upshot of Brian's account, demonstrating empathy in reflecting Brian's mental state. The conjunction 'so' at the beginning indicates G1's summary causally flows from Brian's account, and as such strengthens the impression that G1's understanding comes directly from Brian and is congruent with his experience. Groupworkers commonly began formulations with 'so'. G1 summarises the meaning of Brian's account as being about how Brian sees his role and being disappointed with himself, showing empathic understanding. This is hedged ('kind of', 'maybe') with hesitations ('eh', 'ah'), downplaying the certainty of the suggestion, which indicates G1 is managing his limited rights to access this experience, and the possible threat to *face* his formulation might present to both of them.

This formulation also transforms Brian's talk away from not feeling like a father, his feelings in that experience, to orient to what he sees as being the role of a father, his beliefs. It also subtly shifts the emotion referent, from ones which indicate feelings of shame about who you are ('bad', 'small', 'an idiot', 'emasculate') to 'disappointed' which implies feelings of guilt from failure to do something, your behaviour. Transforming the talk in this way links Brian's account to the wider programme agenda, that is identifying clients' beliefs so they can be challenged (as they are in the interaction following this extract) and promoting a positive sense of self while condemning the offending behaviour (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). Brian's confirming response (ll.21-25) aligns and affiliates with G1's formulation and indicates it was heard as an expression of empathy (Wynn & Wynn, 2006), as he upgrades the reflected emotion ('really, really disappointed'). G1 has succeeded in summarising Brian's account through paraphrasing, displaying accurate empathy and transforming his experience, making it relevant to the programme.

Reframing meaning

Using formulation to reframe the meaning of clients' talk is demonstrated in extract 10 below. Here Fred is talking about his childhood.

Extract 10:

Group A: Session 2: [V3: 24.27]

- 1 Fred eh:: In general (.) as a whole it was a happy time
- 2 Adam hmm ((nods))
- 3 Fred but within that there was (.) eh::: issues of (.) >my
- 4 mum was a single parent. She worked all the time. She

5 had a career. I spent most of my childhood with my
6 gran and granpa< [who were-

7 Adam [hmm-

8 G2 ((reaches hand forward)) I'm just going to stop you
9 there cause that's that's that's kind of really
10 important stuff.

11 Fred hmm ((nods))

12 G2 Just going to stop you there. This this is about
13 slowing that down. hh So what Fred's saying is that
14 your mum was working all the time

15 Fred mh hmm ((nods))

16 G2 cause she'll be on her own

17 Fred yeah yeah ((nods))

18 G2 So she was trying to provide for you. ((looks around
19 group))

20 Adam [((nodding))

21 Carl [((nodding))

22 Dale [((nodding))

23 G2 You were brought up a lot my your, (.) [gran
24 Fred [gran and
25 granpa ((nodding))

26 G2 Your granpa (.) What might what might the impact of
27 that be fo::r- How old were you then. What kind of

28 Fred tch Well I- that went from the year zero til I was (.)
29 in my twenties

30 G2 Ok so right through your childhood.

31 Fred aye aye

An implication from Fred's description of his mother working whilst he was a child (ll.3-6) could be that her working was selfishly motivated, as she was pursuing a career, and left him 'parentless' in the care of his grandparents, a potential moral judgement on her as a mother. There are of course different ways this could be understood given the inherent ambiguity of language. However, were it not deemed somewhat problematic, or in need of repair or exploration, Fred would have likely been encouraged to go on, i.e. through use of continuers indicating alignment as outlined above, rather than be cut off by G2 (l.8). This could also be an opportunity for an empathic moment, however G2 does not respond as such although indicates she might do ('really important stuff', ll.9-10). Instead, following her clarification of and justification for the interruption (ll.8-10, 12-13), G2 goes on to propose a version of events that reframes the implied intentions of Fred's mother. Asking 'why that now' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), indicates G2 at lines 8 to 13 is interrupting to address some trouble in Fred's talk, although at this point it is not clear what, for example she could be clarifying his description. The subsequent talk points to Fred's stance as the issue. For instance, his description of his mother working could be considered in relation to the risk factor of hostility towards women, in terms of expressing stereotypically traditional views of women and their roles, or perceptions of past wrongs by women (Hanson et al., 2007).

Beginning with 'So what Fred's saying is...' (l.13), G2 achieves three things here. Firstly, as above, 'so' strongly implies this is a direct summary of what Fred has said. Secondly, G2's reference to Fred's talk explicitly signals he has been 'heard' and as such is respected, and she is summing up his account. Finally, in addressing the group G2 is positioning her formulation as clarification for them, or as getting the story straight, rather than a challenge to the problematic implication in Fred's description which could be *face-threatening* and undermine his epistemic authority. G2 goes on to firmly ground her formulation initially in Fred's words (l.14, 'working

all the time') before making a subtle shift from 'single parent', which may hold certain stereotyped characteristics, to highlighting Fred's mother was 'on her own' (l.16); both Fred confirms (ll.15, 17). At line 18, G2 begins again with 'so', here implying direct causality, to give the upshot that Fred's mother was working to provide for Fred, rather than for solely career ambition. This transformation of Fred's talk demonstrates an empathic reflection on Fred's experience. Formulations strongly prefer confirmation or agreement, but this requires clients to decide if they agree with the groupworker's reinterpretation of events (Heritage & Watson, 1979). Fred provides agreement to the first part of G2's formulation, which is relatively close to Fred's description and as such unproblematic. However, he does not respond to the upshot at line 18 where the groupworker is looking around the group and receives affiliative responses in the form of nodding from other group members. Fred may not feel obliged to respond as, by G2's gestures, the formulation here is not directed at him or he may be resistant to it. By directing the formulation to the wider peer group, G2 avoids a potential *face-threatening* situation for her and Fred where he disagrees. A further gist formulation is evident on line 30, which receives an unequivocal confirmation (l.31).

G2's reframing transforms the meaning of Fred's experience of his mother working when he was a child. In this way groupworkers gently navigate *face* and epistemic authority to contribute to the construction of a new narrative meaning relevant to the aims of the programme, e.g. reduce risk, prosocial modelling, promote desistance. Interestingly, in groupwork these formulations may not just provide a reinterpretation of meaning for the individual client to assess, but also for the rest of the group to assess and engage with. Formulations here can work to signal and promote what is a more institutionally, and by proxy socially, desirable or prosocial perspective to have (Heritage, 2005; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014). As such formulation is one conversational resource used to demonstrate prosocial modelling and this cue can then influence the ongoing talk of other group members. In this instance, as shown below, G2's interpretation of Fred's mother as working to

provide for her family is echoed shortly afterwards ('trying to pay the bills', ll.47-49) by another group member, Dale.

Extract 10 (continued):

[16 lines omitted]

47 Dale did did you see your mum go through a lot of problems
48 herself obviously working all the time trying to pay
49 bills

Constructing a narrative

Co-constructing the meaning of clients' experiences is core to the business of the MF: MC groupwork programme. Using their professional expertise, groupworkers apply knowledge to, categorise and see what is significant in clients' descriptions of their experiences (Goodwin, 1994; Schegloff, 1979). This allows them to formulate clients' preceding talk in a programme relevant way where, as shown previously, groupworkers offer suggestions as to how clients can or should narrate their experiences, steering them towards what aspects to focus on and what meaning to apply. Extract 11 below demonstrates a groupworker using formulation, through extending a client's turn, to co-construct the meaning of a client's experience. Importantly, this shows even where groupworkers' formulations appear uncontentious they can be a source of interactional trouble. In this extract Dave is giving an update at the start of the session on his recent experience of running into an old team mate at a recent sports competition. This old team mate is aware of Dave's offending, however Dave hasn't seen him since being convicted of sexual offending.

Extract 11

Group C: Session 2: [V1: 08.53]

- 1 Dave which was good for more than just one positive was my
2 heart sunk when I went in and one- my old team mates
3 from my team before I got sentenced was actually my
4 pairs partner the guy I spent all my time with and I
5 haven't heard from him since my heart sunk but when
6 there was like a hundred people the(h)re and I thought
7 I'm not going to let him have a go
- 9 G3 mh hmm↑
- 10 Dave so I sort of went over to the bar right beside him I
11 thought I cannae avoid him all night
- 12 G3 yeah.
- 13 Dave and I was that nervous I actually dropped my phon(h)e
- 14 G3 ɛrig(h)htɛ
- 15 Dave and he picked it up and said oh hiya Dave and then
16 just started talking away and that
- 17 G3 ok ((nodding))
- 18 Dave and he didnae mention what had happened like just
19 sitting talking about the ((sport)) and how I was
20 getting on
- 21 G3 good so how did you feel about that
- 22 Dave pretty well
- 23 G3 hmm ((nodding))
- 24 Dave cause that's two occasions my heart sunk and I've just
25 felt worse right away and it's
26 [been positive on both occasions
- 27 G3 [((nodding))
28 and actually you were talking about you know whether
29 or not you should avoid these sorts of competitions
- 30 Dave ((nodding))
- 31 G3 because you might bump into [people
- 32 Dave [yeah ((nodding))
- 33 G3 =and then you know this occasion where actually
34 probably the thing you were fearing the most has
35 happened
- 36 Dave Yeah
- 37 G3 and nothing negatives [come of it

38 Dave [well I always thought
39 to myself if I did bump into him he's a lovely guy
40 G3 ((nodding))
41 Dave so I'm going (keep on seeing him) but when (.) you
42 [dinnae ken peoples
43 G3 [it's in the back of your mind
44 Dave yeah
45 G3 yeah absolutely

In telling his story, Dave uses the common idiom 'my heart sunk' (ll.2, 5, 24) to communicate his feelings of sadness and dismay at seeing his old teammate, as well as noting his nervousness (l.13) in approaching this person. We can see G3 aligning with Dave's action of storytelling (ll.9, 12) and affiliating with the humour in the description of his stance (l.14). The culmination of the story on lines 15 to 20 is that the interaction was, contrary to Dave's concerns, unremarkable. Following this, at line 21, G3 could respond with an empathic reflection. Instead, after the assessment token 'good', she asks a version of commonly used ancillary question, 'so how did you feel', which as previously outlined is a form of empathic response (Heritage, 2011). Dave's feelings are oriented to as the relevant topic, making them 'therapizable' above other possible options (Antaki et al., 2005: 634). This elicits an elaborated response from Dave (ll.22, 24-26), noting two unexpected positive experiences. Through using 'and' to begin her turn at line 28 G3 ties her talk to Dave's, extending it as though she is completing his thought in his preceding turn (Vehviläinen, 2003). Groupworkers here often extend clients' turns, using conjunctions such as 'and', 'but', 'although', 'or'. This was evident in every session. Extending the client's turn in this way can enable an apparently seamless, intersubjective co-construction of the story of the client's experience, where the contributions from the groupworker steer the story along, incorporating institutionally relevant aspects. Vehviläinen (2003) noted, in psychotherapy, this type of extension is used to bring up connections, parallels or juxtapositions between the client's talk and the professional's interpretation. Collaboratively completing clients' sentences, groupworkers also demonstrate empathy in showing

they are hearing and understanding the client's story (Sacks, 1995). This demonstration of hearing and understanding is further evident as G3 refers directly ('you were talking about', ll.28-29) to Dave's previous expression of concerns about attending these competitions. This grounding in Dave's previous talk strengthens G3's formulation, making it more difficult to reject.

G3 grounds her formulation in Dave's previous speech, both immediate and from a previous session, empathises in reflecting his mental state ('you were fearing the most', l.34) but also moderates her epistemic access to Dave's experience ('you know', 'probably', ll.33, 34) as she links the general ('these sorts of competitions', l.29) to the specific ('this occasion', l.33). Dave initially agrees with G3's formulation (ll.30, 32, 36). As groupworkers' extended turns appear to flow directly from the client's talk, as though the groupworker is talking from 'within' the client's experience (Vehviläinen, 2003), they may be particularly difficult to reject. However, clients can resist them. On line 38 Dave gives a *well*-prefaced 'my side' response (Heritage, 2015) rather than an unambiguous confirmation. A 'my side' response is one where the person speaks from what they know, and is knowable to them relative to the other people in the interaction (Pomerantz, 1980). Heritage (2015) noted *well*-prefaced my side responses generally indicated agreement between the speakers, where the second speaker uses their story to corroborate the first speaker, as noted previously (see extract 7(b)) in relation to 'second stories' as a display of empathy. In the position of responding to a formulation, *well*-prefaced my side responses can be used by clients instead of clear confirmation or rejection, but as a resistance to the explicit or implicit meaning in groupworkers' formulations. Considering the fundamental question in conversation analysis 'why that now?' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), what does Dave's response do here? He claims primary epistemic rights to assess his old team mate as being a lovely person (ll.38-39). This highlights the character of this particular person is relevant to this positive experience, as opposed to people in general where the reaction could be assumed to be negative. This resists a possible implication in G3's formulation that

Dave's general fears of the consequences of bumping into people at these competitions were unwarranted, evidenced by this specific occasion. This implication is *face-threatening* and as such Dave's response serves to justify his general fears (ll.41-42), a stance that G3 quickly, firmly and collaboratively affiliates with (ll.43, 45). G3's formulation, as an extension of Dave's talk, which initially appears as non-confrontational and non-contentious then presented some inadvertent trouble in managing *face*.

Overall the groupworkers use formulations regularly in the sessions of the MF: MC programme, i.e. there are multiple instances of formulation in all 12 sessions I viewed. Formulations here can demonstrate empathy when they reflect clients' mental or emotional states, reframe the meaning of clients' talk and co-construct clients' narratives. In doing so they transform clients' talk, making it relevant to the programmes aims and agenda. Formulations can also communicate to the client that the groupworker is listening to and understands them (Antaki, 2008; Voutilainen & Peräkylä, 2014). However, the groupworkers can risk their formulations being rejected where they transform clients' talk too drastically or the clients do not want to engage with the embedded institutional agenda (Muntigl & Horvath, 2014). Attending to issues of *face*, epistemic authority and creating opportunities for relevant empathic moments encourages engagement with the action of a formulation, as clients' stance and personhood are oriented to and incorporated.

Summary

Warmth, empathy and respect are noted as key practice skills for building effective working relationships in criminal justice social work, necessary for reducing reoffending and promoting desistance (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; McNeill et al., 2005). In this chapter I have proposed that these skills are necessary for building working relationships as they are features and

components of the actions of managing *face*, negotiating epistemic rights and creating empathic moments in interaction. These actions are essential to maintain cooperation and solidarity in interaction, which in turn strengthens social relations. Managing *face* means making efforts to preserve both your own and the other person's autonomy and self-image in the interaction, saving you both embarrassment (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). By attending to issues of *face*, groupworkers demonstrate both value for and acceptance of the individual in the interaction, beyond their offending behaviour. Acceptance and support are linked to demonstrating warmth (Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Furthermore, this aligns with the ethos of Braithwaite's (1989) reintegrative shaming, the desistance paradigm (Maruna, 2001; Ward & Maruna, 2007), and Marshall and colleagues' (2003) outline of respect in relation to treatment of people who have committed sexual offences, where the person's self and autonomy is valued while their offending behaviour is censured.

Epistemic authority refers to a person's rights and access to knowledge, where people are afforded privileged access to their own experiences, thoughts, feelings etcetera (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). That is, we don't generally tell people what they are thinking or feeling. However, in this setting groupworkers also have rights to expert and deontic knowledge, due to their institutional status (Heritage, 2005; Voutilainen & Peräkylä, 2014a), and as such can give different interpretations of clients' experiences, thoughts or feelings. In delicately negotiating this tension, groupworkers convey they respect and value clients' thoughts, rights and wishes, e.g. by making suggestions rather than assessments, or acknowledging clients' stance. This action reflects Raynor and colleagues' (2014) outline of respect, where practitioners should not be dismissive or rude, and they should listen to the client. Acknowledgment of clients' stance also demonstrates understanding, which Marshall and colleagues (2003) link to the process variable of respect and empathy.

Finally, groupworkers make space for clients to tell their stories in interaction, i.e. 'doing opening', to which they can demonstrate empathy by showing their understanding of and support for the clients' displayed stance towards their experiences. This creates an empathic moment, achieving communion in the interaction (Buchholz, 2014; Heritage, 2011). Notwithstanding the lack of clarity in criminological literature regarding what empathy is, demonstrating understanding of clients' experiences is considered central to building effective working relationships with people who have offended generally and sexually (Bonta et al., 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Marshall et al., 2002). Through withholding or using conversational contributions, i.e. alignment and affiliation, at their turn in the sequence, groupworkers direct clients' talk in an institutionally relevant and appropriate way, cutting off possibly anti-social stories and promoting prosocial or self-reflective ones.

The asymmetry of the institutional relationship means it is largely incumbent on the groupworkers to manage issues of *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion in interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992a). This is because they are primarily the ones doing the initiating action, e.g. asking the questions, inviting others to speak, evaluating, summarising. Reflecting this responsibility, previous criminological research has highlighted that successful engagement in supervision relies on the relationship building skills of the professional, rather than the client (Rex, 1999), although noncompliance with supervision is often attributed to client characteristics (Sturgess et al., 2015). I have outlined some of the conversational resources the groupworkers in this study used to manage these issues and build engagement: question design, alignment, affiliation, and formulation. These resources have been identified in previous interactional research, outlined above, as evident in building engagement and working relationships in institutional settings. They are reliant on the structures of interaction: turn-taking, sequence organisation, turn design, and preference (as outlined in chapter 2).

Groupworkers' questions are designed to mitigate any possible threats to *face* and demonstrate respect for the clients' epistemic domain. However, they are also designed to be relevant to the institutional aims, in eliciting and directing the client's story. Furthermore, they can be used to encourage group cohesion and participation, promoting 'moments of empathic communion' between clients (Heritage, 2011: 160). Through alignment and affiliation, groupworkers then encourage clients' stories and can demonstrate their understanding of and relatedness to the client's experience. In this way groupworkers show empathy, drawing from a range of possible empathic responses indicating different strengths of support, e.g. highly empathic response cries ('wow') to the less empathic form of asking a related question. These actions create space for clients to tell their experiences, which is a way of demonstrating warmth in conveying acceptance and support for their personhood. Finally, they demonstrate respect for clients' *face* in affirming their actions and stance in the moment-by-moment talk.

Formulation, a way of sensemaking in interaction that promotes cooperation and solidarity, is a common way the groupworkers make clients' talk relevant to the aims of the programme and a central way in which they articulate a client's mental or emotional stance to demonstrate an empathic understanding. Furthermore, it allows the groupworker to reframe or specify something in the client's talk, which can shed a different light on the client's experience, potentially transforming the stance towards that experience, or make an aspect of client's talk relevant to intervention. Using formulation groupworkers then make shifts to the meaning of the client's narrative, influencing how it is shaped in the ongoing interaction. These transformations range from subtle to blatant and can jeopardise the ongoing cooperation in overstepping the mark and challenging the client's self-presentation. Moreover, transforming the client's talk too much can undermine the accuracy of the groupworker's understanding and the congruence in the interaction, as such formulations are delicately designed to maximise agreement. Importantly, formulations are available to the respective client to confirm or deny. Although

formulations strongly prefer confirmation, the clients have some say over the construction and direction of their narrative as they can disagree without losing *face*, demonstrating value and respect for their rights, feelings and wishes.

The skills, actions and resources outlined here all promote cooperation and solidarity in everyday and institutional interactions, which builds positive social relationships. In this way demonstrations of warmth, empathy and respect can be understood as promoting engagement in the moment-by-moment sequence of talk as *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion are negotiated. This is different from previous criminological research on effective working relationships, where empathy, warmth and respect appear to be positioned as something the practitioner does to the client, or are qualities inherent to the practitioner. Instead these skills are produced and managed in the talk-in-interaction between the practitioners and clients, where due to the asymmetry of the relationship and subsequent sequential positioning of the interlocutors, it is mainly incumbent on the groupworker to attend to *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion in the unfolding interaction. In this chapter I have demonstrated how this engagement is practically and locally achieved, with a focus on the actions of the groupworkers, through the conversational resources outlined above. They are used to manage the potential interactional conflict in this context, where the narratives and stance of clients may be at odds with the institutional narrative, and the groupworkers' stance. The groupworker then must balance these tensions, maintaining clients' engagement whilst also upholding their deontic and expert rights to determine what is morally and institutionally 'right'. This tension has been previously highlighted (Waldram, 2007; Ware & Mann, 2012).

In the next two empirical chapters I will describe how, using these conversational tools of engagement, groupworkers negotiate possible tensions to endeavour to co-construct client narratives which incorporate features of desistance identities and

awareness of risk factors. I will also highlight that when care isn't taken to preserve face, manage epistemic authority and enable empathic moments there is interactional trouble that threatens the ongoing cooperation.

Ch. 4: Co-constructing desistance identities

As discussed in chapter 1, the process of desistance is proposed to involve a change in narrative identity (Maruna & Farrall, 2004; McNeill et al., 2005), where people who have offended develop a coherent and credible self-story to account for their checkered pasts in a way that enables them to present a new, reformed identity (Maruna, 2001). Laws and Ward (2011) propose that people who have committed sexual offences also develop and refine a new narrative identity for themselves. Narrative identity refers to the way people form their identity through crafting stories about their life, synthesizing their past experiences with their current situation and future goals to give coherence to their life story (Maruna, 2015; McAdams & McLean, 2013; Vaughan, 2007; Ward & Marshall, 2007). These narratives build over time and are shaped by repeated interactions with others, through which the narrative is edited and refined. This is an active and interactive process which is both self-constituted and impacted by wider social and discursive influences (McAdams & McLean, 2013). As Ward and Marshall (2007: 289) note ‘a narrative identity creates meaning out of the disparate aspects of people’s lives and by so doing tells them how to live and who they fundamentally are’. Narrative identity construction is an ongoing, dynamic and active social process.

In chapters 1 and 2, I highlighted that previous criminological research on desistance has primarily examined people’s narratives devoid of the interactional context in which they are told, usually in research interviews. However, this previous research also often notes narrative identities emerge from the individual’s interaction with their social and relational environment. This research has, as such, outlined a more macro-level analysis of narratives, e.g. ‘addiction narrative’, ‘desistance narrative’, rather than the fine grained detail of how identity is inferred, attributed, negotiated and resisted during a person’s story-telling, in interaction in that particular setting (Benwell & Stokoe, 2016). As demonstrated in the previous

chapter, the conversational contributions of the listener direct and shape the speaker's story. Narrative identity is then performed and constructed in the talk-in-interaction.

In the sessions of the MF: MC programme clients are invited to tell their stories, and the meanings of these stories are negotiated, edited, debated and sculpted within the group interaction. It is an interactional site where clients' identities and life stories can be reconstituted, contributing to the formation, shaping or reinforcement of desistance narratives and non-offending identities. However, this process is likely to be marked with ambiguity and ambivalence, as people manage interactional, moral and wider practical dilemmas and challenges (Kirkwood, 2016; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016; Sampson & Laub, 2003). In this chapter, I will outline how desistance narratives are co-constructed in the talk-in-interaction between groupworkers and clients during the MF: MC groupwork sessions. To analyse desistance narratives in the talk-in-interaction, I coded my data initially for instances where there was implicit or explicit talk about offending or antisocial behaviour, and categories and features of identity, e.g. father, good person, teenager, workaholic, including activities and interests as defining characteristics. Ward and Marshall (2007) note we construct who we are by the interests and activities we pursue. Previous criminological research on desistance, particularly the seminal work of Maruna (2001, 2004), as outlined in chapter 1, has highlighted three features in the narratives of people desisting from offending behaviour: offending behaviour is characterised as situational, a positive 'true self' is established, and meaning in life or generativity is portrayed as a goal or redemptive activity. Drawing from this research, I further coded my data for instances where offending behaviour was positioned as situational, a 'core self' as separate to offending behaviour was described and generative pursuits, as identity features, e.g. volunteering, were discussed. From this coding, I analysed how these topics and features were sequentially and locally produced in the interactions, as outlined in chapter 2. This sequential analysis enabled me to group the actions of the talk-in-

interaction in more detail, as presented in this chapter. As I will demonstrate, this sequential analysis highlights the relational process through which narratives consistent with desistance are built up in interaction.

Importantly, discursive psychology and CA are not interested in determining the veracity of individuals' narratives but in identifying what the components of the narrative might be designed to achieve in the interaction and how the participants orient to them (Auburn, 2010). Here I am interested in how the clients and groupworkers build up identity and narrative in their talk, in a way consistent with the post hoc, perhaps more polished, desistance narratives found in research interviews. To demonstrate this, in this chapter I will outline how the elements previously noted as consistent with narratives of people desisting from offending behaviour are constructed and function in the talk-in-interaction to build desistance narratives: i.e., characterising offending behaviour as situational, establishing a 'true self', and pursuing meaning in life or generativity.

Offending behaviour as situational

As outlined in chapter 1, an identified characteristic of the narratives of those desisting from offending, both general (Maruna, 2004) and sexual (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Kras & Blasko, 2016; McAlinden et al., 2016), is positioning offending behaviour as due to situational factors, which are external, unstable and specific. Drawing parallels with social psychological literature on attributions, Maruna (2001, 2004) highlighted that people who desist from offending attribute positive life events to more internal, stable, global causes (i.e. I'm a good person) and negative events, including offending, as external, unstable and specific (i.e. that was out of character for me). The opposite is considered applicable to those who persist with offending. The implication of previous research is that such attributions originate in the speaker, rather than through interaction with others in specific contexts. However, for example, a young person accused of assault may give a very

different account speaking to their friend than to the police or their parents. Furthermore, as highlighted in chapter 2, the person who is being told the 'story' also influences its shape and focus, through their status, the context and the design of their questions and responses (Drew, 2012).

In the interactions during the MF: MC groupwork sessions, both clients and groupworkers contributed to constructing clients' offending behaviour as attributable to situational factors. I will outline three ways this is evident: eliciting situational accounts, managing excuse-making, and use of passive reference. In attributing offending behaviour to situational factors, the client's self is, by implication, positioned as separate to the external, unstable and specific offending behaviour; the sin is separated from the sinner.

Eliciting situational accounts

Extract 12 highlights the possible impact of very subtle shifts in language use in encouraging a situational account for offending and separating the self from the behaviour. This extract is during an exercise where Ben is asked to reflect on the links between his life experiences and his offending behaviour.

Extract 12:

Group A: Session 2: [V4: 40.03]

1 G2: We've got to know you a bit it. Sounds like Ethan's
2 kind of drilling it down a wee bit here though.
3 What's- I mean what's relevant cause this is not just
4 about saying what was your childhood like it's like-
5 it's about working out what's relevant to kind of
6 >how you- how you-< <why you're here
7 [°somehow°>

8 Dale: [what what made you basically offend
9 Ethan: because
10 Dale: OR be in a situation that [you got done for-
11 Ben: [eh:::
12 Dale: you got charged as an offender
13 Ethan: yeah because you are an intelligent person and you've
14 got a good head on your shoulders
15 Ben: hmm hmm

G2's question, which is asking 'what's relevant' to Ben being 'here' on a court mandated groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending (ll.1-7), highlights the institutional business at hand of requesting a narrative account to which Ben has access. In completing this question G2 avoids the interrogative 'how' instead repairing to 'why' (l.6). What does this repair achieve? 'How' questions are commonly answered by describing the means by which something occurs (Hayano, 2012); here, this might imply an expectation that Ben provide the formal legally recorded account of his offence (Waldram, 2007). 'Why' questions can present a more challenging stance, for instance suggesting the situation does not accord with common sense, requiring respondents to justify their behaviour, with related social difficulties for the interaction (Bolden & Robinson, 2011). In this case, such a suggestion may serve to implicitly separate Ben from his behaviour, i.e. that he offended does not accord with who he seems to be. Here Ben is invited to provide an evaluative account that explains and perhaps justifies his 'being here' (i.e., why he offended). This action acknowledges Ben's epistemic rights to his experience, albeit constrained by the expectations of the context to tell a certain type of account.

Furthermore, stating 'why you're here' (l.6), rather than using more explicit statements (e.g., 'why you committed a sexual offence'), moderates the challenging tone and presupposition of the question by drawing on the group's shared understanding of the 'problem'. G2 appears to be treating the topic as sensitive in hedging her questions ('what's relevant to kind of' l.5), and especially as she further softens her statement through the utterance 'somehow' (l.7), which is evident in the turn's prosody as she speaks more slowly and quietly. The delicate wording and tone of G2's question moderates *face* threats in both the directiveness of her question and implication of labelling Ben a 'sex offender'. Moreover, in demonstrating a preparatory stance towards the topic as being sensitive, she is laying the ground work for an empathic moment. That is, by projecting a presumption this is a sensitive topic, G2 is demonstrating an understanding of Ben's potential feelings before he has displayed his stance in this interaction, a presumption which then places interactional pressure on Ben and others to cooperate with G2's stance. 'Somehow' (l.7) also implies a lack of agency, as though Ben being here, in a group for addressing sexual offending, is by chance. As such, the design and the delivery of the groupworker's question may make way for an account that focusses on situational factors and, due to her institutional status as a groupworker, she has some rights in determining what type of contribution is allowable (Heritage, 2005).

As conversation analysis is primarily concerned with what the conversation participants do in the interaction, and not the actions the analyst ascribes to them, it is essential to see how the next speaker treats the prior speaker's utterance; what sense are the participants making of each other's talk (Edwards, 2004)? Here Dale's development of G2's question evidences that the facilitator's request is heard as permitting, if not encouraging, a situational account. He makes the topic explicit (l.8), re-formulating the question in a manner which downplays Ben's agency in offending and highlights the situational: 'what made you basically offend' (l.8), 'or

be in a situation that you got done for-' (l.10), 'you got charged as an offender' (l.12). Line 8 can be seen to request a situational cause for offending: something that *made* Ben offend. However, it is ambiguous; for example, Ben could disclose he is sexually attracted to children, which would be a more stable, internal attribute. By re-formulating this to 'be in a situation' (l.10), the request for a situational account is made explicit. Finally, Dale's self-correction from line 10 ('you got done for-') to line 12 ('you got charged as') reduces agency and accountability for committing a sexual offence. Both statements place Ben as a passive actor in his arrest and subsequent conviction, which distances him from being held accountable. Getting charged as an 'offender' rather than *being* an 'offender' or committing an offence also allows deniability of the characteristics and predicates of the category of 'offender'. Ben is not being labelled as a 'sexual offender', a category which implies stable, internal traits of deviance and intractability (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007).

Finally, Ethan's dispositional description of Ben as intelligent with a 'good head' (ll.13-14) juxtaposes Ben's positive character with his offending behaviour, further setting him apart from the category of 'offender' and emphasising the transience of the offending behaviour. This positions Ben's offending behaviour as an aberration that deserves an explanation separate from 'who he is'. These positive attributes afforded to Ben echo the findings from Maruna's (2001) seminal study, where people desisting from offending describe themselves as 'better than some common criminal' and apply their positive traits to their successful desistance. How the request for Ben's account of 'why [he's] here' is constructed between the groupworker and the other clients invites a situational account for his offending behaviour and moreover separates the offending behaviour from Ben's self. As such, normative excuse-making behaviour is enabled, alongside the maintenance or development of a prosocial narrative identity, as Ben is positioned as someone 'who should know better'.

Managing excuse-making

However, giving situational accounts or making excuses for misdeeds is highly contentious within the criminal justice context, although it is considered normal and healthy behaviour outwith it (Maruna & Copes, 2005; Maruna & Mann, 2006). People who have offended are expected to accept full, unequivocal responsibility for their offences, particularly in the case of sexual offending behaviour (Kemshall, 2003; Kras & Blasko, 2016; Waldram, 2007, 2010). Excuse-making in criminal justice settings is then marked as evidence of denial, justification and minimisation, increasing risk of reoffending and to be targeted in intervention (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Maruna & Mann, 2006), despite a lack of evidence (Ware & Mann, 2012). In this study clients clearly oriented to the potential trouble in attributing their offending behaviour to external, unstable or situational causes, most of the time. (I identified only one instance where a client did not mitigate or moderate his denial of his offending behaviour.)

For example, in extract 13 Brian balances his accountability for his offending as he also attributes this to an external, unstable and specific cause. In this exercise he is describing an unhelpful thinking style he has noted in his homework diary as relevant to how he was thinking over the Christmas period in relation to buying his son's Christmas present (this extract follows on from extract 9 in chapter 3). As noted in chapter 1, the concept of unhelpful thinking styles is central to the MF: MC programme, drawn primarily from cognitive behavioural techniques and schema therapy (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a). Clients were provided with a sheet of paper outlining ten common unhelpful thinking styles (Appendix D) and asked to identify patterns of thinking which may have negatively impacted their lives. Brian has identified 'personalisation' which is explained as blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault, i.e. 'this is all my fault'.

Extract 13:

Group B: Session 1: [V2: 28.36]

- 1 Brian Oh yeah but see personalisation. This is all my fault. It
2 is all my fault (.) I know it's an unhelpful thinking style
3 but in my head everything- the reason I'm sitting here and
4 facing a court case coming up I'm on bail. It is my fault.
5 You could say cause I never went to the doctors when my dad
6 died originally which my doctor like (tschk) and I'd
7 (unclear) again five years down the line
8 G1: hmm
9 Brian but it's still my fault. I had a problem I didn't seek help
10 for
11 G5: That may well be true Brian but I suppose the issue is that
12 those thoughts were coming to mind about something that was
13 very kind of specific
14 Brian hmm

Brian challenges the explanation of the unhelpful thinking style of 'personalisation', highlighting his circumstances are unequivocally his fault, through his emphasis and legitimising use of an extreme case formulation ('all', l.1) (Pomerantz, 1986), implying they are a consequence of his offending behaviour (ll. 1-4). In this way he has positioned himself as taking full responsibility for his offending behaviour and the consequences ('the reason I'm sitting here and facing a court case coming up I'm on bail. It is my fault', l.3-4). However, Brian then moves to attribute his offending behaviour to his father's death and his grief following this (ll.4-7).

Brian navigates the risk of being treated as mitigating his responsibility. The use of 'you could say' at line 4 as a way of hedging, treats this account as potentially delicate and is a bid for support. Brian's change in footing or stance here protects him from being seen to be justifying his behaviour, which would potentially contradict the institutionally or societally acceptable narrative. Through his active positioning - 'I never went to the doctors' (l. 5) - Brian maintains accountability,

whilst also accounting for his offending as a result of his father's death ('when my dad died originally', l.5), and not due to stable, internal causes, e.g. deviant sexual interest, general emotional regulation deficits. Moreover, by implying his doctor agrees with or made this assessment Brian gives his account some professional legitimacy (ll.5-6). Brian's turn is designed to persuade the hearer to align and affiliate with his story. The groupworker aligns with Brian's action of story-telling ('hmm', l.8), prompting Brian to continue, but withholds clear affiliation or support. As outlined in chapter 3, aligning actions, such as 'hmm', demonstrate the person is listening to the speaker, and respects their action of storytelling. They do not indicate the listener understands or supports the speaker's stance.

In the absence of affiliation, Brian has a number of different interactional options available to him, for example he could further seek this support (as per extract 7a, chapter 3), e.g. by upgrading or talking more persuasively about the impact of his father's death or his doctor's assessment, or he could return to safer ground aligning with the expectations of the criminal justice agenda to take responsibility for his offending behaviour. On lines 9 and 10 he does both, clarifying his culpability ('but it's still my fault', l.9), and restating his offending was a result of the situational, unstable and external event of his father's death and his lack of appropriate action around this ('I had a problem I didn't seek help for', l.9). In his story, Brian's identity is someone who accepts responsibility for his offending behaviour and the consequences, but in a story where this behaviour was precipitated by the unique event of his father's death rather than for example predisposed by some internal, stable trait. A combination of responsibility taking and externalisation of responsibility, such as Brian's story suggests, is proposed to be normative and something people who are desisting from offending do (Kras & Blasko, 2016). Such accounts demonstrate the delicate navigation of accountability at the interface between the institutional, formal narrative and the personal, autobiographical narrative (Waldram, 2007).

Like Brian, clients in the MF: MC groupwork sessions did delicate discursive work to avoid being treated as making excuses or justifications, whilst also accounting for their behaviour as attributable to situational factors. In extract 13, G5 does not challenge the veracity of Brian's account or his narrative identity within that, although it is also not fully supported ('may well be true', l.11), maintaining and respecting Brian's epistemic authority over his experience. Instead the groupworker goes onto formulate Brian's account, making it relevant to the institutional task at hand, looking at patterns of thinking that are maladaptive (only the beginning of this formulation is shown; ll.11-13). Again, as per chapter 3, softening the threat to *face* and managing epistemic authority, this is done in a delicate way by mitigating the implied challenge ('I suppose', l.11) and hedging ('kind of'). Clients providing accounts for their offending, or other problematic behaviour, which could be interpreted as denial, minimisation and justification, are treated delicately by both clients and groupworkers in interaction, where direct confrontation is avoided. This maintains cooperation in the interaction and allows the talk to be made relevant to the aims of the programme. Moreover, this approach reflects that of 'rolling with resistance' advocated for in motivational interviewing and criminal justice social work (Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012).

Passive voice

A common way for clients in the groupwork sessions to position their offending behaviour as situational was through using the passive voice, i.e. 'it just happened', similar to Maruna's (2001) observation. This also serves to separate the offending behaviour from the person. Again, by using the passive voice, clients risk being seen to be minimising their offending behaviours, which could be problematic (Waldram, 2007; Ware & Mann, 2012). Here delicate discursive work enables clients to place the offending behaviour as external to the self without being censured for minimising their offences, as demonstrated in Extract 14 below. This extract is taken from a conversation about Craig's plans to disclose his offending history to his current girlfriend, a requirement of his licence conditions.

Extract 14:

Group C: Session 1: [V5: 03.26]

1 Craig and I and I think the fact which I'm not (.) agreeing
2 and I'm not saying that it's any worse or any less
3 than anything else
4 G4 uh hmm
5 Craig but the fact that like I was fourteen fifteen at the
6 time
7 G4 uh hmm I remember you saying
8 Craig I don't know if that would be
9 G4 ((clear throat))
10 Craig like eh more like accepting of it or if it would be
11 worse the fact that
12 G4 hmm
13 Craig she's got a seventeen-year-old son which (.) she
14 didn't (unclear) thinking well when he was like
15 fourteen would he have made that same mistake how can
16 [he make that mistake=
17 G4 [hmm
18 Craig =or should she she could look at it people make
19 mistakes I don't know↑ (.) but I've (2)
20 G4 right eh certainly what I'm getting out- eh a sense
21 of here Craig is that (1) your relationship is very
22 important for [you
23 Craig [yeah
24 G4: you you have a long- longer term view of [this
25 Craigf: [yeah yeah]

Through narrative reflexivity, that is providing a here and now commentary within the course of the narrative (Auburn, 2005), Craig manages the possibility of being seen to minimise his offences: 'which I'm not agreeing and I'm not saying that it's any worse or less than anything else' (ll.1-3). He then goes on to place his offending as specific to a time in his life as a teenager (l.5), providing temporal distance between his past and present. G4 aligns and affiliates with Craig's narrative stance at line 7, 'I remember you saying', encouraging the direction of his story and

providing institutional reinforcement to an account of his offending behaviour that is situational and specific to his teenage years (Heritage, 2005). Reference to the category of teenager also evokes the stereotypes and predicates of this category, i.e. impulsive, irresponsible, risk taking and perhaps importantly, a stage which one grows out of.

Craig's passive use of the word 'it' (l.10) (Maruna, 2001) and his reference to his offending as a 'mistake' (ll.15, 16, 19) further separates the behaviour from the self, implying it was an occasion of error, not intentional, and as such situational, external and specific. By referring to his girlfriend's possible evaluation ('she could look at it people make mistakes', ll.18-19), Craig further mitigates against being assessed as minimising his offences as he reports her possible reaction rather than his beliefs. This would allow him to plausibly defend against any accusations of minimising. Craig's lengthy and tentative construction of his offending behaviour is provided in a series of hedged explanations which pursues support from the groupworkers or other group members to accept this narrative account. His account is not challenged or problematized by the groupworker, or other group members. G4's minimal tokens (e.g., 'hmm', ll.12 & 17) align with Craig's account encouraging him to continue his story although not explicitly endorsing or affiliating with it (Stivers, 2008). Instead she formulates Craig's stance towards his relationship demonstrating empathy and making this aspect relevant (ll.20-22, 24), an assessment Craig confirms (ll. 23, 25). Craig's *face* and the groupworker's *face* are both maintained. In doing such delicate discursive work, as in extracts 12 and 13, clients manage their presentation as accountable whilst also attributing causes to external factors. Similarly, Kras and Blasko (2016) noted a mix of responsibility taking and attribution of responsibility to external factors in the post hoc explanations of sexual offending from the men desisting from offending in their study.

However, these accounts are not merely given and received, but they are being tentatively presented for evaluation and adaptation by the group, where the contributions from groupworkers and other group members also serve to manage the accountability in the person's story. For example, as in extract 14, Frank in extract 15 below uses the passive voice in referring to his offending behaviour. Here, Frank, who has recently joined the community-based group following release from prison, is outlining his goals for the programme under the Good Lives Model domains, specifically here Knowledge: Learning and Knowing.

Extract 15:

Group B: Session 1: [V4: 03.44]

- 1 Frank eh knowledge, learning and knowing em achieving. To
2 learn from my mistakes a better understanding and how
3 to face up to group eh company (.) .hh
4 (15) ((G1 writing))
5 Frank Learn from my mistakes
6 (4)
7 G1 Better understanding of, So wh-wh-what what do you
8 mean by learning from your mistakes?
9 Frank Well learning from my past. (.) Mistakes I've made.
10 °My offending°.
11 (5)
12 How it come to be .hh ((small shrug)) (.) .hh
13 G5 Because Frank you were saying jus:: at the break just
14 before coming into this that actually (.) that's what
15 keeps you going at the moment is a real motivator for
16 you is one thing you've
17 Frank yeh=
18 G5 =a much better understanding of
19 Frank Why it all come to that
20 (3)
21 G5 So a better understanding of why you came to offend,

Like Craig in extract 14, Frank refers here to his offending behaviour as ‘mistakes’ (l.2, l.5, l.9), again with the implication his offending behaviours were errors, situational and specific. G1’s request for clarification – ‘what do you mean learning from your mistakes’ (ll.7-8) – calls for Frank to be explicit. However, it is ambiguous whether G1 has requested clarification of the meaning of ‘learning’ or ‘mistakes’. Frank treats the object of doubt as the ‘mistakes’, thrice reformulating this: ‘learn from my past’; ‘mistakes I’ve made’; ‘°my offending°’ (ll.9-10). Frank actively references his offending through use of the possessive pronoun ‘my’, although it is whispered. Whispering can indicate upset in the speaker, where previous research on whispering in interactions on child protection helplines notes its association with crying (Hepburn, 2004). Frank’s reformulations and his non-lexical behaviour, i.e. pausing, heavy breaths, akin to a sigh, and a shrug, suggest his whisper indexes shame (Ruusuvuori, 2012). Frank here is, briefly, actively accountable for his offending behaviour; however, following a five second pause, he reverts to a passive account (‘how it come to be’, l.12), one he rehashes at line 19. Referring to offending behaviour as ‘it’ passively happening or arising, i.e. ‘come to be’, again serves to separate the offending from the person. It may also serve to manage shame, as posited by Farmer et al. (2016).

Frank’s account, which places his behaviour as external to himself through passive reference, is not directly challenged; however, it is modified by the groupworker through lexical substitution in his ‘so’ prefaced formulation on line 21. Lexical substitution is a technique noted in interactional research on psychotherapy: it allows the therapist to express a contrary position in a non-confrontational way by replacing a referent in the previous talk (Rae, 2008), here it is the change from ‘it’ and ‘that’ (l.19) to ‘you’ and ‘offend’ (l.21). The ‘so’ preface, as per chapter 3, implies G5’s formulation comes directly from Frank’s account. G5’s modification manages to both align with Frank’s passive account and keep Frank accountable for his offending behaviours, through echoing Frank’s passive verb use, which continues to allow for a situational account, and using the pronoun ‘you’, which

places Frank as an active agent ('why you came to offend', l.20). As such the personal and institutional pursuits, and *faces*, are maintained. Frank's offending behaviour can be considered in terms of situational and external factors, rather than as a reflection of who he is, potentially facilitating the development of a desistance narrative. At the same time Frank is being held as accountable for his behaviour.

Furthermore, separating the behaviour from the person in the story but maintaining their accountability may encourage clients to express a narrative identity of being guilty rather than shameful, by distinguishing between being responsible for a bad act and being a bad person, respectively (Marshall et al., 2009; Proeve & Howells, 2002). Shame, or feeling badly about who you are, can be a hindrance to treatment (Marshall et al., 2009) and may increase risk of re-offending (Tangney et al., 2014). Positioning the offending behaviour as situational, due to specific, external and unstable factors, can implicitly separate it from a global, internal, and stable sense of the self as good. Practitioners can censure the person's behaviour and still accept them for who they are, demonstrating warmth (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Furthermore, clients can then be encouraged to take responsibility for their future actions rather than their past behaviours, which may be more supportive of future desistance (Maruna & Mann, 2006; Ware & Mann, 2012).

These examples demonstrate how offending behaviour can be discursively constructed in interaction as due to situational factors. Importantly, a number of discursive devices are used by both the clients and the groupworkers in order to maintain a balance between clients accounting for and being accountable for their offending behaviour, including hedging, passive reference, narrative reflexivity (Auburn, 2005), bids for support, and word selection. These actions also maintain cooperation and solidarity in the ongoing interaction, as insisting clients accept full, unmitigated responsibility will likely threaten their *face*, demonstrate disregard for

their epistemic authority and obstruct empathic moments. Furthermore, encouraging clients to accept full, unmitigated responsibility may potentially damage clients' ability to maintain a coherent and positive sense of self (Blagden et al., 2014). Instead, situational accounts of offending are not presented by clients to be merely accepted or rejected; they are interactionally negotiated, allowing the offending behaviour to be separated from the characterisation of the person. The person can then be characterised as having a positive 'core self' (such as Ben in Extract 12), a further feature noted in the stories of people desisting from offending.

'Core self'

Maruna (2001) also identified people who were desisting from general offending appeared to ascribe to conventional moral values and had related core beliefs that characterised their true self in their narratives. A similar presentation of having a positive 'core self' also appears to apply to those desisting from sexual offending, as they rejected the label of 'sex offender' separating their true self identities from the abhorrent sexual offending behaviour (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; McAlinden et al., 2016). The construction of a good and moral 'core self' juxtaposed with bad and immoral offending behaviour also highlights the temporary and external nature of the offending. Therefore, attributing offending behaviour to situational, external and unstable causes, and displaying an internal, stable and moral 'core self' are implicitly mutually constituting in interaction (Maruna & Copes, 2005). In all the MF:MC groupwork sessions there were multiple instances of a positive 'core self', as identified in Maruna's (2001) seminal work, being presented, performed, attributed and encouraged, where the essential goodness of the person was explicitly highlighted by groupworkers, other group members and clients.

Characterising a good person

Clients were explicitly encouraged by groupworkers and other group members to accept a narrative of having a good 'core self' separate from their offending behaviours, for example in extract 16 below, later in the same exercise as extract 15, where Frank is outlining his goals and hopes under the GLM primary good of 'Happiness' (see chapter 1 for the GLM goods). During the exercise, G1 takes notes on a flipchart, visible to the group, drawn from Frank's previously prepared statements and from comments by the other group members throughout the exercise. At two points in the extract G1 points towards writing on the flipchart to highlight his point (the writing was not visible to me).

Extract 16:

Group B: Session 1: [V4: 24.08]

- 1 Frank To look at myself in the mirror and say I am a good
person
- 2 (1)
- 3 G1 hmm
- 4 Frank (be happy then) where now I'm looking in the mirror
5 thinking °nah° not doing it for me
- 6 (3)
- 7 (that's what I get/ just full of guilt)
- 8 G1: So so your goal in terms of happiness what I'm
9 picking up from that is that (.) eh eh eh something
10 about (.) this ((points to writing on flipchart)) I
11 wonder if it's connecting to this again. You know you
12 want to tell yourself that (.) you're (.) and this
13 (.) ((points to writing on flipchart)) that you're
14 you're not someone who's defined by your offences
15 that Brian said you know that you're someone else (.)
16 you're a good person
- 17 Frank yeah °aye°

At line 1 Frank projects his future hope, which he compares to his current experience at lines 4 and 5, implying he considers himself a bad person due to his offending behaviour; thus, offering a global, general and negative assessment of his character. Orienting to this, G1 reformulates Frank's statement, drawing on comments written on the flipchart. He places the offending behaviour as part of Frank's history not the totality of it (ll.12-14). G1 explicitly proposes a separation of Frank's behaviour from his self and a rejection of being categorised as a 'sex offender' instead offering a global, moral 'core self' characterisation ('you're a good person', l.16). Frank agrees with this characterisation, albeit muted (l. 17). G1's formulation is strengthened from drawing on the group's contributions, referencing the flipchart and Brian's previous statement. Throughout G1's formulation the group were nodding along, socially ratifying this way of constructing Frank's narrative, to separate his offending behaviour from an enduring positive 'core self' as Maruna (2001) proposed people desisting from offending do.

The groupworker's orientation to Frank's negative self-characterisation in extract 16 echoes Kirkwood's (2016) observations of groupworkers, in a programme addressing domestic abuse related offending, orienting to clients' resistance or ambivalence towards prosocial identities. He noted the groupworkers encouraged positive change through highlighting positive aspects of self and allowing for narratives of change inherent in 'secondary desistance' (Maruna & Farrall, 2004). In the MF: MC groupwork sessions groupworkers, and other group members as in extract 12, also attributed desirable personal virtues to clients as building blocks for a positive 'core self' in the narrative identity. This was particularly prevalent as praise, for example in extract 17 below. This extract is following a verbal spat resultant from Ethan being asked why he had not yet registered with a GP, a homework task he had from the previous fortnight. Ethan has just apologised, explaining he felt vulnerable and put on the spot.

Extract 17:

Group A: Session 2: [V1: 29.26]

1 Dale: [((coughing))]
2 G2: [I think that shows a level of maturity though] shows
3 maturity as well that you can quite kind of quickly
4 you turned that around
5 G4: yes
6 Ethan: I have to don't I otherwise it'll just affect me for
7 the rest of (.) plus I don't mean it from the heart
8 G4: ((nodding))
9 G2: yeah
10 Ethan: eh I was just- I felt like ((recoils)) whoa whoa
11 [whoa
12 G2: [yeah
13 Ethan: sort of thing
14 G2: and you were able to say now that it makes you feel
15 vulnerable
16 Ethan: yeah
17 G2: it's not easy for a guy to say that
18 Ethan: hmm
19 G2: it's probably something that we're all frightened off
20 Fred: ((nodding))
21 Ethan: hmm ((nodding))
22 G2: we're all fearful of being vulnerable and showing our
23 vulnerabilities it says a lot- it takes a lot of
24 courage to be able to say that

In this extract G2's formulation attributes Ethan with maturity (l.2) or self-control in how he has managed the altercation, which G4 supports (l.8). This praise elicits an account from Ethan which, as is consistent with compliment responses (Pomerantz, 1978), downgrades his behaviour implying there was no choice (l.6) and qualifying this (l.7) in further explaining the reason for his heightened response (l.10).

Beginning with the conjunction 'and', which implies a direct extension of Ethan's talk, G2 returns to her approving formulation (ll.14-15) as she goes on to highlight the reasons her praise is deserved, drawing on gender stereotypes (l.17) and

common empathic experience (I.19). Ethan and Fred affirm G2's empathic formulation (II.20 & 21). Drawing on this common ground G2 offers further praise to Ethan for being courageous (II.22-24). Praise highlights the positive aspects of clients' behaviours, is used to note change and attributes desirable qualities to them, contributing to 'who they are' in their narrative. This action links to pro-social modelling and reinforcement, and rewardingness which have been linked to reduced recidivism in relation to general (Trotter, 2009) and sexual (Marshall et al., 2002) offending behaviours, respectively. However, praise, like compliments, appears tricky as it places conflicting sequential and moral constraints on people to respectively accept the praise and avoid self-praise, particularly in light of strong positive descriptors (Pomerantz, 1978), such as the attribution of personal virtues. Furthermore, it runs the risk of being treated as patronising. However, the public forum of the groupwork sessions also means the group can affirm the praise and attribution of virtues on behalf of the individual client, providing social support for a good 'core self' to be constructed as part of that client's narrative identity.

Issues characterising yourself as a good person

In the MF: MC groupwork sessions, clients generally did not explicitly self-characterise as moral or good and were more likely to do so implicitly by placing the offending behaviour as external to themselves. This is likely due to interactional constraints around self-praise, which is generally treated as problematic (Pomerantz, 1978). Furthermore, there is a moral and social constraint of self-ascribing morality, particularly in the context of a groupwork programme you are court-mandated to attend due to committing sexual offences, due to both the nature of the offending being widely considered as grossly immoral and the institutional expectations of accountability. However, clients are encouraged to develop a narrative identity of a good 'core self', which presents a dilemma: how to present a positive self-image without being seen to be arrogant, uncontrite or unaccountable. Even when explicitly requested to highlight positive attributes as part of the business of the group, clients avoid directly self-characterising as having

a good 'core self'. For example, in extract 18(a) below Emmet has been tasked to prepare a letter to himself in the third person expressing compassion, which is linked with warmth in being non-judgemental and recognising value in the self and tolerating emotions (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a). Emmet reported he has previously tried to complete this letter by himself and struggled. In introducing the exercise, the groupworker has asked how he went about the exercise this time, asking if his mother helped as previously discussed.

Extract 18(a):

Group B: Session 2: [V1: 28.57]

1 Emmet more (.) eh (.) more the whole family got involved
2 G3 ok [in what way
3 Emmet [(with it) ((turns sheet to G3)) [well
4 G3 [yeah (.) but in
5 what way what- how did they how did everyone get
6 involved
7 Emmet well they started talking about what the good points
8 G3 right ok
9 Emmet hmm
10 G3 So it kind of came from: (.) who was there, your mum,
11 Emmet my mum my dad my brother my sister eh a few of my
12 sister's friends were there as well so
13 G3 o:h wo::w so everybody doing your homework
14 Emmet well it wasnae really like it didnae I didnae start
15 off like that it was more my mum turned around and
16 asked people to agree and add bits to it
17 G3 right (.) right and how did that feel having other
18 people take part
19 Emmet it was really good
20 G3 yeah ((nodding)) (.) well it- how did you experience
21 that kind of emotionally or physically
22 Emmet a:h I was (2) I knew beforehand like cause all my
23 sister's friends they all knew me before my offence
24 so they all understood well all understood me

25 G3 mh hmm
 26 Emmet so e:m I grew up with most of them so em same with my
 27 brother and sister so they all knew
 28 G3 they know you pretty well
 29 Emmet yeah
 30 G3 yeah so how did it feel when you heard them saying
 31 kind of good stuff
 32 Emmet felt a bit strange at first cause it's not something
 33 I'm used to
 34 G3 yeah ah hah okay ((points to sheet)) and who's
 35 actually written it
 36 Emmet my mum

Referencing the 'whole family' (l. 1) provides an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), strengthening the presentation of self here as it implies the people who know Emmet best are unanimous in their assessment of him and his 'good points' (l.7). This is further strengthened when Emmet reports his sister's friends were also present (l.12), which is marked by G3 through her exclaimed response cry and humour ('o:h wo::w', l. 13). Although this is treated as a possible *face* threat by Emmet, who saves *face* by highlighting his mother was responsible for involving others (ll.14-16), mitigating any concern that others' positive comments regarding his character were a result of him canvassing for them or he was shirking his homework.

There seems to be some difficulty between lines 17 and 28, whereby the groupworker is asking how it felt having 'other people take part' (ll.17-18) which Emmet deals with as justifying the presence of his 'sister's friends' (ll.22-24) rather than using emotional description. Although Emmet begins to address G3's question regarding his experience of this process ('a:h I was (2)', l.22) he instead repairs this to 'I knew...' which leads to the implicit formulation of a 'core self' by separating the offending behaviour from an enduring inner self. He constructs this by positioning his sister's friends as having epistemic rights to knowing him, and as such being

qualified to make an assessment of him. The use of reported others' evaluation (his sister's friends) and defining their judgement cognitively rather than emotionally, stating they 'knew' and 'understood' (ll.23 & 24) him, makes this formulation more persuasive. The repetition of the word 'all', an extreme case formulation, four times sets a strong case (Pomerantz, 1986). In stating 'they all knew me before my offence' (l.23), Emmet provides a separation both temporally and indexically between his self and his behaviour. The repetition and emphasis of 'me' (l.24) further highlights Emmet's reference to a fundamental self, that his true character was being discussed. The groupworker's 'mh hmm' (l.25) is treated as a continuer, and as such Emmet returns to justifying, with some hesitation, their rights to knowing him akin to his siblings (ll.26-27).

Interestingly here, Emmet has used the past tense, 'they all knew' (ll.23, 27) and 'they all understood' (l.24), referring to before his offence. His use of past tense may indicate shame or guilt, i.e. 'I was a good person before...', or possibly demonstrate alignment to perceived institutional expectations to be accountable for offending behaviour, without minimisation or justification (Waldram, 2007). The groupworker's response, 'they know you pretty well' (l.28), places this in the present, supporting a shift to a current characterisation of Emmet as having good points and those being enduring from his past, as part of who he fundamentally is. In this way Emmet's implied 'core self' is not only allowed but he is encouraged to develop this self-story, reflective of desistance narratives identified in previous research (e.g. Farmer, McAlinden, & Maruna, 2015; Maruna, 2001).

In extract 18(a) we saw the narrator, Emmet, build a formulation that tentatively presented a good 'core self' primarily through reported other evaluation. In Extract 18(b), shortly following 18(a), this characterisation is taken up and further developed by another group member, Brian, serving to further present Emmet as having a good 'core self' that is stable, internal and global.

Extract 18(b):

Group B: Session 2: [V2: 02.55]

((84 lines omitted))

1 Emmet it [was
2 Brian [Also the fact that you're sitting with people
3 being nice to you. In a way they've accepted what
4 you've done and moved on from that.
5 Emmet hmm hmm
6 G3 ((nodding))
7 Brian So they've probably moved on from your offending
8 better than you've moved on from your offences.
9 G3 ((nodding))
10 Emmet ((nodding))
11 Brian They've accepted what you've done. Know that's a blip
12 in your character.
13 G3 hmm
14 Brian They know what you are really like.
15 Emmet yeah

Brian builds on Emmet's formulation that the 'others', Emmet's friends and family, hold epistemic rights to making this assessment of him. In stating that these 'others' have 'accepted' Emmet's offending behaviour and 'moved on' (ll.3-4), Brian provides a specific, temporal quality to the offence. It is something that can be moved on from, in terms of time and identity; it is not pervasive. Brian evaluates 'moving on' as positive, as it is something Emmet's friends and family have done 'better' than Emmet (ll.7-8), indicating there is some obstacle for Emmet. G3 affiliates with Brian's formulation, providing institutional support for this narrative (ll.6, 9). Finally, from lines 11 to 14, by proposing that Emmet's offending behaviour was a 'blip' in his character, Brian places Emmet's offending as unstable and specific, not a common behaviour or a part of what he is 'really like', his core or essential self (l.14), which by implication is positioned as good. Emmet accepts this characterisation. Brian is able to provide this characterisation of Emmet as having a good 'core self' separate from his offending, as it is not his narrative and he is not

constrained by interactional and moral dilemmas of praising or aggrandizing himself.

The relational aspect of desistance narratives is then clearly seen here. There are potential difficulties for clients in the groupwork sessions presenting a formulation of a good or moral 'core self', both interactionally and socially. Instead the 'core self' identity is constructed in interaction, where the discursive work of other group members and groupworkers enables the explicit separation of self from behaviour without compromising the position of the client as accountable. This is a form of social ratification, in that the narrative identity is accepted and approved in the interaction. Ratifying desistance narratives is aligned with the macro conceptualisation of tertiary (McNeill, 2006) or relational (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016) desistance, where desistance is recognised and supported by the family, community, and society around the individual. As such, this micro-level of analysis highlights some of the mechanisms of tertiary or relational desistance, and its relationship with secondary or identity desistance (Maruna & Farrall, 2004; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). However, it is evident here the role of others is not merely acceptance or validation as others are active participants in the construction of a person's self-story. In extract 18(a-b), we can also see tertiary desistance in a double sense, as Emmet's account of how others in his life, not present in this interaction, see him and how the groupworker and other group members in the interaction are reinforcing a desistance identity by accepting, prompting and promoting the separation of a positive 'core self' from the offending behaviour.

Constructing generative pursuits

Generativity is defined as a concern for people besides self and family that usually develops during middle age; especially a need to nurture and guide younger people and contribute to the next generation. It is a concept situated in Erikson's theory of

psychosocial development (1959), which proposes generativity manifests when a person feels the need to actively contribute to the greater good in their community or society more widely. Maruna (2001) drew on this concept noting that amongst the participants of his study connection to something larger than the self seemed to be central to desistance, in contributing to a sense of redemption. Some of the clients of this programme referenced pursuits such as volunteering, which might be considered examples of generativity. These pursuits are not solely accounted for in terms of being for the benefit of society or the next generation. Echoing McAlinden et al. (2016), the reasons for pursuing generative activities are co-constructed by the clients and groupworkers as providing meaning to life, demonstrating a moral 'core self' and alleviating guilt, i.e. providing redemption. This is evident in Extract 19, where Alan is updating the group on the outcome of his plans to begin some voluntary work.

Extract 19:

Group C: Session 1: [V1: 10.30]

- 1 Alan ah hm ((clears throat)) I've some good news and then
2 got some not so- not so good news but that's to do
3 with X-mas. Any(h)way the good news is (.) em my plan
4 to start with the as a driver's mate (.)
- 5 G1 hmm
- 6 Alan on a voluntary basis .hh with the ((charity)) driver
- 7 G1 hmm
- 8 Alan who does the collections we..eh that's started (.)
9 that's worked out pretty well (.) hm (.) yeah
10 ((nodding))
- 11 G1 oh excellent=

12 Alan =it's on four mornings a [week

13 G1 [yeah

14 Alan and (.) two three hours ((waves hand))(.) it's just
 15 enough (.) [exercise (unclear)

16 G4 [I was going to say in and out in and out
 17 lifting

18 Alan without standing all night having biscuits on the
 19 machine [ha ha hah

20 G4 [hah hah ha

21 Alan yeah that's it is (.) getting out in the fresh air

22 G4 yes um hm

23 Alan and contributing yeah

24 G4 good (.) um
 25 (.)

26 G1 and that's all eh voluntary, is it?

27 Alan yes yeah yea (.) well I get sandwiches given to me eh
 28 you know for (.) lunch ha he

29 G4 yeah so (.) th-th there's a good return, isn't there,
 30 in different [ways

31 Alan [yeah

32 G4 but also (.) eh making a real valuable contribution em
 33 to (.) to the community

34 Alan yeah hh

At the beginning, there is an empathic moment as Alan describes the good news of starting volunteering, and his stance towards that (ll.1-4, 8-10), which G1 aligns (ll.5, 7) and strongly affiliates with (l.11). Alan highlights both personal and public benefits of voluntary work; exercise (l. 15), getting out in the fresh air (l. 21) and contributing (l. 23). In constructing this as a three part list, Alan speaks to the personal benefits whilst using the third element ('contributing', l.23) to emphasise the wider generative nature of the activity and move the focus of the discussion from the personal to the public benefits (Jefferson, 1991).

The pause at line 25 could indicate the topic has come to an end, following a brief acknowledgement from G4 that the update has been heard (I.24). The groupworkers draw attention to and make relevant the generative aspect of Alan's news; G1 clarifies the voluntary nature of the work with an extreme case formulation ('all eh voluntary', I.26), and, after briefly acknowledging the personal benefits (II.29-30), G4 emphasises the wider public benefits (II.32-33). G4 upgrades and endorses Alan's note of contributing (I.23), emphasising the positive nature of this behaviour – 'real, valuable contribution em to (.) to the community' (II.32-33). Interestingly, G4 does not make Alan the direct referent of her formulation, by not using the personal pronoun you, and therefore does not directly praise him (II.29-30, 32-33). This omission may serve several interactional functions. It presents the benefits of generative pursuits as generally desirable and achievable, and it also manages to avoid the potential interactional trouble of a compliment. As noted above, compliments are generally problematic, as they sequentially prefer acceptance but socially prefer avoidance or dismissal, to avoid self-praising (Pomerantz, 1978). In this situation, however, downgrading or rejecting the praise, a common interactional strategy (Pomerantz, 1978), might undermine G4's promotion of volunteering as good and worthy. On the other hand, accepting it could undermine the supposed altruistic nature of 'contributing', leaving it looking disingenuous. The generalised delivery of the formulation, although clearly directed to Alan, side steps these issues and protects Alan's *face*, while positively evaluating generative pursuits for the group.

Furthermore, in the context of a group for addressing sexual offending behaviours there is again a delicate negotiation in presenting the self as moral, as for people who have offended redemption of their moral character needs to be earned (McNeill, 2012) and presumably cannot be self-ascribed, but is socially rewarded, if it is even achievable (Kirkwood & McNeill, 2015). As with Extracts 18(a-b), the virtue or morality in contributing to others is instead presented and/ or ascribed by another, either reported or within the interaction. The groupwork sessions may be

an interactional site where morality and virtuous characteristics can be evaluated, attributed and negotiated to build up a narrative identity.

Generativity as a worthy pursuit is also demonstrated in Extract 20 below, as is the purpose of this for redemption. This extract is from the same exercise as extract 15 and 16 above, where Frank is outlining his goals for the programme under the domains of the GLM. This is in relation to the primary good “Community”.

Extract 20:

Group B: Session 1: [V4: 19.48]

1 Frank join a group as I say
2 G1 yeah yeah you sort of
3 Frank friendsh::ip (.) more of that kind of help for others
4 by volunteering and do the wellbeing thing
5 G5 ((nodding))
6 Frank that's eh
7 (3)
8 G1 so just generally becoming more involved with other
9 people
10 Frank ((leans forward to look at chart)) yeah
11 G5 and helping others as well you have down there seems
12 quite important
13 Frank hmm
14 G5: for you Frank
15 Frank .hh it would help me hh
16 G5 ((nodding))
17 G: how how would it help you↑
18 Emmet get out and [work
19 Frank [it would help me get on in life and show
20 I'm a better person what I was and
21 G5 ((nodding))
22 Frank <.hh able to live a good life> ((said in a sighing
23 manner))
24 G5 does that also link in with then the kind of I know
25 they've put spirituality in here but that kind of

26 give meaning to life (.)

27 [being able to have that kind of

28 Frank [oh yes oh aye yeah it does (.) aye.

29 G1 is it about reassurance as well?

30 (1)

31 Frank aye

32 Emmet (will help you move forward)

33 G1 yeah kind of reassuring yourself that you you can do

34 it

35 Frank yeah human being

36 G1 you can be a [part of things

37 Frank [yeah yeah yeah

38 ((G5 and G1 exchange looks and nod))

As with Extract 19, helping others is oriented to as relevant by one of the groupworkers (II.11-12), clarifying Frank's reported motivation goes beyond socialising (II.8-9). Making 'helping others' relevant prompts a discussion about Frank's motivations. Emmet briefly gives one potential rationale of activity (I.18). However, Frank's account appears to relate to reintegration, specifically moral reintegration into society; how Frank can earn redemption (McNeill, 2010). This begins by a three-part list from Frank; help his life progress (I.19), demonstrate his redemption (II.19-20) and his ability to maintain this (I.22). Three-part lists convey completeness (Jefferson, 1991), and in this case links to the overarching goal of the programme, to live a good life. Interestingly, here the aim is about demonstrating to others, 'show I'm a better person' (II.19-20), highlighting the role of others in reintegration to allow, assess and accept change for people who have offended (Braithwaite, 1989; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). Generative actions are constructed by Frank as a method of demonstrating prosocial change, as opposed to Extract 19 where the community benefits are highlighted. G5 presents Frank with a further possible motivation for this pursuit, linked to the primary good of spirituality in the GLM (Ward & Maruna, 2007), 'give meaning to life' (I.26). This echoes the agenda and language of the MF: MC programme. Frank's motivation to help others is constructed here as in the pursuit of redemption and relevant to the institutional

task, for Frank to outline his goals for the programme.

The post-sequence expansion from lines 29 to 38, appears then to construct reintegration as a further motivation for Frank's generative goals. It is not clear what reassurance G1 is referring to in his question on line 29, and this remains ambiguous as nothing is specifically indexed, i.e. 'it' (l.34) and 'things' (l.36) are not clarified. In the sequential context following Frank's characterisation of helping others as redemptive, it could be a reference to wider societal morals, where doing 'it' is following society's moral code and being a part of 'things' is being an active prosocial member of society. This serves to place Frank outside the category of 'member of society', and that categorisation as something he is trying to achieve through what might be considered generative pursuits. Following from G1's prior turn at lines 8 and 9, the reassurance could be also in relation to Frank's social skills, i.e. that he can get involved with people. Both possibilities orient to forms of reintegration, i.e. moral or practical. Frank appears to orient to this understanding of the ambiguity of what he is seeking reassurance on, on line 35, 'yeah human being' and his affiliation on line 37. This account is then ratified by the non-verbal actions of the groupworkers (l.38).

Further on in the exercise the other group members, in extract 21 below, then explicitly orient to and present Frank's pursuit of volunteering as a means of redemption, encouraging Frank to consider positive attributes that may contribute to constructing a good 'core self'. Extract 21 comes immediately after extract 16 above where F states he wants to 'To look at myself in the mirror and say I am a good person' (extract 16, l.1).

Extract 21:

Group B: Session 1: [V4: 26.11]

1 Andy try to focus on some of the positives about yourself
2 you say you want to help people
3 ((C tips D in the leg))
4 Andy that's a good place to st- as good a place to start
5 as any
6 Calum but we're not looking in the mirror here you are
7 Brian (you said) at some point want to do volunteering some
8 sort of redemption for yourself
9 Frank .hh free myself from guilt ((points to sheet))
10 Brian hm(h)mm

In his advice, Andy presents Frank's motivation to help as evidence of a positive characteristic of Frank as a person (ll.1-2), and as a way of beginning to see (or narrate) himself as a good person (ll.4-5). The central aspect of generativity is noted however on lines 7 to 9, where volunteering is to provide 'some sort of redemption for yourself' (ll.7-8) and specifically for the saving of Frank, rather than the benefit of the wider community – 'free myself from guilt' (l.8=9). Here generativity can be seen as a personal pursuit for the demonstration of change to others, or society, rather than an act of altruism.

How generative pursuits were constructed in the interactions in the MF: MC groupwork sessions contributed to characterising clients' narrative identities as morally good; volunteering or wanting to volunteer implies you are a morally good person. Such pursuits were highlighted by groupworkers as worthwhile and rewarded, or positively reinforced, with praise of the client's virtues. Furthermore, helping others is a way of, perhaps selfishly, publicly showing you are a good person, to achieve redemption and reintegration. However, clients constructing generative pursuits as demonstrating their own good character, in this context, falls under similar constraints as self-constructing a good 'core self'; how to do so without blowing your own trumpet, appearing disingenuous or scripted, i.e. 'talking

the talk'. Clients achieved this by referring to the personal benefits, including giving meaning to life, over the public ones, leaving these implicit. Others, and reported others, were left entitled to make the assessment of what pursuits and behaviours demonstrated good character.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined how desistance narratives are constructed in the talk-in-interaction in the MF: MC programme groupwork sessions for addressing sexual offending behaviour. Specifically, I illustrated how groupworkers, clients and other group members discursively characterised offending behaviour as situational, established a good 'core self' and drew on generative pursuits as an identity building resource. In this way, groupworkers, and other group members, are actively involved in re-storying clients' lives, as their questions and responses contributed to the shape and direction of clients' stories, and who they are in those stories. Furthermore, they support clients in dealing with two challenges in constructing these stories of desistance: providing a situational account for offending without minimising responsibility and constructing a good 'core self' without self-ascribing morality.

Providing situational accounts for misdeeds is generally considered normative, however in the criminal context this is pathologized, being conceptualised as denial, justification or minimisation which is then often targeted in programmes for addressing offending behaviour (Maruna & Copes, 2005; Maruna & Mann, 2006; Ware & Mann, 2012). This pathologizing may actually hinder desistance in fracturing and dismissing a person's sense of self as essentially good (Blagden et al., 2014; Hulley, 2016; Maruna, 2004). In this context, the design of groupworkers' questions, and other turns, gave institutional permission for clients to provide situational accounts for their offending behaviour. This demonstrated respect for clients' *face* and epistemic authority. However, alongside this they also maintained clients' responsibility for their offending behaviour in a non-confrontational

manner, which is proposed to be more effective in addressing sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003), promoting group cohesion (Beech & Fordham, 2008) and maintaining therapeutic relationships (Weiste, 2015).

Correspondingly, clients negotiated placing their offending behaviour as situational and external to their self with being accountable, as they oriented to the problematic potential of situational accounts, i.e. seen as minimising or excusing their behaviour. Clients achieved this in interaction here by using the passive voice, reference to temporality, and using disclaimers such as explicitly acknowledging their responsibility or through narrative reflexivity (Auburn, 2005), where they comment on their own account to intercept any problematic interpretations or implications, demonstrating their current moral awareness. These actions also maintained respect for the groupworkers' *face* and their epistemic and deontic authority, by not putting the groupworker in a position where they have to be explicit about the client's responsibility, and adhered to the wider societal norms, i.e. people who have offended should be responsible for their behaviour (Kemshall, 2003; Ware & Mann, 2012). Both groupworkers and clients delicately negotiated this balance, maintaining cooperation in the interaction, allowing the harmful behaviour to be positioned as due to external, unstable and specific factors and separate to the client's self: separating the sin from the sinner.

Furthermore, clients and groupworkers highlighted past offending behaviour as a resource to support learning and self-improvement, while maintaining their accountability. This echoes Maruna's (2001) findings, where people desisting from offending highlighted their learning from their past behaviours has made them the better person they are today. Moreover, this narrative promotes a sense of agency and control over current and future life, re-construing past harmful behaviour as something to reflect on for promoting positive future action, i.e. learning from mistakes to do something different. Having a sense of control over one's life has been linked to desistance from general (Maruna, 2001) and sexual (McAlinden et

al., 2016) offending. Taking this perspective is also aligned with the ethos of the Good Lives Model, where the focus is on how to achieve those primary goods important to the individual, now and in the future, through understanding what they were pursuing with their offending and what the obstacles were (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Gannon, 2006). Again, this strategy served to separate the offending behaviour, i.e. what you did, from who the person fundamentally is, i.e. who you are. This is further evident in the next chapter discussing risk talk. Establishing this separation may encourage clients to express guilt for their behaviour rather than shame of their self, where the latter is proposed to be detrimental to programme engagement (Marshall et al., 2009) and desistance (Braithwaite, 1989; Proeve & Howells, 2002; Tangney et al., 2014). This is consistent with Braithwaite's (1989) model of reintegrative shaming, where the harmful act is condemned and the moral goodness of the individual is emphasised to support them with positive change and reintegration with society.

The narrative elements of situational offending behaviours and 'core self' were mutually constituting; separating the bad behaviour from the person implied a contrasting and good 'core self', and vice versa. However, as with self-praise, clients presenting themselves as good and moral appeared interactionally troublesome as the normative action is to avoid stating you are a good person (Pomerantz, 1978). As such, clients did not often present a good 'core self' explicitly, or they did so through a reported other, e.g. 'my mum thinks I'm kind', or in a highly qualified manner. Instead, groupworkers and other group members attributed individual clients with a good character and virtuous qualities, through praise, advice and formulation, contributing to the construction of a good 'core self' identity. Furthermore, the group were able to accept and ratify this narrative identity on behalf of the individual client, where the individual is constrained by interactional norms to reject or dismiss highly positive descriptors (Pomerantz, 1978), i.e. not to blow their own trumpet. This seems to be contrary to Maruna's (2001) observations that people desisting from offending presented as being better than others. My

assumption is this difference is due to the context of the interaction, where such self-aggrandising in a groupwork programme for addressing offending behaviour could be problematic, for example, evidence of a personality disorder, or temporally not appropriate, as they are positioned as in a process of learning or demonstrating desistance as opposed to reporting achieved desistance. Also, as people are inclined to promote solidarity in interaction (Clayman, 2002), one group member purporting they are better than others would also be contrary to normative behaviour, particularly in a group where there are mixed offence types as there is no easily identifiable common 'other'. This highlights some of the differences between the narratives and identities constructed in research interviews and those evident in naturalistic settings, due to the local conversational context.

Clients also drew resourcefully on descriptions of generative pursuits, to indicate or demonstrate they are or can be good. Generativity can discursively provide a socially acceptable identity, e.g. the professional 'ex-' or 'wounded healer', one that seeks and promotes redemption and reintegration (Harris, 2014b; Maruna, 2001). Talk about 'giving back' to others was rewarded through praise by the groupworkers. As institutional representatives of societal norms, their rewardingness lends support to this narrative as an acceptable one (Heritage, 2005). As with constructing a good 'core self', clients were constrained from ascribing selflessness and morality to their generative pursuits; this could appear calculating and disingenuous. The 'goodness' of these pursuits were made explicit by other group members and groupworkers. This highlights redemption as interactionally constructed. Others must reify the individual as good and redeemed (McNeill & Maruna, 2007); clients cannot claim redemption or present it explicitly but can imply their morality in how they talk about their experiences and life.

This chapter demonstrates how features of desistance narratives are actively constructed and shaped in the talk-in-interaction in the MF: MC groupwork sessions. They are not merely an identity inherent to and presented by the client as

narrator for acceptance or rejection, but actively and gently co-constructed through the suggestions, praise, advice, questions and responses of the others in the group about who the person is, i.e. their past behaviour, present intentions and future aspirations. Rather than secondary / identity desistance and tertiary / relational desistance (Maruna & Farrall 2004; Nugent & Schinkel 2016) being considered as separate, although intertwined, processes, here it is evident that desistance identities are shaped in relational contexts, through dialogue and interaction. Macro-level, possibly well-rehearsed, stories that constitute desistance identities are built and maintained in the ongoing micro-level interactions with others, real and imagined. However, as well as addressing accountability and moral awareness, these stories must also include awareness of risk for an acceptable narrative identity to be constructed at the interface between the individual and the institution. Discourse regarding risk permeates the interactions in the MF: MC groupwork sessions. How this is constructed and how it contributes to the clients' stories will be discussed in the next chapter.

Ch. 5: Risk-talk

Talk about risk is ubiquitous in the MF: MC groupwork sessions, being a focus of many of the exercises and initiated by both clients and groupworkers. Following from the discussion in chapter 1, this is perhaps unsurprising in light of the wider criminal justice and societal context where risk discourse pervades (Robinson, 2016; Stalker, 2003). In this risk paradigm there is a particular focus on 'public protection', where men who have committed sexual offences are deemed to pose a threat of harm to the public and therefore the grounds of this threat, their risk, needs to be identified and managed through accurate assessment and criminal justice supervision (Helmus, Babchishin, & Hanson, 2013; Scottish Government, 2010a). Furthermore, assessment and management of risk is central to the role of criminal justice social work (Scottish Government, 2010a), an explicit aim of the MF: MC programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a) and supported by research and theory (e.g. Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004; Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007; Helmus et al., 2013)

Structured risk assessment tools, based on empirical studies which have identified factors proposed to be predictive of offending (Bonta & Andrews, 2016), are used to aid assessment and intervention, in line with the principles of the RNR model (see chapter 1). The tools used nationally across Scotland are Level of Service and Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004) in relation to general offending, and Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) (Thornton, 2007) and Stable and Acute 2007 (SA07) (Hanson et al., 2007) in relation to sexual offending. These tools measure static factors, i.e. fixed ones such as age or criminal history, and dynamic factors, i.e. criminogenic needs, ones deemed changeable and targeted, e.g. employment, substance use (see appendix F for the full list of risk factors in these tools). However, there is wider concern about how risk discourse is translated into practice (McNeill, 2016b), where interventions are criticised for being individualistic and overly focussed on risk and offending to the exclusion of individuals' wider

narratives, including their strengths (Maruna & LeBel, 2010; McNeill, 2006, 2016b; Waldram, 2008).

Kemshall (2003) has criticised risk assessment tools, emerging from 'psy-' disciplines, as constructing active, agentic individuals, solely responsible for their own crime, and as such risk bearers or risky people. Hannah-Moffat (2005) and McNeill and colleagues (2009) have noted policy discourses of risk and risk factors are refracted in practice, where individuals who have offended are constructed as risk subjects who are transformable (or not) through treatment. Previous research has outlined how, in criminal justice interventions, men convicted of sexual offending are actively constructed as 'risky' and are expected to develop an identity of being at constant risk of re-offending (Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008). Clients must acknowledge, and show they are capable of managing, their own prevailing risks to be considered rehabilitated and suitable for reintegration (Lacombe, 2008; McNeill, 2016b; Robinson, McNeill, & Maruna, 2012). This approach is condemned for placing full responsibility on the individual to change and relieving social and structural systems of their responsibilities in this regard, systems which are fundamental to successful desistance and reintegration of people who have offended (McAlinden, 2016; McNeill, 2016b).

Furthermore, the focus on risk is proposed to quash the hope and motivation necessary to promote desistance (McNeill, 2016b). Having an identity as a risky person is contrary to a desistance identity of being fundamentally good but with harmful and risky behaviours, as noted in the previous chapter. Being categorised as a risky person indicates the difficult, harmful and criminal behaviours are internal, stable and global traits, difficult if not impossible to change and therefore permanent and enduring, something to be forever managed. As such, desistance from offending, in terms of secondary desistance or a change in identity, is an unlikely outcome for a risky person, the best they can hope for is managing their risk. In light of the concerns that a focus on risk potentially subverts the

development of desistance narratives, narratives which are constructed during the talk-in-interaction between clients and practitioners (as per chapter 4) and the ubiquity of talk about risk in the MF: MC programme there seems to be a tension between addressing risk and promoting desistance in interaction. Given this tension, in this chapter I will examine how talk about risk is managed in interaction and how it contributes to constructing certain identities for clients, which may be in tension with narratives of desistance.

As I am interested in members' methods, risk will be discussed here in its widest sense, drawing from how this is constructed in the talk. Talk about risk in the MF: MC groupwork sessions appeared to encompass a broad meaning, beyond those of structured risk assessment tools to include any aspect of a person's life that can have an adverse impact, e.g. living situation, thought patterns, self-esteem. For the purposes of this analysis, I coded sections of interaction where risk was indicated, including any talk about past, present or future harm or possible harm, indicators of this, including drawn from the programme materials (i.e. Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014a, 2014b) and structured risk assessment tools (e.g. LS/CMI, SA07; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004; Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007), and strategies to address this. Risk factors from the actuarial tools, particularly dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs, were mostly evident as topics and resources constructed in the talk-in-interaction in the groupwork sessions rather than static labels that were applied to the clients by the groupworkers. Talk about risk, or risk-talk, also included discussion about clients' harmful actions towards others and clients' experiences of harm, from self, others and structures. Risk-talk contributed to clients' narrative identities, in becoming part of how clients told their stories of who they are, and, at times, how they have changed. Being aware of and managing risk was evident in how risk was constructed, discussed and attributed to clients in the talk-in-interaction in the MF: MC sessions.

Echoing previous research (e.g. Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2008), here clients were expected to demonstrate their awareness of their individual risks and how this is being addressed, and failure to do so was made relevant by the groupworkers, or at times other group members. In this way, risk-talk can be seen to be doing some of the business of the groupwork programme, i.e. clients to develop an awareness of and ways to manage risks (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). However, risk-talk can be a source of interactional trouble and as such is a delicate topic. Following from chapter 3, I propose this is due to the threat to clients' self-presentation, or *face*, risk-talk poses and the asymmetrical nature of the institutional interaction, where the groupworkers have deontic authority, i.e. the authority to determine how things should be.

This chapter will outline how risk is spoken about, demonstrate that it is part of doing the business of the groupwork programme and explore the trouble evident in risk-talk and the interactional consequences.

How risk is talked about in interaction

Talk about risk pervades the interactions in the groupwork sessions and is made relevant in three ways: explicitly, implicitly and using proxy terminology. Firstly, as one might expect, talk about risk includes discussion of factors explicitly linked to both general and sexual offending, as outlined by risk assessment tools (i.e. LS/CMI, RM2000, STABLE & SA07, see Appendix F) and incorporated into the programme theory manual (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). When risk is explicitly discussed it is primarily where the focus of the exercise is past, current or future risk. Extract 22 below for example is taken during an exercise where the group are identifying risky thoughts, mood states and situations for Calum.

Extract 22:

Group B: Session 4: [V2: 34.25]

1 G3 eh sexual preoccupation not quite a mood but (.) I
2 wasn't quite sure where [I was going to put it
3 Calum [not sure I'd say no
4 G3 but that kind of sense of you know starting to think
5 about sex a lot particularly tied with alcohol and
6 that can be quite [a risk
7 Calum [aye::,
8 G3 that just sort of <starts playing on people's minds a
9 bit> sometimes
10 Frank tch

G3 explicitly highlights 'sexual preoccupation' as a possible risk (l.1), which is a risk item on professional risk assessment tools (i.e. SA07) concerned with the frequency of sexual thoughts and behaviours and how these interfere with a person's interpersonal and prosocial functioning (Fernandez, Harris, Hanson, & Sparks, 2012; Hanson et al., 2007). Explicitly referencing risk factors makes it clear and definite the talk is about risk, and institutionally relevant. Initially Calum rejects G3's suggestion, with some uncertainty (l.3). G3 continues to explain using lay terms ('starting to think about sex a lot', l.4) linking this to Calum's known circumstances, i.e. that he has an alcohol misuse problem, which have been relevant to his offending behaviour. Here risk items from the professional risk assessment tools are made explicit as relevant and attributable to individual clients, implying a causal relationship with their offending. Calum's agreement, however, with an elongated and rising intoned 'aye' (l.6), seems weak. G3 appears to downgrade her ongoing reformulation using softening phrases, i.e. 'just sort of', 'a bit', 'sometimes'. G3 is encouraging Calum to affirm or at least align with the suggestion (Pomerantz, 1984a). G3's translation of the technical terminology of sexual preoccupation into lay terms broadens out the definition, also making it less stigmatizing or *face-threatening* and as such more relatable and acceptable. It is persuasive in getting Calum to accept this formulation. Softening and reformulation is common in my

data when talking about delicate topics or in light of *face* threat, as per chapter 3, and indicative of the delicacy of talking about risk, even when risk is the explicit topic of discussion.

Implicit references to risk are observable in three ways in the data. Firstly, in the use of common idioms, e.g. 'alarm bells ringing', 'red flag'. Secondly, in their focus on factors from risk assessment tools (i.e. LS/CMI, RM2000, SA07), of which I have a professional working knowledge, without explicitly stating them. In Extract 23 G2 can be seen to be pursuing information in relation to sexual preoccupation without being explicit, in contrast to Extract 22. Here Fred is undertaking an exercise as part of the Discovering Needs module, which is a mandatory module (see appendix E), where he is asked to identify links between factors in his life and his offending. The prior discussion focussed on Fred's use of pornography becoming problematic when his job required him to do a lot of travelling and work online. He stated he feels he 'sat online' to avoid the problems in his life. This could also be construed as using sex as a coping mechanism, another risk factor noted in the risk assessment SA07.

Extract 23:

Group A: Session 4: (V4: 24.02)

1 G2 and how did that sort of impact on your sort of sexual
2 management how you managed yourself [sexually
3 Fred [tch I I I self-
4 medicated
5 G2 right ok,
6 Fred masturbation
7 G2 mmh yeah ok b- but what happened to the level of that
8 [was there
9 Fred [oh it went up dramatically
10 G2 ok went up you said dramatically,
11 Fred oh aye aye
12 G2 ok,
13 (3)

14 G2 is that relevant how relevant is that
 15 Fred oh that's extremely relevant
 16 G2 so in terms of what was going on in your mind during
 17 the day at work
 18 Fred .hh hh
 19 G2 was it you know were you busy with sexual thoughts
 20 Fred not at work
 21 G2 ok mh hmm
 22 Fred eh:: (.) there was at the time there was a (.) it was
 23 away fa work
 24 G2 ok
 25 Fred when it was relevant
 26 G2 ok

Instead of focusing on the use of sex as a coping strategy, G2 instead embarks on a series of questions (ll.1-2, 7-8, 14, 16-17, 19) which attempts to bring into focus the frequency of Fred's sexual behaviours and thoughts, building a picture of Fred being, at that time, sexually preoccupied. This is strengthened by Fred in his use of extreme case formulations ('dramatically', l.9; 'extremely', l.15) and affirmed by G2's repetition of 'dramatically' (l. 10). G2's utterances can be seen to be pursuing an account, from her hedged 'how' initiated question on lines 1 and 2 requesting an evaluative response, her aligning and affiliative responses encouraging Fred to tell a story (ll.5, 10, 12) and the silence at line 13, where neither G2 or Fred take the position as next speaker (Schegloff, 1982; Stivers, 2008). Fred is being requested to demonstrate his awareness of the risks relating to his offending. Fred's failure to do so at line 13, however, is not unsurprising as the question-answer pattern of the unfolding sequence would place G2, as the questioner, in the position of the next speaker particularly after the indication the sequence has finished, from G2's utterance of 'OK' (l.12) (Schegloff, 2007).

There appears to be some confusion about the interactional roles here, Questioner/ Answerer or Storyteller/ Listener. G2 does take up next speaker position at line 14,

repairing from a closed to an open question, although again the design of this question – ‘how relevant is that?’ – does not explicitly invite an account but a quantification, which Fred orients to (l.15). The action of constructing sexual preoccupation as a risk factor relevant to Fred however can be seen most visibly, albeit somewhat resisted, when G2 moves from a broad question ‘what was going on in your mind’ on line 16, repairing to stipulate being ‘busy with sexual thoughts’ (l.19) as the topic of concern. Here are echoes of the lay explanation of sexual preoccupation offered by G3 in Extract 1 (ll.4, 7). Interestingly the description here is less broad than that in the previous extract, and closely reflects the risk assessment guidance on sexual preoccupation: ‘the frequency of thoughts and behaviours and the degree to which an offender’s sexual thoughts and behaviours interfere with personal and/ or prosocial functioning’ (Fernandez et al., 2012: 80; Hanson et al., 2007). Again, this is treated delicately, with hedging and speech perturbations, where the technical language of risk is softened and translated into lay terms. This action serves to manage the threat to *face* and possible stigma of accepting the characteristics of risk factors related to sexual offending. The technical and clinical language of the formal conceptualisations of risk factors is difficult to incorporate into the autobiographical narrative due to its impersonal and detached quality and the negative connotations it evokes (Digard, 2014; Waldram, 2007), where it is expected most people will be attempting to present as normative (Goffman, 1959; Sacks, 1984; Maruna, 2001; Kras & Blasko, 2016). The phrase ‘sexually preoccupied’ is not an everyday phrase. This has implications for how risk is assessed and mutually understood, potentially accounting for some of the disparity noted between professional judgement and risk assessment tools as the lay language of risk is reinterpreted into technical language and vice versa (i.e. Kemshall, 2000).

Both Extract 22 and Extract 23 are in the context of risk being an established topic within the bounds of a specific exercise, so perhaps not surprising there is evidence of risk-talk. Finally, risk-talk also appears outwith these exercises where how certain

utterances are dealt with in the interaction indicates they are being oriented to as 'risk' relevant. Here the problematic nature of the behaviour, situation, or thought, for example, is oriented to by the clients and groupworkers. In instances where it is not oriented to by the client, the groupworkers, and at times other group members, will do further interactional work in urging the client to align with the project of recognising risk; for example, in extract 24 below where Emmet is describing his activities over Christmas and New Years to the group during check-in at the start of the session.

Extract 24:

Group B: Session 1: [V1: 17:09]

1 Emmet ehm (I've a bad memory of that em) Christmas day I
2 remember I wasn't up til about three o'clock and then
3 I can't remember anything cause my brother came around
4 with a (unclear) to drink
5 G1 okay
6 Emmet e:::h (.) pretty much the same for new year .hh (2)
7 except my brother challenged me to the vodka challenge
8 G1 it sounds like you and your brother make for quite a-
9 quite a mix when it comes to the alcohol
10 Emmet well (.) he bought by a bottle of (black vodka) at new
11 year which is the strongest vodka you can get on the
12 planet and he decided to challenge me to the vodka
13 challenge so I was like (.) woke up in a cupboard
14 covered in towels and covers and pillows and I was
15 like that just lying there (.) stayed there all
16 morning with a hangover it was unbelievable (unclear)
17 ? (unclear)
18 G2 I seem to remember you saying eh em the last session
19 we had here E you have a tendency to be a bit
20 competitive with your brother about about stuff was
21 that sort of going on [here
22 Emmet [oh aye it wasn't just me and my
23 brother there was a whole load of us
(11 lines omitted - Emmet describing playing a drinking game)

35 G1 [((nodding))
36 G2 [((nodding))
37 ((G1 and G2 look to each other))
38 Emmet I mean there was nothing- no no bother I mean I would
39 have been
40 G1 I'm going to ask any regrets any beer guilt before
(unclear)
41 Emmet oh no there was nae nothing was nothing (last thing I
42 remember)
43 Dan at least it would have been in a safe environment for
44 you anyway in your own house
45 G1 ((nodding))
46 Emmet aye aye it was it was a good day

Between lines 1 and 7 Emmet describes his brother as instrumental in his heavy alcohol use over Christmas. G1's 'okay' on line 5 could be seen as alignment, encouraging Emmet to continue with his update (Schegloff, 1982), or as an acknowledgement token (Guthrie, 1997), displaying Emmet has been heard and understood. It does not affirm or endorse Emmet's account, a possible initial indication of a problem with it. For example, it is different to the affiliative 'okays' in extract 23, which were uttered with an assessment token ('right', l.5), and a repetition (l.10). After this Emmet continues his story. Through formulation groupworkers can orient to and make comment on an aspect of clients' talk in a way that implicitly problematizes it, leaving the client the opportunity to confirm or deny it, attend to the *face* threat and risk implicit in their own talk, and demonstrate their awareness of the risk. In this instance, at lines 8 and 9, G1 orients to Emmet's relationship with his brother and their alcohol use as relevant. Given the context, i.e. a groupwork programme addressing sexual offending behaviour, it is unlikely G1 is supporting Emmet's account of heavy alcohol use, although this is ambiguous. Possible challenge is softened here as G1 manages his lesser epistemic rights ('it sounds like', l.8). The repetition on line 8, 'quite a- quite a mix', suggests G1 is searching for appropriate words and referring to 'the alcohol' (l.9) formalises his statement, differentiating it from everyday talk where more colloquial language

might be expected (e.g. drink, booze). In this context, through orienting to an aspect of the prior talk, not explicitly affiliating with Emmet's talk, the delicate turn design and formal word selection, G1's utterance appears to negatively evaluate and subtly problematize Emmet's relationship with his brother and their consequent alcohol use.

Emmet however does not treat G1's observation as orienting to a problem, continuing to boast about his antics over New Year (ll.10-16). The ambiguity of G1's formulation which may have allowed any challenge to be softened also left it open to being interpreted as alignment or affiliation. The other groupworker, G2, more clearly respecifies Emmet's relationship with his brother as potentially problematic through an ancillary question, which encourages Emmet to demonstrate his awareness of the issue (ll.18-21). Again, Emmet does not pick this up, instead describing a drinking game, lines omitted. It isn't until line 38, following G1 and G2 exchanging glances, that Emmet orients to their previous talk as implying trouble. He rejects and mitigates any perceived issue, and attempts to save *face*, using a common excuse-making strategy, denying any negative outcome or harm (Maruna & Copes, 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957); 'there was nothing', 'no bother' (l.38).

Interestingly, at Line 40 G1 moves to realign with the informal tone of Emmet's descriptions asking if he had 'beer guilt', contrasting with his previous formal reference to 'the alcohol' (l.9). This question, more softly worded and no-preferenced (Heritage & Robinson, 2011), invites a negative response, giving Emmet a reprieve from orienting to the risks in his previous, lengthy description. This *face-saving* action from G1 promotes cooperation in the ongoing interaction. The evaluation of Emmet's talk as indicating risk is evident in Dan's musing or post-mortem (ll.43-44) (Schegloff, 2007). Although the interaction is complete at line 42, Dan's reference to Emmet 'at least' being in a 'safe environment' orients to the risk implied by the groupworkers where being in a safe place might mitigate his risky behaviours. As with Extract 23 this interaction also links to factors relevant to risk

assessment tools, i.e. significant social influences, anti-social peers, substance misuse. Groupworkers can non-confrontationally orient to aspects of clients' talk as relevant or indicative of risk through formulation and ancillary questions. This allows clients to protect their *face*, by indirectly encouraging them to question aspects of their own talk and demonstrate their awareness of the implied risks rather than directly challenging them or claiming greater epistemic authority, i.e. telling them what the risk is. Clients can then take the opportunity to demonstrate their awareness of and how they manage risk, or, as in this case, deny or downplay the implied risk.

Other terms act as proxies for risk-talk due to their conceptual and operational positioning in both the MF: MC programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013) and in relation to wider risk management policy and guidance (i.e. Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005; Scottish Government, 2016), including references to licence conditions, restrictions, sexual offender registration, and social work and police management and supervision. Given these factors are prevalent in clients' lives, and the programme's express purpose is addressing sexual offending, it is perhaps predictable these proxies regularly feature in the talk-in-interaction. A number of authors have written about the impact these factors have had on the lives of men convicted of sexual offences including the possible inadvertent risk of increasing recidivism rates (e.g. Harris, 2017; Levenson, 2018; Mcalinden, 2005, 2010; McCartan, 2014; Mercado, Alvarez, & Levenson, 2008; Prescott & Rockoff, 2011). It is how these references index risk, risk awareness and compliance which is of interest here. This can be seen for example in Extract 27, discussed later.

'Unhelpful thinking styles' is another proxy term denoting risk related to the models of change underpinning the MF:MC programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013), which are also influential in treatment programmes for sexual offending more generally (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Mann & Fernandez, 2006):

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Schema Focussed Therapy. As noted in chapter 1, targeting cognitive processes is central to both approaches; the client's thinking is conceptualised as the problem and the solution. The MF: MC programme manuals specifically state practitioners '...should aim to assist offenders in understanding their characteristic thinking patterns which contributed towards the decision to use anti-social behaviour in any situation' (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013: 50). Here I am interested in the use of 'thinking styles' or patterns as a common language to denote risk as internal, enduring but addressable. Extract 25 and 26 in this chapter, and extract 13 in the previous chapter, demonstrate clients and groupworkers use this language. 'Thinking styles', particularly unhelpful ones, are targeted for change and positioned as, at least part of, a solution to the 'risk' problem. Again, this adds to a narrative of risk, which positions the client as both a cause of and a solution to their offending behaviour. At first sight this may appear contrary to narratives of desistance that place the offending behaviour as due to external, situation and specific factors, however this talk also places people as agentic and in control of their future, which echoes narratives of desistance from general offending (Maruna, 2001) and sexual offending (McAlinden et al., 2016).

In extract 25 'unhelpful thinking styles' are explicitly constructed in interaction as linked to offending behaviour and persistent. This extract concerns an exercise looking at Brian's life history, where he has been asked to identify how events in his life have shaped who he is today (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a: 116). The programme explicitly states this should focus on general experiences rather than a detailed exploration of sexual offending. Throughout this exercise multiple references are made to unhelpful thinking styles as pervasive and problematic across domains of people's lives, including sexual offending. Here G1 is giving feedback at the end of Brian's contribution, which lasted approximately half an hour.

Extract 25:

Group B: Session 3: [v6: 18.04]

1 G1 it seems to me like there are em Brian some maybe
2 we've pulled them out today maybe you were kind of
3 aware of them before already but there was some kind
4 of thinking styles that have probably proved to be
5 somewhat unhelpful that have been a theme in your life
6 Brian hmm well there's unhelp un un unhelpful thinking
7 styles
8 G1 yeah
9 Brian there's abusing alcohol (and pornography) as a coping
10 strategy
11 G1 yeah
12 G3 hmm (.) yeah
13 Brian I honest honestly I was sitting with the ((gestures to
14 a sheet of paper)) you know with the unhelpful
15 thinking styles
16 G3 yeah
17 Brian writing and I was like that's that one
18 G3 well done good
19 G1 yeah yeah
20 G3 good [yeah
21 Brian [the the bit that the the current offence that
22 with (Sally) going eh finding out she was going on
23 dating websites
24 G3 hmm
25 Brian that was the eh made a catastrophe
26 G3 Yeah
27 Brian that's it my fault ah ah ah ah
28 G3 Yeah
29 Brian so oh god aye I've had sh: eh sh- shed load of those

In highlighting 'thinking styles' as both 'unhelpful' and a 'theme' in Brian's life (l.3-5), G1 constructs thinking styles as problematic and enduring, i.e. recurring or pervasive. G1's meta-talk (ll.1-3) and hedging (i.e. 'maybe', 'kind of', 'some') indicates the delicacy of managing the epistemic and moral implications of suggesting to someone they have a long-standing pervasive issue, even in a context

where being aware of these issues is treated positively (evident in G3's later praise, ll.18, 20). By repeating G1's formulation, Brian affirms this, agreeing he has a pattern of unhelpful thinking styles (l.6) and expanding this to a three-part list including other offence related risks: 'abusing alcohol and pornography as a coping strategy' (ll.9-10). Brian's well-prefaced turn here functions as a marker to indicate his response will be an extended narrative (Heritage, 2015), he's starting to tell a story, which specifically links unhelpful thinking styles to his offending (ll.21-23) as opposed to keeping a more general focus. Although it is not feasible, and not currently purposeful, to show the much longer preceding interaction, here Brian is actually resuming his story, which culminates in how he committed a sexual offence. By resuming his story, rather than treating G1's formulation as news, Brian indicates he is aware of the risks around his offending; he is doing 'being a client', demonstrating his engagement and learning, and doing the expected business of the group, as I will discuss in the next section. His actions are affirmed by G3's praise (ll.18, 20).

As in this extract, the construction of unhelpful thinking styles as identifiable, enduring, pervasive, internal, risk relevant and linked to offending is mostly uncontested. Although there are instances where clients resist the attribution of certain 'thinking styles', I identified only one instance where the quality of thinking styles as pervasive is questioned as being too simplistic by a client. The language of unhelpful thinking styles is used to denote risk by both groupworkers and clients, where these are positioned as a target for change.

Everyone, groupworkers and clients, in the groupwork sessions refers to risk and makes it relevant in their talk. Risk-talk is prevalent and central in the sessions, unsurprisingly given the institutional nature of the interactions in the context of wider pervasive concerns about risk as discussed in chapter 1. However, it is through risk-talk that the participants can be seen to be evoking the specific institutional aims and the wider construction of sexual offending treatment in

interaction. In this way risk-talk can be seen to be part of the business of the group, as I will now outline.

Risk-talk: doing the business of the group

The frequency and centrality of talk about risk in the sessions of the groupwork programme positions risk-talk as, at least in part, the business of the group. Groupworkers and clients orient to and invoke risk-talk. Clients, by virtue of being in the category 'client', are expected to demonstrate their awareness of their risk in their personal circumstances, whether this is thoughts, feelings, behaviours or situations, as well as awareness of their formal restrictions, e.g. licence conditions. Groupworkers are institutionally entitled to ask questions about clients' circumstances and request these demonstrations of risk. Demonstrating awareness of risk alone is not always treated as sufficient, but often followed by an account, or a request for an account, of how risk is being managed or addressed. The relationship between the clients and the groupworkers then is asymmetrical: clients do not request demonstrations of risk awareness from groupworkers, indeed they do not generally request personal information of any sort beyond general greetings, as noted in chapter 3. This is common in institutional relationships, e.g. doctor-patient (Drew & Heritage, 1992b). However, it is worth noting here as the lack of reciprocity of talk about risk (as well as talk about change and 'good lives') demarks these interactions as specific to a groupwork programme that addresses sexual offending, as opposed to interactions in other institutional settings. In this way this talk then constructs and perpetuates the institutional encounter; it is the business of the group.

Clients demonstrate awareness of risk

In demonstrating risk 'awareness', clients may be demonstrating they are responsible or engaged in rehabilitation, in that they are doing 'being a group member' or doing 'being compliant' (Sacks, 1984). This is evident in clients initiating or responding to initiations of risk-talk. Group-workers and other group members

can then orient to this or not, making it relevant or not. Furthermore, as is often the case, it can be linked to institutional discourse which situates lay discourse in psychological or criminological language, constructing a narrative that incorporates dominant theories about sexual offending and treatment, i.e. schemas and cognitive behavioural therapy. This reaffirms a narrative where risk originates from the client, related to their previous experiences, and importantly is in their power to address. They are not necessarily held accountable for the origins of their 'risk', but they are held responsible for developing an awareness of this and managing it in the future. This is in keeping with the ethos of the Good Lives Model, where risks or criminogenic needs are positioned as obstacles to achieving primary goods, and as such need to be overcome and alternative means identified to reduce risk.

Extract 26 highlights how clients may present their awareness of risk, and how this can be treated by the groupworkers to highlight change, noting the client's action of tackling risk, and align with dominant psychological models. During check-in, Fred is giving an update of how his last week has been, reporting he has thought about another group member's suggestion last week that he move to a new house.

Extract 26:

Group A: Session 1: [V1: 06.10]

1 Fred and I'd had a:: think about it and that wouldn't help
2 me any because the problem is not where I stay the
3 problem is my thinking styles and what's inside me.
4 G2 °ah°
5 Fred so yes I could move to another area (.) but the
6 problems would follow me because they're with me
7 Dale mh hmm
8 Fred and I need to face up to them first
9 G2 mh hmm
10 Fred where I stay you know I I go out
11 G2 hmm
12 Fred it does nae stop me from going out e::h

13 (2)

14 G2 >so there was a sense then< something that you took
15 and you really reflected [on
16 Fred [yeah
17 G2 =you said [you didn't
18 Fred [yeah
19 G2 ruminate you reflected on [it
20 Fred [yeah
21 G2 positively [.hh
22 Fred [yeah I didn't worry about it [I just
23 G2 [and
24 Dale [hmm
25 G2 [uh huh
26 Fred I had a think tch analysed my options
27 G2 ah hah
28 Fred and you know there's there's no point in me moving
29 [I'm quite happy
30 G2 [hmm:::
31 Fred to stay where I am. Good house. Good area.
32 Dale ((nodding))
(15 lines omitted)

48 G4 yeah and I certainly think what was positive is what
49 we call (.) internal locus of control that
50 acknowledgement
51 Fred yeah
52 G4 that yes it is about you and it's about dealing with
53 all these different anxieties these different feelings
54 that arise within you and I think we got a clear
55 message last week where yes you are acknowledging
56 progress that you're making and that's that's it
57 Fred hmm
58 G4 so moving moving out is not going to help you to (.)
59 do that so you're staying put and you're working
60 through dealing with these uncomfortable [(feelings)
61 Fred [yeah

Here, Fred defines 'the problem' as his 'thinking styles' (l.3). As outlined above, the concept of thinking styles is heavily drawn on in the programme, positioned as characteristic of the individual and thought to contribute to them behaving in an

antisocial way at any point, including sexual offending. Fred demonstrates acceptance of this idea, noting his 'thinking styles' as problematic, characterising them as internal to him (I.3), pervasive in that they 'follow' him (I.6), and something he needs to address (I.8). Although not linked to sexual offending, Fred is demonstrating an awareness of his hazardous thinking, a cornerstone of the programme (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013). Furthermore, in stating 'I need to face up to them first' (I.8) he is doing 'being responsible' for his future progression, demonstrating agency. Fred is presenting himself as someone who is appropriately aware of 'risk'. G2's formulation notes Fred's use of appropriate 'thinking styles' in dealing with the topic at hand, i.e. thinking about moving house, by juxtaposing rumination (I.19) with positive reflection (II.15, 21). This contrast positions rumination as negative, possibly reflecting a wider understanding of rumination as grievance thinking, which has been linked to recidivism (Thornton, 2002). In this way G2 indirectly acknowledges Fred's demonstration of risk awareness by orienting towards his described actions, how he considered the other group member's suggestion. This influences the progression of the conversation as Fred affiliates with G2 (I.22) before outlining his process of 'reflecting positively', going beyond showing he's aware of his problematic thinking to showing he is doing appropriate rational thinking (II.26, 28-29, 31). In the 15 lines omitted is a formulation sequence where G2 highlights the benefit of the group in helping Fred reflect.

On lines 48 and 49, G4 makes the link to risk in relation to offending behaviour, as she formulates Fred's responsabilised account as being an expression of his 'internal locus of control' (I.49). Locus of control is a psychological concept where people will attribute events in their lives to either internal forces or external forces; the former is proposed to result in better psychological functioning, reminiscent of desistance narratives (McAnena, Craissati, & Southgate, 2016). This concept, considered to play a role in behavioural change, has influenced treatment approaches for addressing sexual offending (Harkins & Beech, 2007). Clients considered to have an

external locus of control, in keeping with desistance research, are more likely to re-offend. Using this psychology terminology, G4 situates Fred's behaviour in institutional discourse of risk and change. G4's ongoing explanation of this concept echoes Fred's earlier positioning by repeatedly using the pronoun 'you' which places Fred as central to the problem ('it is about you', I.52; 'different feelings that arise in you', II.53-54) and to the solution ('you're staying put and you're working through', II.59-60). This might reflect Presser's (2008) reference to cognitive bias in correctional treatment, where clients are asked to construct narratives that frame themselves as both the problem and solution to their offending behaviour. However, contrary to Presser's findings, these narratives were regularly presented by the clients, possibly in their doing 'being a client' and the business of the group by demonstrating risk. The use of such agentic language may support the development of desistance narratives; although offending behaviour may be attributed to external factors, future behaviour is constructed as in clients' control.

Clients' actions of showing risk awareness were not always oriented to; they may not have been recognised as expressions of such or other aspects in the client's talk were oriented to instead, achieving a different purpose. Regardless, clients continue to present these demonstrations as they 'do' the business of being a client. This is evident in Extract 27 below. Again, during the initial group check-in Brian is giving an update of his week demonstrating his awareness of and compliance with risks and norms. However, this account is challenged, and a different aspect is highlighted in relation to his compliance with specific restrictions.

Extract 27:

Group B: Session 2: [V1: 12.52]

- 1 Brian e:::h I've met with- still seeing (Katie) a couple of times
- 2 G3 great good ((nodding)) [that seems to be

3 Brian [I cooked I cooked
4 her dinner (.) and she (.) cooked my dinner on Sunday.
5 .hh I was good I didn't stay over
6 G3 right, ok why why's that good
7 Brian .hh w- w- eh
8 G3 °why's that°
9 Brian I rather dev- go eh see what the friendship's like
10 G3 ((nods))
11 Brian we- we wo-
12 G3 >just build it up<
13 Brian >we have spent the night<
14 G3 yeah
15 Brian and I'm going to buy dinner I'm cooking tonight and
16 I'm going so I'll be spending the night tonight
17 G3 mh hmm
(7 lines omitted)
25 G3 is she aware of your conviction or anything.
26 Brian no
27 G3 no
28 Brian no
29 G3 so make sure you keep yourself right in terms of your
30 registration
31 Brian yes
32 G3 and staying the night
33 Brian oh that was another reason
34 G3 >and if she isn't aware of it< then you need to be
35 kind of thinking about yeah how you explain you can't
36 stay or

Here Brian presents himself as aware, and attentive, of risk and norms in declaratively evaluating not staying the night, implying sexual relations, with his new girlfriend Katie as a positive assessment of him and his behaviour (II.1, 3-5). This type of declarative evaluation asserts Brian's epistemic primacy to the experience, and as such rights to evaluate it, preferring confirmation and affiliation (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Brian is positioning himself as someone who behaves in an appropriate way in relationships, a moral position contingent on the interactional context. As noted in chapter 2, speakers design their utterances in

relation to who the recipient is (Drew, 2012). Here Brian indicates his assessment that in this context, i.e. a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending, not staying over with his new girlfriend is considered socially acceptable or expected. This is possibly in light of Brian previously transgressing norms of sexual behaviour.

However, Brian's assertion is not agreed with, but questioned with a challenging and *face-threatening* 'why', calling for him to justify his account (ll.6, 8) (Bolden & Robinson, 2011). Brian's hesitation, repair and stutter (ll.7, 9, 11) indicates trouble in the interaction following the groupworker's disaffiliative question. This question could be seen as a request for Brian to demonstrate his risk-awareness, such as in extract 24. However, Brian treats G3's question as indicating the problem is his normative claim, i.e. not staying the night at the beginning of a relationship is good behaviour, giving a justification ('we have spent the night', l.13; 'I'll be spending the night tonight', ll.15-16) that aligns with G3's question. G3 also appears to be trying to manage the discordant fallout from the challenge of her 'why' questions in affiliating and quickly stepping in to help build the justification (ll.10, 12).

Following Brian's U-turn on what is considered 'good' behaviour at the start of a relationship, G3 orients to Brian's conviction as the risk relevant topic in this context rather than the morals of 'spending the night'. This is achieved through specifically referring to his compliance with his legal restrictions (ll.29-30, 32), which as previously noted proximally index risk. Brian's response ('oh that was another reason', l.33) is heard as an answer to G3's earlier question (ll.6, 8), why he was 'good' for not staying the night. Brian is in a difficult position. He is attempting to demonstrate his risk awareness, having failed with his original account, however his response follows G3 introducing the restrictions Brian is subject to and as such he could be seen as going along with G3's assertion. The 'oh' preface is how Brian demonstrates his assessment preceded G3's turn. Heritage (2017) highlights 'oh' in

second position assessments allows second speakers to show that they hold the same assessment as the first speaker but formed it previously and independently. 'Oh' prefaced responses also indicate the item is news to the recipient or indicate recollection. In this instance, using the past tense suggests Brian is recalling another reason for his initial evaluative claim.

G3 doesn't orient to Brian's further risk awareness demonstration, instead giving Brian advice (ll.34-36), a strategy that can undermine engagement (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). Interestingly G3 uses the hypothetical 'if she isn't aware' (l.34), grounding her advice giving and managing the threat to Brian's *face*, even though Brian has confirmed Katie is unaware of his offences (ll.26, 28). Here Brian's demonstrations of risk, as an awareness of appropriate behaviour in relationships and his legal restrictions, appear undermined in that they aren't made relevant. His narrative of being someone who thinks and behaves appropriately has not been ratified by the groupworker or the group. Brian's, albeit ambiguous, orientation to risk is not taken up by the groupworker, who instead problematises his account. This positions Brian as not risk aware, and therefore potentially 'risky'. This discord may highlight a disconnect sometimes between the clients' and the groupworkers' understanding about the 'business' of the group, and how, when and in what ways risk awareness should be demonstrated or even what constitutes normative behaviour. The interactional asymmetry between the groupworkers and clients is evident here, where by virtue of their professional role the groupworkers have more access to and awareness of the wider agenda of the programme, risk assessments, and public protection policies. Risk-talk and the goals of the interaction may then only be vaguely understood by the clients, where the groupworkers have access and the epistemic and deontic rights to determine what counts as risk relevant, which may clash with the individual's epistemic rights to their own experiences (Drew & Heritage, 1992a).

Requesting demonstrations of risk awareness

Requests for clients to demonstrate awareness of and account for possible risks are either expected or impromptu. Firstly, during module exercises risk-talk is expected, where clients' past and current experiences, thoughts, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are positioned as relevant to their offending, characterising these as risks or lexical substitutes, e.g. obstacles to a good life. In this context requests for demonstrations of risk awareness and/or accounts are mostly predictable, as the business of the group, and clients have often prepared material or homework for the exercise. Risk-talk here is often explicit and unproblematic; clients' demonstrations of risk awareness are in the main treated as sufficient through alignment and affiliation, as evident in Extract 28. Here Ben is outlining the aims of the Relationship Skills Module, one of which is 'to develop realistic beliefs about relationships with children, and to value and feel more comfortable with adults' (II.1-2) (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014: 173). The MF:MC manual explicitly links this aim to the risk factor of 'emotional identification of children' (Hanson et al., 2007; Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014: 9).

Extract 28:

Group A: Session 3: [V4: 07.43]

1 Ben eh realistic beliefs about relationships with children
2 value and feel comfortable with adults
3 G4 hmm
4 G1 tch I feel that- does that feel kind of self-
5 explanatory when you think about that does it make any
6 sense to people (.) I suppose as a statement
7 G4 hmm hmm yeah
8 G1 ahm is that area relevant to you eh Ben
9 Ben no I don't I don't think so yes the yes the the my
10 offending was indecent images
11 G1 hmm

12 Ben but I don't have I certainly don't think I have an
 13 unrealistic approach to em you know relationships with
 14 children I don't think I'm in love with a child for
 15 the rest of my life
 16 G4 hmm
 17 Ben you know I I realise there are that's not morally
 18 right and it's not legally right either so I don't
 19 have an issue there
 20 G4 hmm
 21 Ben and value and feel comfortable with adults em yeah I
 22 mean I value adult company huh my own company
 23 sometimes as well so yes em pretty understandable yeah
 24 G1 hmm alright

G1's question design respects Ben's epistemic authority over his own beliefs, in asking whether that 'area' is 'relevant' for him (I.8). Although it is a closed question, given the context, i.e. the nature of Ben's offending as viewing indecent images of children which is previously known by the group and later stated (II.9-10), Ben must account for any answer. A simple yes or no will not suffice. If he says yes, he must account for any unrealistic beliefs, and acknowledge he poses a current risk, possibly conflicting with his self-presentation. If he says no, he must account for his offending history. Ben's muddled beginning to his response illustrates this dilemma (I.9). Ben does the latter, denying the risk factor as relevant to him whilst acknowledging the nature of his offending. His use of extreme case formulation on lines 14 and 15 ('I don't think I am in love with a child for the rest of my life') strengthens his rejection of this treatment target (Pomerantz, 1986), although it leaves it open to the suggestion he has unrealistic but less extreme beliefs about children. In highlighting an intimate relationship with a child is 'not morally right and it's not legally right either' (II.17-18) he places himself as understanding wider social norms and systems. In this way Ben is doing 'being aware' of the possible risks whilst accounting for their inapplicability to his specific circumstances. Interestingly, Ben's final utterance (II.21-23) does not do as much work to justify he values and feels comfortable with adults as he undertook in justifying he does not

hold unrealistic views of children, further implying the risk indexed in this interaction is about relationships with children rather than difficulties in relationships with adults. His completion of this statement 'pretty understandable' (l.23) seemingly answers G1's initial question, 'does it make any sense' (l.5), rather than its relevance to Ben's life. Throughout Ben's extended turn G1 and G4 align with continuers, i.e. 'hmm', encouraging Ben to continue his account (Schegloff, 1982; Stivers, 2008). At the end, G1's utterance (l.23) confirms Ben's account is completed, and moderately affiliates, i.e. although not a clear positive evaluation or affirmation, it does not challenge or call for a fuller account. There is no trouble here compared to previous extracts. The request has been dealt with and this dealing was sufficiently accepted by the groupworkers.

It is interactionally troublesome when clients do not orient to risk in their talk during programme exercises, demonstrating risk is a central focus. In these instances, clients are specifically directed to orient to risk in their talk as relevant to their own life. This is demonstrated in extract 29(a) below during an exercise from the Introduction to Thinking Styles and Self-management module, the second mandatory module of the programme (see appendix E). The goal here is to 'promote awareness of schemas (thinking styles) and how they influence behaviour' (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2014a: 86). Emmet has prepared a record of 'unhelpful thinking styles' he is aware of and has described an example from this, i.e. avoiding telling his mother he broke the urn containing his grandmothers' ashes. The group have been discussing whether Emmet's behaviour was due to an 'unhelpful thinking style' or was an understandable and even appropriate action, knowing his mother would be very upset. However, as Emmet has given this as an example of an 'unhelpful thinking style' he is being asked to orient to what is relevant or problematic in this, in terms of risk.

Extract 29(a):

Group B: Session 1: [V2: 07:19]

1 G5 it does sound like there's a bit of a question mark
2 kind of on this one for yourself Emmet
3 Emmet yeah
4 G5 as to whether it is an example .hhh cause as you're
5 saying Dan it's sometimes difficult to generalise from
6 a specific situation
7 Dan hmm
8 Emmet ((nodding))
9 G5 it is when we can maybe see a pattern of a particular
10 style of thinking or dealing with things .hh and if
11 it's- I suppose the interesting thing for me there
12 ((points to flipchart)) was that you identified maybe
13 a pattern of avoiding the problem and
14 Emmet Of
15 G5 the question being eh has that been problematic for
16 you in the past [in terms of
17 Emmet [uh em no (.) eh one of the things
18 (when I think about my past is) when it comes to me
19 and my emotions and my way of thinking if I'm thinking
20 negatively I usually go to my hobbies and have kind of
21 G5 hmm
22 Emmet a break fa it I don't actually approach the problem
23 G1 hmm
24 Emmet I use other methods of solving it
25 G1 hmm
26 Emmet getting that away thinking getting it out of my mind=
27 G1 =yeah ah eh eh just what G5 said you know a pattern of
28 avoiding the problem it's kind of avoidant thinking
29 isn't it, avoidant behaviour
30 G5 and is there any kind of particular thoughts that go
31 alongside that that decision to just not deal with the
32 problem and distract yourself and get involved in
33 hobbies

G5's extended turn between lines 1 and 16 requests Emmet to orient to and account for what is risk relevant in his given example. G5 initially aligns with the previous discussion that this example is ambiguous (ll.1-2, 4-6). This encourages and receives affiliation, as G5 attends to Emmet's epistemic rights 'it does sound like...for yourself' (ll.1-2) and notes another group member's input (ll.4-6). This shows G5 has listened to and understood the prior talk. Furthermore, it closes that discussion and allows him to (re)orient to the institutional task of encouraging Emmet to identify 'avoiding the problem' as a pattern or unhelpful thinking style (l.13) by explicating it. G5's explicit request for Emmet to consider if this has been 'problematic' for him 'in the past' (ll.15-16), grounded in Emmet's previous report ('that you identified', l.12), strongly prefers agreement. However, this request is also *face-threatening*. As previously noted, reference to unhelpful thinking styles denotes risk and has negative connotations, as such 'avoiding the problem' is positioned as implicitly unfavourable. Emmet is in danger of acknowledging 'risk' he has not demonstrated prior awareness of, threatening his self-presentation as risk aware. The design of G5's extended turn attempts to ameliorate this threat through hedging, initially building affiliation and noting Emmet did identify this problem. It is difficult for Emmet to disagree with his own previous talk. This is evident in the delay of Emmet's response, 'uh em' (l.17), a feature of dispreferred responses (Pomerantz, 1984b). However, he does disagree, using similar discursive resources in that he grounds his response in his entitlement to have primary epistemic access over his experiences ('when it comes to me', 'my emotions', 'my way of thinking', ll.18-20) and authority to determine the meaning of these.

Disagreeing with the description of his behaviour as avoidant, Emmet respecifies it as a positive coping strategy ('a break fa it', l.22; 'use other methods of solving it', l.24; 'getting it out of my mind', l.26). However, Emmet's description is quickly, conflictingly, and explicitly redefined as 'avoidant' (ll.27-29), implying all the problematic associations. G5 softens the negative and confrontational attribution of avoidance by co-ordinating with Emmet's word selection ('not deal with the

problem and distract yourself and get involved in hobbies', ll.30-33) to explore the thoughts 'underneath' this behaviour, i.e. the underlying schema (Scottish Government, 2013, 2014a). This softening again shows the interactional delicacy in attributing risk characteristics to people. As we can see here where clients do not orient to risk, this is oriented to and requested by the groupworkers, indicating that risk-talk is in some part doing the 'business' of the programme.

When the request is impromptu, the 'risk' or the problem in clients' prior talk becomes relevant in the interaction when it is topicalised, mainly in the next turn and by the groupworker. Again, this topicalisation evidences 'risk-talk' as being part of the business of the group. This can take up a variety of positions in the sequence, or start a new sequence, and is frequently found throughout the interactions. Also, it is not always designed as a question but sometimes as a formulation or observation, as in extract 23. This topicalisation opens an *action-opposition* sequence that can lead to argumentation (Maynard, 1985), as it implicitly evaluates the client's prior talk as not being sufficient in orienting to and evidencing awareness of the tacit problem or risk. To some extent this sequence is evident in extract 27, where the groupworker points to the legal restrictions as risk relevant rather than assessing the moral implications of Brian's reported behaviour. Extract 30(a) below demonstrates this more clearly. Craig has finished explaining he decided to disclose his offending history to an acquaintance he has known for a short period of time through a community charity, reporting this as positive. Here, Craig explains his reasoning for this decision as not wanting to invest in a friendship to then be rejected (ll.1-2, 4), however the groupworker orients to the 'risk' in Craig's account, i.e. disclosing his offences to someone in an impulsive and unplanned way (ll.6-7, 10-13).

Extract 30(a):

Group C: Session 2: [V1: 19.24]

1 Craig if I wait and then disclose later then it will have
2 meant I'll have invested quite a lot of time
3 G3 mh hmm
4 Craig and hardship into it and just lose it
5 G3 yeah mh hmm ((shrugs and looks to G1))
6 G1 yeah eh eh it sounds like it sounds like you kind of
7 made a spur of the moment decision though to do it
8 Craig I went through every single scenario immediately
9 within five seconds
10 G1 eh::::: I mean eh that's that's that's that's the the
11 eh I suppose technical kind of definition of spur of
12 the moment kind of doing something in about within
13 about five seconds
14 G3 mm hmm
15 G1 What might have been the dangers of that of that sort
16 of giving yourself a five second window to make a
17 decision about something that could have (.) huge
18 consequences. What might be the sort of
19 Craig I could say something and it could completely backfire
20 on me

Both G3 (l.5) and G1's (l.6) 'yeahs' can be heard as acknowledgement tokens, rather than agreements, given the other actions in the local context, i.e. G3's shrug and selection of G1 through looking at him, and G1's observation of Craig's behaviour as impulsive (ll.6-7). Problematizing Craig's reported behaviour as unconsidered, following his explanation, opens the interaction to argumentation (Maynard, 1985). Craig can and does refute this characterisation of his behaviour as unconsidered, noting he quickly considered the possible outcomes (ll.8-9). However, G1 rejects this (ll.10-13). Arguments, such as this, can result in a stand-off, as clients defend their views (Vehviläinen, 2001), threatening ongoing cooperation in interaction (Weiste, 2015) and presumably group cohesion (Beech & Fordham, 2008). Impromptu requests for demonstrations of risk awareness open up the possibility

for argumentation sequences as clients resist certain characterisations of their behaviours, thoughts or situations, where these threaten the client's *face* in attributing risk to them, e.g. you are impulsive (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). In contrast, others, mostly groupworkers, encourage or try to persuade clients to acknowledge and affirm the identified problem. This is evident here as Craig is expressly asked to demonstrate his awareness of the risks ('dangers', l.15) of disclosing his offence history to someone he does not know very well, without sufficient consideration (ll.15-18). This is not a neutral question. G1's use of extreme case formulation in both referring to the 'five second window' and 'huge consequences' (ll.16--18) communicates his position clearly that such behaviour might be highly problematic. In the context of prevailing negative public attitudes towards people who have committed sexual offences such a disclosure may potentially be a significant risk to Craig. Craig demonstrates he understands his actions could have the opposite and undesired effect on lines 19 and 20, echoing G1's extreme case formulation - 'completely backfire'. Craig's answer enables a return to cooperation in the interaction, as it aligns with and affiliates to the project of G1's question. Although both constructions of the situation are plausible, due to the context and the asymmetry in the relationship, the groupworker's construction, imbued with his epistemic and deontic authority, is more persuasive and difficult for Craig to disagree with (Billig, 1996, 1999; Drew & Heritage, 1992a; Heritage, 2005).

Risk-talk is central to doing the business of the group, as clients and groupworkers both attend to this allowing and prompting clients to demonstrate they are aware of relevant risks and can also account for how they address, change or manage these. Furthermore, this demonstrates engagement and compliance with the MF: MC programme. Although sometimes risks to the clients are discussed, risk is often situated as something underlying in clients, e.g. their thoughts or traits, in line with the risk paradigm (Kemshall, 2003; Robinson, 2016), and characterised as something to be uncovered, so the client can account for their offending behaviour and do something about it, in line with desistance narratives (Harris, 2016; Maruna, 2001;

McAlinden et al., 2016). These demonstrations can contribute to the co-construction of clients' narrative identities as people who are actively aware of the risks around their offending behaviour, have learnt from these and are agentic in managing risk in the future. However, as noted, the rules of risk-talk can be opaque to clients and the groupworkers have rights to determine what is relevant or not which can lead to trouble in the interaction. Furthermore, ascribing risk attributes to clients can create interactional difficulties, as I will discuss next.

The trouble with risk-talk

As is evident in many of the previous extracts, talk about risk is often interactionally troublesome and treated delicately. Risk-talk is likely to be interactionally delicate due to the contextual difficulties in clients accepting, resisting or rejecting risk characterisations. All participants have a vested interest in doing risk-talk as the business of the group. However, in doing 'being risk aware' clients must balance presenting as understanding and addressing their risk with mitigating any presentation of currently posing a risk. There are potential adverse social and legal implications of incorporating risk-talk into self-narratives, such as stigmatisation, labelling, self-incrimination or being seen to be a permanent risk of reoffending (Digard, 2014; McAlinden, 2007; McCartan, 2014). Avoiding these may be in tension with the programme's agenda, i.e. for clients to demonstrate their understanding of the risks around their offending. Groupworkers, however, actively pursue the programme agenda through their primary control of the direction of the interaction due to their institutional status (Drew & Heritage, 1992a). As such I propose the trouble with risk-talk results from risk-talk being *face-threatening* and the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between the groupworkers and the clients. Groupworkers attempt to deal with this trouble in the interaction.

Threats to *face*

Risk-talk is *face-threatening* (Goffman, 1967; Myers, 2007) as it challenges clients' situational accounts of offending, accounts which characterise desistance narratives

(as per chapter 4), and questions the individual's current presentation as risk aware and moral. Risk-talk emphasises characteristics associated with the spoiled identity of 'sexual offender' (Goffman, 1963). The extracts in this chapter show the delicate treatment of the topic of risk, seen in interaction through hedging, speech perturbations, softening words, and, at times where there is resistance, efforts being made to realign to maintain cooperation, as in extract 23. Re-aligning achieves different purposes for different participants. For groupworkers it maintains engagement and progresses the group interaction and for clients it maintains their self-presentation which might be as accountable, appropriate or engaged (Scheff, 2013). In this way all parties are saving *face*, in doing 'being a groupworker' or doing 'being a client' (Goffman, 1967). Risk-talk can further threaten the clients doing 'being a client', as they can be seen to be failing in doing the business of the group. When demonstrations of risk awareness and action are oriented to as sufficient there is less, if any, delicate treatment; instead these are often praised and affirmed, as in Extract 26 and 28. Clients are doing what's expected of them in showing they can identify, account for and explain how they address risk. This is more common when clients initiate demonstrations of risk awareness, i.e. when the client is incorporating their awareness of risk into their self-presentation, rather than when this is requested, i.e. when risk is indexed by the groupworker. Requests for demonstrations of risk awareness can threaten the self-presentation of the client, as seen in extracts 27, 29(a) and 30(a), in challenging their expressed capacity, understanding or awareness. Clients will work to save *face*, for example denying/ avoiding acknowledging the risk (e.g. extracts 23 and 29(a)), aligning with the groupworkers' project (e.g. extract 30(a)) or claiming prior awareness (e.g. extract 27).

That is not to say risk should not be discussed, and as seen groupworkers and clients treat it as central to the business of the group, but given its delicate nature risk-talk might be resisted where it threatens clients' narratives and problematizes their expressions or behaviour. Provoking this resistance through confrontation or

directive action might offer interactional advantages, such as prompting a client's display of stance towards a topic which can then be oriented to or achieving other social actions such as enabling advice giving (Vehviläinen, 2001). This directive action is evident in extract 31, during Fred's formulation exercise, which involves making links between factors in his life and his offending behaviour. Fred has described his wife was unfaithful and Ethan's question here (ll.1-2) relates to the timeline of Fred's offending behaviour and his wife's infidelity.

Extract 31:

Group A: Session 4: [V4: 19.57]

1 Ethan one more question Fred where your family was before
2 in-between that or was it after
3 Fred .hh hh
4 Ethan if you don't mind
5 G2 hmm
6 Fred after
7 Ethan it was after
8 G2 and wha- what's kind of behind your question cause I'm
9 interested in that [Ethan
10 Ethan [.h(h)h my I'm trying to make a
11 picture of what was going on
12 G2 ok
13 Ethan and to see how he [was
14 G2 [yeah
15 Ethan feeling
16 G2 but how how is it important whether it was before or
17 after
18 Ethan it's because then it gives me an indication
19 G2 ah hah
20 Ethan then where he went wrong in life to see if was it
21 before the marriage broke up before you found out
22 about the cheating or was it after so we can link a
23 few things up final things to work- it's just the way
24 I work man
25 G2 so is ((wife)) responsible for what happened
26 [then in terms of

27 Ethan [((nods)) tch .hh nah
 28 G2 can I just kind of open that out cause that's
 29 important though
 30 Ethan it's
 31 G2 was that the trigger
 32 Adam (unclear)
 33 G2 or you know what's
 34 Ethan it's a trigger
 35 G2 what's peoples' thoughts
 36 Adam in terms of Fred's behaviour [as
 37 G2 [yeah
 38 Adam I I would say no [th- that that
 39 G2 [hmm
 40 Adam [Wife has no
 41 Fred [Wife has nothing to do with my behaviour
 42 Ethan not with your behaviour no
 43 Adam [you can
 44 Fred [it's a contributing factor
 45 Adam yeah [I was going to say
 46 Fred [as to what I ended up doing
 47 Adam yeah [that's
 48 G2 [ok
 49 Adam a factor in it
 50 Fred but it take me a long while to get (.) out of the
 51 mindset
 52 G2 ok
 53 Fred that it's her fault
 54 G2 ok
 55 ? mh hmm
 56 G2 peo[ple hear that that's really important
 57 Fred [whereas it's not- it's not her fault
 58 G2 aye

Once the timeline is clarified (I.6), G2 twice requests a rationale from Ethan for his question initially in broad manner (II.8-9) before being more specific (II.16-17) as to why the timing is important, problematising his initial question. Ethan's responses portray him getting a 'picture' (I.10) of the situation, working out 'where [Fred] went wrong' (II.20-23). This could be treated as sufficient; Ethan is trying to gain a

fuller understanding of Fred's circumstances. However, G2 then issues a third request as a so-prefaced closed question which specifies the agenda she is pursuing (Bolden, 2009), challenging the possible implication in Ethan's turn that Fred's wife is to blame for Fred's offending (I.25). This is *face-threatening* for Ethan, indicating, for example, he is not holding Fred accountable for his offending or he potentially holds hostile attitudes towards women, a risk factor on SA07 (see Appendix F). Ethan's hesitations and confused answering, both nodding and saying 'nah' (I.27), of this question indicates this is troublesome for him. He may be struggling with the agenda, presupposition or constraints of the question, which may raise concerns about his stance being 'wrong'. Groupworkers can pick up on possible 'wrong' answers or anti-social expressions at a later stage (Vehviläinen, 2001). By directing his questions at the other group members, G2's extended questioning on lines 28 to 29, 31, 33, and 35 serves to protect Ethan's *face* by obstructing him from giving the 'wrong' answer, avoid interactional conflict and encourage a prosocial response from the group, that Fred's wife is not responsible for his offending behaviour. This pursuit is successful as Adam and Fred go on to construct this prosocial response, that Fred's wife is not responsible (II.38, 40, 41), which Ethan concedes to (I.42). The group members as Ethan's peers are called on to address what G2 has highlighted as risk relevant in Ethan's talk; such peer challenge is considered a benefit of groupwork (Mann & Fernandez, 2006; Ware et al., 2009). The role then of Fred's wife's behaviour is characterised as a 'contributing factor' (I.44) of Fred's offending behaviour, which complements wider desistance narratives of attributing offending to external, specific and unstable factors whilst Fred also maintains his *face* of being fully accountable and having changed – 'it take me a long time to get out of the mindset...that it's her fault' (II.50-51, 53) 'it's not her fault' (I.57). G2 stresses the importance of Fred's learning and change (I.56), giving it an institutional seal of approval.

G2's so-prefaced question has been directive in constructing how Fred should position his wife in his 'story' of offending, and how such factors can be placed as

contributing to offending but not causal, to maintain accountability and capacity to change. Johnson (2002), in looking at police interviews with child victims and adult suspects of crime, highlighted by directing the focus onto particular aspects in the talk so-prefaced questions serve a narrative sequencing function. She noted in the more formal context of police interviews the use of *so-* (and *and-*) prefaced questions can result in the interviewer telling the story, rather than the interviewee, as they determine what is relevant, orienting to and constructing a particular narrative direction. This is as a result of the asymmetry in institutional interactions, where the professional is predominantly the questioner and the client conversely is in the role of answerer. Drew and Heritage (1992a: 49) assert this means professionals 'gain a measure of control over the introduction of topics and hence of the "agenda" for the occasion'. This asymmetry may also be a source of trouble in relation to risk-talk, as will be discussed further below.

Asymmetry in the institutional interaction

Talk about risk highlights the normative and asymmetrical relationship between the groupworkers and the clients, as the groupworkers are designated as having expertise regarding 'risk' associated with offending and determining the 'right' course of action, but apply this knowledge to the clients' personal experience, situation and capacity, to which the clients themselves have primary epistemic access and rights. Interactional research has demonstrated professionals giving advice can be similarly problematic due to the normative and asymmetrical nature of institutional relationships (e.g Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Jefferson & Lee, 1981; Perakyla, 1995; Vehviläinen, 2001, 2003). Although institutional interactions are characteristically asymmetrical (Drew & Heritage, 1992a), advice-giving can challenge the client's epistemic authority regarding their life and experiences in telling them what they 'should' do. Likewise, talk about the risks relevant to someone's offending, or even more broadly to their general behaviours, thoughts and actions, can challenge the person's epistemic authority. This also challenges their *face* where they are not presenting as aware of these risks, as previously

noted. Furthermore, in the MF:MC groupwork sessions, when risk is not treated as sufficiently demonstrated or affiliated with it is most often followed by the client being advised on what they 'should' do, which runs into some of the same issues as sequences of advice giving; passive resistance, rejection and expressions of prior knowledge (for example Extract 27).

Extract 32 here is an example of how risk-talk is pursued when the client's talk is not treated as having sufficiently oriented to the risk, resulting in the groupworker giving advice. This extract is from the check-in at the beginning of the group.

Extract 32:

Group C: Session 2: [V1: 22.34]

1 Bill Eh I'm just discussing with Clare my social worker and
2 John who's the offender management officer about going
3 on the internet at [home so
4 G3 [ok ah ha
5 Bill and there's talk about agreement thing to be signed
6 and .hh I also have to look up some economical
7 supplier ha hah.
8 G3 yea yes
9 Bill I mean money is the main issue [too.
10 G3 [yeah of course
11 Bill I'm not looking for big tv packages but just a
12 G3 yeah [some internet
13 Bill [an internet connection.
14 G3 And how how do you feel about having the internet back
15 at home.
16 Bill .hh Well I had it before and ah it's a very convenient
17 thing you know it's eh almost everything is done
18 online
19 G3 yeh absolutely
20 Bill these days. I'll use it for OU studying job search
21 instead of having to keep going to the library and
22 G3 yeah
23 Bill being restricted for [time .hh

24 G3 [So it's useful.
25 Bill [and place.
26 G3 [How:: for yourself do you- d'you feel able to manage
27 that in a way that's safe.
28 Bill a::h I I'll be alright yes [yes
29 G3 [mh hmm
30 Bill I'm quite confident about that.
31 G3 Good great and what you'll do and it's eh A did one
32 quite recently actually is you'll get an internet
33 safety plan [together
34 Bill [hmm
35 G3 =ahm and there'll be certain kinds of things you'll
36 say I'm going to use the internet in this way I'm not
37 going to use it in that way you know whatever [kind=
38 Bill [yeah
39 G3 =of suits you whatever seems best and it's different
40 for different people.
41 Bill ((nodding))
42 G3 eh But it might be that you start em using it at quite
43 a restricted way initially [that
44 Bill [hmm
45 G3 you might say I'm only going to be on it for an hour
46 at a time or I'm going to avoid using it after seven
47 at night or whatever kind of fits for [you
48 Bill [hmm hmm
49 G3 =in terms of thinking about when you used to offend on
50 line with were the risks what were the times that were
51 problematic or whatever
52 Bill hmm
53 G3 and it's about tailoring that to kind of meet you and
54 your needs em and then that can change over time as
55 well so
56 Bill hmm
57 G3 so if you you might start being restrictive and you
58 know build up quite quickly
59 Bill yeah
60 G3 to something different em but yeah good to hear that
61 that's moving forwards as well
62 G1 ((nodding))

Bill is sharing news he is discussing the possibility of accessing the internet at home (ll.1-3), an activity currently restricted, and G3 marks receipt with 'ok' (l.4). So far, the interaction is smooth and reciprocal; Bill is reporting and G3 is acknowledging the report. Bill goes on to describe the practical financial issues involved (ll.5-7, 9, 11), and G3 is firmly affiliating (ll.8, 10, 12). G3's *and*-prefaced question (ll.14-15), implying a continuation of Bill's talk, respecifies the focus, how he feels about having the internet back at home rather than the practical circumstance. *And*-prefaced questions are more common in institutional interactions than in everyday conversation, with these questions having an agenda based character in the former where there is an orientation to a particular course of action (Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994). G3's question is not explicitly about risk, although implied, leaving Bill to interpret the question. Bill's focus can, and does, continue to be on the practicalities (ll.16-18, 20-21, 23, 25). G3 then makes an explicit and impromptu, and as such possibly troublesome, request for Bill to demonstrate his awareness of risk and risk management on lines 26 and 27, asking how he can 'manage that in a way that's safe'. However, the ambiguity of the question means an account is not necessary; Bill can provide an answer as to how he feels. For example, if asked 'how will you manage your internet use in a way that's safe?' the answer would require an account as it makes the process relevant. Asking 'How:: for yourself do you- d'you feel able to manage that in a way that's safe' (ll.26-27) makes B's feelings relevant, to which he has epistemic access, so his answer allows him give his assessment 'I'll be alright' (l.28), which he reinforces by declaring his confidence (l.30).

Bill has not made his awareness of the possible risks or how he might manage these explicit. However, because the question was ambiguous his self-presentation has not been undermined. In the absence of Bill displaying his awareness of risk the groupworker pursues the agenda – how one might manage internet usage safely – through a lengthy advice-giving sequence. This persistence of advice-giving, continuing on this course of action regardless of it being made relevant, was noted

by Heritage and Sefi (1992) in their analysis of home visits by Health Visitors to first time mothers. They outlined a process of stepwise entry into advice-giving: identifying a problem, enquiring about the problem, eliciting the mother's understanding or actions and then tailoring the advice to this. In this way advice-giving was made relevant, could be non-adversarial in being fitted to the mother's account, is specific and can be delivered in a way that is not *face-threatening*. However, they noted more often advice-giving was initiated without any preparation, increasing the risk it would be unwarranted, inappropriate and hence resisted. Stepwise entry into advice-giving may reduce resistance as it elicits the client's views in detail so the professional can fit their perspective to those views (Vehviläinen, 2001). Furthermore, it may alleviate difficulties from the asymmetry of knowledge between the professional and the client, and calibrate the two perspectives as it draws heavily from the client's understanding of their own circumstances. In extract 32 however no problem is jointly identified, as such G3's advice is at risk of being unwarranted.

Heritage and Sefi (1992) further highlighted in their study that advice giving went predominantly unmarked, i.e. 'hmm', 'yeah', 'that's right'. This is evident here from Bill's minimal responses from line 34 onwards. Heritage and Sefi (1992) described this as passive resistance to advice: the advice is not overtly rejected but it is not overtly accepted. In this instance, Bill's passive resistance highlights what is at stake, his self-presentation as being risk aware and the groupworkers' *face* as being responsible for making explicit how to manage risk. Bill does not treat G3's advice regarding an internet safety plan as news, implying prior knowledge (also extract 27). In fact, Bill implicitly references this plan in his opening statement ('agreement thing to be signed', l.5), however this is not oriented to. Bill's aligning, however, enables G3 to continue her advice-giving, albeit seemingly unwarranted, fulfilling her agenda of discussing how internet use is managed safely.

In relation to the relationship's asymmetrical nature, G3 may have rights to advise on aspects of risk management, and Bill may not be able to overtly reject this advice without threatening his self-presentation. However, these positions are also in conflict, as G3's stance implies Bill is not aware of this process, and Bill's stance implies G3's advice is not necessary. The trouble may also arise from their roles changing, where Bill has been moved from the position of news teller to advisee by G3's actions, and arguably, given his passive resistance, Bill does not occupy the role of advisee (Jefferson & Lee, 1981).

In extract 32 passive resistance to the delivery of advice is evident, resulting in a change of topic, moving on to talk to the another client. Without Bill's uptake, all that is interactionally evident is G3's awareness of risk management and internet safety processes. The discussion also comes to quite an unsatisfactory end, dwindling out in the absence of affiliation (ll.60-61). Had G3 oriented to Bill's initial mention of 'an agreement thing' (l.5) a slot may have been made available for Bill to talk about what an internet safety plan would involve for him, which may have latterly, as per stepwise entry, made advice-giving a relevant action. Lack of orientation to the relevance of clients' utterances and pursuit of advice-giving is also evident in extract 30(b), a direct continuation of extract 30(a), where Craig has advised he disclosed his offending behaviour to an acquaintance and he accepted that such behaviour could have dire consequences (30(b), ll.19-20). However, instead of orienting to this, G1 gives advice, which Craig actively rejects using his epistemic authority.

Extract 30(b)

Group c: Session 2: [V1: 19.24]

15 G1 What might have been the dangers of that of that sort
16 of giving yourself a five second window to make a
17 decision about something that could have (.) huge
18 consequences. What might be the sort of

19 Craig I could say something and it could completely
20 backfire on me
21 G1 yeah ahm (.) I'm also I think em picking up on what
22 you said about ok ahm rather than sort of going about
23 it where you invest in a relationship and then you
24 tell them the truth and that almost feels like you
25 haven't been em you haven't been honest with them eh
26 ahm on the other hand I'm thinking about how how
27 things have gone with D where he has held back and
28 that's worked out quite well hasn't it for you
29 ((looks to D))
30 Dave ((nodding))
31 G3 ((nodding))
32 G1 so that it doesn't necessarily have to be that way
33 G3 Hmm
34 Craig I guess it's just with me I've always believed that-
35 personally I believe that telling the truth would be
36 better by far than telling a lie because
37 G3 mh hmm
38 Craig in my experience when I've told a lie to someone and
39 then they've found out the truth it's just come back
40 to bite me in the ass and it's hurt ten times more=
41 G1 hmm
42 Bill mh hmm
43 Craig =then if I'd just came out and said it fa the
44 beginning
45 G1 .hh one of the problems with spur of the moment
46 decisions Craig is that they tend to be kind of
47 emotionally led then kind of tch cognitively about
48 how how you actually think
49 Bill ((nodding))
50 G1 it's more kind of driven by emotions and that's
51 sometimes the problem with that so it could be
52 something to kind of look at in the future
53 G3 hmm
54 G1 a little bit but it sounds like in this case it's
56 paid off you know it's working out
57 Craig ((nodding))
58 G1 which is

59 Craig it's one of the few upsides to my mind racing a lot
60 cause you can get through things pretty quick go
61 through different scenarios pretty quick
62 G1 mh hmm

G1 only briefly acknowledges Craig's affiliation with his action to encourage Craig to accept impulsive disclosures are problematic with a 'yeah' (l.21), before embarking on advice-giving (ll.21-29). G1 attempts to embed the relevance of advice by orienting to Craig's previous speech, i.e. he didn't want to lie and continue to invest in a relationship as a disclosure at a later point might result in rejection (Extract 30(a), ll.1-2, 4). Orienting to truth-telling as the important element in Craig's reasoning, G1 juxtaposes Craig's behaviour with another group member Dave's behaviour, using a third person story which is common in advice-giving (Jefferson & Lee, 1981), to differentiate between not being honest and holding back as separate actions. Dave and G3 affiliate with G1's positive assessment of holding back as appropriate (Stivers, 2008). Reference to other group members' behaviours or experiences can be used as a resource for establishing normative actions.

With no response from Craig, G1 orients to Craig advising there are other options, albeit softly ('doesn't necessarily', l.32). This is strongly rejected by Craig as the interaction unfolds, where he draws on his experience to which he has epistemic rights ('just with me I've always believed that- personally', ll.34-36; 'in my experience...it's hurt ten times more', ll.38-40, 43-44). He also evokes a moral argument: being honest is better than lying (ll.35-36). Craig's rejection of G1's advice is difficult to challenge, given it's grounded in Craig's epistemic rights to his own experience and the moral norms regarding lying. Clients may account for their failure to attend to 'risk' by drawing on their personal experience as not indicative of the 'risk' topicalised by the groupworker. However, in this instance Craig did orient to the risk implied by G1 (ll.19-20).

Moving into advice-giving, without embedding the advice appropriately in Craig's prior turns, threatened solidarity. Furthermore, G1 misses an opportunity for an empathic moment in response to Craig's statement that he's been hurt previously (ll.38-44). Engaging with an empathic response may have promoted solidarity and allowed for supportive disagreement (Weiste, 2015), and also in relation to the GLM given further indication of what is important to Craig, what primary good he is trying to achieve, to support him to develop more appropriate means of achieving this (Ward & Marshall, 2007). Instead G1 returns to his original argument about the issues with impulsive decision making (ll.45-48; 50-52). With no affiliation from Craig, as with extract 32, this sequence ends with the groupworker attempting to end the argument and re-establish cooperation ('in this case it's paid off', 'it's working out', ll.54-56). Craig moves back to his original position, presenting himself as being cognitively adept rather than impulsive (ll.59-61), undermining G1's agenda of highlighting the difficulties with impulsivity, a risk factor for sexual recidivism (SA07; Hanson et al., 2007). More overtly than extract 32, extract 30(b) demonstrates the difficulties in advice giving especially where there is no preparatory groundwork done in the interaction. Here the advice-giving backfires in re-enforcing rather than addressing Craig's position.

Dealing with trouble

As seen in the extracts in this chapter, talk about risk is treated delicately, the delivery of this talk is softened, epistemic and moral implications are managed and the technical terminology downgraded. Even with this delicate treatment risk-talk can still be troublesome, particularly where it is resisted or rejected. Groupworkers (Extracts 23, 30(b) and 32) and at times clients (Extract 23) will often try to promote solidarity when there has been trouble. This is reflective of argumentation sequences which can result in a stand-off with no resolution achieved (Maynard, 1985), so in order to move forward the sequence may be closed with a uniting action, e.g. agree to disagree. Groupworkers also try to manage resistance to risk-talk and avoid argumentation by using the person's own previous report and calling

them to attend to the business of the exercises (extract 29(a)), making the question explicitly risk relevant (extract 28), bringing in other group members (Extract 31) and eliciting their views. Eliciting the views of the group members, in common with the stepwise entry to advice-giving, can provide an entry point in the interaction for risk and risk characteristics to be suggested and more readily accepted. This action manages the asymmetry in knowledge and interaction between the groupworker and the client, where normativity is established by the group and not solely the groupworkers. This is evident in Extract 29(b) below, which follows on from 29(a) where Emmet was resisting being described as having an avoidant pattern of thinking. At the end of 29(a), which is reproduced at the beginning here, G5 has aligned with Emmet's description, not using the word avoidance but talking about not dealing with the problem, turning to hobbies (ll.30-32) which softens the attribution of avoidance as a characteristic of Emmet.

Extract 29(b):

Group B: Session 1: [V2: 08:24]

30 G5 and is there any kind of particular thoughts that go
31 alongside that that decision to just not deal with the
32 problem and distract yourself and get involved in
33 hobbies
34 G1 hmm
35 G5 And is this ringing bells with with anybody else cause
36 I suspect we're all guilty of avoidant
37 G1 °ye::ah°
38 G5 coping at times. Wh-what's the kind of thinking that
39 goes with that.
40 G1 What technically might someone say to themselves that
41 kind of supports that
42 Andy For me it's usually 'fuck it'.
43 G5 right yeh yeh
44 Andy if that helps.
45 G1 Just kind of yeah just put it all down.

46 Emmet I'm kind of yeah that's exactly
47 G1 yeah
48 Emmet for me it's just nah I need to get away fa that
49 [that's it.
50 G1 [yeah
51 G5 [((nodding)) Too much hassle can't be [bothered
52 Dan [Yeah it's too
53 much work to deal with this much easier to just ignore
54 it or avoid it.
55 G5 ((nodding)) Yeah I can deal with it tomorrow.
56 G1 Yeah this is too painful for me to think about right
57 now.
58 Brian Yeah I don't want the stress now
59 G1 Yeah
60 Brian dinnae dinnae need the stress
61 G1 ((nodding))
62 G5 yeah
63 G1 so that's that's the kind of thinking style that we em
64 perhaps beginning to recognise for you ((gestures to
65 Emmet)) is one of em 'to hell with' can you can you
66 kind of give that your own words I don't wa(h)nt to
67 use And(h)y's cause that's his words his way of
68 looking at it how would you
69 describe it wh-what would be the thinking for you that
70 goes with that
71 Emmet for me it's just like the things I think are behind
72 this are something I've always had growing up is where
73 I just (.) anything bad that happened is just
74 ((gestures pushing away)) eh nah no I'm not wanting
75 this so if I go any further going with it something
76 bad's going to happen so I'm just like no nah I'm just
77 going to I'm avoiding that I don't want to do it

It is on lines 35, 36, 38 and 39 where G5 elicits the other group member's views, highlighting 'avoidant coping' as something everyone does, including the groupworkers. This sidesteps disaffiliation, saving *face*, and attends to the asymmetry of knowledge by placing everyone as 'knowing' this and knowing what

'thoughts' are related to avoidant coping. In this way the other group members can contribute to the construction of what avoidant thinking is and there is less pressure on Emmet, as he is not isolated or stigmatised for demonstrating this thinking style. Emmet firmly affiliates with the description put forward by Andy (I.42) and G1 (I.45). Following a lively group construction of the thoughts that accompany avoidant coping (II.42-62), G1 returns to G5's suggestion in extract 29(a) that avoidant thinking is a thinking style attributable to Emmet (II.63-70). To reduce resistance, this is delicately worded, manages epistemic authority and echoes the prior talk Emmet affiliated with, building an empathic moment (Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Maynard, 1991). Emmet now accepts and affiliates with the suggestion, outlining his account (II.71-77) and using the previously contested word: 'avoid'. In this way, Emmet can accept the risk characteristic of avoidant coping into his narrative without damaging his self-presentation, his *face*, as the asymmetry of the interaction is managed through a stepwise entry into the groupworker making such a suggestion.

Trouble in interaction about risk-talk is also managed by situating the suggestion of risk as an opportunity for the client to demonstrate their risk awareness, how they can manage risk and how they have changed, maintaining their *face*, rather than the groupworker offering advice. For example, in extract 33 below the topic of the talk, i.e. the risk that Dave will be angry if his partner rejects him following his offence disclosure, and the action of the talk, i.e. an impromptu request for Dave to explain how he would manage this risk, are consistent between the groupworkers' talk. However, G1's request is resisted, and G4's is oriented to. In orienting to the nature of Dave's resistance and building on G1's talk, G4 gives Dave an opportunity to demonstrate his behavioural awareness and change.

Extract 33:

Group C: Session 1: [V5: 11.01]

1 G1 [yeah] So if if if if you're ahm I think what you're
2 saying Dave is (.) you know you're perhaps prone to
3 ahm having a kind of (2) ((gesturing exploding)) tsk
4 ehm a sort of eh you know a reaction if you like (.)
5 in [the first] in the first
6 G4 [°uh um°]
7 Dave °yeah°
8 G1 few minutes so what what what would be helpful for you
9 to do† you know get under circumstances where
10 ((girlfriend)) doesn't react the way you were hoping
11 (.) [(unclear)]
12 Dave [eh nah I wouldn't I wouldn't]
13 G1 What would you need to do† what would you how can you
14 cover yourself=
15 Dave =I wouldn't need covered in that sense what I'm saying
16 like the anger wouldn't be towards ((girlfriend))
17 G1 hmm=
18 G4 =hmm
19 Dave The anger would be (.) to::wards=
20 G1 =right
21 Dave myself=
22 G1 =yeah
23 Dave and like the people who have pushed me like into
24 having to tell her (.) but at the end of the day I
25 want to tell her as we(h)ll
26 G1 yeah I suppose what I'm getting at is you know if if
27 if you make if you're prone to making bad decisions
28 when your emotions are getting ahead of you (.) you
29 know just be aware of that so don't make decisions
30 i::mmediately give it some time cause you might make
31 better decision la-later on ((nodding))
32 Dave °yeah°
33 (3) ((G4 gesturing))
34 G4 Also I'm guessing also thinking about while any anger
35 you may feel may not be directed towards
36 ((girlfriend)) but it's how that might be conveyed

37 Bill hmm mm hmm
38 G4 (how will you) be able to control that emotion if
39 ((girlfriend)) (goes [eh])
40 Dave [I prob-]
41 G4 THa thank you thank you Dave it's been nice knowing
42 you but no I eh °you know°
43 Dave I probably (.) like (.) go into a shell for a day or
44 two and just sit with my own thoughts
45 G4 °hmm hmm° ((nodding))
46 Dave I would just (.) ruminate and (.) people say
47 ruminating's bad but sometimes like for me it's good
48 because I think about it and I keep thinking about it
49 until I get a clear answer
50 G4 right I eh I think (.) I totally agree rumination has
51 become (.) aligned with negativity and never bu-
52 (.) rumination is problem solving when its eh right
53 this is what's going on and we help- use it to resolve
54 issues then it is- it's the same thing- same process
55 what it is how do I deal with this=
56 Dave =yeah=
57 G4 =rather than why is this happening to me which is
58 negative

Again, there are perturbations, hedging and softening in G1's extended turn indicating this is a potentially delicate and tricky *face-threatening* question, asking how Dave will manage the risk of being angry if his girlfriend reacts negatively (ll.1-5, 8-11, 13-14). He embeds this delicate topic in Dave's prior extended turn (not shown), managing Dave's epistemic authority ('I think what you're saying Dave', l.1) in his formulation of Dave losing his temper as a typical reaction (ll.2-4). This strategy, as seen in research on advice-giving, attempts to curtail resistance as it is difficult for people to reject their previous talk (Vehvilainen, 2001). However, it is a precarious strategy as, given the ambiguity of talk, resistance can be based on the prior talk's meaning being misunderstood, as is evident here. Dave corrects the premise of G1's suggestion, that Dave would lose his temper at his girlfriend (ll.15-16), instead clarifying any anger would be towards himself (ll.19, 21) and others

(II.23-24). Dave's clarification here has sidestepped the question. As before, G1 provides an answer in giving advice on what Dave should do (II.26-31), which, after a pause, Dave minimally acknowledges (I.32), as per passive resistance (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). Dave has not fulfilled his role in the interaction as 'answerer' or demonstrated his risk awareness as part of the 'business of the group'.

Building on the previous sequence, G4 returns to the question of what Dave will do if he is angry from being rejected. She can embed this request more securely following Dave's clarification, specifying although Dave's anger might not be towards his girlfriend the expression of anger remains a relevant concern which requires Dave's account (II.34-36, 38-39, 41-412. Groupworkers can build on each other's talk to achieve the pursued action, although not always successfully (e.g. extract 24). The groupworker not actively participating in the ongoing interaction can observe and address the trouble source in the interaction, allowing the action to be accomplished rather than abandoned. Another example of this joint action pursuit can be seen when one groupworker explains the meaning of the other's talk, either explicitly or in translating it (e.g. extract 29(b)). In this case Dave accounts for how he will manage his potentially negative emotional response (II.43-44, 46-49) answering G4's respecified request which reflects G1's advice to 'give it some time' (II.29-30). In his description, Dave presents himself as someone who problem-solves, countering any potential understanding that sitting with his own thoughts is negative in his definition of rumination (II.46-49). G4 supports and reinforces Dave's account (II.50-58) indicating to Dave his answer is acceptable, reworking the concept of rumination as problem-solving, and he is doing 'being a client' in orienting to and accounting for risk.

By tag-teaming, the groupworkers create opportunities for clients to demonstrate their awareness of risk, management of risk and change, contributing to constructing aspects of desistance narratives, i.e. people who have learnt from their

past mistakes and have agency in their future. Giving clients an opportunity to talk about risk in the context of demonstrating change appears to reduce the resistance to risk-talk. Through their combined efforts, the groupworkers can embed suggestions of risk through stepwise entry by orienting to clients' talk, avoiding threatening the clients' self-presentation, or *face*.

Summary

Risk-talk pervades the talk-in-interaction in the groupwork sessions, explicitly and implicitly. In this programme risk is considered broadly, beyond the narrow definitions of risk assessment tools (e.g. LS/CMI, SA07), encompassing thoughts, behaviours, feelings and circumstances that might have adverse effects in any area of clients' lives, not only in relation to sexual recidivism. This may reflect the influence of the Good Lives Model, where offending is seen as resulting from the deficient and harmful means used to pursue common life goals, and thus a reflection of wider difficulties in the person's life. The frequent and mutual orientation to risk-talk highlights talk about risk is doing the business of the group. Echoing findings from previous research on criminal justice interventions with men convicted of sexual offending (Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2008), here clients are expected to demonstrate their awareness of risk. Beyond these expectations, clients also use risk-talk to performatively display their learning from and understanding of the difficulties in their lives, including their offending, their motivation to change, and their reformation.

Although attribution of offending to situational, external and unstable factors may be allowed or even encouraged, as in chapter 4, clients are also expected to remain accountable for identifying internal and stable risk factors specific to them (e.g. unhelpful thinking styles, alcohol abuse) and addressing these. Risk is thus constructed as how the person (i.e. internal factors) has interacted with their environment (i.e. external factors) to create the circumstances where offending, or

other negative events, have occurred. Hence, clients are held responsible for their future behaviour whilst being allowed, in a constrained way, to provide an account for their past behaviours, including their offending. Similarly, Digard (2014) noted, from his research interviews, probation officers supervising people convicted of sexual offences also emphasised the future and the construction of a positive future self for their clients but highlighted this was difficult at times when clients were stuck in the past. Instead of quashing hope (McNeill, 2016b), talk about risk is, at times, used as a resource to generate hope and agency, deemed important for desistance, i.e. knowing what went wrong in the past can give you a sense of control over the future.

However, talk about risk is often troublesome in interaction, especially when not initiated by the client but introduced by the groupworker, and may threaten engagement. This is due to the threat risk-talk can pose to clients' self-presentation, or *face*, and the asymmetrical nature of the institutional interaction where groupworkers ultimately have epistemic and deontic authority. Consistent with previous research on offending (e.g. Auburn & Lea, 2003; Kras & Blasko, 2016; Presser, 2004) and interaction (e.g. Sacks, 1984; Wooffitt, 1991), clients in this study usually made efforts to present themselves in a positive and normative manner in interaction; i.e. demonstrating awareness of the risks related to their offending, having a moral 'core self', compliance with the programme and either having 'changed' or being motivated to change. Groupworkers challenging clients' prior talk can contradict this presentation and as such threaten their *face*, where the client can try to maintain their self-presentation or align with the groupworkers' suggestion of risk. The asymmetry in interaction warrants this action, where groupworkers, due to their professional status, are enabled to direct the topic and agenda (Drew & Heritage, 1992a), determining both what is relevant in clients' talk and if their talk is sufficient in doing 'risk awareness'. However, it is important to note this orientation to risk is often equivocal in the groupworker's turn, leaving the

agenda hidden and the clients to guess the implication in the groupworker's question or suggestion.

Suggestions of risk can open up argumentation sequences, as clients resist *face*-threats in the implication or attribution of risk, or can result in a mismatch of interactional roles, as the groupworker's action of suggesting risk can shift these *in situ*, e.g. from troubles teller to advisee (Jefferson & Lee, 1981). Furthermore, there is an asymmetry of knowledge, where the groupworker holds expertise about sexual offending and the institutional agenda and the client holds expertise about their own experiences, as noted in chapter 3. Waldram (2007) in his ethnography of a prison-based treatment programme for addressing sexual offending highlighted that the former is privileged in these settings. This is evident here, to some extent, in that the groupworkers are interactionally allowed to impart their knowledge, which threatens clients' *face* and claims authority over clients' knowledge domains, as evident from the regularity of advice-giving when clients' responses are not treated as sufficient. Echoing Heritage and Sefi (1992), clients primarily respond with passive resistance and expressions of prior knowledge, or less often overt rejection or acceptance of the advice. A more step-wise approach may ameliorate resistance, where advice is embedded in and made relevant to the views of the client, rather than being positioned as confrontational, which is shown to be ineffective in addressing sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003). Such an approach echoes that of supportive disagreement (Weiste, 2015), outlined in chapter 3, which promotes engagement as it manages both epistemic authority and threats to *face*, or self-presentation, whilst trying to achieve congruence and potentially empathic communion, encouraging cooperation and solidarity in interaction.

A central or dominant focus on risk, without a relative balance with a forward focussed, strengths based approach to change, is proposed to frustrate the process

of desistance and leave clients with a negative experience of supervision (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; McAlinden, 2007, 2016; McNeill, 2016b; Ward & Maruna, 2007). Considering the micro-level interaction highlights that risk-talk can fundamentally undermine clients' *face*, both negative and positive, in interaction, as it makes relevant specific aspects of the client's talk or experience, aspects linked to a problematic, spoiled and undesirable identity. It is understandable that constraining a person's self-determination and imposing an unwanted identity on them would leave a bad impression of criminal justice interventions. Given identity is relationally and interactionally constructed, if risk-talk is relentless, particularly in being driven by the practitioner's agenda, the result will likely be the construction of the identity of 'risky offender' or in relation to men convicted of sexual offending 'a species entirely consumed by sex' (Lacombe, 2008: 56). As such a dominance of risk-talk which eliminates aspects of a client's talk that may indicate a story of desistance or 'seeds of moral agency' (Waldram, 2010: 252) will clearly thwart the construction of desistance narratives that can promote desistance and reduce reoffending.

As McNeill (2006) outlines, collaborative and explicit negotiation about risks, needs, and strengths, and how to handle these, as well as the wider opportunities to develop human and social capital, are central to a desistance paradigm for addressing offending behaviour. In my study, groupworkers appeared to try to balance and incorporate risks, needs and strengths in the talk-in-interaction to maintain engagement and promote change. Clearly at times, however, risk-talk was favoured over consideration of strengths, possibly reflecting the wider pressure on criminal justice practitioners and interventions to control risk and protect the public from sexual offending, a misguided and ultimately unachievable responsibility (McAlinden, 2007, 2016; McNeill, 2016b). As noted in chapter 1, an amalgamation of risk and strengths-based approaches is essentially what the GLM has proposed to do, in recognition that a focus on risk reduction is not sufficient to motivate clients to change (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Marshall, 2007). Whether the approach

here is due to the influence of the GLM or related to the practitioners' approaches to practice influenced by their personal experiences, values and feelings, (e.g. McNeill et al., 2009; Ross, Polaschek, & Ward, 2008; Ward, 2014; Willis, Levenson, & Ward, 2010) however is not clear.

Incorporating internal, enduring and stable attributions of risk into their wider narratives may be problematic for clients as it can have wider ramifications for their personal and public identity, as they may be stigmatised and characterised as a 'sexual offender' (Digard, 2014). The troubles in risk-talk, as a threat to *face*, may indicate a resistance to accepting categorisation as a 'sexual offender'. Resisting the label of 'sexual offender' is proposed to contribute to desistance (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016). However, a narrative incorporating risk can provide coherence across the client's life, so they can account for their offending behaviour and the processes of their current rehabilitation to enable them, ideally, to reintegrate into society. In this way risk-talk can provide a framework for people to account for and understand their pasts, a feature of desistance narratives (Maruna, 2001; Ward & Laws, 2010). Risk-talk balanced with accounts that separate the behaviour from the person, emphasise a good core self and promote a discourse of hope, agency and change contribute to the construction of narratives of rehabilitation. However, these narratives cannot survive in isolation, where arguably the individual's change must be recognised more widely 'by the community..., by the law and by the state' (McNeill, 2016b: 152) in order for people to be able to live a good life.

Ch. 6: Discussion

In this thesis I have used the fine-grained micro-level methodologies of conversation analysis and discursive psychology to explore what is going on in the talk during sessions of the Moving Forward: Making Changes groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending in Scotland. I will briefly discuss the use of these methods to allow access to the 'black box' of criminal justice social work, making visible taken-for-granted or tacit practice. Following this I will discuss three primary findings, and their implications, from this exploration: 1) key practice skills are constructed in talk as actions which promote engagement to build effective working relationships, 2) narratives of desistance are evident as co-constructed in interaction, and 3) risk is a central feature of the business of the groupwork sessions for both groupworkers and clients, and as such integral to the construction of clients' narrative identity as rehabilitated (or not). I will then outline the practical application of these findings to social work, discuss a number of limitations of this study and make suggestions for future research, before drawing together some final conclusions.

Accessing the 'black box'

A central aim of this study was to explore the 'black box' of criminal justice social work practice in the context of the MF: MC groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour. Although talking is a central activity in criminal justice social work interventions, either in one-to-one supervision or groupwork, what actually happens when practitioners and clients talk to each other has remained cloaked, including how this talk might contribute to desistance and public protection, which are primary aims of criminal justice intervention (Scottish Government, 2010a). A small number of studies have looked at different aspects of interaction in rehabilitation settings using the micro-level interactional research methods of conversational analysis and discursive psychology (e.g. Auburn, 2005,

2010; Auburn & Lea, 2003; Juhila & Pöso, 1999b; Kirkwood, 2016; Kirkwood & Laurier, 2014; van Nijnatten & Stevens, 2012; van Nijnatten & van Elk, 2015). Maruna (2001: 112) suggested using micro-level research methods, such as these, to look at what happens in interventions with people who have offended and identify the 'micromechanisms of change'.

Building on the pilot project by Kirkwood (2016), this study further demonstrates how conversation analysis and discursive psychology methods can open up the 'black box' by making practitioners' 'routine practices and ordinary language' visible and explicable (Lynch, 2001: 136). In chapter 2, I outlined the suitability of these methods in examining interaction *in situ*, before demonstrating their applicability in this study across the three empirical chapters. Using these micro-level research methods revealed: 1) how key practice skills are evident as conversational actions and resources which practitioners use to progress the interaction, contingent on the institutional context, and maintain engagement (chapter 3), 2) how desistance narratives are co-constructed in talk as they are prompted, negotiated and performed in interaction (Chapter 4), and 3) how risk is a central feature of the business of the groupwork sessions for both groupworkers and clients, and drawn on by both in the interaction to construct clients' narrative identity as rehabilitated or at risk (Chapter 5).

Furthermore, using these methods I identified a number of interactional challenges groupworkers and clients face, which have implications for rehabilitation practice and theory. There were two situations in particular when these challenges appeared. Firstly, when the sequential, moral and/ or normative constraints on the unfolding interaction were in conflict with each other, for example describing yourself as a good person whilst also avoiding self-ascribing morality, echoing Pomerantz's (1978, 1984b) work on preference and compliment responses. In this instance the groupworkers and other group members were able to accept and ratify

the client's moral goodness on their behalf. Others have a central role in supporting individuals to navigate these interactional challenges that may prohibit them from constructing a desirable narrative. This role may require more than recognising and reflecting back change or certain identities (Maruna, LeBel, et al., 2004) but actually holding the identity of a person as good on their behalf in the interaction. Holding a positive identity of a client is a demonstration of warmth and respect, as that person is valued apart from their behaviour (Marshall et al., 2003; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Furthermore, it is likely to give a sense that the practitioner believes in the person, which clients value in the working relationships (Rex, 1999) and contributes to desistance (Maruna, 2001). In this way, rehabilitative efforts that are shaming or project a spoiled identity (Goffman, 1963) are unlikely to support desistance as there is little interactional room to construct a positive identity. This supports Braithwaite's (1989) assertion that stigmatising approaches are counterproductive in the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have offended.

The second situation occurred when there were tensions between the client's stance and the institutional stance, represented by the practitioners, which threatened the ongoing cooperation and engagement in the interaction. Waldram (2007, 2010) noted a similar tension in his ethnographic study of a prison-based CBT groupwork programme addressing sexual offending. He positioned these 'stories' as in conflict with each other, where the client's story was dismissed and dismissible in favour of the dominant institutional 'truth'. He stated clients either attempted to resist the institutional narrative, maintaining their life story, or surrendered to their story being rewritten although it may be meaningless to them. Similarly, Harris (2016) noted that some of the men in her study resisted the narrow narratives of change and risk prescribed by the primarily CBT treatment context, others took these on board and another group appeared to parrot them without the sense they integrated this story into their self-narrative. However, as previously noted, how Harris (2016) distinguished between stories being real or parroted is not clear as both groups were noted as desisting. Digard (2014) highlighted a further difficulty;

these dominant institutional narratives are not socially acceptable narratives, where concealing the 'truth' may be a more adaptive and appropriate strategy.

The tension here, primarily outlined in chapter 5, also relates to the asymmetry inherent in the institutional relationship (Drew & Heritage, 1992a). The groupworkers as institutional representatives have more control over what kind of story is allowable. However, clients can and do resist this, particularly when it threatens their self-presentation, *face*, or encroaches on their epistemic territory. Rather than the conflict noted by Waldram (2007, 2010), my analysis highlights this tension could be delicately and supportively negotiated to avoid confrontation and maintain engagement, possibly promoting narrative re-construction. Avoiding confrontation is of central importance as confrontation is ineffective in groupwork addressing sexual offending (Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003), however challenge and disagreement are necessary for change (Weiste, 2015) and necessary to address antisocial attitudes which play a role in offending behaviour (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Trotter, 2006). Practitioners must balance their deontic rights to determine what is allowable and normative and their epistemic expertise in relation to sexual offending and clients' individual offending histories, with the primary rights a client has to their own thoughts, feelings and experiences and the client's *face* in order to negotiate this tension in a non-confrontational manner. Here, the local and practical management of this balancing act is an expression of the dilemma of care and control, which pervades social work practice (Day, 1979; Dickens, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2006; Trotter, 2006). That is, with these methods we can see how the macro-level concept of care and control is evident in the micro-level interaction. As Ross et al. (2008; see also Skeem et al., 2007) highlight, although our understanding of practice skills and meaningful engagement is drawn from counselling and psychotherapeutic research and theory, this dual aspect of the practitioner's role in working with involuntary clients qualitatively sets it apart from counselling practice. However, it has been given little

attention beyond considering expressions of role clarification or effective use of authority (e.g. Trotter, 2006; Trotter & Evans, 2010; Van Nijnatten & Van Elk, 2015).

Adding to a small body of research using interactional approaches to examine criminal justice practices, in this study I have demonstrated the benefit and potential of conversation analysis and discursive psychology to look in the 'black box' of criminal justice interventions. I will now discuss three key findings: how key practice skills build effective working relationships through promoting solidarity and cooperation in the ongoing interaction, how narratives of desistance are co-constructed in interaction and how risk, as central to the business of the group, is critical to the construction of clients' identities as rehabilitated.

Key practice skills and engagement

There is broad agreement the practice skills of warmth, respect and empathy are necessary to engage people who have offended, generally and sexually, in effective working relationships, which in turn are related to positive outcomes (e.g. Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Marshall et al., 2002, 2003; McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005; Raynor, Ugwu-dike, & Vanstone, 2014; Raynor & Vanstone, 2015, 2018; Ross, Polaschek, & Ward, 2008; Trotter, 2006; Rex, 1999). Empathy and warmth particularly, as practitioner features, have been empirically linked to positive groupwork treatment outcomes for men who have committed sexual offences on measures such as improved coping (Marshall et al., 2002).

Despite this agreement the potential mechanisms of how relationship building practice skills are evident in the interaction and how they contribute to building working relationships have not been fully elucidated in research on rehabilitation, as the focus has mainly been on measuring the association between the working relationship, or features of this, and treatment outcomes (Ross et al., 2008). This is interesting, as practitioner training has been developed from research identifying positive associations between features of the working relationship and the

treatment outcomes (see Bonta et al., 2011; Chadwick, Dewolf, & Serin, 2015; Raynor & Vanstone, 2018; Trotter, 2006; Marshall et al., 2002) without clarity about the mechanisms of engagement in the moment-by-moment interaction. As Horvath and Muntigl (2018) note, although it is useful to understand the aggregated effects of identified skills on treatment outcomes, these cannot specify what is effective *in situ*. In this study I aimed to explore how these key relationship building practice skills are evident *in situ* in the interactions between the clients and practitioners during the groupwork sessions of the MF: MC programme. In doing so, in chapter 3, I also established how these practice skills build engagement in the ongoing interaction, as actions which maintain solidarity and cooperation, to create working relationships. Being able to engage clients or having an engaging style is highlighted as important for fostering desistance (McNeill, 2001; Rex, 1999).

Rather than looking for warmth, respect and empathy, as independent, observable or reportable phenomenon in interaction, as in previous criminological research, I considered how demonstrations of these 'common-sense' skills were incidental to the interaction, contingent on the institutional context, and as such needed to be locally and practically managed by the groupworkers and clients (Sacks, 1995). From this perspective these skills can be seen as features and components of fundamentally cooperative actions in interaction, specifically managing *face*, handling epistemic authority and creating empathic moments. Doing these cooperative actions demonstrates a person's self-presentation and autonomy (their *face*), and their rights to knowledge (epistemic authority) about themselves are valued in the interaction, as well as communicating that the speaker's experience, and their stance towards this, is understood by the listener (empathic moments). In this way the descriptions in previous research of what comprises warmth, respect and empathy (e.g. Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003; Ross et al., 2008; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Trotter, 2006; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012) are evident as mutually constitutive of these cooperative actions which groupworkers and clients do in

interaction. For example, the action may be to protect the client's *face*, where the meaning is that the client is valued and respected, expressions of warmth and respect.

The practice skills are not neatly linked, one skill to one action, but have significant overlap and similarity, which may explain the variation in delineating and defining the separate skills in previous research. For example, in creating empathic moments groupworkers were also managing client's negative and positive *face* in supporting their action and stance, respectively. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of the skills as cooperative actions highlights their interdependence for successful demonstration and engagement, e.g. achieving empathic communion in interaction is reliant on also being warm and respectful. Bearing in mind this interconnectedness and overlap, it may still be helpful to delineate which skills are more evident in which specific actions. In this case warmth appears quite aligned with managing issues of *face*, respect is reflected in managing epistemic authority and empathy is evident as creating empathic moments. Warmth and respect however appear particularly enmeshed, where demonstrating value for the person is observed through the actions of managing *face* and epistemic authority, reflecting the similarities in their definitions (as per chapter 1 and 3).

As customary features of interaction, people are continually and systematically doing these cooperative actions (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967; Heritage, 2011, 2013; Raymond & Heritage, 2006). The very routineness of them may be why the skills of empathy, warmth and respect fall under the rubric of tacit knowledge, so well-known that they require no comment 'as they are, or should be, familiar' to people working in the field of addressing sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, 2005: 114). This routineness may also hint at why these skills are difficult to train people in (Ross et al., 2008) and why the effects of training decrease over time

(Bonta et al., 2008). Some people are likely to be more interactionally adept than others at managing face, epistemic authority and empathic communion in their everyday conversations. However, without being able to identify how these skills are done beyond hazy abstraction we are led to believe these are inherent traits rather than learned and honed communication skills. Furthermore, as our patterns of communicating are so ordinary to us, and there is a desire to maintain *face* and professional expertise, it would be very easy to return to old habits when the structured approaches and instructions of training are no longer fresh in your mind.

Managing *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion are cooperative actions as they promote and maintain engagement and solidarity in interaction (Clayman, 2002; Goffman, 1967; Heritage, 2011; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). That is, these actions allow the talk-in-interaction to progress and people to together create a shared construction of their world, which is fundamental to building social relationships (Heritage, 2011). This communion in interaction reflects what Bordin (1979) called the bond, the nature of the relationship, an essential element in forming a working alliance or relationship (Ross et al, 2008). In the context of the MF: MC programme, as with most institutional contexts, it was normally incumbent on the groupworkers as the professionals to engage the clients, both practically, as they were more regularly in the position of asking questions and evaluating responses (Drew & Heritage, 1992a), and professionally, as social workers are expected to build effective working relationships (McNeill et al., 2005).

In this study the groupworkers tried to engage clients by doing the cooperative actions in their talk, through their design and positioning of conversational resources including question design, alignment, affiliation and formulation. As outlined in chapter 3, previous interactional research has highlighted the role of these resources in fostering engagement and building a working alliance (e.g.

Horvath & Muntigl, 2018; Muntigl & Horvath, 2014; Symonds, 2017; Weiste, 2015; Wynn & Wynn, 2006). Using conversational resources in this way, groupworkers were able to engage clients by eliciting clients' narratives, demonstrating they were listening to and understood the client, encouraging group participation, and focussing clients on the programme and institutional agenda, e.g. for the client 'to develop an understanding of themselves and their behaviours from a different perspective' (Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013: 13). This list mirrors skills identified across previous research by, for example, Trotter and Evans (2012), Vanstone and Raynor (2012), Marshall and colleagues (2002, 2003, 2005), and Beech and Fordham (1997) as associated with positive treatment outcomes. These skills include active listening, reflective listening, paraphrasing, encouraging dialogue and getting clients' assessment of their needs, encouraging group responsibility and open expression of feelings, being directive, and linking to the purpose of the intervention.

Positioning the key practice skills as mutually constitutive of the cooperative actions of managing *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion also illustrates how a non-confrontational approach maintains engagement in the ongoing interaction. As noted above, challenge and disagreement are considered necessary for promoting change in clients' views in therapeutic settings (Weiste, 2015). Muntigl and Horvath (2014: 341) note, in therapy settings, pursuing challenge or disagreement as 'a profitable line of discourse' for narrative change can threaten cooperation in interaction and as such a balance must be struck. In relation to addressing offending behaviour, challenging and disagreeing with antisocial or concerning views is necessary to reduce reoffending (Andrews et al., 1990; Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Trotter, 2006). This is a central interactional challenge that arises, when the personal and institutional stories are in tension, as previously highlighted.

Marshall and colleagues (2002, 2003, 2004) found taking a non-confrontational approach, contrary to prevailing wisdom around addressing sexual offending behaviour, resulted in better treatment outcomes and lower attrition rates. They describe a non-confrontational approach as being supportively but firmly challenging, whilst also being empathic and respectful. By attending to the cooperative actions in how they approach challenge and disagreement, practitioners can demonstrate empathy, warmth and respect whilst they dispute clients' accounts or stance. That is, they can effectively disapprove of the account or stance without undermining the client's self-image, autonomy or primary rights to their own experience, maintaining engagement in the ongoing interaction. As highlighted in chapters 3 and 5, this can be achieved through supportive disagreement (Weiste, 2015), where the practitioner makes an effort to express understanding of the clients' emotional experience, highlights the issue with the client's perspective whilst also validating and accepting it is true to them, works to find some congruence between their two perspectives, avoids argument, and respects the client's autonomy. This echoes Heritage and Sefi's (1992) outline of stepwise entry into advice giving, where the advice is grounded in and affiliates with the prior speaker's talk. In this way practitioners encourage clients to engage with re-evaluating their account by offering different perspectives rather than imposing the practitioner's view, where the latter is more likely to result in resistance as clients seek to save *face* and assert their epistemic rights (Vehviläinen, 2001, 2003). This aligns with motivational interviewing, an approach advocated for use in practice to address general and sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003; Marshall & Serran, 2004; McNeill et al., 2005; Vanstone & Raynor, 2012). A supportive disagreement approach is particularly in keeping with the motivational interviewing concept of 'rolling with resistance', where practitioners avoid confrontation, adjust to client resistance and seek to develop the discrepancy between the clients' goals and their current behaviour or attitudes (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).

Finally, in relation to the role of key practice skills in promoting and maintaining engagement to build an effective working relationship, authors have highlighted that practitioners working in this area face a moral dilemma of wanting to condemn the clients and also contribute to their rehabilitation (Dealey, 2018; Ward, 2014; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Laws, 2010), and that rehabilitation programmes are confrontational and deficit focussed (Marshall, Fernandez, et al., 2003; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Waldram, 2007). Condemnation, confrontation and a sole focus on risks are proposed to have adverse effects, e.g. programme attrition, increased recidivism. Dealey (2018: 30) noted practitioners may fear being seen to collude with the client, 'or risk identification with their actions, or be unable to deal with feelings of revulsion that arise in the course of discussing sexual offending behaviour.' If engagement is seen as a function of managing *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion, as means of displaying empathy, warmth and respect, it is clear how this would be grossly undermined where practitioners' fears and desires to condemn the person dominated their practice. Namely, practitioners maintaining a punitive *face* which confronts both the client's self-image and autonomy, asserting their deontic and epistemic authority over the client's experience and avoiding communion and affinity with the client is likely to result in passive or active resistance, and possibly disengagement. These actions will not promote cooperation and solidarity but result in rupture and trouble in the ongoing interaction. The resultant ruptures may then be attributed to the client's behaviour and non-compliance, rather than situating them as, at least partly, system or practitioner generated (Ross et al., 2008).

I have outlined how demonstrations of the key practice skills of warmth, respect and empathy build effective working relationships by being actions that promote cooperation and solidarity in interaction. The resulting interactional style reflects Braithwaite's (1989) model of reintegrative shaming, where a person's selfhood and morality are valued but the harmful acts are condemned to encourage positive

change. This is aligned with previous research on practice skills in rehabilitation. However, rather than outlining a list of skills to follow, understanding how these skills are evident *in situ* as cooperative actions that promote engagement will enable practitioners to be more adaptive and responsive to individuals in interaction. It is through this continued engagement, using the practice skills to navigate situations that create interactional challenges, that clients' stories of themselves and their offending behaviour are shaped in the interaction, which I will discuss next.

Co-constructing narratives of desistance

Through the close analysis of interaction in the sessions of the MF: MC groupwork programme, in this study I illustrated how practitioners, and other group members, shape clients' narratives through subtle and explicit aspects of their talk. Unlike narrative methods, conversation analysis and discursive psychology are interested in how stories 'get embedded and are managed, turn-by-turn, in interaction rather than in the internal structure or isolated story events' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2016: 135). As such I have explored how the stories of who a client is are constructed, negotiated, resisted and promoted in the interactions. Previous research has observed probation and treatment programmes for addressing offending behaviour as possible sites for re-constructing self-stories (e.g Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Waldram, 2007). In chapter 4 I outlined how features identified in the narratives of people desisting from offending, both general and sexual, through *post hoc* interviews, are collaboratively produced, presented, and promoted in the talk-in-interaction during the MF: MC groupwork sessions. These features were: providing a situational account for offending behaviour, constructing a good 'core self', and expressing generativity (Farmer, McAlinden, & Maruna, 2016; Maruna, 2001, 2004; McAlinden, Farmer, & Maruna, 2016).

Rehabilitation is framed as a relational process in the desistance paradigm (Anderson, 2016; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Maruna, LeBel, et al., 2004; McNeill, 2006), although this is mostly described in terms of individuals' change in behaviour being recognised and reflected back to them by others (Maruna & LeBel, 2010). Rehabilitation interventions are proposed to promote desistance by ratifying the person's efforts to desist, supporting them to reflect on their lives and increasing their self-belief by believing in them (Farrall et al., 2014; King, 2013a; Maruna, Porter, & Carvalho, 2004; Rex, 1999). Anderson (2016) highlighted the importance of the practitioner as audience in co-constructing desistance narratives, primarily in accepting and acknowledging the performance of desistance in the telling of such a narrative. From the micro-level analysis in this study, it is evident the practitioners, and other group members, are not a passive audience but active contributors to the narrative that emerges as their talk necessarily shapes and directs the story in specific ways. As Cavarero (2014) notes, although the person may be the protagonist in their own life story, multiple voices can tell the narrative. Narrative identities of desistance are evident here as shaped through dialogue and interaction. This challenges the distinction between secondary/ identity desistance, as the internal and individual change in identity, and tertiary/ relational desistance, as the external and collaborative acceptance of and support for that change (see Maruna & Farrall, 2004; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). Narrative identity is necessarily relationally constructed in interaction, where others don't just support or accept a change in narrative identity but actively engage in its moment by moment construction.

Practitioners and other group members were central in enabling the accommodation of the features of desistance narratives into clients' stories, as they were able to support clients with two key challenges: how to construct the self as a moral, good person and balancing accountability for offending behaviour with providing a situational account. The first of these challenges arises from both the normative expectations of interaction, i.e. people avoid self-praise (Pomerantz,

1978), and the context of the interaction. Presenting yourself as morally good during a programme to address your sexual offending behaviour is contentious and problematic as you have reprehensibly transgressed the moral social code. This is evident in Waldram's work (2007, 2008, 2010). People who commit sexual offences are widely socially depicted as abhorrent, morally bankrupt, intractable beings (Dealey, 2018; Harris, 2017; Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007; McAlinden, 2007, 2016; Ward, 2014; Williams & Nash, 2014). Considering this, people who have sexually offended are not entitled to assess their own morality, as such whether they are morally rehabilitated is determined by others. Arguably this is the case, to a greater or lesser extent, for any type of offending behaviour (e.g. Braithwaite, 1989) and is related to the important role of recognition and ratification from others highlighted in previous desistance research (Maruna, 2001; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016).

In attributing virtuous characteristics to individuals and positively evaluating their generative activities, practitioners and other group members in this study were able to construct a person's identity of having a positive core self on their behalf. This action of creating a moral identity for a person may contribute to that sense of someone believing in them, an aspect noted as important in promoting desistance and building effective working relationships (Burnett & McNeill, 2005; Maruna, 2001; Maruna, LeBel, et al., 2004; Rex, 1999). Furthermore, it promotes the availability of a desirable self-image and allows clients reject the label of 'sex offender', which Farmer and colleagues (2016) found was central for their participants desisting from sexual offending.

The second challenge – providing a situational account whilst maintaining accountability for offending behaviour – required a delicate balance to be struck that was individually and institutionally acceptable, which practitioners and clients navigated together managing issues of *face*. Situational accounts here were

enabled, functioning to separate the behaviour from the self and by implication contribute to the construction of a good core self-identity. Previous work has critiqued the notion of situational accounts as evidence of cognitive distortions which precede and precipitate offending, highlighting making excuses after the fact is a normative behaviour when you have transgressed societal norms and mores (Auburn, 2010; Auburn & Lea, 2003; Maruna & Copes, 2005; Maruna & Mann, 2006). This study supports the assertion that situational accounts are not necessarily pathological, but rather normative, being treated here as potentially supporting the creation of a liveable self-identity and a foundation for desistance narratives. This is contrary to previous literature on programmes addressing sexual offending which note clients are expected to take full, unequivocal responsibility and situational accounts are deemed to be excuses, justifications or minimisations (Maruna & Mann, 2006; Waldram, 2008; Ware & Mann, 2012). Clients and practitioners here both oriented to the expectation that clients would maintain responsibility for their offending (or how they came to be on the MF: MC programme in the case of clients denying their offences), but this could be qualified by explicitly or implicitly attributing offending behaviour to external and situational factors. This reflects Kras and Blasko's (2016: 1750) empirical observations of how men desisting from sexual offending explained their offending behaviour *post hoc* as a 'unique combination of both responsibility taking and externalization of responsibility'. Accountability was also managed through talk about risk, which I will discuss next.

I have discussed how desistance narratives are co-constructed in the talk-in-interaction in the MF: MC programme groupwork sessions, highlighting this context as a site for (re-) storying who a client is. This demonstrates that secondary or identity desistance is necessarily relational, achieved through interaction with, real or imagined, others. The joint endeavour of interaction enables the moral and normative interactional dilemmas an individual who has sexually offended faces in constructing a socially acceptable self to be circumnavigated. However, particularly

in relation to sexual offending, research has highlighted such sites demand risk-laden, formulaic accounts which do not attend to clients' expressions of morality or desistance, resulting in potentially distorted or rote explanations of offending and self (e.g. Digard, 2014; Harris, 2016; Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2008, 2010). The accounts demanded are further noted as problematic in embedding an identity of 'sex offender' in the narrative, which is proposed to be at odds with clients' normative attempts to present a socially acceptable self (Digard, 2014; Farmer et al., 2016; Lacombe, 2008) and as, highlighted in chapter 5, desistance. However, as I will discuss next, rather than holding clients unequivocally responsible for their past behaviour, which might threaten a socially acceptable self-image, risk-talk in my study served to maintain clients' accountability for their future behaviour, current awareness of risks around their offending and compliance with the group. In this way, risk-talk reflects the sense of control over and focus on the future people desisting from offending are proposed to have (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; Maruna, 2001; McAlinden et al., 2016) as well as the ethos of the GLM (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Willis et al., 2013).

Co-constructing narratives of rehabilitation: the role of risk-talk

Risk-talk pervaded the groupwork sessions, drawn on by the clients and the groupworkers to achieve social actions in the interaction. The centrality of risk-talk as a feature of the business of the group means, in this context, it is not possible to build a self-story devoid of risk, as clients and groupworkers all oriented to the need for clients to incorporate risk and risk awareness into their narrative. As discussed in chapter 1, given the dominance of the RNR model of intervention, the wider rise of the risk paradigm and the specific aims of the MF: MC programme, the centrality of risk-talk in this programme is perhaps unsurprising. As previously stated however programmes for addressing sexual offending have been criticised for being overly focussed on risk and avoidance goals (e.g. Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2008; Laws & Ward, 2011). The dominant focus on risk is argued to be unsupportive of desistance narratives in reinforcing an identity of the person being continually at risk of re-

offending (McNeill, 2016b). Risk-talk could initially appear to undermine the co-construction of desistance narratives in positioning risk as inherent to the person, contradicting the idea of a good 'core self' and constraining the attribution of offending to situational factors.

However, in this study I identified a balance where narratives that emphasised situational accounts and a good 'core self', as per desistance research, were promoted alongside narratives that identified and accounted for risk. This balance may be due to the underpinning influence of the GLM on the MF: MC programme encouraging an focus on approach goals, rather than avoidance goals, to support clients to move away from offending by identifying and developing prosocial ways of achieving their primary goods (Willis et al., 2013). Furthermore, the GLM encourages a broader consideration of people's lives, not solely looking at their past offending behaviours, risks and criminogenic needs but also their wider narrative history, present intentions and future aspirations. Within this risk is an essential feature threaded through clients' stories of their lives. Lacombe (2008) reported risk-encoded narratives are a salvation and a prison allowing clients to establish an identity as rehabilitated but also tying them to the identity of always being a 'sex offender'. In partial agreement with Lacombe (2008), clients here used risk-talk as a resource for salvation to demonstrate their change and awareness, presenting themselves as rehabilitated. However, in my study risk-talk also enabled them to distance themselves from the label of 'sex offender' as they outlined learning from their awareness, making them a different person to who they were. The groupworkers also used risk-talk to demonstrate client's change and self-awareness. This echoes Harris' (2016) assertion that treatment can provide an opportunity and a framework for clients to understand their offending in a meaningful and useful way. Furthermore, risk-talk served to indicate a sense of agency and control over the future, i.e. what will you do differently in future. These functions of risk-talk all echo elements of desistance narratives previously identified

in men desisting from sexual offending (Farmer, McAlinden, et al., 2016; McAlinden et al., 2016).

Talking about risk was however at times contentious and resisted, particularly where it threatened clients' self-presentation in interaction. This aspect appears to align with the idea of 'deviant smithing', noted as a common feature of criminal justice interventions, where the characteristics and predicates linked to offending are reinforced, overshadowing other aspects of the individual's character to create the Master Status (Becker, 1963) of a criminal identity (Digard, 2014; Lacombe, 2008; Maruna, 2001). In this study, rather than reducing clients to an inventory of risks or facts, risk-talk was balanced with attending to other aspects of clients' narrative identities in the talk-in-interaction, in keeping with the ethos of the GLM. Groupworkers often worked to maintain engagement and cooperation in interaction in managing such resistance, finding common ground between the narratives rather than imposing a narrative focussed on risk. At times however they asserted their deontic and epistemic authority, which was particularly evident in this study as instances of unsolicited, unanchored advice-giving rather than direct confrontation.

However, in the strive to maintain engagement there may be unintended consequences of risk-talk. For example, as macro-level discourses of risk factors are translated to the micro-level in more palatable terms (e.g. extract 22, chapter 5) it creates a different meaning, possibly opening a separation between the individual understanding and the institutional understanding. This can have knock on effects, as Juhila and Pöso (1999b) noted in their study of interviews between practitioners and clients regarding the latter's suitability for community service. They highlighted the agenda of the practitioner is usually unclear to the client, and as such clients do not know the risk criteria or 'hidden codes' they are being assessed against. This leaves clients unable to fully appreciate the identity being institutionally

constructed, an identity that is translated into a formal written report. However, other influences beyond the interview are also likely to influence how the clients were characterised on paper, such as prior knowledge of the person, colleagues' opinions and case records (e.g. McNeill, Burns, Halliday, Hutton, & Tata, 2009). How risk factors are translated into practice may also reflect the considerable difference Kemshall (2000, 2003) has noted between the institutional views and practitioner views of risk and its operationalisation.

Risk-talk is oriented to as a necessary part of the talk-in-interaction in the groupwork programme. Individuals' narrative identities are of course wider than discussion about the risk related to their offending (Ward & Marshall, 2007; Ward & Maruna, 2007). However, in order to construct a desisting identity people who have offended need to demonstrate they can account for and understand their past offending behaviour (Maruna, 2001; Ward & Laws, 2010). Risk-talk provides a framework in which to do this, so they can create a credible self-story that is personally and institutionally acceptable. This talk is ideally underpinned by the wider evidence base encapsulated in actuarial risk assessments, although at times, as noted above, this is potentially lost in translation or undermined by prioritising clinical judgement (Ansbro, 2010) which is generally found to be less reliable than actuarial assessment (Bengston & Långström, 2007; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Hanson & Bussière, 1996). However, as per previous research, where there is too much focus on risk the framework is likely to be prescriptive, not adaptable to and difficult to incorporate into individual's own narratives. So, although risk-talk and desistance narratives could be in tension, as has been previously noted, when taken together they enable a narrative of rehabilitation to be co-constructed. In this narrative individuals can explain their offending past and their non-offending future in a personally and institutionally acceptable way.

As highlighted above, rather than just witnessing and accepting the presentation and performance of narratives of rehabilitation, practitioners and clients actively co-constructed these narratives through their talk, facilitating 'normal smithing', or the creation of a conventional identity which Maruna (2001) proposed provided a way out of a deviant identity. However, in the case of men convicted of sexual offending it is possible they had a conventional identity prior to conviction which has been spoiled, possibly irrevocably in the eyes of society. Echoing Digard's (2014) concerns, potentially there is no narrative accounting for sexual offending behaviour that is socially acceptable. Whether a narrative of rehabilitation which accounts for and demonstrates understanding of a criminal past, while projecting a realistic non-offending future is relevant, acceptable, supported and sustainable outwith the treatment programme remains to be seen, although there is some indication it might be helpful (Digard, 2014; Harris, 2016).

I have discussed the role of risk talk in co-constructing narratives of rehabilitation. Risk-talk is ubiquitous in the groupwork sessions and as such influences how client's self-stories are constructed. Although talk about risk has been proposed to potentially detract from the development of desistance narratives, here it is evident risk-talk can contribute to desistance when it is used to give an account for and demonstrate understanding of past offending behaviours (Maruna, 2001; Ward & Laws, 2010), and project a sense of control over the future (Maruna, 2001; McAlinden et al., 2016, Farmer et al., 2016). Narratives of rehabilitation were co-constructed through the creation and negotiation in talk-in-interaction of client self-stories that encapsulated features of desistance and risk.

I have outlined the primary findings and implications from this study; making visible the tacit key practice skills of empathy, warmth and respect and how they promote engagement in interaction which contributes to building effective working relationships, how desistance narratives are co-constructed in interaction and are

necessarily relational, and how risk-talk as a central feature of the talk-in-interaction contributes to the creation of narratives of rehabilitation by providing a framework for clients to account for their offending in their wider life story and project a non-offending future. Having done this, I will now outline how some of these findings have been applied to social work practice, and further potential applications.

[Application to social work practice](#)

The findings from this study can directly and usefully contribute to training and development of practice with people who have offended. As Raynor and Vanstone (2018) highlight, and my own experience would suggest, practitioners working with people who have offended to promote their desistance are interested in training and research on skills. Furthermore, as highlighted the key practice skills are noted as central in all three dominant paradigms influencing criminal justice social work interventions. Surprisingly there is minimal guidance in the training manuals of the MF: MC programme about staff skills (see Scottish Government & Scottish Prison Service, 2013, 2014b, 2014a), perhaps reflecting wider assumptions people working in this area have these skills as traits or have adequately developed them through their professional training. Previous research, particularly studies quantifying practice skills, has been applied to training with positive results, especially in relation to improvements in the structuring of professional skills, e.g. prosocial modelling (e.g. Andrews & Carvell, 1998; Bonta, Ruge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Bonta et al., 2011; Marshall, Serran, et al., 2003b; Raynor & Vanstone, 2018; Trotter, 2006). However, as noted above, without ongoing supervision these improvements tend to decrease over time. Raynor and Vanstone (2018) more recently discussed the research tool from the Jersey Supervision skills (JS3) study, a checklist to identify practice skills (Vanstone & Raynor, 2012), being adopted by the service and practitioners as a tool they apply to video-recordings of selected sessions to regularly review and develop their own practice, with positive evaluation. A strength of this approach is that they are using direct recordings to

review their practice, rather than relying on memory or simulated situations such as role-play.

Notwithstanding the benefits of these approaches, they are based on aggregated, idealised categories of practice skills which may gloss over the nuances of interaction and the local and practical constraints in demonstrating some of these skills *in situ*. Why do expressions of empathy, for example, sometimes result in resistance? Furthermore, the guidance on how the personal relationship building practice skills in particular are operationalised in practice is not clear, appearing to rely on the taken-for-granted quality of these skills. The findings and approach from this study can complement existing training to build deeper and more reflexive understandings of practice, as demonstrated in other areas where conversation analysis and discursive psychology have been applied to institutional talk, e.g. GP interactions (Heritage, Robinson, Elliott, Beckett, & Wilkes, 2007), childbirth helplines (Kitzinger, 2011; Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2007), police negotiations and interviews (Sikveland, Kevoe-Feldman, & Stokoe, 2019; Stokoe, 2013), mediation services (Sikveland & Stokoe, 2016) (see Antaki (2011) for a collection).

Using the Conversation Analytic Roleplay Method (CARM) developed by Professor Elizabeth Stokoe (Stokoe, 2014), over three sessions I presented some of the findings of this research, regarding desistance narratives and achieving empathy in interaction, to the practice team involved in the study, including practitioners who were not research participants. CARM is a technique which uses the footage of the real-time, actual encounters to discuss and reflect on the actual talk people do in their jobs. By slowing the interaction down line-by-line practitioners are supported to analyse what is happening in the talk and how. Kirkwood and colleagues (2016; Kirkwood & Laurier, 2014) have previously highlighted the benefits of this approach in knowledge exchange with criminal justice social work practitioners. They noted reflection on practice is key in social work, however this falls foul of memory and

recall issues which distort the object of the reflection and the reflection itself. Considering real life interactions collaboratively with practitioners using the CARM approach promoted practitioners' reflections on how criminal justice social work practice is done, their own practice and the wider context of criminal justice social work.

In terms of knowledge exchange from this study, the feedback from the practice team has been very positive, with the practitioners stating they felt this approach helped them to reflect on their practice and, in unpicking what they are doing with their talk, consider more deeply the mechanisms of tacit practice knowledge. Furthermore, they commented this gave a more tangible awareness of how they can and do promote desistance in their direct interactions, and the potential difficulties with this. I also delivered a workshop on the topic of achieving empathy in interaction at the 2019 Scottish annual NOTA (National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers) conference using this method. This conference attracts delegates from all over the UK who work in areas such as statutory criminal justice social work, voluntary agencies (e.g. Stop It Now), academia, psychological services, and Scottish Government policy and training agencies. The workshop was well received with delegates commenting on the new perspective this approach brings to looking at practice, particularly the taken-for-granted soft skills.

I have also presented data from this study to a wider audience of Criminal Justice and Children and Families Social Workers at an ESRC Festival of Social Science event using the CARM approach to consider how resistance and engagement are dealt with in interaction. In the evaluation of this event practitioners highlighted they found this approach engaging and it supported them to reflect on their interactions with clients in their own settings. Importantly this approach provides an authentic experience of social work practice, as it draws from real-life interactions as opposed to simulated role-play, which is popular in social work education and training

(evident in its use in social work programmes across Scotland and the UK generally, and in its presence in academic literature regarding social work education e.g. Hargreaves & Hadlow, 2007; Hitchin, 2016). As Stokoe (2013) notes role-play may not reflect how interactions play out in real life, for instance certain practices may be over exaggerated to be made 'assessable' in the context of the role-play. Using actual practice gives a sound empirical grounding to reflect on the communication strategies used to engage involuntary clients *in situ*, considering both the function of the actions in talk and their outcome.

Having worked part time as a criminal justice social worker in a local authority team throughout my PhD, I have been aware of the influence the emerging findings have had on my own professional practice. In considering what is being done in the talk-in-interaction I believe I have been able to be more responsive and reflexive in practice. I've particularly noted improvements in how I manage resistance and threats to ongoing cooperation *in situ* and how I encourage clients to challenge their own views of their behaviours and experiences, for example using supportive disagreement (Weiste, 2015) or stepwise entry to build a shared understanding of the problem to be addressed (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). Furthermore, it has supported me to reflect more deeply on my investment in my self-image, or my *face*, in my professional interactions with clients, and its impact on the working relationship. Actively considering the concept of *face* in interactions has been, for me, a more usable framework to be reflexive in practice as opposed to for example common frameworks used in social work, such as Karpman's Drama Triangle (1968) or Berne's Transactional Analysis (1964) (see Koprowska, 2014). Rather than adapt my understanding of my role in interaction to set categories, like parent/ child/ adult (Berne, 1964), *face* allows me consider the subtleties and nuances in my talk, my patterns of response when 'who I am' is challenged in the talk-in-interaction and the impact on the ongoing engagement. As such I have more deeply reflected on my professional identity, rather than attempt to categorise this in line with a set framework.

The feedback so far indicates training and practice development drawing on the findings from this study, and further interactional research on criminal justice interactions or social work interactions more generally, would be of considerable interest and benefit to practice and the construction of effective working relationships. However, rather than outline a list of skills to be applied, I recommend we use evidence from actual practice, such as in this study, to support practitioners to reflect on the conversational strategies used to effectively build engagement in the ongoing interaction and challenge antisocial sentiment. I propose this will enable more reflective, reflexive and responsive practice. The evidence from this study, which has been used to support knowledge exchange, highlights how practitioners can encourage engagement and effectively manage discussion about difficult topics in interaction through the demonstration of key practice skills of warmth, respect and empathy. These skills are observable as cooperative actions in practitioners talk, specifically: managing issues of *face*, navigating epistemic authority and creating empathic moments.

Limitations and future research

There are limitations to this study which should be considered, including; 1) the reliance on linguistic data, 2) the absence of linking to outcomes and 3) data was not collected or analysed in a chronological manner, and no data was collected on interactions beyond the structured MF: MC sessions. I will discuss these limitations, noting how future research may address these before commenting on possible further fruitful avenues of empirical enquiry.

In this exploratory study I focussed primarily on verbal expressions, only noting some gross movement and broad features of prosody, i.e. whether something was said, for example, in a whisper, quickly, loudly, or with a smile. Due to the methods of data collection, i.e. fixed-point camera with one microphone, not all movements

or facial expressions were clearly visible or close prosodic features (e.g. intonation, pitch) clearly audible. Furthermore, I did not have the technology or research skills at the time to undertake such analysis. Movement, gaze, facial expressions and prosody are clearly important aspects of face-to-face communication, and have been considered more granularly using conversation analysis methods (e.g. Deppermann, 2013; Goodwin, 1994; Kupetz, 2014; MacMartin & LeBaron, 2006; Mondada, 2018; Schegloff, 1998; Stivers et al., 2012; Weiste & Peräkylä, 2014). What people say is certainly coloured by how they say it. Weiste and Peräkylä (2014), for example, noted that in relation to empathic communication in psychotherapy the 'how', in terms of prosody, rather than the 'what', in terms of lexical composition, was a key indicator of whether therapists' formulations validated or challenged clients' emotions. In their study of multiple movements during a group therapy programme addressing sexual offending, MacMartin and LeBaron (2006) highlighted clients provided answers verbally but displayed ambivalent participation through their gaze and body orientation, being simultaneously compliant with and resistance to the programme.

Future research could look at the role of prosody, facial expression, gaze and movement in building cooperation and engagement in interaction in criminal justice settings, both with individuals and in relation to group cohesion. This research could consider, for example, how practitioners use multimodal expressions to engage clients or manage ambivalence, how the prosodic features of talk or facial expressions contribute to challenging antisocial behaviour, or how gaze promotes group cohesion and engagement in the multiparty talk in this context.

Notwithstanding the importance of these features, as ten Have (1990) notes, the common focus on the verbal aspects of interaction in conversation analysis and discursive psychology has been primarily practical rather than principled as these are the most accessible, with an increasing body of research focussing on non-verbal and other aspects of interaction. I have tried to incorporate gross non-verbal aspects as these were also accessible on the video recordings. Importantly, the

gestalt of communication is dealt with in interaction by the members and their understanding of this is evident in their orientation turn-by-turn in the ongoing interaction. That is, people in the interaction are responding to the non-verbal expressions and demonstrating their understanding of these in the next turn; as such they are determinants of the direction of the interaction and have necessarily impacted the analytic judgements about what is being done in the talk in this study. This study has explored the contribution of the verbal and gross non-verbal aspects to the organisation of the talk-in-interaction in this setting. Having some understanding of the whole organisation then enables exploration of some of the potentially less easily isolatable aspects (ten Have, 1990).

In relation to this limitation, I would like to make a further comment relating to the groupwork context of this study. As highlighted in chapter 1, groupwork is the dominant mode of treatment for addressing sexual offending. Given the aim of this study was to examine practitioner practice skills, I have primarily focused on the groupworkers' talk and how the practice skills are evident in this talk in the interactions. To a lesser degree, I have noted how other group members demonstrate, and are prompted to demonstrate, some of these skills and contribute to the co-construction of other client's narratives. However, I have not explicitly explored the wider role of the group or how the multiparty talk is organised. Previous research has highlighted the benefits of multiparty talk in family therapy as a way of progressing through conversational impasses by engaging multiple partners in talk (Couture, 2007) and as a way of managing *face* and alignment during paediatric appointments (Aronsson & Ridstedt, 2011). These strategies are evident in this study. However, further research could focus more explicitly on the group talk, and its role in maintaining engagement and co-constructing narratives. This may shed light on the organisation of group processes in this setting, which Frost et al. (2009) highlight have been inconsistent and at times absent from groupwork interventions addressing sexual offending. Furthermore, it was not possible, for practical reasons, to fully examine the detailed

non-verbal aspects other group members were displaying when the groupworkers were talking to one client, to identify their role in the ongoing interaction. Further research, which uses multiple camera points, could consider these aspects in relation to the organisation of the multiparty talk in this setting and group cohesion, an central element of effective groupwork (Beech & Fordham, 2008; Yalom, 1985).

A second limitation of this study is the absence of data on distal outcomes such as reoffending rates or programme completion. There is broad agreement that effective working relationships, built through demonstrating both personal and professional key practice skills, are associated with improved outcomes in relation to general and sexual offending (see chapter 1). In this case, in the absence of data on outcomes, further claims cannot be made about an association between the practice skills promoting cooperation in the micro-level interaction and wider programme engagement or reduction in re-offending rates. Ekberg and colleagues (2015) and Horvath and Muntigl (2018) argue there is a need to understand the interactional phenomena before testing associations with outcome measures. The understandings developed in this study could be applied to future research to consider the associations between the practice skills and more distal outcomes, bearing in mind the protracted quality of building relationships and that outcome measures are themselves problematic and complex concepts. For example, although lack of treatment engagement is clearly an important predictor of programme attrition (Beyko & Wong, 2005) it is not the sole predictor; other factors such as those related to the individual (e.g. ongoing criminogenic needs and risks) and the system (e.g. wrongly assessed as suitable for the programme) are influential. In this study, at the time of data collection, only two participants stopped the programme both due to breach of their licence conditions rather than voluntary disengagement. Recidivism rates as a measure of programme effectiveness or engagement is also problematic due to the limits of the Criminal Justice System, such as the impact of political and public context on conviction rates, low report rate of sexual offences, reported time lapse between age of onset

and age at first arrest for sexual offences, low conviction rates and also the low rates of recidivism amongst those convicted of sexual offences (Almond, McManus, Worsley, & Gregory, 2015; Kirkwood, 2008; Looman, Abracen, Serin, & Marquis, 2005).

Relatedly, the final limitation concerns identifying engagement or narrative change over time. The video-recordings I accessed were of three groups over a four-month period. For several reasons, including video quality determining which sessions were selected for analysis and the rolling structure of the sessions, I did not track these interactions chronologically or follow the progress of specific clients, as such I have not considered engagement or narrative change within or across the groupwork sessions beyond how the interactions are locally and practically managed. Furthermore, my access was limited to the interactions recorded in the groupwork sessions, as such I did not have data on other historical, interim, or incidental interactions between the clients and groupworkers. These would also have impacted engagement and the narrative developed in this context.

In relation to engagement, building and maintaining an effective working relationship is a 'persistent longitudinal project' (Weiste, 2015: 41) which practitioners and clients continually work to achieve (Muntigl & Horvath, 2014), as opposed to perpetuating once achieved. Through the empirical chapters I have highlighted the interactional ways practitioners work to achieve this engagement moment-by-moment, promoting solidarity *in situ* to build effective working relationships, while also pursuing institutional projects that may threaten this engagement, e.g. prompting clients to consider a different perspective or demonstrate risk awareness. This micro-level analysis of engagement highlights the ways the macro-level relationship is actively maintained. Applying these findings to interactions in other criminal justice intervention settings, e.g. one-to-one supervision or a groupwork programme for addressing offending of a different

nature, would shed light on the generalisability of the findings of this research. It would also further elucidate the constraints and practices specific to building effective working relationship in criminal justice contexts expanding from the prevailing reliance on therapeutic literature (Ross et al., 2008).

Personally and professionally, it seems likely to me the working relationship would (hopefully) progress over time as the practitioner and client know each other better, potentially allowing the practitioner to take greater interactional risks in pursuing institutional projects, for example due to their greater epistemic access to the client's world. That practitioners and clients orient to and index a shared referential world, constructed in previous interactions, provides some evidence to support this (Schegloff, 2007; Voutilainen, Peräkylä, & Rossano, 2018). A longitudinal consideration of specific client's engagement at different stages, potentially following a common theme across interactions, e.g. how alcohol use is discussed, could be followed to investigate progression of engagement over time. This could similarly be considered in relation to group cohesion, e.g. considering how the group orients to an individual on joining the group and then at subsequent stages.

When I have discussed this study with people, I am commonly asked 'do the clients change?'. As King (2013: 152) notes 'it is the importance of meaning attached to particular events, commitments or desires within narratives which aids the desistance process'. It is evident in this study that through talk groupworkers, and other clients, moved to promote certain stances, as demonstrations of the meaning attached, towards clients' stories, and displace others, encouraging a narrative of rehabilitation. As I have not tracked change over time however, I cannot make claims about whether there has been a shift in clients' narratives, for example to describing a core self, censuring offending behaviour, and having hope and a sense of responsibility for the future (or, as noted above, if this links to reduced

reoffending). CA studies, primarily in relation to therapy settings, have mostly focussed on recurring practices in interaction, e.g. how practitioners formulate clients' talk (Antaki, 2008; Antaki, Barnes, & Leudar, 2005) or how clients resist optimistic questions (MacMartin, 2008), rather than change in these practices longitudinally (Voutilainen, Peräkylä, & Ruusuvuori, 2011). However, Voutilainen, Peräkylä, and Ruusuvuori (2011: 362) have demonstrated in their study of a therapeutic intervention that CA offers a 'particularly sensitive method' to investigate therapeutic change by analysing interactionally similar sequences dealing with the same theme across different sessions (see also Voutilainen et al., 2018). They identified changes in client responses to therapeutic formulations over sessions, where the client in their case study moved from resistance, to ambivalence, to confirmation and elaboration of the therapist's formulations over the course of the sessions.

A similar process to Voutilainen and colleagues (2011, 2018) could be adapted to look at change over time in how clients respond and story their experiences in criminal justice interventions. For example, a recurrent theme in relation to Brian in this study is that he is not a good father due to his offending behaviour; change over time in his narration of this could be analysed across sessions by focusing on formulation-response sequences following his implicit or explicit expression of being a bad father. However, change in talk is evident in this study within interactions as well, for example in an interaction where one of the clients is discussing his shame around having to borrow money to buy his son's Christmas present (extract 9, chapter 1) as the interaction continues there is a shift in the client's talk from shame, being a bad person, to guilt, doing a bad thing (Mullins & Kirkwood, in press). Change in a client's talk was also evident in Kirkwood's (2016) study, where a client moves from ambivalence towards crying to accepting it. It is important to state here that I am not implying clients' narrative identities are solely constructed in these interactions, unlike the previous view of case work (Burnett & McNeill, 2005), but these interactions contribute to narrative construction as noted

in previous research (e.g. Digard, 2014; Harris, 2016; Lacombe, 2008; Waldram, 2010) and further work could be done to examine change in talk over multiple interactions.

Conversation analysis and discursive psychology have been demonstrated in this study and previous research (e.g. Auburn, 2010; Auburn & Lea, 2003; Kirkwood, 2016) as particularly well suited to opening the 'black box' of criminal justice social work interventions. They are, as yet, a relatively untapped methodological resource to examine and explicate how criminal justice interventions are done in practice, to identify the micro-mechanisms of change and engagement (Maruna, 2001). These methods have been fruitfully applied in other institutional settings to improve practice and outcomes (e.g. Heritage & Robinson, 2011; Sikveland et al., 2019; Stokoe, 2013a). As such there is a wealth of potential research avenues to pursue, beyond what I have already referred to. Further research could examine specific recurrent practices of interest such as how clients discursively resist proposals of risk in interaction (e.g. Ekberg & Lecouteur, 2015), where these interactional moves may indicate what is important to the client in relation to their prudential values (Ward & Marshall, 2007). Recognising that 'when officers received training in core correctional practices, the offenders they supervised experienced lower odds to reoffend' (Chadwick et al., 2015: 296), these methods could be applied to consider how other core correctional practices are displayed and negotiated in interaction, potentially further considering the reality of these skills in interaction compared to the training (e.g. Stokoe, 2013b).

Reflections

Undoubtedly my professional background and values as a social worker have influenced how I have approached and thus shaped the research in this study. Willig (2001) highlights the necessity in qualitative research for reflexivity in research to examine the researcher's influence on the process and thus the conclusions that

can be drawn, as well as the influence of the research on the researcher. She differentiates between personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity entails 'reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research' (p 10), as well as how the research affects the researcher. Epistemological reflexivity involves reflecting on the influence of the chosen methods on the research.

In relation to personal reflexivity, as noted in the introduction, I was interested in examining social work practice skills precisely because of their tacit and taken-for-granted quality. My professional experience has been that social workers are assumed to be naturally warm, empathic and respectful or develop these skills as their social work knowledge, experience and value base grows. This assumption fails to acknowledge the difficulties and complexities of building effective working relationships in practice, especially with involuntary clients, where there are competing priorities and agendas, and traditional therapeutic understandings of how these skills are demonstrated are not always appropriate (Ross et al., 2008). Although others have highlighted these skills are not inherent traits (e.g. Trotter, 2006), the prevailing wisdom, as evident in much research in this area, is that they are (e.g. Marshall et al, 2005). I think practitioners can develop these skills over time, possibly considering it 'practice wisdom', i.e. intuitively knowing how to handle a conversation based on a foundation of experiential knowledge (Scott, 1990), and get better at developing effective working relationships. Importantly, and in line with the idea of shadowing in social work education (Riche, 2006), I think in examining how experienced practitioners demonstrate these relationship building skills we can glean a deeper understanding of what is effective in the context of criminal justice social work intervention. As such I anticipated that these skills would be present in the interactions in this setting given the experience of the practitioners, however I was surprised they were not as clear as social work and rehabilitation literature would imply.

I was further motivated to undertake this research in order to contribute to understanding and training in this area. In light of this I found it very frustrating when the skills were not as clearly evident as I had anticipated, and struggled initially to suspend my wider aims and my perspective as a practitioner to engage more fully with the process of the methodology, i.e. considering what is interesting in the data rather than looking for something in particular. In suspending these aims, and taking a step back from my professional vantage point, I was instead open to noticing how identity was constructed in a manner consistent with previous desistance research and the central position risk holds in the interactions. Due to this, my perspective on how practice is conceptualised has changed since undertaking this research, particularly in seeing that the talk-in-interaction is central in supporting people to actively construct and try on new identities. I have noted how my individual practice has been influenced above.

A final point in relation to personal reflexivity: as Becker (1967) highlights research is value-laden, and how we choose to approach a topic will demonstrate these values as we pick a 'side'. As I have undertaken this research, my values in relation to the role and value of criminal justice social work and rehabilitation in general have been brought to the fore, particularly in discussions with colleagues and established academics in criminology. Rehabilitation is a contentious word (Ward & Maruna, 2007) and seems to have become synonymous with discipline and punishment (Lacombe, 2008; McNeill, 2016b). Criminal justice social work intervention is criticised for being the long arm of the law, considered a further form of social control and punishment, usually of those already most disadvantaged, under the guise of helping. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing, albeit a shoddy disguise. It is clear the risk paradigm has fundamentally influenced how people who have offended are supervised. This has resulted in some positive influences in relation to evidence of improved effectiveness of interventions (Bonta & Andrews, 2016) and some unintended 'collateral consequences' such as

potentially hindering change and neglecting the wider social and political influences as the individual becomes the source and bearer of risk (McNeill, 2016b: 143).

Bearing in mind these important critiques which are fundamental to challenging and keeping the system in check, I have picked the side of rehabilitation. I believe rehabilitation as 'a way of helping people who want to go straight' (Ward & Maruna, 2007: 7) is a valuable pursuit, and that criminal justice social work, underpinned by the core values of social work, is well placed to support this pursuit. These core values include a moral commitment to treating people as humans, with empathy, respect and warmth (SSSC, 2016), regardless of their offence histories. As such I have not problematised the aims or even existence of this programme. This is further based on my belief that interventions to address offending behaviour can be effective. Meta-analyses have demonstrated programmes to address sexual offending can be effective, in terms of lower recidivism rates for those receiving treatment than for those not receiving treatment (Hanson et al., 2002; Schmucker & Lösel, 2015, 2017; Gannon et al., 2019). However, notwithstanding the findings of these meta-analyses, a recent evaluation of the Core SOTP (Sex Offending Treatment Programme) based in prisons in England and Wales concerningly indicated those receiving treatment are more likely to reoffend than those not receiving treatment (Mews et al., 2017). As Raynor and Robinson (2009) state, where the rationale for programmes addressing offending behaviour is their ability to reduce reoffending, interventions must be effective to be ethical. As such ongoing evaluation and increased understanding of what about these programmes is effective is necessary, leading Gannon and colleagues to call for more examination of who is staffing these programmes and their skills as well as the programme variables, e.g. treatment method, quality (i.e. RNR or evidence based practice), mode and setting.

McNeill (2012) also highlights there is a moral and social dimension of rehabilitation that is obscured by the dominance of psychological approaches. As highlighted in this study, interventions can support the moral and social rehabilitation of people who have offended by enabling the co-construction of an identity as morally and socially reformed. However, reflecting other research in this area (e.g. Waldram, 2008; Lacombe, 2008; Digard, 2014), I am keenly aware of the asymmetry in the working relationship, and the potential for this to be experienced as oppressive and illegitimate power by clients. This is a concern across social work, where practitioners should be critically reflexive about their practice, their values and the structures within which they operate to recognise and address the complexities of power in their relationships with clients (Tew, 2006). Power is central to social work practice, and I have touched on how it might be evident within this exploration of the talk-in-interaction during the sessions of the MF: MC programme.

In relation to epistemological reflexivity, the methods I have used are aligned with the idea of social constructionism, treating each interaction as a site where an understanding of reality is constructed by the people in that interaction, as outlined in chapter 2. As such I have not sought the practitioners' or clients' views of the working relationship, what promotes change or how they view risk-talk, as this would inevitably be a further construction of reality rather than an objective reflection of what happened or a route to their thoughts, feelings or motivations. As such, seeking the participants' views would not be appropriate to address the research questions of this study. The views of practitioners and clients in this respect have previously been sought in research (e.g. Rex, 1999; Digard, 2014; Burnett & McNeill; Farrall et al, 2014). A further option, however, is to involve participants in the analysis of the data. This can be done through a process called video stimulated recall, where the video/ audio recordings and transcripts are used to prompt discussion about what is happening in the interaction and how it is happening (Dempsey, 2010; Lyle, 2003; Pomerantz, 2005). With this approach Pomerantz (2005) warns researchers must avoid privileging participants' comments

over what is observable in the data. In my original proposal for this study I had intended to use video stimulated recall methods. I chose not to use this approach due to time constraints. However, in using the CARM approach, as previously outlined, which is similar to the idea of video stimulated recall the practitioner participants, and others, engaged with and contributed to the analysis.

Juhila and Pöso (1999b) noted, in their study of social work practice in probation work, the benefits of engaging participants in the analysis. They advocated for an approach using discourse analysis and ethnographic methods, drawing on the idea that these methods can complement each other in addressing the 'how' and the 'why' questions (Silverman, 2006; Silverman & Gubrium, 1994). They found the ethnographic approach complemented the discourse analysis, giving them as researchers access to the institutional and cultural interpretations which enabled more thorough analysis of the data. That is, the practitioners were not relying on unobservable hidden reasons to explain the interactions but pointing out aspects of the interaction that the researchers were unaware of without this professional knowledge. In this way the ethnographic approach they used, which they highlight is a departure from traditional ethnography of participant observation, gave them access to the 'shop talk' of this particular setting (ten Have, 1990).

As I noted in chapter 2, I have some familiarity as a criminal justice social worker with the 'shop talk' of the MF: MC programme so could identify some specific aspects of interaction that may not be evident to those outside the profession, for example the different constructions of risk, as discussed in chapter 5. From Juhila and Pöso's (1999b) description of their research methods, CARM appears to have some similarities to their ethnographic approach, i.e. analytic sessions and conversations with the participants. They also used observational and documentary data. Using the CARM approach in this study helped me deepen my understanding of the interactions in the MF: MC programme in this particular setting and team,

their specific 'shop talk', contributing to my analysis. Juhila and Pöso (1999a) noted using this dual approach revealed different cultures between teams, evident in the interaction, which impacted how suitability for community service was constructed. Engaging with the participant team in this study, using CARM and through informal discussions during the period I was transcribing, gave me insight into the local culture of this team. However, I remained conscious of grounding the analysis in the data and not in the commentary of the practitioners (Pomerantz, 2005).

Complementing conversation analysis and discursive psychology approaches with a limited form of ethnography could provide a further avenue to connect the social structure to the talk, giving a wider picture of practice. However, as Maynard (2006) states these methods could be epistemologically in conflict so research combining them would need to be carefully designed.

Conclusion

In this study I have explored how the key practice skills of empathy, respect and warmth are evident in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending behaviour using the micro-level methodologies of conversation analysis and discursive psychology. This exploration has demonstrated the suitability and potentiality of these methods to allow access to the 'black box' of criminal justice supervision. Using these methods has explicated and made visible the routine and tacit practices through which practitioners display key practice skills. Furthermore, how these skills then contribute to building effective working relationships is clear as they are actions which promote and maintain cooperation and engagement in interaction. I have also demonstrated how narrative identities are conferred, contested and constructed in the talk-in-interaction to encapsulate desistance and risk, where this balance creates a narrative of rehabilitation at the interface of the institution and the individual. Negotiating the construction of 'who a client is' in the moment-by-moment interaction is aided by the prudent display of the key practice skills, in managing issues of *face*, epistemic authority and empathic communion. Further research using these methods has the potential to deepen understandings

of criminal justice practice and desistance from crime, with the potential to improve practice.

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Appendix A: Participant information sheet and consent form for clients



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE

Exploring Social Work practice skills in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR

Eve Mullins, PhD Student in Social Work, the University of Edinburgh.

INVITATION

You are being invited to take part in a research study looking at the practice skills Criminal Justice Social Workers use in delivering 'Moving Forward: Making Changes', the Criminal Justice groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending in Edinburgh. The study aims to identify aspects of 'best practice', how they contribute to effective working relationships within the groupwork setting and improve service delivery. You are being asked to give your approval for the recordings of the groupwork sessions in which you take part to be used for the purposes of this research. This project has been approved through the University of Edinburgh School of Social and Political Science Ethics Procedure.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The study involves the analysis of the audio and video recordings of the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' groupwork programme that are already routinely collected. It does not require any further action on your part.

Following the analysis of these recordings you may be asked if you would like to take part in an interview to discuss your experience of the programme, through watching selected segments of the video recordings.

In order to contribute to improvement of service delivery and future practitioner training re-enactments using actors may be made from the recordings. Individual participants will not be identifiable in these as all identifying information will be removed.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered. If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask a member of the Groupwork staff or contact the researcher.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no known direct benefits or risks for you in this study. The video footage itself will not leave the building.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The original recordings will be treated confidentially and only accessed by those directly involved in the research. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any of publications or presentations that result from the research.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Eve Mullins will be glad to answer your questions about this study. Please contact:

E-mail: emullins@exseed.ed.ac.uk

Postal: The University of Edinburgh, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Sq.,
Edinburgh EH8 9LD

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE

Exploring Social Work practice skills in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The study focuses on the practice skills of Criminal Justice Social Workers delivering the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' groupwork programme to identify aspects of 'best practice', explore how they contribute to building effective working relationships and to improve service delivery. You are being asked to give your consent to the recordings of the groupwork sessions of 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme being used for the purposes of this research.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

I (Participant's Name (Printed)*) _____ agree for the recordings of the groupwork sessions of the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme in which I take part to be used for the purposes of this research.

Participant's signature*

Date

I (Participant's Name (Printed)*) _____ agree to be approached by the researcher at a later stage to ask if I want to be interviewed about selected interactions within the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme.

Participant's signature*

Date

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)
consent

Signature of person obtaining consent

**Participants wishing to preserve some degree of anonymity may use their initials (from the British Psychological Society Guidelines for Minimal Standards of Ethical Approval in Psychological Research)*

Appendix B: Participant information sheet and consent form for groupworkers



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE

Exploring Social Work practice skills in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR

Eve Mullins, PhD Student in Social Work, the University of Edinburgh.

INVITATION

You are being invited to take part in a research study looking at the practice skills Criminal Justice Social Workers use in delivering 'Moving Forward: Making Changes', the Criminal Justice groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending in Edinburgh. The study aims to identify aspects of 'best practice', how they contribute to effective working relationships within the groupwork setting and improve service delivery. You are being asked to give your approval for the recordings of the groupwork sessions in which you take part to be used for the purposes of this research. This project has been approved through the University of Edinburgh School of Social and Political Science Ethics Procedure.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The study involves the analysis of the audio and video recordings of the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' groupwork programme that are already routinely collected. It does not require any further action on your part.

Following the analysis of these recordings you may be asked if you would like to take part in an interview to discuss your experience of the programme, through watching selected segments of the video recordings.

In order to contribute to improvement of service delivery and future training, re-enactments using actors may be made from the recordings. Individual participants will not be identifiable in these as all identifying information will be removed.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered. If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should contact the researcher or ask your line manager.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no known direct benefits or risks for you in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The original recordings will be treated confidentially and only accessed by those directly involved in the research. The video footage itself will not leave the building. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any of publications or presentations that result from the research.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Eve Mullins will be glad to answer your questions about this study. Please contact:

E-mail: e.mullins@ed.ac.uk

Postal: The University of Edinburgh, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Sq., Edinburgh
EH8 9LD

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE

Exploring Social Work practice skills in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The study focuses on the practice skills of Criminal Justice Social Workers delivering the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' groupwork programme to identify aspects of 'best practice', explore how they contribute to building effective working relationships and to improve service delivery. You are being asked to give your consent to the recordings of the groupwork sessions of 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme being used for the purposes of this research.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

I (Participant's Name (Printed)*) _____ agree for the recordings of the groupwork sessions of the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme in which I take part to be used for the purposes of this research.

Participant's signature*

Date

I (Participant's Name (Printed)*) _____ agree to be approached by the researcher at a later stage to ask if I want to be interviewed about selected interactions within the 'Moving Forward: Making Changes' programme.

Participant's signature*

Date

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)
consent

Signature of person obtaining

**Participants wishing to preserve some degree of anonymity may use their initials (from the British Psychological Society Guidelines for Minimal Standards of Ethical Approval in Psychological Research)*

Appendix C: Transcription notation


From Jefferson, G. (1984) "Transcription Notation", in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds), *Structures of Social Interaction*, New York: Cambridge University Press

(.)	A micro pause
(0.2)	A timed pause
[]	Speech overlapping
><	Pace of speech has quickened
<>	Pace of the speech has slowed
()	Unclear section
(())	An action
°word°	Whisper or reduced volume speech
:::	A stretched sound
=	Latched speech, continuation of talk
.hh	In-breath
hh	out-breath

Appendix D: Unhelpful Thinking Styles handout

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking




Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

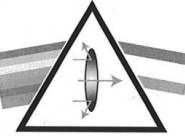
Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalising



Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw


Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

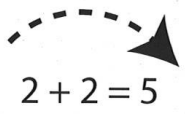
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count


Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:


- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimisation



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.


I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

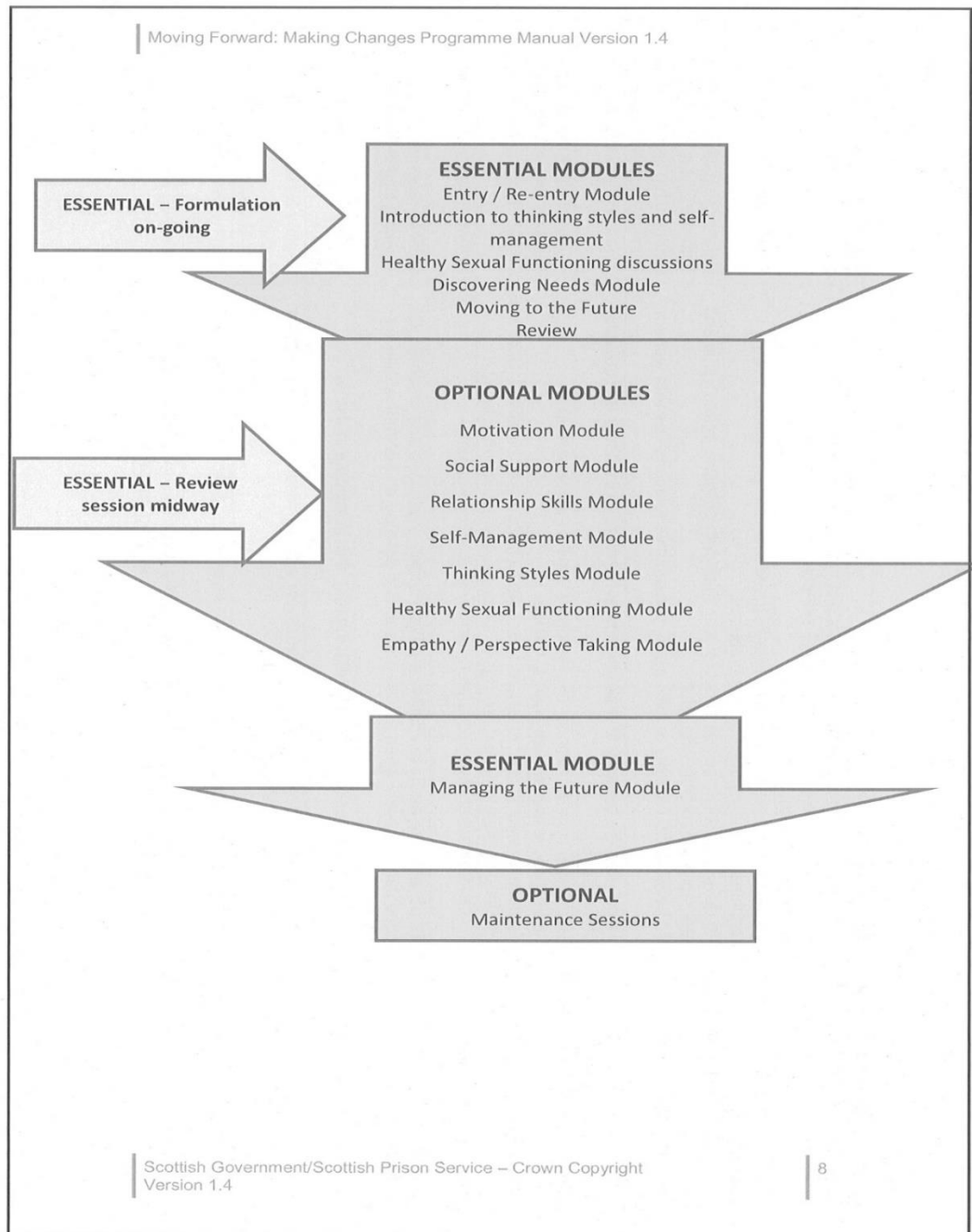
I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot

Personalisation

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Appendix E: MF: MC Programme module structure



Appendix F: Risk factors included in current risk assessment tools

Level of service/ case management inventory (LS/CMI) – general offending risk assessment

From: Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Wormith, J. S. (2004). *Level of service/ case management inventory (LSCMI)*. Canada.

1. *General risk/ need factors*: Criminal history, education/ employment, family/ marital, leisure, recreation, companions, alcohol/ drug problem, procriminal attitude/ orientation, antisocial pattern.
2. *Specific risk/ needs factors*: personal problems with criminogenic potential (e.g. racist behaviour), history of perpetration
3. *Prison experience/ institutional factors*: history of incarceration and barriers to release
4. *Other client issues*: supplementary psychological and physical health, financial, accommodation, and victimisation items.
5. *Special responsivity considerations*: dominant responsivity considerations from clinical research and correctional opinion.

Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) – sexual offending risk assessment

From: Thornton, D. (2007). *Scoring Guide for Risk Matrix 2000.9/SVC*.

Sex:

1. Step one: Age at commencement of risk, sexual sentencing appearances, criminal sentencing appearances
2. Step two (aggravating factors): any conviction for – any sex offence against a male, any sex offence against a stranger, a non-contact offence, 'stranger'.

Violence:

1. Age at commencement of risk
2. Violence sentencing appearances
3. Any convictions for burglary

Stable and Acute 2007 (SA07) – sexual offending risk assessment

From: Fernandez, Y. M., Harris, A. J. R., Hanson, R. K., & Sparks, J. (2012). STABLE-2007 Coding Manual. Revised 2012. Ontario: Public Safety Canada.

<i>Stable factors</i>	<i>Acute factors</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant social influences 2. Capacity for relationship stability 3. Emotional identification with children 4. Hostility towards women 5. General social rejection 6. Lack of concern for others 7. Impulsive 8. Poor problem solving skills 9. Negative emotionality 10. Sex drive/ sexual preoccupation 11. Sex as coping 12. Deviant sexual preference 13. Co-operation with supervision 	<p>Sex/ violence score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Victim access 2. Hostility 3. Sexual preoccupation 4. Rejection of supervision <p>General recidivism score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Emotional collapse 6. Collapse of social supports 7. Substance misuse