The Familial Impact of Imprisonment

An Exploratory Study Examining How Imprisonment Impacts Upon Family Identities

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Abstract

This exploratory study examines how families of male prisoners serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence, construct and manage their identity. A conceptual review of the literature revealed how some families experience a sense of vicarious shame, stigma, and guilt however, until now, there has been a distinct lack of analysis as to how families perceive and manage their individual and familial identities both within and outside their immediate family networks and extended community. The unique feature of this exploratory research is that it reveals how different family members connected to a prisoner understand and present their individual, familial and extrafamilial identity. Only by examining this phenomenon through a variety of familial experiences can the complexity of the impact of imprisonment on family identity, cohesion, relationships and wellbeing be understood.

An interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used to understand the participant's individual and collective experience. This qualitative study adopted a purposive sampling strategy and resulted in eleven face-to-face semi-structured interviews being conducted. A duel hermeneutic of data analysis was achieved by combining elements of Smith et al. (2006) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Framework with Mills et al. (2010) Sensemaking Framework. The key themes that emerged from the interviews were integrated into four co-constructed family case studies.

This study has demonstrated that families of prisoners consciously and unconsciously create alternative biographical scripts to create a more viable and accepted individual and familial identity in the pursuit of a less stigmatised and marginalised identity. Findings from the study also illustrate that neutralizations utilised in families differ depending upon their sensemaking of the event, and that there are distinct gender differences in the way that shame and stigma are experienced. Distinctly, families of prisoners experience both reactive and proactive identity losses due to enforced separation which requires a redefining of past relationships, and a renegotiation of future roles .

The implications show that understanding the ways in which families perceive and manage their individual and familial identities creates an opportunity to work with families and the wider prison community to integrate this new knowledge into family restorative work and educational programmes. Working with the individual and the family to renegotiate and redefine their sense of self could reduce the long-term debilitating impacts of imprisonment and optimise capacity to support one another and the prisoner.

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Key Terms

Agent of Causality. The person believed to be responsible for the offence.

Ambiguous Loss. The loss when someone is physically absent but psychologically present, or physically present but psychologically absent. There is no closure or emotional resolution to the loss.

Category A. Prisoners that cause the greatest risk to the public, police or national security. Category A prisoners are detained in the most secure establishments.

Category B. Prisoners who do not pose the greatest risk but are detained in establishments where there is high security and escape would be difficult.

Category C. Prisoners who are unlikely to make escape attempts but cannot be trusted in an open prison.

Category D. Prisoners who present a low level of risk and can be detained in a more relaxed regime. After official approval, at certain times, prisoners may be allowed to leave the premises to work or return home for a short period of time.

Connected Identity. A link to the prisoner and the offence.

Counterfactual Reasoning. A process by which people seek alternative causal explanations to their experience by mentally mutating an element of reality to align with their own beliefs and suppositions.

Courtesy Stigma. A sharing of the same spoiled identity of another due to an attachment through an association and the failure to adhere to societal norms and values.

Cultural Master Narratives. The societal standards that provide us with a narrative of what is valued and respected in society.

Determinate Sentence. The prison sentence is for a fixed length of time to be served in prison and a time on licence in the community. This type of sentence cannot be reviewed or changed by a parole board. If any of the licence conditions are breeched or any additional crimes are committed, the offender could be recalled to prison.

Disenfranchised Grief. Grief that is experienced following a loss that is not acknowledge or recognised as being legitimate by society. A sense of loss that is not validated or supported.

Externalised Shame. A negative evaluation (real or imagined) of self by others.

Family Network. Three or more family members connected to the same prisoner.

Family Network Approach. Interviewing three or more family members connected to the same prisoner.

Guilt. An internal sanction and a sense of responsibility, a desire to make amends and change a situation.

Heteronomous Shame. Fear of exposure or disapproval because of moral failings to adhere to social norms.

Identity Theory. Relates to the individual sense of self and seeks to explain individual role related behaviours.

Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). An indeterminant sentence for prisoners who are a risk of ongoing public safety but do not warrant a life sentence. Offenders are given a tariff that they serve in full in prison and then they are released at the discretion of the Parole Board. The parole board can release the offender when they are satisfied that they no longer pose a risk to the public. If granted parole, a minimum of a 10-year supervision licence will apply. IPP sentences were abolished in 2012 by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Act (LASPO). IPP's were not abolished retrospectively, consequently there are still a significant number of prisoners detained under this type of sentence.

Indeterminant Sentence. The prison sentence does not have a fixed date for release. A tariff is set by the court which means the prisoner must spend a minimum length of time in prison before an application can be made to the parole board for release. This type of sentence includes IPP and life sentences.

In Group. Define the self as sharing the same characteristics, traits and social category as others in the group.

Internalised Shame. A negative evaluation of self against social norms.

Life Sentence. A life sentence means that if released from prison, the rest of your life will be spent on licence. Murderers will be given a life sentence. Serious offences such as rape and armed robbery may result in a life sentence.

Lower-Level Offence. An offence that would not result in a custodial sentence of four years or more.

Maladaptive Family Functioning. Withdrawing and distancing of an individual from the family. This can result in a family level of functioning which is less than before the stressful event occurred.

Out Group. People who differ from the in group. Characteristics, traits, or social categories are not shared.

Primary Victim. The subject of the crime and their family.

Proactive Identity Loss. The loss of an identity that is consistent with of the image others have of us.

Reactive Identity Loss. The loss of an identity associated with events or experiences outside the family's intent or control. For example, a loss of self or relationship that is central to our own identity.

Secondary Victim. A secondary victim is usually someone who suffers psychological harm as a result of being involved or witnessing the harm or injury caused to the primary victim. For this study, this term relates to the prisoner's own family.

Self-Concept. How one describes and evaluates oneself. This includes physical and emotional traits, skills, abilities, position, responsibilities and roles.

Separation Individuation. The process whereby a child separates from the caregiver, developing a sense of autonomy, identity and health independence.

Shame. Shame is an emotion that is linked with social regulation emanating from others. It is a sense of embarrassment, or an uncomfortable feeling that we have done something wrong.

Social Identity Theory. A psychological construct concerned with group processes and intergroup processes. Belonging to a certain group or category.

Sigma. An undesirable discrediting characteristic. A social label that devalues and is used to distinguish a separation of "us" from "them."

Victimage. A feature of proactive identity loss and is characterised by conflict and destructive relationships whereby identities are suppressed.

Whole Life Orders. The offender will spend the rest of their life in prison because the offence was so serious.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

Within this chapter, an introduction and background literature to the study will be presented to illustrate what is currently known about how families experience the imprisonment of a family member. The unique contribution to knowledge that will be generated from the study will be introduced. This chapter will progress to show where my interest in prisoners' families has stemmed from before concluding with an explanation of how the thesis is the structured.

The existing male prison population in the England and Wales is 76,534 (Ministry of Justice, 2022) and at any given point in time, there are approximately 32,000 males serving a prison sentence of four years or more for committing a serious offence (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Whilst the underlying principle of the criminal justice system is to punish and reform the offender, Scott and Flynn (2014), stipulate that imprisonment has a significant impact upon the lives of the prisoner's family who, Christian, et al. (2006) assert, remain the hidden and often forgotten victims of crime and the criminal justice system. Although it is acknowledged that not all prisoners serving a prison sentence will have a family, the majority will. Based on conservative estimations within this prison population, if a prisoner who has committed a serious offence has just two or three family members, this means that there are at least 64,000 to 96,000 individuals who could be exposed to the aftermath of their family members criminal actions.

This research aims to explore how families of prisoners' serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence construct and manage their identity. It will explore how different family members related to a prisoner interpret and present their individual, familial and extra familial identity.

1.1 Unique Contribution to Knowledge

This exploratory study will extend upon what is already known about the impact of imprisonment upon family members and bring some currency to the literature. The unique feature of this research is that it seeks to capture a variety of familial perspectives on living with the consequences of having a member of the family imprisoned for committing a serious crime. Using a family network approach, the

experiences of individual family members can be explored as well as the family as a group. At the time of starting the research, the way in which individual and familial identity is constructed and presented has not been explored within this marginalised population. Only by examining this phenomenon through a variety of familial experiences can the complexity of the impact of imprisonment on the family network be captured. This study will contribute new knowledge and understanding into the way that prisoners' families experience imprisonment and contribute new knowledge and understanding in respect to identity theory. Prison not only creates but reinforces a multiplicity of disadvantages for the families of prisoners (Condry, 2018), whose needs are often hidden, overlooked and not prioritised for intervention. Prisoners' families are a distinct group, and their needs should be supported independently from those of the prisoner.

1.2 The Aim of the Study is to:-

Explore how family members related to a prisoner serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence, construct and manage their identity. It will explore how different family members related to a prisoner interpret and present their individual, familial and extra familial identity.
More specifically the objectives of this study are to:-

- Explore family cohesion, relationships and wellbeing and examine how they are disrupted and affected by imprisonment.

- Explore the individual and familial appraisal of stigma, shame, and guilt.

- Examine how individuals and the family network construct and present their identity within and outside of their immediate and extended social network.

1.3 Stimulation of my Interest in Prisoners' Families.

Davis (2020) asserts how it is essential for the researcher to be open about their own background and prior experiences when conducting qualitative research. This reflexivity assists the reader to understand the relationship that the researcher has to

the research and the subjects, as well as providing some insight into the factors that could shape the researcher's subjective interpretations of a phenomenon.

Conventional methods of reflexivity are usually presented by the researcher writing briefly about their positioning and highlighting their relationship to the study and participants, however Koopman, Watling and LaDonna (2020) suggest that by adopting elements of autoethnography, a deeper critical stance to reflexivity can be achieved. Autoethnographies have been described by Peterson (2015) as a form of autobiography or self-reflection, whereby the personal subjective experiences of the researcher are explored to understand the wider cultural context of the phenomena being investigated. Through autobiographical writing, researchers can reveal and demonstrate the origins and relationship between their personal and professional experiences and the impact this may have upon the study design, data collection, analysis and engagement with the participants. Within this study I have engaged in autobiographical writing to critically reflect upon and evaluate how my own life and experiences of having a relative in prison have impacted and influenced the research. Within this study, my autobiographical accounts are embedded within the different chapters of the thesis and are presented as reflective narratives that situate my relationship to the research. The first reflexive autobiographical account that is presented reflects a significant personal event which stimulated my academic interest in how imprisonment impacts upon the lives of prisoners' families.

1.4 Reflexive Account

"It's a morning that I play back in my mind, it still feels surreal. It is a Sunday morning; I am just about to cook breakfast. She must have rung me first because we were best friends, we spoke every single day. She was happy then, excited to be going on holiday with her husband and their youngest teenage son and his friend. All that was left to do was for her to finish painting her toenails and then vacuum up before they were leaving for the airport. I put the phone down, before the bacon is cooked, the phone rings again.

This time her voice was distressed, and she did not seem to be making any sense. "It's Dan[1], the police have arrested him for murder, they are here now searching the

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[1] Dan is a pseudonym.

house and we don't know what to do". Dan is my Auntie's middle son. Dan has an older and a younger teenage brother.

My first thought was this cannot be true, we had slept in Dan's bedroom with him on New Year's Eve, he couldn't kill anyone. Why is she saying this to me? Dan is a decent person from a decent family. Families like ours don't commit crimes like these! I cannot comprehend what is being said, but I tell her I will be with her soon and pass the phone to my husband. As a serving police officer, he can probably make some sense of it all.

We get in the car and drive. On the way we do a small detour through the village where it has happened. I see lots of police vans, there are large areas cordoned off with tape, and the white tents are up, just like you see on the television. People are beginning to gather. I feel uneasy, the reality begins to set in.

My husband calls his boss to inform him of his connection to Dan. He cannot go into the house with me; he must distance himself; he waits in the car outside. I enter the house. I say hello to the detective in charge who knows my husband, and as a nurse, I have also worked closely with the detective's wife. What on earth will he tell her when he gets home? We are in the dark, I do not know any details, what does he know that we don't? This cannot be true; this type of thing does not happen in respectable professional families like ours.

They are leaving with evidence; several items are bagged up. I feel helpless, we don't know what to do, it can't be true. We do not tell anyone else, not even the rest of the family, it's a mistake, he won't be involved. Later, we plan a strategy, we will have to tell the rest of our family before the news story breaks…just in case his name is released.

Seven months later my nineteen-year-old cousin changed his plea to guilty and he was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum tariff of 21 years in prison for murder. The victim's family as they knew it changed forever, our family as we knew it had changed forever".

This narrative represents my own subjective reality of finding out that my cousin had committed a serious stigmatising crime. This personal event stimulated my interest in researching prisoners' families. As a family we were thrust into unfamiliar territory, lost,

trying to negotiate our way through the criminal justice system without any meaningful support from any professional organisations.

I presently work in the School of Human and Health Sciences in a Higher Education establishment. From my professional background, and being married to a police sergeant, I found it difficult to contemplate that a member of my own family could be involved in committing such a serious crime. At the time of the arrest, I was working as a safeguarding nurse in a primary care setting. Within this role I had worked with troubled families (DCLG, 2014) and supervised professionals who were working with them. I had also worked with families where an adult was absent from the family home for committing 'low level' offences, through to more serious and complex offending such as child abuse and domestic violence. Within the remit of my work, as a health visitor, I was familiar with working with diverse communities where adversities and inequalities such as poverty, poor parenting practices, substance misuse, mental health problems and delinquency were prevalent. These types of families according to Farrington (2020a), are statistically more likely to engage in offending behaviours. In my mind's eye, families 'like ours' were not 'like families like them'. I had differentiated the type of family that I belonged to from the type of families that I worked with; the types of families that were more likely to commit crimes.

1.5 What is Already Known About Prisoners' Families?

The impact of imprisonment upon family members was first examined by Morris (1965) and until the 1990's there remained a distinct paucity in respect to what was known about the families of prisoners. In the last two decades, the interest in prisoners' families has grown and continues to gain momentum resulting in more than a tenfold increase in research outputs and scholarly publications which predominantly stem from Western nations such as America, the United Kingdom and Australia (Lanskey et al, 2018). Although it is not clear why there has been more interest in this field, the surge may be attributed to the rapid, but uneven growth in the global prison population (Comfort, 2019) and the desire to understand the wider impact and implications of punishment and imprisonment upon the family. The body of knowledge that does exist in respect to how family members live with the consequences of imprisonment and the support that is available to them does however remain scattered, with organisations still, rarely identifying this hidden marginalised population within the remit of their work

(Brookes & Frankham, 2021; Jardine, 2017; Smith et al, 2007). What is striking is that despite a growing interest in prisoners' families, little has changed to address their needs, and improve their outcomes (Lanskey et al 2019).

The research to date has, however, extended our understanding about how imprisonment permeates through the family and results in a wide range of adverse and negative harmful effects and is often described as 'secondary prisonization', whereby the family is perceived to serve their own parallel sentence akin to the legal offender (Granja, 2016; Breen, 2008; Comfort 2008). Secondary prisonization provides a theoretical framework to analyse how the institutional monitoring, control and regulation of the prisoner extends beyond the prison to those who have an association to the prisoner. Comfort, (2019) and Hutton (2016) identify how the prison institution has an effect upon the conduct of legally free citizens, who must abide by the rules and follow the prison regulations in order to maintain a relationship with the prisoner. Family and friends are subjected to similar types of control and surveillance as the prisoner, and yet, they have not been convicted of a criminal offence. Hutton's (2016) research identifies examples of how secondary prisonization are experienced by visitors in England and Wales, illuminating how the 'full body or strip search' of visitors is one of the most humiliating experiences that families and visitors may be exposed to. Breen (2010) discusses how imprisonment has unintended consequences and acts as a mechanism of social control of both the prisoner and the family. Breen (2010) asserts how prison strips families of their social control and agency. The formal structural and social control of the prison replaces the disciplinary role of families, who have previously. thought to be a central feature in deterring offending. Similarly, Halsey and Deegan (2015) identified how the role of the state undermined their parenting and capacity to provide for their sons. Mothers interviewed within this study felt demoralised because the state could better provide food, health care, education and recreational activities.

Granja's (2016) study also demonstrates the interplay of the prison institution upon family life and the impact upon the daily activities of the family living on the outside. The study highlighted how secondary prisonization is experienced by the way that families experience time. Within this study, families expressed how their own life was somehow suspended in time because their daily structure, routine and objectives focused on the prisoner, the prison routine and around adapting to different stages of

the sentence (for example, attending visits, being available to receive and make phone calls to the prisoner, and preparing for parole, or release). Family life, like the prisoners, becomes somewhat institutionalised (Breen, 2010) with priorities refocused around the prisoner, often to the detriment of their own social and leisure time (Granja 2016) .

Historically, the effects of imprisonment are well documented and the effects upon the family are most frequently described under the term 'collateral consequences of imprisonment' (Brew et al., 2017; Codd, 2008; Kirk & Wakefield, 2018). Turanovic et al, (2012) identify how the phrase has been extensively used to capture the range of different experiences that family members confront at discrete stages of their journey and range from the arrest, trial, sentencing, detainment and post release periods. For family members, the effects can be multiple and may involve, but are not confined to an interruption or collapse in relationships and social networks; a loss of physical and mental wellbeing often characterised by depression, stress, and anxiety, eating disorders and self-harm; reduced socio-economic status resulting from a loss of employment and income, and the additional associated costs of supporting the prisoner; disruption in housing and education as well as a reduction in social mobility (Bennett & Knight, 2021; Condry & Minson, 2021; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Kirk & Wakefield, 2018). Despite the popularity of this term, Condry and Minson (2021) suggest that this phrase does not adequately attend to the seriousness of the harms that families face and suggest it is conceptually restrictive in enabling a deep understanding of consequences of imprisonment upon the family. They articulate how the term 'collateral' has numerous meanings within the field of crime and punishment theory which can be subject to different interpretations, diluting and blurring the effects upon families. Furthermore, they suggest how the term should be restricted to prisoners in the post sentence period and should not relate to the family, on the basis that within punishment theory, 'collateral consequences' relates to the secondary effects of punishment and civil exclusions upon the prisoner and does not extend to the family. The damaging effects for the family are an effect of the collateral consequences for the prisoner. Moreover, Kirk and Wakefield (2018) identify how the term collateral is often defined as being something that is less important or secondary. For prisoners' families, this is somewhat problematic, as the harms that families experience can be interpreted as being less important and subordinate to those of the

prisoner. Condry and Minson (2021) propose that the term 'symbiotic harms', which is defined as " the negative effects that flow both ways through the interdependence of intimate associations such as kin or relationships" (p 5). Symbiotic harms presents an opportunity to reframe the discourse surrounding the serious negative harms that are experienced by families of prisoners, allowing for a better insight and exploration of the impact of imprisonment for the family. Unlike 'collateral consequences, symbiotic harms does not see that the harms of the prisoner and those of the family as being separate entities however, they are situated as multi-dimensional and interdependent features of the family and prisoner relationship and reliant upon the exchange of both positive and negative support. Symbiotic harms are relational and concerned with the connections and relationship between the prisoner, their family member, the prison as an institution and its associated actors (prison personnel, inmates, visitors). Unlike collateral harms, which places the family as being passive recipients of harms, symbiosis casts the family as actors, who have agency in how they manage the harms that arise from punishing the prisoner. Using this framework allows a greater exploration as to how families construct and renegotiate relationships sheds some insights into why some families are more susceptible to harm and why some are more resilient.

To date the research has predominantly focused and continues to be framed around the experience of prisoners themselves and the role and significance of the family and relationships in promoting wellbeing for the prisoner. Family relationships and the maintenance of family ties in supporting the prisoner during and after the sentence has been identified as being a key factor in in reducing recidivism (Arditti, 2012; Farmer, 2017; Mowen et al, 2018). The focus within this discourse, however, usually situates the family as a capable asset, a resource that can be utilised to support the rehabilitation and wellbeing of the prisoner and yet it is apparent in the discourse presented below, that families of prisoners have distinct needs of their own which should be prioritised and seen as separate from that of the prisoner's reform and rehabilitation.

The negative consequences of imprisonment have been highlighted for at least two decades, with Comfort, (2008) highlighting how the negative effects of imprisonment are multiple and extend far beyond those who are imprisoned. Review of the available literature has illustrated that imprisonment of a family member results in a series of

consequences and the transitions associated with enforced separation are often associated with reduced outcomes that are overlooked and not prioritised for intervention. Fishman (1990) produced one of the first ethnographic studies which explored how families experienced serving 'their own time' outside of the prison and highlighted the challenges that prisoners' wives faced such as poverty, a decrease in household income, increased childcare responsibilities, as well as coping with their own sense of loss and grief.

When a family member is imprisoned, there can be associated structural and environmental changes that can destabilise and change the functionality of the household and the wider family (Fornby & Osborn, 2017), as families reorganise their life and relationships to adapt and accommodate their change in circumstances. How families renegotiate and adapt to the effects of imprisonment, according to Christian & Kennedy (2011), depends upon the nature of the relationship prior to the conviction, and this is determined by the level of connectedness, level of reciprocity and degree of conflict within the relationship. Christian & Kennedy (2011) identified that there are three distinct types of relationships that inform how different family members adapt to the transformations in relationships and are typified as being disruptive, transforming or precarious Families with a disruptive relationship to the prisoner are characterised as being individuals who spend time together, who's relationship is centred upon reciprocity and trust which continues during and after time in prison. For these types of family, the wrongdoing of the offence is less important than finding ways to maintain and sustain the relationship. Prison is seen as a temporary interruption to their plans which can be resumed on release. Families in transforming relationships, however, are often characterised by conflicts within the relationship and the family focus on the criminal behaviour and see prison as an opportunity for the offender to change. The primacy of, and uncertainty of behaviour change can threaten the relationship and support available to the prisoner on release. Finally, precarious relationships represent those family members who are unsure if they wish to continue supporting the relationship with the prisoner because of their dissatisfaction with the relationship either before the offence or because of the offence.

Arditti et al (2022) identify how imprisonment destabilises family functioning and intensifies the potential of harm for kin, which seldom elicits sympathy and support from the wider community resulting in families facing issues of enforced separation.

They highlight how imprisonment is associated with an increased risk of relationship breakdown and contributes to the collapse of intimate relationships and is associated with increased divorce rates. This can result in 'risk' transitions for the children of prisoners, who are potentially vulnerable to the new partners of those left on the outside. Furthermore, children who have an imprisoned parent are more susceptible to becoming homeless or are at risk of being place in care (Tasca et al. 2016)

Although it must be acknowledged that some families may adapt to the changes, some more readily and capable than others, the evidence suggests that imprisonment creates an increased risk, particularly for children and young people. The impact and outcomes for the children of prisoners, and grandparents has become more visible over the last decade. Children with a parent in prison may experience a change in their primary carer, particularly when mothers are imprisoned with many grandparents and extended family members assuming legal guardianship (Brookes and Frankham, 2021; Raikes, 2016; Sneed & Mast, 2022).

Poorer educational attainment, and an increased risk of antisocial and offending behaviour has been linked to the children of prisoners (Farrington 2020a; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Parental imprisonment can result in emotional, behavioural and psychological harms (Murry & Farrington, 2018) resulting in reduced health and wellbeing which can continue and have negative lasting effects into adulthood (Heard-Garris et al, 2018). For many young people, the experience of having a parent in prison is a sudden, unexpected, and traumatic event, which can trigger grief like reactions (Mamby, 2014; Turney & Goldberg, 2019). Prisoner's families and their children can also experience economic and material disadvantage (Foster & Hagan, 2015), particularly where the prisoner has previously contributed to the household finances. Moreover, imprisonment can increase the demands upon the family's financial resources as they may have additional expenses related to legal costs as well as financially supporting the prisoner in prison. Material disadvantage can result in a change of or loss of housing; this may lead the family to relocate either to reduce their visibility and connection to the prisoner and the offence or, they may relocate to be closer to the prison and other family support networks (Arditti et al, 2003).

On reviewing this literature, however, a dominant discourse emerged which described how families of prisoners' typically wish to remain hidden within society and develop a

culture of secrecy which permeates within the individual, family and associated social networks. Murray (2014) and Raikes (2016), suggest that prisoners' families experience social isolation that stems from an imposed social stigma. Arditti (2012), Condry (2007), Codd (2011), Jones et al (2013) and more recently, Kotova (2020), DeShay et al. (2021) Hood and Gaston (2021) all present a discourse on how families are marginalised through the shame, guilt and stigma associated with imprisonment and the nature of the offence and can result in families distancing themselves on a physical and emotional level. May (2000) reports how families try to negate stigma by managing and presenting what is known about them, and by creating distance between themselves and others. This self-imposed distancing can be an attempt to keep family secrets relating to the nature of the crime and imprisonment hidden, although it is important to note that Codd (2008) asserts that it is often the fear of disclosure and being judged in a negative way by others, which is often worse than the reality of the exposure itself. The feeling of stigma and isolation is compounded by how they perceive others see them. Hasley and Deegan (2015) assert how the women interviewed in their small-scale qualitative study, felt 'abandoned' by not only by some of their own family members friends, but the agencies whose role was to provide support to them. The women identified how they were left to deal with the consequences and harms on their own. Where support was available, this often came from other females who themselves, were traumatised and trying to navigate their own transitions associated with the imprisonment of their family member.

McGinley and Jones (2018) identified how for children of prisoner's, managing feelings of shame and stigma was one of the most challenging features of having a parent in prison. The feeling of being judged because of their parent's behaviours has been identified as being the hardest facet of stigma for them to cope with, particularly when the children are told that they themselves are just like the offending parent. Consequently, children adopt strategies such as keeping secrets, lying and not talking about their situation to manage hostility, shame and stigma. This secrecy invariably has a negative impact upon their mental health, their emotional wellbeing and capacity to form secure and meaningful relationships (Jones et al. 2013).

This literature certainly resonates with my individual and familial experience. Although I had not committed a crime, I felt somewhat tarnished by my kin association to Dan, I experienced what Goffman (1963. Pg 31) describes as "a courtesy stigma". I felt that

I shared Dan's spoiled offender identity due to my kinship ties and Dan's failure to adhere to the societal norms and values. As an individual, I began to consciously manage and limit the type of information that I would disclose about Dan and my connection to him. Interestingly, I observed how other family members were also guarded, not just in how they presented themselves and their identity to the external world but how they were also guarded within their interactions with one another. Within our family, there were hidden and divergent views on the appraisal of Dan's crime, of what had happened and why, and there were different opinions as to the extent to which he would, or should, be supported. This personal experience stimulated my interest in prisoners' families and how families experience shame, and stigma, and how they negotiate their individual and familial identity and relationships and wellbeing.

1.6 The Structure of the Thesis.

Following on from this introductory chapter, which has outlined the background and origins of the researcher's interest in the subject as well as offering rationale for the need to undertake the study, there are six subsequent chapters.

Chapter two presents a conceptual review of the literature which situates and locates the key theoretical constructs relating to the study. Within this chapter, the focus of the study is refined, and the aims and objectives of the study are presented.

The third chapter presents the research paradigm and the methodological approach that underpins the study alongside a supporting rationale. The importance and significance of researcher reflexivity is also discussed within this chapter.

Chapter four gives an overview of the data collection process. The qualitative data collection strategy of face-to-face semi structured individual interviews is outlined followed by an account of how the data has been analysed. The chapter explains the steps taken to gain ethical approval for this study and the challenges associated with gaining access, recruiting, and interviewing this often hard to reach population. Finally, the chapter concludes with a reflexive account of the complexities associated with researcher positionality.

Chapter five presents the findings of the individual participant interviews which have been analysed and subsumed to produce a co-constructed family network narrative The family network narratives are presented as individual case studies. Within this

chapter, after applying a duel hermeneutic, the findings from the four case studies are presented.

Chapter six integrates the findings from the four case studies and offers an analysis and critical discussion of how different families construct and manage their identity, as well as examining the impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion, relationships and wellbeing.

Chapter seven concludes the study by presenting a summary of the key findings and highlights the new knowledge that has been generated from conducting the study. The study's unique contribution to knowledge and understanding into the way in which prisoners' families experience imprisonment and manage their individual and familial identity transitions and relationships are outlined. Implications and recommendations for practice and policy developments are considered. Finally, this chapter considers the limitations of the study and identifies scope for future research before a closing reflexive account of the researchers journey is presented.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced and provided a background to the study as well as outlining where the interest for the study has stemmed from. The need to conduct the study has been explained as well as how this study will contribute to what is known about the impact of prison and how the prisoners' families present their individual and familial identities. The following chapter will present a conceptual review of the literature and demonstrate how gaps in existing knowledge have developed the focus for the study.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Review of the Literature

To demonstrate how the focus of the study was developed, a conceptual literature review was performed to extract literature relating to the families of prisoners and locate key theoretical constructs which have informed the development of the aim and objectives of the study (Frederiksen, et al, 2018). Within the conceptual review of the literature the main constructs relating to identity theory, shame, stigma, guilt, and loss and their relationship to prisoners' families will be presented. This is to establish the theoretical underpinnings of the study and to situate the empirical literature to reveal what is both currently known and unknown about the phenomenon. Following on from this, a summary of the aims and objectives of the study are reiterated.

2.1 Theorising Identity

The perception and definition of identity is multifaceted and remains a long debated and contested concept. Essentially, there are two main theoretical standpoints in relation to the self and identity. Identity theory originates from a sociological perspective and relates to an individual's sense of self (personal identity) and seeks to explain individual role related behaviours (Stets & Burke, 2000), whilst social identity theory is primarily a psychological construct, concerned with group processes and intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1978). Social identity theory is concerned with the social sense of self, how we see ourselves in relation to others and how others see us.

At the core of identity theory is the notion that one takes on a role and categorises oneself as an occupant of that role. The set of expectations and meanings attached to the role dictate a set of standards that guide behaviour and performance (Burke, 1991). Having a role involves coordinating, negotiating, and manipulating interaction with role partners. The importance of negotiating role performance is central to identity theory (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Interactionalists such as Mead (1934), suggest that to imagine how others see us is a critical part of human development and is linked with identity. To be able to subjectively visualise how others see us is inextricably related to the external identity we present and how others react to us. Cooley (1902, pg.3) metaphorically portrays this perception as having a 'looking glass of the self'. Who we are is essentially reflected in the reaction's others have to us. Having a subjective

sense of self (real or imagined) and an awareness of how we wish to present ourselves to others links with a process Goffman (1959) describes as the Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Individuals take on a role, like actors, to convince others of who they are. This dramaturgic approach requires individuals to believe in the role and convince others what they are presenting. Consequently, it could be argued that identity is not a fixed construct but involves a degree of choice and fluidity. Variations exist in a person's self-concept, and this is related to the different roles that one occupies. Stryker (1968) suggests that these role identities are multiple as people have many distinct forms of themselves and belong to a variety of social groups and occupy a variety of structural roles.

Social identity theory is the knowledge that a person belongs to a certain group or category (Hogg & Abrahams, 1998). Through comparison, people define, categorise and label themselves and others as being in the 'in group', if they share or view themselves as being in the same social category. People who differ from the 'in group' are categorised as the 'out group'. These self-categorisations and social comparisons have different functions. Self-categorisation accentuates the perceived similarities and differences between the 'in group' and the 'out group' members. The comparison process involves a selective application of the accentuation effect, essentially the factors that will result in self-enhancing outcomes for the self. Self-esteem is increased if the dimensions of the in group are evaluated positively and the out group viewed negatively. The uniformity of the group's perceptions and actions is central to social identity.

2.2 The Formation and Representation of Identity

The framing of identity has shifted over the decades from the premodern and modern ideological stance, whereby identity was seen as fixed and unchanging and closely related to the traditional structures of society such as occupation, gender, and class. The structurally imposed static nature of identity has been challenged by postmodernists such as Hall (1992**)** who depicts that societies are increasingly characterised by fragmented identities whereby people do not possess a single core unified identity, rather they have several, sometimes conflicting or unresolved identities. Bauman (1996) however, suggests that identity has become more than fragmented, claiming that identity has no stable base and that individuals can change

their identity when they choose. The idea of creating a single or permanent identity has been eroded and abandoned because of the rapid rate of change that occurs in postmodern societies and there is no longer a fixed clear sense of who you are and who or what you want or should become.

Jenkins (2014) implies that the fluidity of identity within the postmodernist view has been somewhat overstated because identity is grounded in the social experience and membership of social groups, which is something that cannot be changed at will; identity is formed in the process of socialisation; people learn about similarity and difference and identity is always formed in relationship to others. Identity contains two inextricably linked elements; the individual elements of identity that are unique to a person (primary identities) and those identities that are shaped by social groups. Primary identities such as selfhood, humanness, and gender, that form in childhood remain relatively stable throughout the life course and are less likely to change in adulthood. The individual elements of identity represent difference whilst the collective group represent similarities. It is, however, acknowledged that all social identities are more fluid and are subject to change, although this change is not as radical and fluid as Bauman (1996) would suggest. Drawing on the work of Goffman (1959), this perspective reiterates that people are concerned with impression management, and identities are formed as people successfully or unsuccessfully give the impression of themselves that they want others to see. Bradley (1996) takes on a middle ground between Bauman (1996) and Jenkins (2014) suggesting that the modernist and postmodernist positions are somewhat lacking. People in modern societies do have fractured multiple identities, with no overarching dominant identity, however choice of identity is restricted, and identities are rooted in inequalities, social divisions, and difference. The significance of these factors upon identity are not fixed, it varies in respect to place and time.

On evaluating the literature pertaining to identity theory, is apparent that identity and social identity coexist, and this is a concept that is supported. Adding 'social' to the definition of identity is somewhat of a redundant concept; all human identities are in fact social. Identity is concerned with how individuals and groups are similar or different to others (Jenkins, 2014). This process requires us to interact; to attach a meaning in this way is always a social process. Similarly, Stets and Burke (2000) define how identity and social identity are intertwined, suggesting that group and role

identity coexist with each informing and influencing perceptions, affect and behaviour. Identity emerges and is stabilised from the connection between us and others and is formed through a dialectical exchange of our internal identity (what we think of ourselves) and our external identity (how others perceive and react to us). How we are perceived by others can indeed support and strengthen our own view of self, or it may contradict and undermine it.

2.3 Family and Identity

The family, according to Luckmann (1970) are central to the process of identity formation. Basic relationships found within the family such as mother, father, spouse, and siblings enable us to evolve, act and acquire a sense of identity and social reality. These relationships are characterised and normatively defined by the self and others. They are, as Weigert and Hastings (1977) suggest, unique and particularistic, based on cumulative and inherent historical expectations that constitute a recognisable collective and personalised reality. Each of the basic relationships within the family network, according to Berger and Luckmann (1966), support and contribute to identities in a concrete way. Family biographies can locate its members on an emotional, biological, and cultural level. Individual and family biographies which have an emotional attachment, based on shared memories, and are formed through mutuality and interaction; they incorporate a past, present as well as project a future.

2.4 The Family and Identity Loss

The family are not only a source of identity bestowal and maintenance, but they are a key institution in identity loss. Identity loss can occur on many different levels and there can be differing causational factors involved in identity loss. Imprisonment changes the family structure and dynamics of individual and family identity biographies. McAdam's (2001) influential work on identity purports that one's identity is formed through an on-going narrative that an individual continues to build upon throughout the life course. The life story that we construct is formed through a catalogue of events that are significant, emotionally charged and which are repeatedly recalled. These self-defining narratives inform our understanding of self, our meaning and purpose. Autobiographical memories and the stories we convey are a way of establishing to an audience, a collective family identity that is unique and distinguishable from any other family.

Walter (1996) and Harvey (2002) suggest that people who experience a loss (bereavement or non-bereavement) share stories to validate the accuracy of their memories and their accounts. The loss of a family member either through bereavement or a non-bereavement episode, such as a family member going to prison, can lead to situations whereby families experience a readjustment of their individual and familial identity. The loss, due to enforced separation, is a threat to identity that necessitates a redefining of past relationships as well as negotiating future relationships with the absent relative. The loss of a family member because they have committed a serious stigmatising crime can destroy the family identity as they consider their role and influence on the event. For example, a mother whose son has murdered may try to reconcile unanswerable questions such as 'was my mothering to blame?'. The mutually entwined identity of the mother and son changes to murderer's mother and murderer. The identity of the family is threatened as they are faced with managing discrediting information from both within and beyond the family unit (Goffman,1963). The family and familial identity is continuously challenged, changed and reconstructed in each of its members' minds.

Stone (1988) articulates how, within family systems literature, when a secret or discrediting information is known about an individual, this can potentially disrupt the individual or familial narrative. Consequently, the type of accounts that are shared within and outside the family network, and the accounts that are shared in relation to the loss, are likely to be edited or unspoken. Stone (1998) suggests that the accuracy of the narrative becomes far less significant than achieving a stable narrative. A stable narrative represents both the personal, and the collective stories, that each member of the family can accept or endure (Baddeley & Singer, 2010). Consequently, the stories that may be shared by families of prisoners in relation to loss and the events surrounding the circumstances of loss may remain unspoken, concealed, distorted, or embellished to maintain individual and familial homeostasis. This certainly resonates with the literature surrounding families of prisoner's which clearly highlights how families remain hidden, with family secrets and concealment about their loss being a key feature in identity and impression management (Smith, et al 2001; Hood & Gaston, 2021). Goffman (1963) suggests that stigma, real or imagined is linked to disgrace, consequently the impression that we give of ourselves to others is conscious and calculating. Aligned to the work of Codd (2008), keeping secrets and remaining silent

about a loss can have multiple functions. Kelly and Rodriguez (2006) depict how sharing a family secret may pose a threat to other family members identity or to the family network. According to Baddeley and Singer (2010) a dynamic tension exists between the familial story and each of the members' own stories in respect to the absent person; it can either challenge or support individual and family narratives. Silence can serve to stabilise or challenge the dynamics both within and outside the family network as each family members seeks to readjust both their own individual and family narrative. This silent adjustment may result in a shifting of, or challenge previously held memories. Silence may influence and have a significant bearing upon our interpersonal interactions and relationships, as well as our sense of identity both within and outside the family network. The use of silence can be used to reframe identity, but this concept remains a poorly understood process within the grief literature and for families of prisoners. This study will explore the impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion and intrafamilial relationships as well as exploring the impact of interpersonal interactions outside the family network to gain an understanding of the factors that impact upon the identity of prisoners' families.

2.5 Disenfranchised Grief and Ambiguous Loss

There are multiple studies which describe how the imprisonment of a family member is experienced as a non-death loss akin to a bereavement, resulting in the prisoner and their families experiencing ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief (Turnavoic et al 2012; Dennison et al, 2013). Ambiguous loss is described by Boss (2016) as a loss, whereby a person can be physically or psychologically absent but there is no clear emotional resolution to the loss. Ambiguous loss can result in grief type reactions like those described by Kubler - Ross (1965) and include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Hunt (2021) articulates how disenfranchised grief refers to a stigmatised loss that is not validated or supported because the person and their circumstance is not seen as deserving of compassion and care.

Grief and loss according to Rosenblatt (2001) challenges an individual and familial sense of identity. Grief theorists such as Niemeyer (2001) suggest that grief is a social phenomenon and that recovery from the loss of a loved one requires a sharing of memories, particularly within the family, in order to maintain or reframe one's identity. Memory, and the recalling of stories can inform not only an individual's sense of who

they are within the family structure but can also inform a family's sense of identity. The loss of a person that we have an attachment to (bereaved or non-bereaved) has implications for a person's ability to adapt and self-regulate, grief alters one's self concept, one's identity (Carlson, 2000). Whatever the loss whether it is concerned with a bereavement or non-bereavement loss, Weigert and Hastings (1977) suggest that grief must be successfully resolved to re-establish stable capable selves. There is a body of literature however, that highlights that for prisoners' families, loss, combined with the stress of imprisonment has multiple health impacts which destabilise and challenge their capacity to re-establish their capable self. It is well documented that for the families, imprisonment is associated with poorer mental health, greater psychological distress, an increased incidence of chronic conditions and a decrease in life expectancy (DeHart et al, 2018; Goldman & Turney, 2018; Sundaresh, et al, 2021; Wildman & Wang, 2018).

According to Weigert and Hastings (1977), identity loss can be classified into two distinctive typologies, reactive loss and proactive loss. Interpreting their work, identity loss for families of prisoners' can be conceptualised from a reactive and proactive stance, or both. Reactive identity loss is commonly associated with events, or experiences that are outside the family's intent or control. For example, a death loss associated with cancer. Reactive identity loss can constitute a loss of the self, or the loss of a relationship that is central to our own identity, whereas proactive identity loss is concerned with the relationships and power base within our interactions. One such example of proactive identity loss could be when a male is sent to prison, another individual may take up and assume his role within the household, shifting the powerbase and group dynamics and interactions. Familial relationships and patterns of interaction are typically stratified. Family members have mental images of each other, and images of the family exist in each of the minds of the members. Each member projects this image on to the family according to the image they have. The loss of a member or damage to the family, results in the loss of an identity that was consistent with the image or relationship, consequently identities are renegotiated or reconstructed. This loss threatens present and future identities.

Laing (1967) discussed how victimage is a typical feature of proactive identity loss within families and is characterised by conflict and destructive relationships, whereby identities are suppressed. To sustain a threatened identity, a member of the family or

several members (victimisers) may try to discredit (Goffman, 1968), deny, or destroy identities that emerge or that are sought from the other discredited family members (victims). Laing (1967) suggests that this strategy is employed by the victimisers or discreditors, as a mechanism to maintain their own identity; they need the identity of the victim or discredited to remain unchanged to preserve their own sense of who they are. Proactive identity loss for families of prisoners can result in the imposition of unwanted and spoiled identities. Victimage for prisoners' families can occur on many levels and can be employed as a strategy to preserve individual and familial identity. This study aims to capture the personal meaning of identity and identity change from a range of people connected to a prisoner and it will inform how families continuously adapt and reconstruct their identity. Analysing victimage by exploring who are the discrediting and who are the discredited, and considering how this may impact upon wellbeing, is a unique aspect of this study.

2.6 Stigma

Saunders (2018) identifies how families of prisoners are exposed to stigma and victimisation. The concept of stigma attached to families of prisoners can be linked to what Goffman (1963) describes as a courtesy stigma; the family share the same spoiled identity of the offender due to their attachment through kinship ties and the failure of their relative to adhere to societal norms and values. Stigma by association, is a concept that has been examined through a range of conditions and social contexts such as HIV and Aids (Ho & Mak, 2013); mental illness (Hasson-Ohayon, et al, 2011); and substance misuse (Marshall, 2013).

In relation to families of prisoners, Condry (2007) presented her seminal study exploring the perceptions and impact of shame and stigma experienced by family members of serious offenders. Within this study, women, and in particular, mothers were highlighted as experiencing high levels of stigma compared to males. Halsey and Deegan (2015) also found that women experienced more trauma and felt ostracised because of their connection to a prisoner. They identified that women became entrenched in a revolving cycle of blame,(self-blame, as well as shifting of blame on to others and the wider failings of the system). Their stigma related to the popular belief, that delinquency occurs because of poor, inadequate or bad mothering. Within Halsey and Deegan's (2015) study all the mothers interviewed expressed self-

blame, this occurred after that had exhausted all other explanations for their child' culpability. Mother blaming also stemmed from the male prisoner themselves and from the fathers of the prisoner. The current literature to date however, does not explore how shame and stigma is experienced in families who are in a same gender relationship.

To date, there is a distinct lack of consideration as to how different members of the same family network construct and manage stigma within, and outside, familial networks. This presents an interesting phenomenon which has not been previously explored from this perspective. This study, therefore, aims to gain a better understanding into how different family members all connected to the same prisoner experience stigma and manage their intrafamilial and extrafamilial identity. Condry (2007) suggests that the closer the kin connection, a greater sense of shame is felt, however Goffman (1968) denotes that familiarity does not necessarily equate with a reduction in contempt for a person or situation. Indeed, he suggests that those who are close and obliged to be in contact may be less accepting. Families, and individuals within it may affiliate or separate from those that they perceived to be stigmatised.

Bruce, et al. (2001) identify how stigma is related to social labels that distinguish a separation of "us" from "them". As people are labelled and stereotyped, they are seen as having undesirable discrediting characteristics; they are devalued and experience status loss and discrimination and the subsequent disadvantages that some families encounter can be linked to a diminished profile of life chances. Hutton (2018) identified how families of prisoners (social visitors) are subjected to 'associative' discrimination (pg.231) that stems from the prison itself, and the legally sanctioned visiting practices. Hutton (2016) observed how on entering the prison 'social visitors' are stigmatised and treated differently and less favourably compared to the 'official' prison visitors such as legal professionals and researchers. Notably, prisoners' families (social visitors) are seen as being less trustworthy than the official visitors because of their association to the prisoner. In essence, the establishment fails to separate the family's identity from that of the prisoner and this is reflected in and reinforced by the rules and regulations that are imposed upon the social visitor. For official visitors, the rules are less stringent and greater flexibility and discression is applied around visiting practices because they are perceived to be more trustworthy than the social visitors.

Bruce, et al (2001) importantly articulate how the discourse presented in relation to stigma usually presents the stigmatised as helpless victims. They importantly, draw upon the work of Reissman (2000), who suggests that some people do not experience stigma; they evade or challenge the stigmatising process. Indeed, this is further endorsed by May (2000) who identifies how for some, the challenge to resist stigmatisation can result in an increase in self-esteem and improved relationships. For these families, they appear to positively renegotiate their identity. This study will provide some insight into how individual and familial identity is preserved or renegotiated and explore why some family members experience stigma whilst others do not.

Attempts to mitigate or reduce the experiences of stigma can involve individual and families employing a range of strategies to protect them from revealing or disclosing their connection to the prisoner, however May (2000) suggests that families of newly convicted prisoners, like other groups experiencing stigma strive to attain a non-deviant status, thus become expert strategists in relation to the management and disclosure of discrediting information. This is achieved through managing space and social interactions to evade socially threatening contexts; avoiding people and places to sever kin and friendship ties, distancing their self emotionally and physically by moving house or avoiding intimate relationships (Comfort, 2008; Hood & Gaston, 2021).

Families of prisoners can also adopt what Goffman (1968) refers to as a process of impression management, which involves concealing or revealing signs of their association to the prisoner as well as trying to influence others' impressions of them. A technique to manage discrediting information is to neutralize the offending behaviour by creating an explanation to rationalise or justify the offence. Sykes and Matza (1957) seminal theoretical work on Techniques of Neutralization identifies five different ways in which offenders rationalise, excuse and justify their criminal actions: Denial of responsibility (it was not me), denial of the injury (no one was really harmed), denial of the victim (the victim was deserving of the offence), condemnation of the condemners (the offender assigns blame to authorities who are responsible for state control and who have the power to regulate social behaviour such as the police, judge and the jury) and finally, the fifth technique adopted is appealing to higher loyalties

(the offender did not act according to his own resolve, he acted in the interest of others or on the order of some higher powers such as god).

Light and Campbell (2006) illuminate the strategies employed by prisoners' families to protect identity such as information control through lies and secrets told to children, and to family and friends as well as limiting information conveyed to others in different social contexts (Condry and Minson, 2020). More recently, Hood and Gaston (2021) investigated the ways in which the family experience and respond to the imprisonment and subsequent re-entry of their relative from prison and found that the families fear of shame and stigma resulted in them isolating themselves from social networks and they actively avoided talking about the imprisonment of their family member. Prisoner's families according to May (2000), continually assess the risks and benefits of concealment and disclosure. Even within support groups for prisoners' families, Bradshaw and Muldoon (2019) found that although a shared experience fosters a willingness to be open and develop social connections, the family still employed 'discursive silencing strategies' (pg. 219) to manage the impression that was given to others in their own support group, to avoid the threat of spoiling of their own identity. This study will explore the relationships within the family network and evaluate how different family members connected to the same perpetrator appraise and experience stigma. Invariably, different family members of those imprisoned will have their own view upon how the individual and familial social identity should be presented. This unique construct will be examined within this study.

2.7 Shame and Guilt

Shame is an emotion that is linked with social regulation emanating from others, it is, suggests Gunther (2011), a process of maintaining the norms and socially excluding through a sense of being judged by ourselves and others. De Hooge et al. (2010) depict how shame on a functional level enables us to protect or restore the threatened self, the threats to our individual and social identity. Conversely guilt is related to an internal sanction and a sense of responsibility, a desire to make amends and change a situation (Ferguson & Crowley, 2007). Shame and guilt are not only connected with an evaluation of one's own behaviour, but they can also be linked to and experienced because of how other people behave (Tagney and Dearing, 2002). Vicarious shame and guilt occur when people evaluate themselves negatively in response to another

person's behaviour. Lickel et al.(2005) assert that vicarious shame and guilt are distinct emotional reactions according to the appraisal and interpretation of the event, and by different aspects of one's association to the wrongdoer. May (2000) interviewed relatives of murderers revealing how their own feelings of shame were linked to their perceptions of their own culpability and familial responsibility for the actions of the perpetrator and how they believe them to be perceived by others. Lickel et al (2005) revealed how families felt guilty for another's act or behaviour if they had a highly interdependent association with them. Parents, particularly mothers, are more likely to experience a sense of shame and guilt in relation to their offspring's behaviour (May, 2000). It is not uncommon for the prisoner's own family to impose a sense of shame upon those more closely connected to the offender, this serves as a mechanism to distance themselves from the offence, and the offender, and negate vicarious shame and guilt (Welton et al, 2012).This notion of experiencing shame and guilt by association for prisoner's families, is an overarching theme within the literature (Arditti et al, 2003; Condry, 2007; Codd, 2008; Evans et al. 2021). To date, however, the research has predominantly focused on the strategies individuals employ to manage the shame and the threat to identity (either real or imagined) such as limiting social interactions, severing kin or friendship ties, distancing themselves physically or emotionally by moving house and location or avoiding intimate relationships (Condry, 2007; Condry & Minson, 2020; Hood & Gaston, 2021). How different members of the same family experience shame and guilt in relation to their proximity and association to the offender has not been widely examined in the context of familial and individual identity. This study will seek to examine the factors that influence this appraisal of shame and guilt.

The significance of gender and gender differences in the management of shame and identity for prisoners' families has received little attention. Lewis (1971) presents a theory that there are indeed distinct gender differences in the way males and females organise themselves, proposing that females are more prone to shame identities whereas males are more likely to experience guilt. Dutcher and Barnes-Ceeney (2021) however explored the experiences of men who had a romantic partner in prison and found that shame was a feature of the male's experience; if any of the family questioned their relationship, or their decision to stay with the imprisoned female, this would trigger feelings of shame. Consequently, as a protective strategy, the males

would sever ties with individuals they perceived to be unsupportive of their partner and their relationship.

Applying the principles of gender schema theory Benetti- McQuoid and Bursik (2005) purport that it is not only gender but gender role that should be considered in relation to proneness to experience shame and guilt. They articulate how differences in gender socialisation inform the anticipation of shame and guilt. Unlike Lewis (1971), they suggest, irrespective of gender, individuals who adopt a more feminine gender role experience a greater disposition to shame proneness compared to those individuals who demonstrate a masculine or androgynous gender role. The familial and gender differences in the way individuals perceive and experience vicarious shame and guilt is a construct that will be explored within the remit of this study.

2.8 Aims of the Study

The conceptual review of the literature has identified how some families experience a sense of shame, stigma, and guilt by their kin association. From critically appraising the existing literature it is clear however, that that there is a distinct lack of analysis as to what this really means for family members in respect to how they perceive and manage their individual and familial identities within and outside their immediate family networks and extended community. This lack of analysis has informed the development of the aim and objectives of the study. To reiterate the aim of the study introduced in chapter one is to:-

Explore how families of prisoners serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence, construct and manage their identity. It will explore how different family members related to a prisoner interpret and present their individual, familial and extrafamilial identity.
More specifically the objectives of this study are to:-

- Explore family cohesion and relationships and wellbeing and examine how they are disrupted and affected by imprisonment.

- Explore the individual and familial appraisal of stigma, shame, and guilt.

- Examine how families construct and present their identity within and outside of their immediate and extended social network.

2.9 Chapter Summary

The review of the literature has presented an overview of what is currently known and unknown about how prison impacts upon the family. The conceptual review of the literature has located the key theoretical constructs which relate to the study and identified how these constructs relate to the family of prisoners. This conceptual literature review has been instrumental in identifying gaps in the literature which have developed the focus of this study.

The next chapter will present the research paradigm which describes the philosophical views of the researcher which has informed how the study has been approached.

Chapter Three

The Research Paradigm

In the previous chapter, the literature relating to identity and the phenomena of shame, stigma, guilt, and loss has been discussed. The conceptual review of the literature has exposed how this phenomenon has not been previously examined through a lens that has captured how imprisonment impacts upon the lives of different family members all connected to the same prisoner. Consequently, the lack of evidence in this area has informed the aim and objectives of this study, which are to capture both the individual and familial perspectives of how shame, stigma and guilt are experienced and managed, as well as examining how the family and the individuals within the family, construct, manage and present their identities.

Within this chapter, the research paradigm is introduced which situates this qualitative study within an interpretative hermeneutic phenomenological framework. The researcher's ontological beliefs, and the epistemological assumptions which have influenced and informed the selected methodology and research methods are explained. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the role of the researcher and reflexivity within qualitative research.

3.1 Philosophical Position

Before starting a research study, Scotland (2012) asserts how the philosophical positioning of the researcher should be articulated because it not only provides context to the study and underpins the research design and methodology, but it is instrumental in deciding how the data should be analysed. Robson and McCartan (2012) identify how the researcher's ontological assumptions, that is, their beliefs about the fundamental nature of reality, and what is real and true, cannot be separated from epistemological assumptions, which are concerned with the theory of knowledge and what type of knowledge is conceivable and valid. Tuli (2010) asserts how within social research, qualitative paradigms are often underpinned by interpretivism and constructivism. Interpretivism according to Hillier (2016) is based on the premise that knowledge is constructed through interpretations of experience and reality and knowledge cannot exist independent of the human mind. From an ontological

perspective, interpretivism supports my own assumptions about the nature of reality. As a relativist, I believe that there are multiple versions of reality, that reality is subjective and is constructed by the meaning and context that we attach to experiences. I believe that within the social world, the nature of truth or reality is not something that exists independently of consciousness, experience, or context; it is not something that is waiting to be objectively discovered, rather our reality and knowledge is constructed by the intrinsic meaning that is placed upon our experiences (Loseke, 2017). One's reality according to Berger and Luckmann (1966), is socially constructed and grounded in experience and the subjective meanings that are placed upon our experiences. Crotty (1998) asserts how one's view of the world is informed by the sociocultural, political and organisational spaces which we occupy which are laden and informed by distinct value and beliefs systems. Therefore, for these reasons, it is possible for people to arrive at different perspectives related to the same phenomenon. The aim of the interpretive researcher is to capture the developed meanings and understanding that subjects ascribe to an experience rather than merely describing the representations of a phenomena. The interpretative approach contrasts with realist perspectives, which takes the position that that there is only one truth of reality, which can be deductively and objectively measured using quantitative methods (Bowling, 2013). As this study is concerned with an in-depth exploration of the participants' subjective lived experiences, without any intention to manipulate the setting or the variables (Robson and McCartan, 2016), a qualitative approach was adopted. Quantitative approaches were discounted, as they cannot fully capture the different individual and collective subjective meanings that prisoners' families attach to their experience.

3.2 Philosophical Perspective: Phenomenology

Robson and McCartan, (2016) discuss how phenomenology is research methodology that aligns with an interpretivist epistemological perspective. As this research seeks to understand the subjective meaning that families of prisoners' give to their experience, this type of methodology was adopted. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) describe how a phenomenological approach enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon from the perspective of participants who have experienced it. Phenomenology seeks to comprehend how individuals make meaning of their own lived experiences for

researchers to gain new knowledge and perspectives that can inform, influence, or even change how an experience is understood (Quay, 2016).

Fundamentally, there are two main philosophical approaches to phenomenology, which are categorised as being descriptive phenomenology and interpretative phenomenology (Bowling 2014).The following section will briefly illuminate the difference between the two approaches and provide a justification for the interpretative phenomenological approach adopted within this study.

3.3 Descriptive Phenomenology versus Interpretative Phenomenology

According to Becker (1992), experience forms the basis of knowledge; in essence what we experience directly or indirectly informs our awareness of our self, of others and the world around us. The focus of descriptive phenomenology requires the researcher to focus purely on describing the experience as opposed to interpreting or hypothesising about the experience. Descriptive phenomenology was developed by Husserl, a German 20th Century philosopher who considered experience to be the foundation of knowledge. Husserl (as cited in Dowling, 2007) identifies that the lived experience has "universal essences" or common features, which can be generalised to others who have similar experiences. Universal essences according to Lopez and Willis (2004) are deemed to represent one correct truth or interpretation of the phenomena being explored and is achieved by the researcher developing a phenomenological attitude known as epoche. Epoche, is achieved by the researcher developing a neutral stance by suspending their own subjective knowledge or bracketing off their consciousness of what they believe or think they know about the phenomena of interest (Neubauer et al, 2019). Underpinning the descriptive approach is the search for one correct truth relating to an experience. However, as previously stated, my philosophical positioning is that there are multiple subjective versions of reality relating to the subjectivity of an experience. Although lived experiences have 'universal essences' which can be generalised to others who have experienced a similar phenomenon, it is my belief that these 'universal essences' can be captured without the researcher achieving a complete state of epoche as denoted within the descriptive approach. A descriptive phenomenological approach that requires the researcher to set aside existing conscious knowledge (bracketing off) of prisoners' families and their experiences was unrealistic as several years prior to undertaking

this study, as part of my MSc final year project I had conducted an extensive literature review exploring the familiar impact of imprisonment and the transitions that prisoners' families experience. From the knowledge which I obtained from the review, and from my continued interest in this marginalised population, I could not, and did not want to achieve a true state of epoche and set aside what I already consciously knew. Instead, I adopted an approach of partially inhibiting my knowledge and suppositions which is deemed by Overgaard (2015) as being more realistic. Through the process of reflexivity (Dodgson, 2019), I was able to develop a critical awareness of my own positioning and limit how this could influence the study. Recognising and valuing my insider experience and knowledge of prisoners' families was instrumental in informing the design of the study and has facilitated a connection to the research and the participants in a way that may not have been otherwise achieved, Descriptive phenomenology as an approach was therefore, rejected because it not only conflicted with my ontological and epistemological positioning, but it was also important to consider the meaning attached to the families' individual and collective experiences as opposed to purely describing what their experiences were.

In contrast to descriptive phenomenology, interpretative phenomenology moves away from merely describing core elements or essences of the experience and searches for the meaning or interpretation embedded in subjective life experiences. Interpretative phenomenology is commonly known as hermeneutic phenomenology and is derived from the philosophical work of Heidegger (1988) and later, Gadamer (as cited in Grondin & Plant, 2014) and Ricoeur (2009). The hermeneutic researcher is concerned with not just establishing what the experience is like, but the focus of analysis is upon the interpretation of the phenomena and what this means (Tomkins, 2017). Unlike descriptive approaches, which rely on the conscious perceptions of participants, Lopez and Willis (2004) identify how within hermeneutic approaches, the meanings or interpretations of the experience may not always be recognised or acknowledged by the participants themselves; nonetheless, meanings can be extracted from their reconstructed narratives. Hermeneutic approaches emphasise how the meanings that we attribute to an experience cannot be separated from our engagement with the social, cultural and institution systems of society, and therefore, interpretation of an experience is context specific and based upon our exposure to experiences and our interaction with others. Essentially, the meanings that we attach to an experience to

produce certain versions of events are inherently influenced by the context of our experiences. Hence, this may explain why there may be many interpretations of the same phenomenon (Heidegger, 1988).

Having established that there can be many interpretations of the same phenomenon (Langdridge, 2007), the hermeneutic researcher attempts not only to understand what it is like for the participant but seeks to make meaning of their reconstruction of events and experiences. The role of the hermeneutic researcher is essentially to extract meaning; to make sense of the experience by translating the participants' own subjective understanding of the phenomena being explored. Paley (2016) refers to this type of data analysis as a dual hermeneutic of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), whereby the researcher is tasked with interpreting the participants' interpretation of their experience through a process of first and second order interpretation. The first order interpretation is concerned with the participants' meanings attached to their own experience, whilst the second order interpretation involves the researcher, who tries to extract and make sense of the participants' experience (Tomkins, 2017). This approach to data analysis aligns itself to the aims of this study, which are to elicit the experiences and meanings that are constructed by different family members all connected to a convicted perpetrator of serious crime. A detailed description of how the IPA framework has been utilised within this study is presented in the following chapter.

3.4 Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

Dodgson, (2019) identifies how the relationship between the research participants and the researcher must be clearly articulated not only to understand the context of the research but to demonstrate transparency and credibility of the research findings. Goldstein (2017) asserts how the researcher's own subjective positioning indubitably contributes to the way in which data is constructed and interpreted, and therefore it is imperative that the researcher develops and communicates a critical stance in relation to how they themselves may have influenced the study design and the interpretation of the findings. How we view ourselves to be and how others perceive us to be is revealed through the process of reflexivity.

My own personal experience of having a relative in prison has informed and influenced my assumptions and knowledge about individual and familial experiences of having a family member in prison. Shame, stigma and guilt are a feature of my individual and familial family members' lived reality, and, as such, I assumed that this would be a common feature of other families of prisoners' experiences. My belief was that other families would experience a sense of vicarious shame, stigma and guilt and that individually and collectively, they would consciously and actively employ strategies to conceal the crime and imprisonment to sustain a preferred, somewhat less tarnished identity. For me to reveal or conceal my relative's crime has always been a considered judgement. Disclosures pose a threat to my identity and the image that I perceive others may have of me and 'the type of family' I am connected to. This perhaps stems from my own misguided prejudices. Prior to my own family member being convicted, I would privately assume that perpetrators of serious crime were predominantly from 'bad stock,' whose families must be, in some way culpable for the offending behaviours. These 'type of families', in my mind, were very distinct and different from my own. Although the desire to conceal my relative's conviction has lessened over time, more than thirteen years on from the point of sentencing, there are times when I still feel somewhat uncomfortable and hesitant to disclose this information.

To ensure rigour, qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to the tensions that arise between the level of involvement or distance that is created between those that are researched and the researcher (Gemignami, 2011). The way that the researcher communicates their role and positionality to the participants, and how they perceive the researcher, can influence the recruitment of participants, data collection and data analysis. Hayfield and Huxley (2015) assert how the researcher positionality, that is the roles and identities that the researcher assumes in relation to their participants or site, is an epistemological concern, which must be addressed within qualitative research. Autoethnography is perceived as a type of ethnography that is focused upon making connections between the researcher and the researched (Wakeman, 2014). This is achieved by the researcher giving biographical and emotional accounts of the self to enhance the methodology and the type of theory generated as well as creating a novel way of presenting the data (Wakeman, 2014). As highlighted in the previous chapter, I have embedded biographical accounts of my own experience within the thesis to show my relationship to the subject and the participants. Using

insider status and using personal biographical accounts is not something new within the field of researching prisoner's families, there has been a long tradition of researchers and people connected to the criminal justice system who have utilised their insider status and biographies to offer fresh perspectives into what is known about this marginalised population (Hutton, 2018).

Researcher positionality is frequently discussed in terms of having insider status or outsider status (Gai, 2012). An insider status refers to a researcher who personally belongs to the same group or has some of the same characteristics as their participants, whilst an outsider is not a member and is separate to the group. Greene (2014) however, suggests that insider/outsider positionality of the researcher does not have a binary distinction, but rather, researcher positionality is fluid and can shift throughout the process of the research project. Contreras (2015) depicts how it is possible to occupy both insider and outsider roles at the same time, however this dual positionality is not without tensions and consideration must be given to how using both status's impacts upon the research. Contreras (2015) acknowledges how some outsiders, may question what extent an academic researcher is really an insider, particularly when they may not show any outward stereotypical traits commonly held with the population being researched. Moreover, Fleming (2018) suggests that by drawing upon one's own experience, the insider positionality can potentially open the research to some bias and therefore the findings that emerge can be criticised as being somewhat less reliable when compared to researchers who adopt an outside positionality. Outsiders have traditionally legitimised their research by taking a more objective stance, seeking to distance and minimise their potential to influence, inform or collude with participants by setting aside what is already known about the phenomenon. Contreras (2015) however, suggests that by occupying both insider/ outsider positionalities, new knowledge can be achieved through engaging with a wider range of perspectives which, may have been missed or ignored if dual researcher positioning was not adopted. Within this study, I have situated myself both as an insider and an outsider, and as such, I have occupied this dual positionality, sometimes simultaneously, at different stages of the research process. As an outsider, I have used my professional role as a researcher and academic, to recruit to the study and bring attention to the experience of families of prisoners, providing a forum to enable their unique experiences to be examined. At these times, I am drawing upon

my professional role and identity to produce new knowledge that is credible, and which contributes to the extant literature. However, I have also occupied what Dwyer and Buckle (2009) describe as 'partial insiderness'. For example, like the participants within this study, I have experience of a family member who is in prison for committing a serious offence and I share some of the same characteristics (e.g., white, middle class, educated, female, mother, stepmother), however, I do not consider myself as being a member of the group because, unlike the participants in this study, I am somewhat more distanced from my imprisoned relative. Unlike the participants in this study, I am not actively visiting or supporting my relative in prison and consequently this creates a degree of difference and separation. This distancing illustrates my 'partial insiderness' and illustrates how my own identity is set aside from the participatory group that that were interviewed. Utilising my insider status was useful in developing the research questions and negotiating access to this marginalised population. My own experience of having a family member in prison (insider status) enabled me to deconstruct my authority as a researcher and enabled me to develop reciprocity with the participants during the interviews. Nonetheless, there are some disadvantages to having this dual positionality and balancing the role of both researcher and a relative of a prisoner who has committed a serious indictable offence. The perceived sharing of experiences can sometimes result in assumptions being made by participants which may influence the type and amount of information that is shared with the researcher (Burger, 2015).

The presentation of self as a researcher occupying a dual positionality is complex and can be emotionally and ethically challenging. Reflexivity has enabled me to attend to the challenges of conducting research and the tensions that interplay between researcher authenticity and true self. Daza (2008) suggests that researchers are frequently required to play the role of researcher which can be emotionally and ethically challenging. For example, Daza (2008) draws on the notion of researcher silence and the tensions that arise from hiding true thoughts and beliefs from participants. When the research subjects' beliefs and values are at odds with your own, this can threaten the presentation of the authentic self. At times, whilst conducting the interviews, I have remained silent and hidden my own views and opinions. The challenges associated with this have been addressed through reflexivity.

Reflexivity was further supported by writing a research diary which facilitated the process of engaging with a critical analysis of the self, of my own values, preconceptions and biases and how these may impact and influence the different stages of the research process. Engaging in a critical dialogue of the self has enabled me to consider and resolve the tensions that have arisen at different stages of the research process in respect to how I present my own identity. Reflexivity has provided the space to dissect the interplay between the research participants and myself as researcher, and address the tensions associated with occupying both an insider/ outsider role whilst at the same time trying to communicate an authentic version of myself.

Monthly supervision with the PhD supervisory team further facilitated the process of reflexivity, providing the time and space to critically reflect upon how my own personal familial experience of imprisonment, and how my ontological and epistemological positioning could influence the design and findings of the study. Supervision provided a safe space in which I could examine 'the role self' in the generation of knowledge (researcher and relative of a serving prisoner) as well as allowing an 'examination of self' by others. This reflective scrutiny of the researcher positioning within supervision is an invaluable quality assurance mechanism at all stages of the research process, maintaining the equilibrium between what Berger (2015, pp. 220) describes as the 'personal and the universal'. The ethical issues of occupying both an insider/ outsider role will be discussed in the reflexive account at the end of the Methods Chapter and further reflexive accounts unfold and are presented within the analysis of the data and discussion chapters.

3.5 Chapter Summary

Within this chapter the research paradigm which is situated within an interpretive hermeneutic approach has been presented. Supporting an ontological assumption that there are multiple versions of reality, and taking a constructionist epistemological perspective, it is possible to address the overarching aim of the study and explore how families and the individuals within the family network, construct their own reality and knowledge through unveiling the intrinsic meaning that they place on their experiences. The chapter has illustrated how the meanings that prisoners' families attach to an experience will be analysed and interpreted using a dual hermeneutic of

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), whereby the role of the researcher is to provide an interpretation of the participants' own interpretations of their experience. Finally, this chapter has concluded by introducing the significance of reflexivity within qualitative research at each stage of the research process and a description of how reflexivity has been applied and evidenced in the write up of the thesis has been provided. The following chapter will describe the data collection process and illustrate the ethical considerations related to the study.

Chapter Four

Methods

This chapter seeks to demonstrate the rigour of the research by presenting a transparent overview of the data collection process. The qualitative data collection strategy of face-to-face semi structured individual interviews is presented followed by an account of how the data was analysed by combining two theoretical frameworks. The chapter will outline the steps that were taken to gain ethical approval for this study. The ethical considerations associated with gaining access recruiting and interviewing this often hard to reach population are addressed. The chapter will conclude with a reflective evaluation of the challenges of researcher positionality and occupying a role of both insider and outsider identity in the recruitment of participants.

4.1 Sampling Strategy

Barrat et al. (2015) identify how for a qualitative study, purposive sampling is an effective way to obtain information rich data from hidden populations who have experience of a phenomena, and who are knowledgeable about the subject being explored. Consequently, this type of sampling strategy was adopted to elicit the experiences of families of prisoners. According to Campbell et al. (2020) purposive sampling involves the setting of inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the sample is non-probabilistic. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study aligns with the overarching aim of the study which is to explore how families of prisoners serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence manage their identity.

4.2 Inclusion Criteria

Families of serving prisoners' who have been found guilty of a serious indictable offence, serving an indeterminant or determinant sentence of four years or over were recruited to participate in this study. Invariably what constitutes a serious offence remains a contested issue. Ashworth (2005) identifies how there are a range of factors that make an offence more or less serious, however indictable offences in England and Wales are usually tried in the Crown Court and are considered to be the most serious category of offence, and carry longer custodial sentences, and involve acts such as murder, manslaughter, rape, sexual offences, robbery, wounding with intent

and arson (Sentencing Council, 2021). For families who are related to serious offenders, Condry (2007) suggests that their experiences are amplified because of the lengthened prison sentence and the associated increased serious stigmatising nature of the offence compared to those serving a shorter sentence. Consequently, families associated with a male prisoner serving a longer sentence of four years or more, including those serving a life sentence were eligible to be recruited into this study as opposed to persistent repeat offenders who serve smaller prison sentences for less serious crimes.

4.3 Exclusion Criteria

Families of prisoners' serving an Indeterminant Sentence for a Public Protection Order (IPP) were not eligible for inclusion in this study. This type of sentence was abolished in 2012 because of the unexpected effects of many prisoners being held in custody for many years beyond the end of their minimum tariff. The abolition of the IPP sentence cannot be applied to prisoners retrospectively, consequently there are still over 1,700 prisoners who remain in prison under this type of sentence. In March 2022 ninety six percent of these prisoners had served their minimum tariff with over 500 prisoners having served ten years over their minimum term with no confirmed release date (Howard league, 2022). It has been recognised that for IPP prisoners and their families, the uncertainty of no release date, and constant fear of recall to prison associated with IPP sentences creates specific and unique challenges (McConnell & Raikes, 2019). Similarly, prisoners serving a Whole Life Term, where the person is never considered for release, brings with it unique challenges and consequently were also excluded from the study. Relatives of Foreign National Offenders (FNO's) were also excluded from participating in the study. Franko (2019) identifies how the families of Foreign Nationals experience is invariably different to that of families of prisoners who have permanent residency in the UK in respect to maintaining contact with the prisoner, immigration issues, the threat of deportation and language barriers. For these reasons, families of foreign nationals have been excluded from this study.

Raikes and Lockwood (2016) identify how the imprisonment of men and women have noticeably different consequences for family structure and functioning. This study seeks to examine the experience of families connected to an adult male prisoner

serving in a UK prison and therefore, families connected to a female prisoner were not included.

Children were also exempt from taking part in the study. As illustrated in chapter one, and chapter two, there has been a plethora of research examining the impact of parental imprisonment upon children and much less on other family members. As this research does not seek to understand the experiences of children who have a family member in prison, children under the age of eighteen were also excluded from participating in the study.

The imprisoned family member was not invited to participate in the study as the focus of this study is to capture the family's experiences of having a member of their own family in prison. As previously stated, families of prisoners serve their own hidden sentence (Condry, 2007), they are forced to live with the consequences of an imposed prison sentence. Over the decades there has been an abundance of research investigating the impact of imprisonment upon the prisoner and their victims from various criminological, psychological, and social perspectives. Families of prisoners, however, should be recognised as secondary victims of the offence in their own right and should be given their own platform to voice their experiences independently from that of the prisoners' voice.

Consideration was also given as to whether permission should be sought from the prisoner for their family to take part in the study; this inclusive approach would potentially negate any further feelings of social exclusion for the prisoner, however, if the prisoner were to decline permission, this would mean that the family would be similarly excluded and unable to participate, thus silencing them. Hence, the decision to seek the permission of the prisoner for the family to participate in the research was that of the family members and not a prerequisite to take part in the research.

Given that this is a cross-sectional study, the experiences of families at different stages of the journey need to be captured, for example those who are relatively early into the sentence, mid-sentence and approaching parole. It is also important to acknowledge that the type and categorisation of prison is likely to have an impact upon family members' experience. For example, prisoners who are in an open prison may, according to Statham et al. (2021), be more cooperative, and this might lessen the stress on their family, whereas families recruited from high security prisons might

experience more stress because of the notoriety and difficulties associated with maintaining satisfactory contact. The recruitment strategy was therefore aimed at accessing prisoners' families from a variety of different types of prisons and at different points within the sentencing.

4.4 Ethical Approval

Research that involves human participants must comply with ethical research standards and procedures to protect and promote the safety and rights of the participants and protect the researcher from harm (Resnik, 2018). An application was submitted to the University of Huddersfield Human and Health Sciences School Research and Ethics Panel (SREP) to gain ethical approval to proceed with the study (Appendix 1). The initial idea was to recruit families of prisoners' serving indeterminant sentences from prison visitor centres however, this was too restrictive and a further application to SREP was submitted (Appendix 2) and approved (Appendix 3) to include prisoners' families serving a determinant sentence of four years or more. As the family members were not prisoners themselves, no other institutional approvals were needed to commence the fieldwork, however, approvals to support access, recruitment and broader ethical considerations are explored and discussed below in respect to the various stages of fieldwork.

4.5 Recruitment and Negotiating Access

Initially the recruitment strategy was to recruit families from Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) visitor centres. Consent from the National Offender Management (NOMS) National Research Committee[2] was sought to seek permission to access their facilities and gain consent to recruit and interview families within their establishments. The committee did not give consent for the visitors' centres to be used as an interview location but agreed that their visitor centres could to be used to access and recruit families (Appendix 4). Prison visitor centres and family engagement services are primarily managed by Non-Government Organisations (NGO). The university had an existing relationship with a NGO, Partners of Prisoners (POPS) who provide support for prisoners' families at the pre-arrest stage and offer support throughout the sentence and during the post-conviction stage. At the time of undertaking the

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[2] At the time of negotiating access in 2014, NOMS was the forerunner to what, is now HMPPS (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service)

research, POPS were responsible for managing ten prison visitor centres in the Northwest of England. This organisation was approached and following a face-to-face meeting with the director of the organisation, permission was granted to recruit families from the visitor centres that they managed. At the time of recruitment, Category A establishments could not be accessed through this organisation and therefore another NGO, Northeast Prison Aftercare Society (Nepacs) who were responsible for the management of prison visitor centres in the Northeast of England, facilitated access to prisoners' families from a Category A prison.

Relatives were informed about the proposed study via a flyer which was situated in the visitors waiting room (Appendix 5) and all relatives attending the visitor centre on recruitment days were directly approached and given verbal and written information about the nature and purpose of the study as outlined in the flyer. As the aim of the study was to interview more than one member connected to the same prisoner, it was important that additional family members could be recruited into the study to form a family network. Giesbers et al. (2018) frame family networks within a social capital model, and they define family networks as being concerned with the flow of support and resources that an individual receives from its members who can be connected by blood or who have friendship ties. Due to the uniqueness of family functioning and composition, the 'family' was not defined in advance by the researcher as Pasley and Petren (2015) suggest that the parameters of what constitutes a family has changed and moved beyond the traditional nuclear structures; the meaning of family should not be defined by researchers but by the individuals themselves. Similarly, Hutton and Moran (2019) identify how the "typical family" no longer exists, relationships that contribute to the notion of family are diverse and fluid and can consist of non-biological members. For this study the family was not bound by blood ties, the participants were free to invite who they thought were significant others in their lives and who the deemed to be a family member.

For the purposes of this research, therefore, a family network consists of three or more adult family members, who are all connected to the same male prisoner serving a custodial sentence of four years and over for committing a serious indictable offence in England and Wales. The partners and parents of the prisoner (the primary contact) were approached in the first instance to take part in the study (Appendix 6). The primary contact's role was to identify the family network and stimulate interest from

their family to participate in the study. Before members of the family were approached by the researcher the primary contact obtained written permission from the members of the family network to share their contact details with the researcher (Appendix 8) and with their consent they were approached to participate in the study (Appendix 7).

Recruitment of family networks from the visitor centres took place over an eighteen-month period. Bimonthly visits were made to the centres and eventually three family networks were recruited to participate in the study. One of the most significant methodological challenges was trying to locate and recruit the family network (three or more family members connected to the same prisoner).Whilst the visitor centre provided the physical site and social space to access the sample, the challenge was to engage with the primary contact, who was critical in facilitating and negotiating access to other family members. Spacey et al. (2021) identify how family gatekeepers play a key role in not only facilitating or limiting access to other family members but can influence and validate the degree of trust that other members should have in the research and the researcher. Gaining the trust of the primary contact therefore was central to the recruitment process and how this was negotiated is discussed in the reflexive account at the end of the chapter.

Although there was much interest generated for the study in the waiting room, this did not often translate to families being recruited into the study. Often the family network could not be established because the primary contact could not recruit additional members of their family into the study. Whilst the reasons for this are multiple, on occasions the primary contact was the only family member connected with a prisoner and did not have any family to approach, or the primary contact could not recruit into the study either because their family had disassociated from the prisoner or could not recruit family members who were supporting the prisoner. This perhaps reinforces what has already been established in chapter one, that families of prisoners typically wish to remain hidden and therefore recruiting multiple members of the same family was a significant challenge.

Two family networks were recruited from the POP's visitors' centres and the third family network was recruited from Nepacs. Whilst recruiting families who were attending visitor centres in the North of England may appear to be restrictive in respect of the demographic, the families recruited came from different geographical locations

throughout England, and the prisoners they were visiting were accommodated in a different location to where their offence occurred. Recruiting from visitor centres alone, however, did not capture those families who were not accessing visits, or the family support services aligned with a visitor centre.

To reach a wider demographic, amendments were made to the SREP application and permission was granted to use online and support groups accessed via social media sites to recruit families of prisoners (Appendix 2). It was anticipated that this would not only help to attract families who were not visiting or accessing family support services but would potentially promote a wider, diverse sample of families and be inclusive of different ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds. Social network spaces can be seen as dynamic place where social interaction occurs, where identities, real or performed, are communicated and made visible by their creators (Robards, 2013). Social media sites such a Facebook and Twitter have been identified as being an effective tool in the recruitment of hidden, marginalised, or stigmatised groups of people (Temple & Brown, 2015) who are often difficult to access via more traditional recruitment methods. Online recruitment via social media sites have been successfully adopted within the context of traditionally hard to reach or seldom heard populations such as parents with a child with a life threatening condition (Akard et al, 2015); accessing participants with an addiction (Thornton et al, 2015), as well as a range of sensitive topics related to adolescent behaviour and experiences such as mental health (Ellis et al, 2014) and risky sexual behaviours (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2015). For this study, existing support groups for families of prisoners were identified through a search of Facebook and permission from the administrators was sought and obtained to access the closed group (there were no open access groups found). Access to these closed social groups requires an administrator to approve membership before group members can access, read, and post comments.

Once permission was obtained from the group administrators, a post was placed in the group with details of the study inviting members to participate in the study. Family members who expressed an interest were identified as the primary contact. A primary contact participant information sheet (Appendix 6) outlining the details of the study was sent to them along with an additional information sheet for their family members (Appendix 7). If a family network was established, the primary contact sought consent

to share their contact details with the researcher (Appendix 8). Only when the consent had been obtained were the family network approached to participate in the study. It took 6 months to identify and recruit a family network from the online support group. This activity took place concurrently with the recruitment via the visitor centres.

One of the main challenges to using Facebook as a medium to recruit families of prisoners into the study was concerned with how to present my own identity ethically to the administrators and individuals who were occupying this closed group. The challenges and dilemmas of researcher positioning and to present myself self to the closed groups are considered later in the reflexive account at the end of the chapter.

4.6 Sample Size

In total, four family networks were recruited into the study and a total of eleven individual face to face interviews were conducted. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) identify when Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of the data is proposed, the sample size typically involves one to fifteen participants. Later in the chapter, it is established that this research incorporates features of IPA as a method of data analysis. Consequently, the sample size of eleven falls within the recommended parameters and allows for the similarities and variations between each participant to be examined in great depth.

The criteria for inclusion into the study at the outset was to interview a minimum of three family members all connected to the same prisoner. All four family networks met the inclusion criteria before data collection began. For one family network however, one of the participants withdrew from the study and no longer wished to be interviewed. The withdrawal came after two of the family members had already been interviewed, resulting in a family network consisting of only two individuals. Having a family network of two at the recruitment phase would have meant that this family did not meet the inclusion criteria, however, after careful consideration, and following a discussion with academic supervisors, the decision was made to still included this family network in the study; two of the family members had already provided their time and emotionally invested in the research. To not use their data, after they had already been interviewed and invested the time in the research would have been discourteous at best and ethically problematic. Their experiences of having a family member in prison had

produced relevant and rich data which would unequivocally inform the aim and objectives of the study.

Although families of prisoners from a Category D establishment were invited to take part in the research, the table below illustrates how the experiences of these families are not captured within this research. This may be an area for future research as Category D prisoners are, according to Crew et al. (2016) detained in environments which have a more relaxed regime and prisoners are afforded the freedoms of an open prison which may result in a very different familial experience. Details of the recruitment method, family network, and nature of the offence, and prison sentence are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Details of the family network recruited.

	Recruitment method	Members of the family network interviewed	Ethnicity	Type of crime and sentence length	Length of sentence served at the time of interview
Family network 1	Category A Visitor Centre	Mother Stepfather	White Black African	Murder-Life Sentence 19 years.	6 years
Family network 2	Category B Facebook	Mother Sister Stepfather	White White White	Wounding with intent. 8 years with an additional 3 year on licence.	7 years
Family network 3	Category C Visitor Centre	Father Mother Sister	White White White	Sexual offences against children 5 ½ years.	4 ½ years
Family network 4	Category B Visitor Centre	Mother Sister Nephews Wife	White White White	Rape, intimidation, and threats to kill. 11years.	2 years

Out of the eleven participants who were recruited into the study, ten were from a white ethnic group (females n=8, males n=2). Families from ethnic minority groups were approached at the visitor centres to participate in the study, however their views are underrepresented within this study. Abass et al. (2016), however, assert how race, ethnicity, language, and cultural differences do impact upon the familial experience of prison and the willingness to take part in research. The under representation of families from ethnic minority groups in this study could also be attributed to the perceptions held regarding the researcher's own ethnicity. As a white, middle-class woman, families from ethnic minority groups may have felt that they could not relate to the researcher because of the perceived "face value differences" associated with race, ethnicity, and culture. Abass et al. (2016) identify how perceived similarities between researcher and participant can promote a sense of trust, shared understanding, and willingness to participate. Fryer et al. (2016) suggests that by racially matching the researcher and the participants (racial concordance) can improve recruitment into a study, however due to resource limitations this was not feasible for this study.

4.7 Data Collection

Data was collected through individual semi structured interviews and photo or artefact elicitation. Semi structured interviews seek to elicit the perspective and meanings that are constructed by different individual family members all connected to a perpetrator of serious crime, seeking to unveil their subjective reality of how they construct, reconstruct, and manage their individual and familial identity. The semi structured interview approach allows the participants to convey their experiences in their own words, however the researcher has some control over the focus of the interview without being too prescriptive (Liamputtong, 2019). Focus groups as data collection method were rejected because interviewing participants where sensitive subjects are to be discussed, such as the imprisonment of a family member, is less appropriate than conducting individual interviews (Busetto et al, 2020). Moreover, it is recognised that within focus groups the responses that participants may give may be influenced by the experience of others (Zeleeva, 2019). Individual interviews are more appropriate to address the focus of this study which is to explore how family members interpret and present their individual, familial and extrafamilial identity without the

influence from other family members or homogenous groups.

Participants were also given the option to select personal photographs or artefacts such as images selected from the press (selected by the participants) to help to generate conversation, sharpen memories, select issues that are most pertinent to them and represent their reality of the experience. Glaw et al. (2017) assert how using photos or artefact in an interview can produce information that may not be obtained through an interview alone; it offers participants an alternative medium to help organise and express what they may find it difficult to articulate, as well as being a tool for them to validate and extract meaning from the image they present. Two out of the four family networks used photos to validate their narrative accounts, showing images of their family both past and present, whilst one family network referred to a newspaper clipping to show how the identity of their relative was communicated to the outside world at the time of their arrest . This tool was useful to explore their feelings in relation to the offence and to extract a deeper level of analysis.

Once a family network had been identified, written consent was obtained before the interviews commenced (Appendix 9). Prior to the face-to-face interviews, a written and verbal explanation of the purpose of the study was given as well as how the participants' right to confidentiality and anonymity would be promoted in line with the procedures outlined in the approved SREP application. Each participant was given the opportunity to ask any questions relation to the study and were advised of their right to withdraw from the study without prejudice.

The interview schedule was very loose with three broad questions asking participants to describe the following:

- What was life like before the crime?
- What was life like during the arrest, sentencing and trial?
- What is life like now and how do you see the future?

An interview schedule and checklist (Appendix 10) was helpful during the interviews as it provided a prompt of potential subthemes that could be explored to address within each question, whilst at the same time maintaining the integrity of the individual's experience. The location of the interview was decided by the participants themselves,

and all interviews were conducted in the participants own home. Edwards and Holland (2013) identify how participants are likely to talk more freely within their own environment, and therefore, where the interview takes place is an important consideration as it can influence the type of information that is exchanged. To build rapport participants need to feel comfortable, having other people overhearing or accessing the space where the interview is being conducted can create stress for both the interviewee and the researcher and ultimately influence what is discussed. The interviews were conducted in a space in the participants' home with just the participant and researcher present. The participants from each network were also interviewed separately, immediately after one another to minimise the risk of one another influencing the type of information that was shared with the researcher.
The individual interviews lasted between 26 and 76 minutes each.

4.8 Informed Consent

Ethical research requires participants to have information in order that they can make an informed decision to participate in a study. This involves providing clear information about the scope of the research and ensuring participants have a clear understanding of their role in the research process (British Sociological Association, 2017). All potential participants received a written information sheet detailing the aims of the proposed study and how their data would be collected, stored, and used. This information sheet included the contact details of the researcher and the main supervisor in order that prospective participants could ask any questions relating to the study (Appendix 9).

4.9 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The participants were informed that their names, and any other identifying information such as names of their relatives, friends and demographic data would be changed to protect the identities of the participants and their serving relative. Participants were informed that their anonymity would be safeguarded through the allocation of a pseudonym which would be used in the transcripts, field notes and future publications. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Although transcription of the interviews was a lengthy process, one advantage of this process was that it further safeguarded the participants' identity as the audio files of the

interviews containing actual names of the participants were not heard by anyone other than the researcher. The pseudonym allocated to the participant was also used in the discussions with the supervisory team. To protect the participants' data, the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018) have been upheld. All electronic files and recordings containing personal data have been stored in a password protected file on the University of Huddersfield's secure data storage facility.

4.10 Sensitive Nature of the Topic

The participants were informed that they were able to suspend or terminate the interview at any time. In two of the interviews, the recordings were briefly paused because the participants were visibly upset. After a short interruption, both participants resumed their recorded interview. Before and throughout the interviews, the participants were treated with respect and reassured that they did not have to disclose anything that they do did not feel comfortable sharing with the interviewer. Immediately following the interview, the participants were de-briefed and signposted to organisations that could offer further support to them. No one withdrew after the interviews had taken place, just one participant withdrew ahead of the scheduled interview.

4.11 Researcher Safety and Lone Working

The research involved interviewing participants in their own home and therefore a standard risk assessment was undertaken in relation to lone working. The potential risks of lone working were identified in the SREP application (Appendix 12), and the usual mechanisms were put in place to support lone working. Information about location, time and date of the interviews was shared with a member of the supervision team who were contacted by the researcher by mobile phone before and after each interview.

Whilst the procedural aspects for conducting ethical research have been presented, it is important to acknowledge how these procedures and do not always take account the ethical issues or dilemmas that arise during fieldwork with vulnerable or marginalised groups such as prisoners' families. Muller et al. (2020), identify how these ethical codes and procedures are somewhat reductionist and do not always consider wider issues that can arise between the researcher and hard to reach groups.

Ferguson and Clark (2018) identify how hard to reach or marginalised groups are often more reluctant to engage in research because a lack of trust in professionals and the organisations in which they operate. Researching marginalised groups can present unique challenges that require additional considerations such as trust building and managing the dynamic between researcher and participant, whilst at the same time trying to present an authentic version of oneself. Some of these issues arose during the life course of this research. The reflexive accounts that are embedded and presented within the following chapters of the thesis not only illustrate the type of ethical dilemmas that emerged but how these were addressed by the researcher.

4.12 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data has been guided by two theoretical frameworks. The following section will provide an outline description of the frameworks as well as providing a rationale for the blended approach. An example of how the analytical frameworks have been adopted and integrated into this study are presented within this chapter.

The previous chapter identified that the research has adopted an interpretive phenomenological approach, so it was appropriate to apply an interpretive phenomenological analysis framework (IPA) to the data analysis process. The analysis of the material was initially informed by Smith et al. (2009) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Framework. This is a recognised IPA framework that provides a six-stage approach to data analysis that allows both the particularistic and the shared features of a participant's experience to be represented. The initial six stage IPA framework was useful in that it provided a set of general guidelines for the first order analysis; the exploration of the participants' subjective emic experience, however the framework was somewhat limited in facilitating the second order analysis where the objective of the researcher is to try to understand the participants' sensemaking of their experience (etic perspective). To facilitate the process of the *how* people make sens*e* and give meaning to their experience features of the IPA analytical approach (Smith, et al, 2009) were integrated with elements of Mills et al. (2010) Sensemaking Framework.

Sensemaking as a method of analysis has been chosen to compliment the IPA analysis as it considers the social and psychological processes of how people attach meaning to an event as opposed to solely focusing on the outcome of that experience

(Mills et al, 2010). Combining the approaches enables a deeper dimension to the analytical process because it considers how prisoner's families were making sense of their experience. Adopting this pluralistic approach to data analysis is an accepted, but relatively innovative approach within the field of qualitative research as it allows researchers to develop understanding of the phenomenon that essentially may otherwise have remained hidden. Hood (2015) suggests that the application of a dual lens is original, in that it allows different facets of the participants lived experience and discursive performance to be explored within the context of their experience. Combining the two approaches to data analysis not only allows an exploration of the participants subjective experience but considers how participants' make sense of their experience and how they position their identities. To achieve the duel hermeneutic, it is important to consider why participants recast their stories in the way that they did. Adding this third dimension, the why element, to the data analysis allows the researcher to cast their own interpretations and theorize upon the way in which families not only make sense of having a loved one in prison but considers the significance of their experience. Combining the approaches resulted in an eight-stage approach to data analysis. The stages are presented in a linear fashion, however data analysis itself was not a linear process. Table 2 below illustrates the different focus and function of the two analytical frameworks.

Table 2: Process of Data Analysis: Merging analytical approaches, IPA and Sensemaking.

Stages of Analysis	Focus on	Function
IPA Stage 1-6	Experience	Participants subjective understanding
Sensemaking Stage 7	How meaning is made	Recasting and enactment of the environment
Duel Hermeneutic Stage 8	Why? What does it mean?	Interpreting and theorising the participants sensemaking

Trying to make sense of the participants experience required a fluid approach which allowed movement back and forth through the eight stages. The duel hermeneutic, this third dimension to the process of data analysis, is achieved when the researcher

applies an etic lens through a process of functioning patterning. This is where the researcher interpretates and theorizes upon the participants experience and sensemaking. In essence, the researcher interpretates and makes sense of the participants sensemaking.

Stages one to six described below, illustrate how features of IPA (Smith et al., 2009) were applied to this study to achieve the first order analysis.

4.12.1 IPA First Order Analysis.

Stage 1: Rereading and Relistening

Stage one of the data analysis process was centred upon re-familiarising and immersing oneself in the detailed context of the data. Each of the recorded interviews were personally transcribed verbatim. The transcribing, although a lengthy process facilitated a deeper level of engagement and familiarisation with the content of the interviews (McGrath et al., 2018). The process of transcription itself, of replaying and listening to the interviews, ignited the interplay of interactions within the interview, illuminating a depth and nuance to the participant's words that reading alone could not have achieved. The scripts were read and closely re read, often in conjunction with listening to the participant's accounts. This process of immersion was significant as it captured the participant's experience on a meaningful level, unveiling new understandings of the participant's emic experience as a result of acquiring a deeper connection with the participants narratives.

Stage 2: Initial Noting

Having become familiar with the content of the interview, the second step of data analysis involved making notes and documenting observations on what participants could be saying in order to explore any connections that surfaced. This process allowed me to stop and consider what was occurring within the participant's experience as well as allowing me to reflexively annotate any issues pertaining to my own influences and responses to and from the participants. Reading through the text, pertinent questions that sought to address and attach meaning to, and from, what the participants were trying to convey from their experience were developed. The aim here was not to agree or assert if their story was accurate or complete. Crowther et al. (2016) state that for the hermeneutic researcher the testimony presented by the participant can never be neutral. Rather it is concerned with the participants own evaluation of the event, their story will never be fully unveiled as participants select

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what they wish to disclose based on how they choose to be perceived at any one time through a process of limiting or embellishing their story. What is essential to the story one day, may be less relevant to them, and retold differently another day.

Stage 3: Developing Emergent Themes from the Single Interview

The notes, in conjunction with the interview data, allowed the development of emergent themes that were initially chronologically ordered. These emergent themes were grounded from and could be traced back to each participant's single interview and their particularistic experience. This process was complex as the same theme could manifest itself within the single interview in several different and discrete forms transcript data.

Stage 4: Searching for Connections Across Themes (within-participant patterning)

Having listed the emergent themes within a single interview, the next stage involved identifying and abstracting what were the most significant elements of the participant's experience. This patterning process of abstraction allowed themes with similar concepts or categories to be grouped together under conceptual superordinate themes with subthemes subsumed within them (Smith et al, 2009). One such example of a superordinate theme within this study is Troubled Identity, with one of the subthemes being labelled as Maternal Culpability.

Stage 5: Moving on to the Next Interview

The next stage was to move on to the analysis of the next interview transcript. The process of stage 1-4 was applied to each individual interview. To capture the experience of familial imprisonment for each individual person, it was important to treat each analysis as a new and separate unit of analysis as opposed to simply trying to replicate and apply the themes of analysis derived from the first interview data to all the remaining participants.

Stage 6: Looking for Patterns Across Individual Interviews and Across Cases

Having identified the superordinate and subthemes for individual family members, the next step was to search for the themes and patterns within a family network, the aim being to identify and both the unique and shared the aspects of their individual and familial experiences. This process was repeated for all four of the family networks. The final stage was to look for commonalities and differences of experiences across the different family networks. At this stage, the decision was taken to take a case study approach to present the findings. A separate chapter outlining the findings for each of

the four family networks is followed by further discussion chapter to illustrate the commonalities and differences across the four different family networks.

Before the final two stages of the analysis are presented, the following section will discuss the theoretical concept of sensemaking and explain the significance of incorporating this concept into the data analysis framework adopted in this study.

4.12.2 Sensemaking

Sensemaking is concerned with understanding how different meaning or interpretations are applied to the same phenomena, and it provides a useful framework to understand how identity is rooted in, and from, the narratives that we create or tell. The language and the way we tell a story both mediates and creates our understandings of experiences. Gee (2010) asserts how discourse and language is seen as a tool in which people create, endorse, and validate their individual and group identities and the social roles that are available to them. In essence, the language we use to explain an event, reflects, and mediates how we produce an understanding of the event. One way that we make sense of an event is achieved by comparing our experiences against perceptions of normality, this also serves to influence the impression that is given to others. The IPA framework alone, did not capture the way in which participants were using language to tell their story and yet this was fundamental to their conceptualisation and understanding of their experience. Mills et al. (2010) describe how the language we use to explain an event, reflects how we produce an understanding of the event, in essence it reflects our sensemaking of the situation and projects our identity.

Sensemaking is undertaken when we must make meaning of situations and practices that have not been predicted, or that are unfamiliar. Sensemaking was originally explored within the world of work and corporate environments. Weick (1995) originally developed his theory of Organizational Sensemaking after examining the way that individuals and organisations in the corporate world, made sense of unexpected events and outcomes, when systems failures had occurred. Brown et al. (2008) however, suggests that sensemaking as an analytical tool, should not be confined to corporate organisations as unfamiliarity is a feature that is encountered throughout our daily activities: making sense of unfamiliar events is a reoccurring process that we encounter as part of our daily life. Boudes and Laroche (2009) suggest how exposure

to such events in life, and interruption to an established way of being, requires an individual not only to try to establish how to respond and evaluate what should be done, but also how they are going to manage their fear and apprehensions associated with the event. Sensemaking is thus, a constantly evolving process, it occurs within a social context and is informed and shaped by the wider societal structures, norms, and expectations. Furthermore, sensemaking cannot be separated from context or past experiences. Mills et al. (2010) assert that sensemaking is a comparative retrospective process, whereby we draw upon past similar experiences to inform the way we interpret, react, and make sense new experiences.

Sensemaking as an analytical tool that can be applied to families of prisoners as this process is triggered in response to any disruption to regular routines or practices within an organisation. The family can be seen as an organisation, so when individuals within that organisation are faced with an unexpected event such as an arrest and conviction of their family member, their usual routines are invariably challenged and disrupted. This event or crisis forces the family and individuals within it to make sense of what is happening and to construct and attach different meanings. The disruption and change challenges the individual and familial identity, how individuals and the family network perceive themselves to be, and how they perceive they will be seen by others.

The IPA framework alone, largely ignored the person in context and yet this is central to understanding how participants were making sense and interpreting their experiences. How people make sense of events and their identities, is not only grounded in context of their social experience and membership of social groups (Jenkins, 2014) but deeply rooted in the organisational, environmental, cultural and social structures in which they occupy. Mills et al. (2010) recognise that, how we make sense of new events is intertwined with our identity construction, identity not only shapes our experience but the meaning making attached to the experience, the factors that shape and influence who we are, how we think we should be and how we want to be seen. Ojha (2005) describes how identity and sensemaking are processes that share many interrelated constructs. Sensemaking is concerned with a process of people attempting to make meaning of unknown entities that can arise in new and uncertain situations. Identity development is somewhat comparable in that we must assimilate and develop a sense of self when exposed to unfamiliar situations. Identity development is a process in which we monitor ourselves and situate our sense of

belonging in relation to the dominant or non-dominant group (Stryker, 1968). It is concerned with how we negotiate the roles and relationships we occupy in these new or uncertain scenarios.

4.12.3 Sensemaking and Benchmarking

How we situate ourselves and make meaning, however, is achieved not only through the language we use and the stories we tell but how we benchmark ourselves and our experiences against perceptions and discourses of normality (Tomkins, 2015). Benchmarking our experiences and situating discourses against perceptions of normality, influences our own sense of self, and how we are seen to be; it mediates and creates our understanding of the way in which we attach meaning to an experience. It was apparent, during the initial analysis, that many of the participants within this study were presenting and making sense of their stories in this way. According to Willig and Stainton (2017) people create an understanding of situations through their reconstruction of events as they select and extract information to present a certain version of that event. The story we create and the meaning we attach to our interpretation of an event is not necessarily bound by truth or accuracy, instead to support or inform our sensemaking we create plausible stories, and we look for and isolate cues to shape and support our beliefs or version of events (Tomkins, 2015). Through information selection, stories are crafted by prisoners' families, certain moments in time or cues are projected, whilst others completely ignored. In doing so, people may change or ignore what is indeed the truth. The cues prioritised and extracted in a person's reconstruction may differ depending on their positioning, inter subjectivity and sensemaking of the event. Consequently, different meanings can be attributed to the same event from different people. Within this study the power and influence of family members upon one another's sensemaking of their own experience cannot be ignored. The description and sensemaking of their family experiences can be informed by the dominant personality within the family, the story they recast, just like a film director, can influence the direction and how the cast (the family) interpretate the main experience. The director interpretates certain versions of their experience by selecting and prioritising cues to shape and influence the familial story or casting performances. This can inform how other individual family members perceive or should perceive things to be. Consequently, the less dominant family members interpretation of their own experience, may be a subservient version of the dominant

member's experience, or a somewhat distorted presentation of their own experience. This interpretation of experience can create family unity or familiar tensions. The external presentation of self may be that the family are united and supportive of one another and their family member in prison. Their internal dialogue with self, and of their experience, however, could conflict and be less accepting to that of the main storyline projected. Examples of differences of experience can be seen and are presented throughout the four family network case studies.

Having provided a description and justification for combining IPA and sensemaking the seventh stage of data analysis presented illustrates how features of a sensemaking framework were adopted to capture how family members were using discourse and language to make sense of their experience. The eighth stage projects the researchers duel hermeneutic, where a description of how my interpretative commentary of the participant's sensemaking was achieved to reflect the significance of the participants experience.

Stage 7: Using Sensemaking for Interpretive Framing

To make sense of the participants sensemaking of their experience, the use of language and how individual participants were presenting their experience was analysed, in order try to establish how they themselves, were making sense of their relative's crime, conviction, and imprisonment. Through analysing the talk and the language used, it was possible to identify ways in which they recast the events to influence their understanding of the experience as well as informing our perceptions of them. The language, and the how participants framed their story in relation to their relative's crime revealed not only how they were making sense of their experience but revealed the techniques that they employed to renegotiate and recast the event, their sense of selves and their individual and familial identity. To interpretate the participants sensemaking, a polarisation patterning technique (Tomkins, 2015) was adopted to look at the way in which participants were using discourse to benchmark their experiences against perceptions of normality. Polarization techniques can be used in a variety of situations, however, one example of the ways in which polarization techniques were used in this study, was to explore the participants experience and sensemaking of their own identity and their perceived degree of culpability for their relative's offending behaviour. This strategy of polarization captured the participants experience of identity, how they perceived themselves, and who they thought they

were or how they wished to be perceived. Polarization by the participants was achieved by benchmarking themselves against what they thought they ought to be or are perceived to be (See table 3).

Within this example, having established troubled identity as a superordinate theme, a subtheme that emerged within this was labelled maternal culpability. By applying the polarization of good mother versus bad mother, the experience of having a son in prison can be somewhat revealing. For example, a participant benchmarked her identity against being a good mother and yet there was conflict and a disconnect between how she perceived herself to be (good mother) and how she thought she was seen by others (bad mother). Through analysis of the way in which participants were presenting their story, it was possible to identify a range of discursive techniques which were employed to attend this cognitive dissonance whereby there was a disconnect between what kind of a mother the participant thought she was, and how she perceived she was seen by others. These discursive techniques are used to shape and present our identities in a more positive way, as well as being instrumental in discrediting the competing discourses. The function of discursive techniques is described within the eighth stage of the data analysis.

4.12.4 Functioning and Theorising: A Duel Hermeneutic

Stage 8: Having identified the superordinate and subthemes from the participants experience (stages 1 to 6) and analysed how participants were presenting their story (stage 7), a second patterning technique of functioning was applied to the data analysis process (Smith et al, 2009). Functioning patterning calls for the researcher to consider the role and purpose of a theme presented within any given account of an experience. The positioning of the participants in any given story reveals a sense of their identity, it projects who they are, or how they wish to be seen at that moment in time. Consequently, combining the functioning element in this eighth stage of the analysis process, allowed an interpretive lens to be applied to speculate how participants made sense of their experience of having a member of their family in prison and consider why they may have presented their story in the way that they did. Each family member presented a series of performative neutralizations as described by Sykes and Matza (1957) to cast their appraisal of their experience. Neutralization techniques help families to negate a negative appraisal of their identity and present themselves, and their imprisoned family member in a more positive way. In the

example of defending against the perception that the mother may be to blame for rearing a delinquent son, several discursive strategies were employed to apportion blame elsewhere. For example, within this study, a mother described her child rearing practices as being consistent with the societal expectations of good mothering. The blame is directed away from any intimation of poor parenting practices onto the victim using various language techniques and strategies. The language selected directs the audience towards the participants understanding of her experience, for example that the victim had manipulated and coerced her reluctant law-abiding son to do things that were not in his character. The language that was used by the participants reflects their sensemaking of having a family member in prison at a particular moment in time and conveys how they chose to understand and project their individual and familial identity. Blending sensemaking with the IPA framework captures the person in context as well as the way in which participants use language and benchmark their experiences against perceptions of normality to interpret their experiences and frame their identities. Table 3, on the following page, illustrates an example of how sensemaking was achieved within the study by participants' benchmarking identity against perceptions of normality.

The final section of the chapter presents a reflective account of the various methodological and ethical issues pertaining to the recruitment of participants, and the positionality of the researcher's own identity. This section is written in the first person as it gives a personal account of the complexities of conducting research whilst simultaneously occupying an insider and outsider position and trying to present an authentic version of oneself. Greene (2014) articulates that for researchers occupying some aspects of both statuses, it can be difficult to negotiate these challenges in respect to competing between being too much of an insider or not enough.

Table 3. Sensemaking Interpretative Framing the Troubled Identity: Defending Against Maternal Culpability and Familial Toxicity.

		Polarizations	
Sense making	Benchmarking against Perceptions of normality Good mother Versus Bad mother	*Who I am supposed to be*	A good mother is responsible for how her children turn out to be. Rears good, kind, law abiding citizens. Instils morals, values, and manners. Respect's authority.
		Who I feel I am	A good mother. Intrinsically questions good mother status. "I don't what I did wrong". "I don't know if I could have brought them up any better".
		How I think other see me	A bad mother. Bad mothers produce bad children. My parenting is responsible, I am culpable for his actions
Presentation of Self	Discursive Strategies: Techniques of neutralization		Presents self and family as good law-abiding citizens through techniques of neutralizations. Defends against maternal culpability. Plausibility. The Incident framed around an accident, not deliberate murder. It's just a set of circumstances, with no intent to murder. Shifts responsibility onto victim, she was a sexual deviant, she tied a ligature around her neck.
Function			Attends to cognitive dissonance. Realigns identity in line with societal perceptions of good mothering. Defends against maternal culpability by shifting the responsibility on to victim. Negates stigma of poor parenting.

4.13 Reflexive account: Accessing Participants and Researcher Positionality

There were many ethical and emotional challenges at the design stage of the research which were raised by the tensions between simultaneously occupying an insider status (having a member of my own family serving a custodial sentence) and outsider position (researcher) as outlined in the section entitled reflexivity and researcher positionality in chapter three. I had to consider how I could authentically and ethically present myself to the organisational and family gatekeepers and the wider family network. Whilst some of the issues related to researcher positionality have been highlighted in chapter three, this reflective account illuminates the considerations and implications of strategically deciding which role to present and for what purpose at the recruitment stage of the study design. Stryker (1968) suggests that we choose to forefront that self-identity we feel most salient according to how well it fits any given situation. In the context of prison visiting centres the organisational gatekeepers to the site were professional staff, so I consciously chose to prioritise my professional identity as researcher, which was reflected in how I negotiated access. In the first instance, I approached the organisation and informed them about the study first and only later informed them that I also had a family member in prison. Here I was not being deceptive, my insider status was true, I just chose to forefront my researcher status to gain access to participants through their organisation. Whilst, on the face of it, this appears to be privileging my outsider position, it is important to point out that simply identifying as a researcher does not automatically equate to outsider positioning. In this context I used my professional researcher status to develop rapport with other professionals and gain support for the project. In this example the professional identity was fore fronted.

The second route to access participants was by using Facebook, which can be utilised in a variety of ways, such as placing an advert under the paid advertisement feature or placing details of the study and invitations to participate on the pages of existing groups that relate to the topic under investigation. For this study, existing support groups for families of prisoners were identified through a search of Facebook and permission from the administrators was sought to access the closed group (there were no open access groups found). Access to these closed social groups requires an

administrator to approve membership before group members can access, read and post comments.

One of the main challenges to using Facebook as a medium to recruit families of prisoners into my study was concerned with how to present my own identity ethically to the individuals who were occupying this closed group. I felt that prioritising my professional researcher status would prevent me from not only accessing families of prisoners, but that it would prevent families wanting to share their experiences with someone who they may perceive to have no understanding of the issues that they face as trust and rapport is more easily established if participants perceive there is a shared identity (Homfray, 2008; Ozturk, 2011). To best negotiate access with gatekeepers, therefore, I felt it important to "fit" in and be seen as an in-group member (Hogg & Abrams,1998) and so, I strategically highlighted my attributes that most aligned me with the potential participants (Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009). This understanding was not only informed by the methodological literature but also my personal insider experience of having a family member in prison. This had cultivated an uneasy sense in me, which resonates with much of the literature of vicarious shame and stigma (Condry & Minson, 2020; Evans et al. 2021). I perceived having a family member in prison to be a negative blemish upon my own character and that I would be judged for my relatives' actions, thus, my own identity would be spoiled by my association. Consequently, revealing or concealing this information about my family has always been a considered decision for me, and I felt that this may be the same for potential participants. As a result of my insider status, therefore, I considered the likely impacts of presenting myself in different ways to maximise recruitment, concluding that prioritising my insider status of having a family member in prison was important. As a result of these considerations, I rejected disclosing my researcher status at the approval stage of gaining access to gatekeepers, as I feared it would hinder access to potential research participants (the group members) and jeopardise my legitimate status of being in the group.

Once I was given access to the Facebook group, I was faced with the dilemma of how to introduce myself, and when to present my researcher identity, particularly as although I wanted to be open and honest, I did not want to be initially perceived as an external outsider; I wanted to be accepted primarily as an insider with a genuine shared identity of having a family member in prison. Highlighting this insider identity, however, involved coordinating, negotiating, and manipulating my interaction with

other family members of prisoners. This role performance involved careful considered interactions and postings with the other group members. This is significant because the perceptions that the group held, could influence and inform if they would engage and interact. Cooley (1902) metaphorically portrays this perception as having a looking glass self: who we are is essentially reflected in the reaction's others have to us. At the same time as presenting this insider status, however, ethically I needed to be honest about my simultaneous outsider researcher position. Furthermore, participants were likely to feel deceived if I did not reveal my outsider status on first establishing some communication with them. To post to the group without revealing my researcher identity at the outset, I felt, would, therefore, cause both personal and professional tensions. I would have felt like an intruder and to not disclose one of my identities (researcher) on my first messaging post to the group would have eroded any trust that could be built. As a result, my first post presented below, was very considered but revealed my dual identity as both insider (family member of a prisoner) and outsider (researcher), but clearly positioned that of insider over that of outsider at this stage, but also being clear and transparent about what I wanted from them:

> "Hi, I am new to this site, so hello to everyone. I have a relative in prison who is serving a prison sentence for committing a serious crime. It's 9 years on from sentencing now and a long road ahead. As a family we have been affected enormously, something that I never gave a second thought to until it happened to us. It has had a massive impact upon us, and I can see from your posts that many of you are experiencing similar issues that we face daily. It's so nice to see such a non-judgemental supportive group. Prison effects families and yet we at large remain a hidden and marginalised group. My own experience has prompted me into doing research into how imprisonment affects us as families on the outside. It's an area that's important as this impacts upon so many families and unless it's happened to you people just don't understand the issues that we face, so until they do how can we begin to challenge the prejudices and judgements that we experience. If you have a relative who is serving 4 years or more in prison and you would like to know a bit more about my study or take part, please drop me a post. The study would not

involve your relative serving time, and confidentiality would be maintained. I hope that it's ok to put this on the site. Looking forward to hearing from you guys".

The careful positioning of myself in this opening post aimed to achieve an ethical balance of positionality that maximised rapport, and so supported gaining participants. Disclosing my researcher status did not appear to jeopardise my membership of the group and this first post was positively received, generating over 30 comments within the first day. It was soon evident, however, that emphasising this dual positionality in which my insider status was prioritised highlighted tensions as I further interacted with group members. Although I wanted to present my insider status as most important to the group member, I still thought of myself as predominantly an outsider by privileging my researcher status. Consequently, I was hesitant to disclose too much of own personal information for fear of compromising my 'objective' researcher perspective. This struggle has been voiced by Berger (2015) who describes the difficulties maintaining an empathetic impartiality, whilst at the same time trying to initiate and maintain a level of affiliation so that potential participants want to take part in the study. Although I was willing to talk about my familial experiences of having a member in prison, I did not want to disclose too much for fear of influencing the group members' stories, should they agree to partake part in an interview. Maintaining a separation between their lived experiences and my own, through considered and limited disclosure, felt at times, like it restricted and limited the level and depth of conversation that I could participate in. I was constantly aware of my outsider status, which enabled me to reflect on my presence within the group and how I was shaping the conversation for potential participants to consider taking part in my study. At the same time, I was constantly working to integrate my insider status to build trust and communicate with the families on the basis of our shared, but different, knowledge and experience of familial imprisonment.

4.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the steps that have been taken to answer the research question. The ethical issues related to the study have been articulated in relation to acquiring permission to undertake study, recruitment, informed consent, participant confidentiality and anonymity, the sensitive nature of the subject, storage of data and

researcher safety. The ethical issues that have emerged during the recruitment process in respect to researcher positionality and occupying a simultaneous insider/ outsider identity and the complexities of presenting an authentic self have been presented. Issues relating to negotiating access to the families of prisoners via organisational and family gatekeepers have been discussed. The frameworks which have supported the data analysis have been presented with a rationale as to why features of IPA and Sensemaking have been blended to achieve a duel hermeneutic of the individual and collective experiences of prisoner's families. The experiences of each family member have been subsumed to produce a co-constructed family narrative, presented as a case study. In chapter five, the findings from the four co-constructed case studies will be individually presented and discussed.

Chapter Five

Findings from the Four Co-constructed Case Studies

The following chapter will present the research findings of the data from the four co-constructed case studies. Each case study is presented as a separate chapter to illustrate the superordinate findings and the sub themes within. The themes depict the particularistic issues pertaining to individuals within a family network before considering the issues between the family members.

Each case study is introduced and organised under subheadings which outline the family structure and relational ties to the prisoner. Members of the family network are introduced and information relating to the offence and conviction are specified. A summary of the familial positioning in relation to the offence is presented. Following on from this, the superordinate and subthemes that have emerged from the first and second order of data analysis for each of the case studies are presented. Narrative extracts, using verbatim quotes, from individual family members, reflect the participants' emic perspectives. The researcher's own interpretative commentary, the etic perspective, is embedded and situated within the existing literature, to illuminate the significant issues that have arisen from the research. Finally, after the findings from all four case studies have been presented, a separate discussion in chapter six, will analyse, compare and contrast the themes generated across the four co-constructed family case studies

Chapter 5

5.1 Case Study One
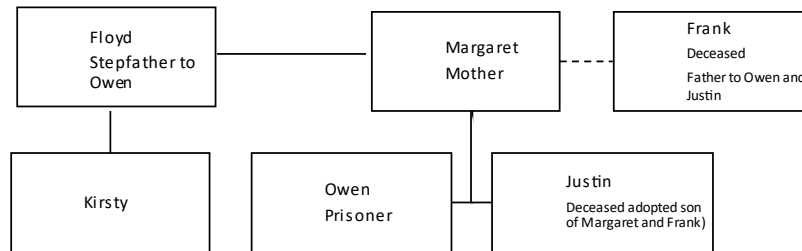
The family structure and relational ties

1. Owen is the prisoner serving nineteen years. Owen was adopted at ten days old by Margaret and Frank. Frank is Margaret's first husband, who is now deceased.

2. Margaret is Owen's adoptive mother and was Justin's biological mother (interviewed)

3. Floyd is Owen and Justin's stepfather. Floyd was also Frank's best friend (interviewed)

4. Kirsty is Floyd's biological child from a former marriage. Kirsty is an adult and lives independently of him in the south of England (not interviewed)

Additional family information

- Frank is Owen's adoptive father and Justin's biological father. Frank died at the age of forty-seven when Owen was twenty-two years old, and Justin was seventeen years old.

- Justin was Owen's younger adoptive brother. Justin died whilst Owen was in prison.

The family network.

Margaret and Floyd had been married for ten years at the time that the interview took place. Margaret was a retired professional; Floyd was a semi-retired executive. Both Margaret and Floyd had known one another's children from infancy. Floyd's daughter Kirsty had agreed to take part in the study but withdrew due to personal issues on the same day that Margaret and Floyd had been interviewed. Although this family network no longer met the original inclusion criteria (three or more relatives connected to the same prisoner), this family unit was kept in the study, as discussed in chapter four. The interviews, in which Margaret and Floyd had shared difficult and sensitive accounts had already taken place. Margaret and Floyd wanted their narratives to be included, despite not having a third member in their network.

The Conviction

Owen was serving a minimum prison sentence of nineteen years. At the time of the interview, he was six years into his sentence. In his late thirties, Owen had been found guilty of the murder of his ex-partner, Lydia. At the time of his trial and conviction the media reported Owen to have obsessively stalked and strangled his ex-partner Lydia at his home. A verdict was not reached on a separate charge of rape.

The offence and familial positioning

Owen's mother, Margaret, and stepfather Floyd denied the charge of murder. The couple's sensemaking of Owen's offence was that Owen's long-term girlfriend, Lydia, had died after she had accidently asphyxiated herself following a consensual bondage sex game that had gone wrong. This dominant critical sense making, of an accidental death, was interwoven and deeply embedded within their reconstructions.

The reconstruction of Margaret's story and her recall of events leading to Owen's imprisonment were framed as a tragic accident whereby his girlfriend Lydia died as a result of the couple experimenting in autoerotic asphyxiation. Margaret's recasting was based around a narrative that her son was not culpable for Lydia's death and that a violent aggressive murder had not taken place. In retelling and framing her story as an accident, Lydia's death was seen because of something awful that occurred which was unexpected and without intent.

Floyd's story was somewhat different in that he did not explicitly refer to an accident, rather he focused on the notion of play; Bondage and Discipline, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) play in which Owen was a naive participant. The emphasis that Owen was naive in this play was suggestive that he was not fully aware of the potential consequences of BDSM play. Play is usually seen as an innocent activity, where participants consensually engage without intentions of malice. Framing the death around play, lessens Owen's intent to kill. This, like Margaret's story, makes Floyd's construction of the events more palatable to an audience. Lessening Owen's culpability in Lydia's death eases their own perceived culpability and lessens the shame and stigma often associated with acts of violence or murder. The difference between the two constructions is in the perceived level of Lydia's culpability. Floyd projected a sharing of culpability, whereas Margaret steered the culpability away from Owen and firmly onto Lydia.

The following section presents the superordinate and subthemes that emerged from analyzing the data. This section illustrates how Margaret and Floyd use a series of minimisation techniques to support their version of events. It reflects their sensemaking and how they chose to present themselves and their identities at a particular moment in time. Their recasting not only enables them to make sense of what has occurred but how they wish to be seen by others.

5.2 Theme One: Neutralizing a Troubled Identity and Impression Management

Maruna and Copes (2005) identify how constructing events using neutralizations is part of the process of identity construction. Margaret and Floyd used three key inextricably linked neutralizations which allowed them to recast their subjective accounts and make sense of the story of how Owen came to be in prison. Margaret and Floyd use denial (Sykes and Matza,1957) as a neutralization technique, however, they also employ a second neutralization technique of minimization. Margaret and Floyd denied responsibility, denied the victim status, and minimized the injury. Denial of the victim status was also seen in case studies two and four. Margaret used these techniques of neutralization to support her position that Lydia's death was accidental, and for Floyd to situate Lydia's death as being a result of play. Floyd, unlike Margaret, however, used a fourth neutralization technique of condemning the condemners (Sykes and Matza,1957) which involved the blaming of others who had imposed the

deviant label onto Owen. Under this category, we later see how Floyd applied this neutralization to negatively judge those in authority seeking to legitimize the role that the police and jury played in Owen's demise. It is a strategy that seeks to lessen the severity of Owen's crime and serves to apportion blame elsewhere. The following subthemes illustrate the way in which the couple used this range of different neutralizations to present their individual and familial identities. An analysis of their sensemaking is integrated within each subtheme to achieve a duel hermeneutic.

5.2.1 Manifestations of Neutralizations: Minimising responsibility

Both Margaret and Floyd presented Lydia and Owen's relationship as a couple who were engaged in sexual experimentation within a loving consensual relationship. Margaret described the answer phone message which she received from her son in which she learned of Lydia's death:

> Margaret: "So she had been coming round so they could do some college work with him and erm, he rang up and he left this message saying that erm, they had been experimenting and Lydia had died. Erm, and he didn't, didn't go into a lot of detail".

The narrative that Lydia died because of a sex act that had gone wrong within a relationship is more palatable to them, and the listener, compared to the alternative discourse that was presented by the prosecution and supported by the jury, which was that Owen was an ex-partner of Lydia and he had purposefully stalked and killed Lydia. Framing and benchmarking the relationship in this way supports their sensemaking of what happened. Margaret and Floyd's evaluation was that Owen had been in a good relationship as opposed to a fractured toxic relationship:

> Margaret: *"They had been going out together, not quite a year. I didn't know her that well because we were living up here. I met her about half a dozen times. In fact, they came up that year before she died. They came up Boxing Day and stayed until New Year and then went back. She was talking about getting married and where she wanted to get married. All sorts of stuff like that."*

Similarly, Floyd conveyed that Owen wanted to get married:

Floyd: "Erm, but he had also got to the stage, where I can see him thinking I need to get married, and so that's where he was going basically".

This narrative was however, challenged by Lydia's mother:

Margaret: "In court, Lydia's mother denied all that. She denied that they were in a serious relationship."

The explanation and normalisation of the relationship, one of boyfriend and girlfriend, reframes the stage and context of Lydia's death. In presenting the relationship in such a way, it not only supports Margaret's understanding of the relationship, but it protects Margaret from alternative versions of what the relationship may have been. Margaret's statement of the denial of the relationship by Lydia's mother, is significant in that it potentially offers different insights into the nature of the relationship and the narrative that Margaret and Floyd had constructed. An alternative way in which the relationship may have been construed was presented to Margaret:

Researcher: "So it could almost be portrayed that they were having casual sex and that he killed her on purpose, almost?"

Margaret: "I think that's how they saw it". [The prosecution, jury and media].

As well as using techniques to present the relationship in a positive way and minimise contesting accounts that were presented at court and in the media, which suggested that Owen had stalked and murdered Lydia following a brief romance that Lydia had terminated some months earlier. The narrative suggested that he was coerced in to taking part in sexual experiments by Lydia:

Margaret: "She had asked him to go to this Swingers Club, when I was talking to him one of these mornings on the phone; he had said I don't really want to go. I said, well don't go then because it takes a very strong relationship for you to go and see someone else with her. We found out later that she had been a regular member there. They found one bloke that gave a statement that was never used in court

which proved she was into experimenting…we know her bedroom is full of sex toys."

Floyd also portrayed Lydia as taking the lead:

> Floyd: "He is unbelievably naive you know…In some ways his naivety with this particular young lady, she wanted to "play" some games. I think he went along with it, and he didn't do any research [laughs] as to what the potential consequences of those sort of games could be".

Floyd did not portray Lydia as a sexual deviant. One explanation for this may be that Floyd himself may not view BDSM as being deviant; he himself perhaps identified with it, and had a more accepting liberal view of it:

> Floyd: "Historically I have had a curiosity about that sort of play, yes BDSM is fine but there are various bits of BDSM that are pretty bloody dangerous. I can understand why some people might want to play, but when play involves breath, it is going to be seriously stupid sticking stuff round you neck and you're potentially cutting off the blood supply to your brain which can cause ventricular fibrillation. You can do as much CPR as you want, but until you get the rhythm back you aren't going to do very well".

Floyd shifted the blame away from Owen by emphasising his naivety. Floyd's sensemaking was suggestive that Lydia's death was not a deliberate act, it occurred because of ignorance as opposed to an act of malicious intent. The play however, according to Floyd and Margaret, was led by Lydia consequently this shifted the responsibility away from Owen.

Margaret had questioned her son about why he had experimented with autoerotic asphyxiation:

> Margaret: "Why on earth did you agree to do something like that? Owen said, well I thought if I didn't, it had got to the stage where I thought if I didn't, I would lose her. Well, he did didn't he, but not in the way that he thought."

Margaret's understanding was that Owen had been a reluctant participant, who had no choice but to go along with Lydia's desires for fear of losing his relationship. This impression management strategy could be employed to negate the spoiling of Owen's identity of being a sexual deviant whilst at the same time shifting the blame and the responsibility onto Lydia. Christensen (2010) suggests that such neutralizations may be presented to make the act (asphyxiation bondage and sexual experimentation) less horrifying to the storyteller and the audience receiving it. The intimation that Lydia's death was attributed to an accident exemplifies the denial of her son's responsibility and culpability of guilt:

> Researcher: "So they had just been experimenting and something went wrong?"
>
> Margaret: "Yes…Whatever happened, it wasn't deliberate. As I say, you don't know what can happen do you."

5.2.2 Neutralization: Deny the victim, minimising the injury.

Ugelvick (2012) identifies how for some prisoners, acknowledging their victim can be problematic as it signifies that they have caused suffering (physical, financial, or emotional) to someone else. Injuring others is not ethically what sensible people do. Consequently, prisoners who position themselves within this arena try to distance themselves from the moral stigma associated with being an aggressor or as a protagonist. Denial of the victim (Sykes& Matza, 1957) is one of the narrative approaches employed by prisoners to reposition themselves as moral citizens. Similarly, prisoners' families can adopt this as a repositioning strategy. Margaret and Floyd did not deny Lydia's death but they both denied her the victim status. This can be seen in how Margaret described Lydia as being responsible for placing the ligature around her own neck:

> Margaret: "She had used a ligature round her neck … She had used one of those things that you couldn't release."

Margaret moved the responsibility for the type of ligature selected and the placing of the ligature around the neck firmly upon Lydia. This mitigates her son's involvement in

causing harm to Lydia. Margaret was clear, that Lydia placed the ligature around her own neck without offering any explanation as to how she had reached this conclusion. The alternative discourse could be to suggest that Owen had placed the ligature round her neck. This would implicate Owen as having a greater role in her death. This would not support her own sensemaking and framing of the event.

Margaret used techniques of neutralization through her choice of words to deny Lydia a victim status. The quote below softens and mitigates any role Owen may have had in her death:

> Margaret: "Lydia had died, she was found dead on the bed".

Margaret and Floyd did not make any reference to a killing, or there being a victim or a victim's family. Margaret's narrative was constructed around an accident whereby her son is cast as a victim of circumstance led by Lydia's sexual deviance. Margaret positioned herself as a supporter of her son's versions of events. This belief in her son is exemplified through a conversation that she described with Owen's adoptive Grandma:

> Margaret: "She said [Adoptive Grandma] do you believe him, and I said yes I do. I might feel differently if I had found out that he had done it deliberately".

The level of trust between Margaret and Owen was embedded and threaded throughout her narrative. Margaret experienced a close, open and honest relationship with Owen stemming from early childhood to the present day. The openness and honesty within their relationship cemented Margaret's belief in what Owen has told her to be true and underpinned her subjective positioning:

> Researcher: "You must have had a close relationship with Owen for him to discuss that kind of stuff with you".

> Margaret: "Yes I always did".

Margaret's positioning, of belief in Owen's story, reaffirmed a denial of Owen's responsibility in Lydia's death, as well as the denial of Lydia as a victim. This can be explained that for close family and friends, it was not within Owen's character to

undertake such a crime and that he was physically unable to do what he had been accused of:

> Margaret: "Most close friends knew Owen so, I think they sought of realised that it was, whatever happened, it wasn't deliberate".

Floyd's positioning in respect to whether he believed Owen' story was quite difficult to determine although he did present as having the same views as Margaret. Floyd's reconstruction and understanding of events aligned with Margaret's story, whether he really believed this or if it was something he felt he should believe was unclear. Floyd identified how his role was to be there to support Margaret. It could be that the couple's subjective realities were aligned in the belief that Owen was a victim of circumstance. Alternatively, it could be suggested that to support Margaret, Floyd must be seen to support Margaret's story, and to do this, he adopted her interpretation and construction of events. Floyd expressed that he did not really know what had happened:

> Floyd: "I don't suppose I know all the detail. It was never formally discussed."

The following dialogue indicated that Floyd was open to that fact that there may be many different realities and interpretations as to what occurred. Floyd however blocked and ignored the possible alternative theories:

> Floyd: "I don't need to know what went on because it wouldn't change it. You see the thing about truth is that truth varies, and there is no such thing as absolute truth. It depends where you are standing, and it always depends on where you are standing. That's why eyewitness stuff is so unreliable. You always, whatever you think, or end up believing, is partly because what has happened to you as an individual before".

As well as it being uncharacteristic of Owen, Margaret and Floyd conveyed how it was not physically possible for Owen to have done what the prosecution had accused him of doing and what the court had convicted him of doing:

> Margaret: "Owen is classified as thirty percent disabled. So how does, a young man who is thirty percent disabled, who has just had a broken

wrist the week before, how does he overcome, because they said he moved her body. He said he could not have lifted her body anyway, even if I wanted to, I could not have done. I mean a dead body's a dead weight isn't it; it's heavier than a live body. He said how does someone like that overcome an athletic young girl. There would be marks on either him or her".

Similarly, Floyd supported this notion:

Floyd: "Owen is at least thirty percent disabled, you know there was not a scratch on her, and there were no drugs or alcohol in her system so erm, how has he persuaded her. He's not like that, a cable tie around her neck. Logical people don't do that".

Margaret and Floyd also used neutralization techniques to deny the victim status. This is evident in the way they disassociated Lydia from their stories. One such example can be seen when Margaret talked of the police arriving at Owen's flat and finding Lydia and Owen:

Margaret: "And Lydia, they found Lydia on the bed and Owen was on the floor unconscious. Apparently, he had taken a load of pills, so they rushed him to hospital, and he ended up being in a coma for four days. When I asked him later why he had taken the pills, he said he didn't remember taking them. He said, I just wanted my head to stop hurting. I just didn't want. You know I don't know what he wanted really. He just said that he wanted his head to stop hurting and erm, so they wouldn't let us see him. Which I found strange if he was unconscious".

Margaret continually shifted the focus from Lydia who had been found dead and talked in great length about her own son. During their interviews Margaret and Floyd made little reference to Lydia or acknowledged or showed concern for her family. Lydia was the "empty space" (Ugelvick, 2012, pp. 269) that the interview navigated around. This narrative denial and blocking of Lydia are illustrated within Floyd's story, he is seen to depersonalise Lydia in the way that he refers to her:

Floyd: "The girlfriend, Lydia, or whatever her name was. I think its Lydia".

This may be a protective mechanism which enables them to somehow live with the offence and what Owen has been convicted of. Personalising Lydia as a victim is somewhat problematic in that it makes her, and her death real, as opposed to her being an object of little significance. It opens the possibility of Owen and his crime being viewed differently. Margaret narratively counterbalanced these blemishes of character by positioning her son as a good person and a model prisoner. This suggests, in turn, that she is a good mother, it supports her understanding of her experience, that her son being in prison is not a reflection on her mothering:

> Margaret: "Owen is very quiet and keeps himself to himself. He says if there is any sign of any trouble his door is shut. I know he is well thought of. One of the guards told me he was too polite because he always says please and thank you and he is softly spoken, and he doesn't cause any trouble. He seems to keep himself safe".

Minimising the injury was another neutralization technique that Margaret adopted to minimise Lydia's victim status. Margaret was open about Lydia dying as a result of autoerotic asphyxiation from a ligature tied around the neck, however she shared the following information about the injuries:

> Margaret: "Strangely enough, I can remember the police officer that spoke to me saying there wasn't a mark on her Lydia, so whatever happened wasn't aggressive. Only one tiny nick where Owen had cut [the ligature] because he couldn't get it open."

Once again, here we see how the reconstruction was framed around death being accidental. Owen was cast, not as a killer, but a man desperately trying to save his girlfriend. The act was not violent or deliberate. Sensemaking in this way allows Margaret to lessen the potential anguish attached to the moral societal stigma of being seen as the mother of an immoral violent prisoner.

Floyd minimised the violence that had occurred in the way he described the sentence Owen received:

> Floyd: "It was 15 years, I knew it was life, but it was the minimum sentence, I thought for some reason it was 15 years, but it is actually 17 years I think".

Owen was sentenced to life, with a nineteen-year tariff. Floyd minimised the severity of the crime, and this is illustrated by his referral to the minimal sentence that could be applied. In accordance with Section 21 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003), the courts are required to set a minimum term that must be served before a prisoner can apply for parole. The starting point for prisoners who have been sentenced after 2003 for murder, with no mitigating or aggravating factors, is fifteen years increasing up to thirty years or a whole life tariff depending upon the assessment of aggravating or mitigating factors. The minimum sentence described by Floyd, suggests that in the hierarchy of murderers Owen is significantly less dangerous. It is as if he was saying Owen has been convicted of murder, but it is not the worst murder. This potentially lessens the stigma for Floyd's family.

5.2.3 Neutralization: Condemning the condemners.

Floyd shifted the blame for Owen's conviction onto the jury, suggesting that they were wrong to convict Owen of murder. Floyd asserted that Owen's conviction was not beyond reasonable doubt.

> Floyd: "I think there is reasonable doubt, but having served on jury myself, it's a bloody lottery who you get and what you get."

This point is interesting to note as Floyd himself admitted to not knowing all the detail surrounding the case and yet somehow, he had concluded that there were some inconsistencies in the evidence that should challenge the guilty of murder verdict. Not knowing the detail of the alleged offences was also a feature of Julie and Gill's recasting in case study three and Ann and Sharon in case study four. Margaret and Floyd did not go to the trial; they went for a few days at the beginning of the three-week trial to give their evidence, consequently they did not hear the evidence that was presented for both the prosecution and the defence teams:

> Floyd: "We only actually went down to give evidence and Owen knew that we were not going to go down and stay. I don't think he wanted us to stay. I don't think he wanted his mum to hear the detail of what was likely to come out in court".

> Researcher: "Did you want to hear the detail; did you want to know exactly what was going on and would you have liked to have known more, what is now in the court transcripts?"

> Floyd: "Possibly yes, erm with hindsight".

Floyd explained how Owen's fear of the police was the reason for there being no manslaughter plea, manslaughter was not an option:

> Researcher: "What's kind of surprising to me was that there was no manslaughter option or plea if the death was accidental".

> Floyd: "Lydia and her mother might of had some relationship with the police or someone knew her because Owen says that when he woke up, because he had taken himself an overdose. When he woke up in prison, he decided he was going to run for some reason. This complete mad thing. Owen says that this policeman had said they were going to get him. So, whether it's that".

Floyd suggested that Owen's fear of the police prevented a manslaughter plea. He blamed Owen's condemners (Lydia's mother and a perceived threat from a policeman that she knew) for preventing a manslaughter plea or charge. These justifications served to minimise the violent nature of the conviction. Again, this presents Owen in a better frame which is less stigmatising for the family. Floyd's belief was that it should have been manslaughter (without intent) and not a murder charge.

5.3 Theme Two: Sense of Self and Others

This theme focuses on the impressions that are given to others. It is concerned with identity, and the subjective view of self, the external presentation of self, and role performance.

5.3.1 Shame and Stigma

Margaret's biographical narrative was framed around early motherhood and the joy that parenting her two boys brought to her and her first husband (now deceased). Margaret used photographs from her collection to recollect and demonstrate scenes of a happy family life and an idyllic childhood. These chronological images depicted

scenes of a young mother and father with their boys, Owen, and Justin, growing up, playing together, and enjoying family holidays. Margaret presented an external subjective view of herself as enjoying early motherhood within a close family network. The photographs served as a symbolic archive (Berger & Luckerman, 1991) that provided proof and framed her personal and social identity of a good mother:

> Researcher: "How was it for you being a mum?"
>
> Margaret: "It was good because we thought we weren't going to have any children. I had had Owen from 10 days old, I bonded with him straight away, he was a good baby, he didn't cry a lot erm, and he was just a happy kid. Then 6 years later, Justin came along. My husband had an operation for blocked tubes. They said we can't guarantee it working, we have never done it before and then 6 year later Justin came along".

Floyd reflected on his relationship with Owen as being a positive one:

> Floyd: "Owen was just a good lad … My relationship with Justin was not brilliant, whereas my relationship with Owen was always good. He was just a really sound lad, and we still get on now you know".

Margaret described the values she instilled into her boys reflecting the societal norms and expectations:

> Margaret: "They were always taught to erm, treat other people as you would want to be treated you know, erm. They were never in fights apart from one. Justin had one serious fight because this one kid was bullying him".

Margaret presented herself as an upstanding moral citizen. This is further reflected in how she described her role in cooperating with police interviews and in her interactions with the prison officers:

> Margaret: "We had spent hours and hours and hours being interviewed by the police on three or four separate occasions. They would just ring up and say we have a few more questions, can you come in so. We were perfectly honest about everything. We told them

about the phone call, so they were able to access that…Most of the officers are really nice and supportive, if you are polite with them, they are the same with you. So, I think the perception that other people may have [prison visitors] that they are being looked down upon, they may have a slightly aggressive front to the officers, so you get the same back".

Margaret's external impression management strategy was that of a good mother with moral integrity, instilling the same values within her children. Her narrative reflected her experience of the positive elements of mothering, of being a model parent who was able to find a good equilibrium between demands of being a wife, working and providing a loving nurturing environment for her children. Margaret did not illuminate any of the daily challenges and guilt complexes that most women face in striving to attain the "good mother status" that Warner (2005) suggests is unachievable. Guilt and shame that are typified within constructs of motherhood do not feature in Margaret's narrative as a mother. The imagery presented by Margaret was that she was a good mother and that Owen's behaviour was not a reflection of her mothering choices, or style of parenting. The subtext here is that the values that she had instilled in her children are not consistent with those of a murderer. This may be a strategy (conscious or unconscious) to shift any blame or responsibility that she may intrinsically feel for Owen being in prison. Positioning herself as a good mother is an impression management strategy that moderates the negative links between family, delinquency, and poor parenting (Hoeve et al, 2009), as well as lessoning any discord between her ego identity status of a good mother (Erikson, 1968) and how others in society may construct her and the nature of the crime committed by her son. This presentation, suggests Duffy et al (2017), can be adopted as a self-protective defence strategy to counter cognitive dissonance (Festinger,1957). The good mother status can help Margaret maintain a positive self-esteem and defend against disapproval and conflicts that could arise from within herself and the gaze of others. All the mothers in this study, all negotiated a troubled parenting identity by recounting stories which reframed motherhood; this enabled them to resist cognitive appraisals (of the self and by others).

May (2000, p198) suggests that the families of people who have been convicted of murder experience stigma that is based upon their own "suspicion of familial toxicity".

The family may view themselves or be viewed by others as having a role and influence upon their relatives criminal behaviour and consequently the family are seen to be connected and responsible themselves in some way to the violent act. None of the family members across the case studies assumed any culpability for their imprisoned relative. When asked, Margaret questioned the notion of familial toxicity and her own culpability but at the same time reaffirmed that her sons had a good upbringing:

> Researcher: "As a mother, have you ever questioned your role as a mother?"
>
> Margaret: "Yes you do, I think that is a natural reaction. When I think back, I think, what did I do to deserve it? Losing my husband at 47, losing a son to a 19-year prison sentence and then lose another son to alcohol. You do think what I did wrong? Did I do something wrong along the line? I don't know that I could have brought them up any better".

Floyd reaffirmed the notion that Margaret had questioned her role and influence as a mother in her son's behaviour. He suggested that Owen being in prison was a source of embarrassment to her:

> Floyd: "I think she finds it embarrassing, she brought him up. There is this hole, because she went through a period of, I have got 2 boys, one of them has ended up in jail, one of them has ended up a drunk, I must have been an absolutely crap mother. I don't believe that's the case basically you know."

Margaret herself could have offered an alternative discourse and shifted blame in respect to familial toxicity away from herself as his adoptive mother and transferred blame to Owen's genetic heritage. DeLisi (2016) suggests, that it is difficult to ascertain whether offending behaviours is because of biological, neurological, or genetic pathology (nature) or whether criminal behaviour, stems from environmental and sociological factors (nurture) or a combination of all these elements. Ferguson's (2010) meta-analysis review on gene prediction upon criminal behaviour suggests that criminal behaviour could be half attributed to genetic factors and half environmental factors such as family and peer group influences in the formative years. Margaret was

asked if she thought that Owen's behaviour was attributed to genetic factors as opposed to parenting influences.

> Researcher: "There is an argument, is it genes or is it nurture".

> Margaret: "Yes especially when he thought his dad was a wrongen". [Laughing].

Margaret and Floyd did not offer any real explanations as to the origins or influences upon Owen's criminal behaviour. Margaret acknowledged that Owen thought that his biological father was a "wrongen but she did not elaborate. This may be because her positioning was that Owen was not criminal, Lydia's death was an accident, so perhaps this is why there are no rationalisations offered accounting to the role of and influences of the family in Owen's behaviour, or the fact that he may have just been born that way.

Contrary to some research findings who report families of prisoners experience a courtesy stigma (Goffman, 1968) and share the same spoiled identity as the offender due to their kinship ties and the failure of their relative to conform to expected social norms and values. Within this study none of the men stated that they had experienced a stigmatising response from others, whilst two of the mothers did (Sue, in case study two, and Julie, in case study three) and two of the mothers did not (Margaret in case study one, and Ann in case study four).Margaret verbally denied any courtesy stigma:

> Margaret: "I don't think that there is any stigma to it. It's just a set of circumstances at the wrong time. You just have to support them the best you can. I might feel differently if I found out he had done it deliberately".

This statement supports the work of Reissman (2000) who suggests that some people do not experience stigma. Margaret's presentation of belief in her son, the belief that it was an accident, makes it less stigmatizing for her. Another explanation for denial of the courtesy stigma could be that the views and opinions of others do not matter to her:

Margaret: "To be honest I don't care what people think. You learn in life, as I have said before, you never know what's going to happen in life. I don't care of what people think of me or Owen".

Researcher: "Before all this, was it important to you what people may think about you?"

Margaret: "No, I have never cared what people think of me."

This point is interesting to note because although Margaret denied that it matters to her what people think, it was important to her to know what was being reported in the press in relation to the offence. This illustrates an incongruence between what was said, (not caring what others think about her and her son) and her actions (actively looking for media reports) which suggests that what others think is important to her:

Researcher: "Were you waiting for it to hit the press?"

Margaret: "Yes, we kept on looking online to see if there was anything in the press. It was on the news, erm, there was a piece in the local paper, I think on two occasions. It wasn't widely picked up on by any of the media as such. I found it unusual really because they normally do don't they, but it wasn't."

The lack of national press coverage suggests that Floyd and Margaret were not publicly exposed. The distance between their home and where the crime took place was significant enough for them to remain relatively anonymous:

Floyd: "In some ways I was relatively lucky on that one anyway, because you see some of the stuff that's around in the press and I think Owen in some ways didn't get that much publicity. There was local publicity, but I don't recall that he got into the national news… There was never the door stepping, the press door stepping. I suppose the fact that we were at the other end of the country. I suspect if we had been being down there, the local press, you never know the local press may have been door stepping. The distance made it easier for us as a family".

The media coverage of the arrest, trial and sentencing potentially exposes the family, and threatens their identity status. The visibility of the reported crime means that the family run the risk of being discredited (Goffman, 1968) and viewed negatively by society. Consequently, it could be implied that it was important for Margaret to know what had been released from the press to the public. This exposure is beyond their control and potentially presents a challenge to the integrity of the family identity.

5.4 Theme Three: Strategies for Information Control

The following theme relates to the known about-ness or visibility of the crime. All the interviewees across all four case studies adopted a process of information control to reveal or conceal what was known about the offence and conviction This strategy, Goffman (1968) suggests, is a technique employed to reduce the risk of being discredited and the spoiling of their own identities. On meeting new people Margaret did not recognise that this was something that she actively managed, but acknowledged that this may be an unconscious strategy that she has adopted when encountering new people:

> Researcher: "So if you meet someone new. A new person or if you're in a new situation, or you are doing your charity work and you get asked about your children, what do you say?"

> Margaret: "That depends, that depends. I don't tell them anything to begin with. It depends on how close you get, you know. If someone asks how many children I have got I say one, I had two, but I lost one. But I don't tell them where Owen is. There are some friends who do know, you know long term friends".

> Researcher: "When you meet new people are you conscious that that might come up and that you might have to avoid it?"

> Margaret: "No that doesn't bother me".

> Researcher: "So it's not a conscious thing?"

> Margaret: "No".

Researcher: "So you don't think what happens if they ask, I have two sons I've just got one now? If they asked more questions such as what does your son do, and where does he live?"

Margaret: "Erm, do you know I can't remember anyone asking. Not new people, not in that context, no".

Here we see that Margaret does not deny Owen as her son, but she limited and conceals what she tells new contacts about him. The unravelling of her story does not occur as she does not get close to new acquaintances. Margaret appeared to block the conversation from developing further. This impression management strategy, although reported not to be on a conscious level, protects Margaret from any negative stereotypical responses that can occur through impersonal contacts between unfamiliar people.

The process of visiting exposes Margaret to being in contact with others who share the same stigma of visiting their family and friends in a Category A Prison. Although Goffman (1968) suggests that these 'sympathetic others' can be a great source of practical and emotional support, Margaret did not choose to relate to other visitors in the visiting room:

Margaret: "If someone speaks to us, I will speak back but we have not made any friends as such. We only go once a month, so we don't often see people who are there at the same time as us on a regular basis".

This implies that Margaret does not actively seek to converse or pursue the support of other prisoner's families. This could be a strategy to distance her from that prison visitor status category. Conversely the distancing could be a personality trait as opposed to Margaret being deliberately evasive:

Margaret: "I'm not very good at meeting new people. I'm not a great talker, although you might not think so. I'm not very good at all. I am a very quiet person".

In terms of what Floyd tells people:

Floyd: "I generally don't tell people, but normally I wouldn't go around telling people where Owen was anyway."

Researcher: "If you met someone, potentially a new friend or neighbour and they said what about your children. What would you say about them?"

Floyd: "I suppose I would say that I had a daughter down south and that I had a stepson up north. End of. I suppose if we are together, strategically, I would talk about my daughter, and I wouldn't necessarily say anything about Owen or Justin. I don't think that I would have a problem saying it, but I would be guided by what Margaret would say because in some ways I don't want to embarrass her".

Researcher: "So you would talk about your daughter and let Margaret talk about her boys?"

Floyd: "Yes I would say so, I mean it's not something that has come up because we don't really meet a lot of new people, but I can see how it would come up with new people".

The strategy that we see here is one of avoidance and again this is featured within all four case studies. Floyd deflected any potentially discrediting information away from himself and shifted it onto Margaret. He is seen to disassociate from Margaret's children with the justification that he does not want to embarrass Margaret. An alternative, but speculative explanation is, that Floyd finds it embarrassing and he tries to avoid being discredited by shifting the responsibility for Owen onto Margaret. Floyd's desire to conceal information for fear of how others may view him was unravelled following a disclosure from the researcher:

Researcher: "I used to think about telling people, it was always a conscious thing. I didn't used to tell people because I used to think well, if I do tell them what are they going to think of me? Are they going to think that I am like that, to tell or not to tell and if I do will that change my relationship that I have with them and what they think of me".

> Floyd: "Yes, what are they going to think of me, yes, yes. I suppose I did that to begin with. I don't think of it in those terms anymore, and if it comes up, I suppose I would handle it in that way".

Floyd suggested that his strategy in respect to telling people about Owen had changed over time. The impression that he gave was that he used to, but no longer conceals information. There did, however, appear to be a continued reluctance to share information about Owen. Floyd discloses information relating to Owen, only when he is required to do so. The disclosures occur out of necessity and are of a practical nature. The information is limited, and the details of the incident are not elaborated upon:

> Floyd: "I actually told one staff member, other than my boss, because she was going to have to pick up some work when I was away, at one stage we were visiting twice a month. None of the detail was ever mentioned. It was a matter of Owen's on a charge of murder, the detail beyond that was, I don't think that I ever went into detail, not even with what was then my boss".

And with his current employers:

> Floyd: "I have told the chief executive, it a matter of I can't do those two days because we are away visiting. It's about practicalities. I have told him Owen has been convicted of murder, so he can deal with it as he feels. None of the detail has been mentioned. If he thinks that I am not suitable for the executive board then that's their decision. I still want to work".

Goffman (1968) reveals how negative reactions from others can recede once a relationship forms and an individual's own unique personal qualities become known. Knowing a person seems to equate with greater understanding and empathetic responses. This is indeed reflected in Margaret's story. Margaret adopted a process known as sheltering (Goffman, 1968) with strangers whereby disclosures are only possible when trust builds. Margaret has maintained some friendships with people she knew before Owen was convicted and sentenced to prison:

Researcher: "So in terms of your friends have you maintained the same relationships, or have you found the way people respond to you is different?"

Margaret: "No I don't think so. Not the friends that we told. We still go on holiday every year with the friends we stayed with when Owen was arrested. We were good friends before this and have remained so".

Margaret and Floyd did not perceive a change in their long-term friendships or in the way that they were perceived by their friends. This suggests that those friends who knew Margaret and Floyd and their family before the conviction, appear on the surface, to be accepting and supportive of them.

Margaret maintained her identity as a supportive mother by reaffirming that the close, open relationship that existed before imprisonment has been maintained whilst Owen has been prisoned. Margaret asserted that she and her son did not avoid 'difficult conversations' at visiting time for fear of upsetting one another during visits. This contrasts the findings within case studies two, three and four whereby he family members all engaged in protective sheltering activities, engaged in prosocial communication, and avoided discussing uncomfortable subject matters that they perceived may cause further harm and distress to one another

Researcher: "If you went to visit or you have a phone call and you thought Owen wasn't ok would you talk about it with him?"

Margaret: "We tackle issues as they come up otherwise it just preys on your mind".

Researcher: "So would you bring it up with him even if you thought it may upset him?"

Margaret: "Yes oh yes, I can't see the point in keeping up the pretence, it just preys on your mind otherwise".

5.5 Theme Four: The Effects of Imprisonment. Reactive and Proactive Identity loss.

The effects of imprisonment upon the family were framed around loss and the different types of loss that the family members may experience. These are encompassed as reactive and proactive losses.

5.5.1 Reactive Loss

The effects of imprisonment upon Margaret's identity were multiple. These appear to be less so for Floyd. Reactive identity losses featured within Margaret's story and are defined as, loss of self or the loss of a relationship(s) that is understood as being integral to our own identity (Weigert & Hastings, 1977). Margaret articulated the loss of self:

> Margaret: "It's not where I thought I was going to be…I've lost interest in everything. Just my whole focus is on what's going to happen to him."

Conversely reactive identity losses did not feature in Floyd's story, he did not express any loss of self. This can also be seen within Pete's recasting in case study two:

> Floyd: "I don't see what Owen is in jail for affects me directly in terms of what I do or can contribute to. I don't know if that's unusual or not".

A possible reason for the absence of a reactive identity loss is that Floyd was Owen's stepparent; Floyd did not see his relationship with Owen as being integral to his own sense of being. Similarly, he did not let Owen being in prison define him or his relationship with Margaret:

> Researcher: "To what extent does Owen being in prison define you or your marriage?"

> Floyd: "It doesn't, well I don't think it does anyway. It's something that is there, and we deal with it as it comes up. We plan our visits around other things; we deal with the letting of his flat and insurance. We email him now but not as much as we used to, and phone calls are less. He will ring on birthdays; he always rings for Margaret's birthday.

He doesn't ring for mine but that's not a problem, but that's pretty much it".

The origins of Margaret's reactive identity losses however, stemmed not only from Owen being sent to prison (a non-bereavement loss) but were further compounded by the death of Margaret's youngest son Justin (a bereavement loss). Margaret believed Justin's death was a direct consequence of Owen's imprisonment:

Margaret: "I don't think Justin would have died if Owen had not been in prison, because he started drinking. Justin didn't go and see Owen, I think he went two or three times, but it upset him so much that he just started drinking. Owen feels guilty about that too, he says if he hadn't of been in prison then maybe he could have helped him".

Margaret gave an account that Justin's started drinking when Owen was in prison however Floyd stated that alcoholism had been a feature in Justin's life since he had split up from his wife, years earlier. Floyd did not associate Justin's death as being a direct result of Owens imprisonment:

Floyd: "Justin, I mean had been drinking since at least 2007".

These losses (bereaved and non-bereavement) challenged Margaret to revaluate and renegotiate her role not only as the mother of a convicted murderer, but the status of Margaret's identity as a mother of two boys had changed to a mother of one living child with whom she has restricted access to. Margaret's anticipated future as a mother, her relationships, hopes and aspirations for her sons and grandchildren had consequently changed and so had the image (perceived by self and others) that was consistent with these relationships. Margaret's identity and role as a grandmother had also been renegotiated and temporarily suspended because of her youngest son Justin dying:

Margaret: "I feel that I have lost my grandchildren too. I don't have any contact with Justin's children. I had a relationship with the grandchildren before we moved back up here. His wife has remarried, I know where they are and I did get in contact when he died, but her husband sent me a message saying that the girls would obviously have to be told, if they want to contact me, to be patient and let them do it in their own time".

Grief and loss according to Rosenblatt (2001) challenges an individual and familial sense of identity. Niemeyer (2001) suggests that recovery from a loss (either through bereavement or non-bereavement loss) involves a process of identity reconstruction, and this can be achieved through the sharing of memories. He asserts that memory and the sharing and reconstruction of memories can inform not only an individual's sense of who they are within a familial structure but can also inform a family's sense of identity. In the monthly visits to Owen, family memories are shared, and this consequently helps to reconstruct Margaret's own sense of self, her role and her familial identity:

> Margaret: "We sort of talk about all sorts really. He tells us what has been happening and what he's been doing. We reminisce about things and about family. There is always something to talk about".

Despite maintaining a close attachment to Owen, Margaret stated how she disliked visiting. The visits usually took place every month and Margaret and her husband Floyd stayed overnight to allow them two visits over two days.

> Researcher: "So, you go once a month, so before visits is that stressful or do you look forward to it?"

> Margaret: "No, I don't look forward to it, I hate going. Yeah. Usually, I think it's the long drive as well, you know you have to get up early and get there to register to get an early number, so you don't lose any of your visiting time".

"I think it's the long drive as well". This statement only offers part of an explanation as to why Margaret hates going to visit Owen. The "as well" is suggestive that there may be other reasons for this. Margaret did not offer any reasons as to why she hated going to visit. There may be countless reasons as to why she hates going. One speculation could be that Margaret is aware of competing narratives that could disturbingly challenge her recasting and construction of events. Visiting Owen as a prisoner, could force Margaret to face the reality of his conviction and the possibility that her son could indeed be a murderer and responsible for Lydia's death. Alternatively, visiting the prison places a temporary institutional identity upon Margaret, whereby she becomes categorised and labelled as a prison visitor. This forced identity is transitory in that

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Margaret can choose to ignore this label until the next time she has to organise, face up to or go on another visit. Another explanation could be that Margaret sees visiting as something she has to do when really, she and her son should not have to be there at all. It could be speculated that Margaret does not identify herself or her son as being the same as the other dangerous prisoners who are there. When Margaret was asked why she thought her son was in a Category A Prison she replied:

> Margaret: "I don't know; I think it's because of the length of sentence that he was given".

Category A prisons are for those prisoners who are the greatest risk to the public. Margaret was either unaware of this, or she had chosen to conceal or disbelieve his level of dangerousness.

5.5.2 Proactive Loss

Proactive identity losses are concerned with the image that others have of us and the relational power within our interactions with others (Weigert & Hastings, 1977). Family members can pose a threat to our identity, in that they can overtly or covertly seek to deny or spoil identities that arise or that are sought. For Margaret and Floyd, there were no obvious proactive identity losses reported that threatened their identity status within the family network because of Owen's conviction. The relationships with her sister and other family members, including Floyds own daughter were not elaborated upon. Consequently, it is difficult to assess if Margaret had experienced any changes to her identity or how she is perceived by family members because of any altered status (real or perceived) or dynamic change within the family network.

5.6 Case Study Two

Pete Stepfather	Sue Mother	Deceased Father

Sarah Sister	Jon Prisoner
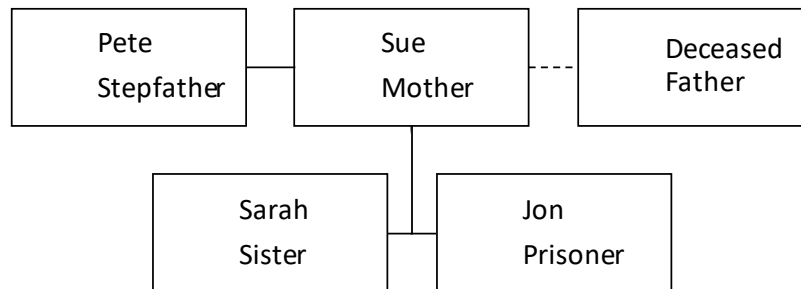
The family structure and relational ties

- Jon is the prisoner serving eight years with a further three on licence.
- Sue is Jon and Sarah's mother (interviewed).
- Pete is Sue's husband of eight years. He is Jon and Sarah's stepfather (interviewed)
- Sarah is Sue's biological daughter and Jon's sister (interviewed).

Additional family information

- Sarah and Jon's biological father died some years before the interview was conducted.

The family network.

The family lived together in a two-bedroom rented flat. Sue was unemployed and in receipt of disability living allowance for a long-term condition. Her husband of eight years, Pete, is a market trader who was in receipt of a job seekers allowance grant. Sarah, Sue's nineteen-year-old daughter is employed as a domestic help in a hotel.

The interview took place at the family's home. There was a significant variation in the length of the interviews. Sue's interview was seventy-two minutes, Pete's interview lasted thirty-five minutes and Sarah's interview was concluded at twenty-two minutes. As a result of this variation in the length of the interviews, the analysis in places is somewhat weighted towards Sue and Pete's reconstructions.

The conviction

At the time that the interviews took place Jon had served two years of an eight-year prison sentence, with an additional three years on licence for wounding with intent contrary to Section 18, schedule 19 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Jon was in his mid-twenties when he was sentenced for carrying out a hammer attack on the son of his mother's Facebook rival. Sue had been bullied by her rival as a child and following a chance meeting between the women in the street, a Facebook feud developed between the two families. Following a series of online exchanges, their sons agreed to meet for a fist fight. The prosecution claimed that Jon had struck his victim with a hammer multiple times. Jon initially denied any involvement in the attack, but he later admitted that he had met up with the victim. Although Jon's victim did not receive any life-threatening injuries, this was not the first occasion that Jon had used a hammer as a weapon in an assault.

The offence and familial positioning

This section presents the familial positioning in respect to how each family member framed their understanding of the offence. The framing of the offence is central to each family members projected narrative. It underpins how they reconstructed what had occurred and how they wished to present themselves and their family identity to others. In this case study, all three family members framed the incident leading to Jon's conviction around a central story line of self-defence. Sue, Pete and Sarah did not deny that the attack took place, their experience was that Jon had used the hammer, striking once, to protect himself in a pre-arranged fist fight with the victim who they understood had been carrying a knife.

Sue rejected the notion that Jon was a dangerous individual. Denial of the potential risk that their relatives pose to the public was also embedded within case study one, two and four. Sue did not acknowledge the wrong in Jon's rule breaking behaviour or

accept that that there should be any consequences for his actions. Throughout the interview, Sue continually colluded with and rationalised Jon's rule breaking behaviour by shifting blame elsewhere. This shifting of blame was seen across all four case studies. Pete and Sarah's recasting was somewhat different to Sue's sensemaking. Although they similarly framed the incident around self-defence, they both, unlike Sue, identified with the notion that Jon did partake in rule breaking behaviour, and they believed that Jon should take responsibility and be held accountable for his actions. It could be suggested that this positioning allowed them to detach from Jon and present themselves and their identities as moral individuals, who, unlike Jon, know the difference between right and wrong. The divergence in familial perspectives resulted in some interfamilial tensions within the family network which were only apparent within this case study.

5.6.1 Theme One: Troubled Identity, Impression Management and Manifestations of Neutralizations

This theme is concerned with the impression that the family presented to others; it is concerned with their sense of self, their individual and familial identity. Sue, Jon and Sarah use a series of 'performative' neutralizations to present their appraisal of the crime. Sykes and Matza (1957) suggest that families adopt neutralization techniques to negate a negative appraisal of their identity. The analysis of the ways in which the family members adopted and implemented different types and levels of neutralizations are presented within this theme. The manifestations of the neutralizations are categorised and presented under the following subthemes: denial of responsibility, minimising the injury, denial of the victim, and condemning the condemners.

5.6.2 Neutralization: Denial of responsibility

Denial of Jon's responsibility was an impression management strategy that was presented by Sue to deny Jon's culpability for the crime that he was convicted of. Categorical denial of responsibility was also apparent in case study four. In case study two and three, the family acknowledged that some harm may have occurred but minimised their relative's role and culpability. For Sue, it was also used to justify and rationalise his continued rule breaking behaviour during his prison sentence. Denying

Jon's responsibility for his actions and shifting the blame elsewhere defends against a negative societal appraisal of her son and her as a mother.

Denying Jon's responsibility for his actions was reflected in how Sue constructed his behaviour before going into prison, his behaviour relating to his offence and his subsequent behaviour in prison. Sue made a series of 'actor adjustments' on behalf of her son to deny Jon's culpability in any wrongdoing. Actor adjustments according to Condry (2007) are strategies commonly adopted by relatives of serious offenders and are used to influence the impression of the audience towards their loved ones. Actor adjustments serve not only to lessen the perpetrators responsibility but are also instrumental in lessening the moral accountability assigned to relatives. Sue did not see the wrong in Jon's rule breaking behaviour or accept that there should be consequences for his actions. Sue's actor adjustments supported her understanding of Jon's rule breaking behaviours.

Sue denied Jon's responsibility in the violent assault which resulted in his custodial sentence. Sue framed his behaviour around a scenario of self-defence. Jon was aggravated by the threats to Sue made via social media, and therefore Jon agreed to meet his antagoniser (Sue's school bully's son) for a fist fight. Sue described how the invitation to meet came from the victim, which in her mind casts her son as not being the instigating aggressor. When he arrived, Jon was threatened with a knife. The attack with a hammer was explained by Sue in the excerpt below, to be an act of self-defence. Sue projected a victim status for Jon and the responsibility for the attack was denied on the grounds of provocation and the threat of being stabbed himself:

> Sue: "I'm going to stick a knife in your mum's throat, come and meet me now. So anyway, Jon picked the hammer up. I'm going to stab you Jon. So, Jon's gone up to meet him, I didn't know. I'm sat here oblivious to it all. He's gone running out the house and I said to Pete (partner) "what's he done"? "He's gone to meet that bloke". I thought oh no, oh no there will be a punch up, a punch up I thought. And then Jon gets up there and the bloke had a knife, so he was just about to stab Jon, so Jon's got the hammer, like just a little, a little cut in his head that's all he had. It wasn't hard, to warn him basically, so the bloke dropped the knife and said that ahh you have hit me with a

hammer ehh, like that. Jon, he pulled the bloke up and shook his hand and said now fucking leave it".

Sue explained how she protected Jon by lying to the police when they were searching for him after the attack. In Sue's reconstruction she is projecting a good mother status.

Sue: "The police were here every half hour looking for him. I said he doesn't live here. I was stalling because he was hiding at his friends".

This casts her as having an identity of being a loyal protective mother and yet, at the same time, this act could be interpreted that she herself is an immoral rule breaker, and therefore could not distinguish the wrong in Jon's criminal behaviour. This protection creates an identity conundrum for Sue, although she herself did not recognise or see the tension with this. Being a good mother is socially constructed, and it could be argued that society expects protecting children is a feature of good mothering; that is what good mothers do. Conversely, it could be interpreted as a feature of bad mothering. Sue herself breaks societal rules and expectations by lying to the police to protect her child; her behaviour threatens her ability to influence and produce children of sound moral character:

Sue: "Jon's come back here and the bloke he has err what do you call it, a blood disorder Hepatitis C? [Haemophilia is the blood disorder that Sue is referring to] Well he bled more, so Jon's got blood all over his hands and I'm like crying no. So, I say pick you clothes off now and get them in the wash and go home. So, Jon buggered off home to his bed sit and within half an hour the police were knocking. I'm saying, "he doesn't live here". "Do you know where he lives?" I say "No, I don't know where he lives, he doesn't live here. I like have never been to his flat ever. I haven't got a clue". "You must know". "No, I don't". So, they were coming back like every half an hour and erm they eventually got Jon".

Sue's evaluation was supported by her offering mitigating circumstances and by shifting the blame for Jon's actions towards others. Rationalising Jon's behaviour in this way supports Sue's sensemaking that her son should not be held to account for his behaviour. One such example of this can be seen in the way that Sue suggested

how the idea to use a hammer in the attack was put into his head by the police. Sue signalled to herself and the audience that Jon was not capable of such independent bad thoughts; the idea must have been put in his head:

> Sue: "About two years before that, one of his so-called friends robbed his dead dad's telly, sentimental value to Jon. He went into his flat and robbed it. He saw him one day on the green outside, he was here one Sunday, and he went out, punched him in the face, straight in his face. He got arrested. Police tried to say he used a hammer then. He never because we saw what was going on. He went to trial for that. I told them that we didn't have a hammer in my house yeah. He ran out and punched him. I saw what was going on. He got off with that. He got probation for common assault. There were mitigating circumstances because he robbed his dad's telly. I think that they [the police] put the idea of a hammer in his head".

Denying responsibility for Jon's role in frequent rule breaking behaviour whist he was in prison was also a feature of Sue's interview. Sue defended, rationalised and minimised Jon's non-conforming behaviour. Sue's experience was that Jon was always a victim, and his behaviour was always assigned to the fault of others. Sue believed her sons recasting of these events:

> Researcher: "Is there ever a time when you doubt your son or his story as a mother?"
>
> Sue: "What Jon? No never, no. Jon and Sarah have never been afraid not to tell me anything. There's always been that trust there. So, I know what Jon says is the truth".

Sarah however was a little less certain in her brother's level of honesty and version of events in relation to the offence that he is in prison for:

> Sarah: "Jon always tries to get away with things by lying and my mum always believes him. We both don't tell her everything."

Pete, unlike Sue, did not perceive Jon to be a victim. This difference in perceptions resulted in tensions and arguments between Sue and Pete. Sue would defend her

son, whilst Pete would accept that there should be consequences for his rule breaking behaviour. Pete's reconstruction of Jon's persona was that he was not always truthful, and in contrast to Sue, Pete accepted there should be consequences for Jon's rule breaking behaviour and that he should be held accountable for his actions. Pete described how he told Jon that he should not have lied to the police about his involvement in the attack:

> Pete: "When Jon finally got arrested, he told the police that he had arranged to meet up with the guy, but he lied and said that the guy never showed up. I said you know that's stupid, there is a witness who has seen you there. It's obvious that there was some type of scuffle, and you are saying that you are not even there. I said you shouldn't have done that".

Pete conveyed that he knew the difference between right and wrong. He did not always support Jon's stories in which he casts himself as an innocent victim. Pete challenged his behaviour and unlike Sue he did not collude with Jon's version of events:

> Pete: "Jon wouldn't necessarily tell us one hundred percent the truth. Jon is very secretive. He will say on the phone that someone has planted Hooch [prison vodka] in his cell when you know for a fact he is brewing it himself. He will try and get himself out of it when you know for a fact that he is brewing it himself. I would say to Jon what are you doing? You have lost your remission, you have lost your canteen, and you have lost your TV. If you keep doing it they will keep taking these things away from you".

Pete identified with himself as being a citizen of sound moral character who knew the difference between right and wrong. Pete presented himself as a reformed character, a changed man from his younger self who had spent time in prison. Pete identified with being an individual who abides by the rules of society. This sets him aside not only from Jon, but his own criminal past for which he served a prison sentence. In doing so Pete upholds a positive moral identity:

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> Pete: "If Jon's done something wrong and he wants me to sort it out for him, I'm not going to put myself on the line. That's me, I don't do drama. I used to when I was younger, but you learn to keep out of it".

It would, however, appear that for Pete, there were different layers as to what was considered to be acceptable law-abiding behaviour. When Jon came back to their flat following the attack, Pete, like Sue shielded him from being found by the police. He encouraged Jon to cover up his involvement in the attack by trying to remove evidence and denying that he knew where Jon was:

> Pete: "I said get your clothes off and get them in the washing machine and get yourself all washed up…The police were coming here every half an hour. They said where is he? I said I don't bloody know, he's not here, he doesn't live here".

Sue recounted 'sad tales' in relation to the suffering Jon has had to endure to atone for his rule breaking behaviour whilst serving his prison sentence. Sue's narrative shielded her son and herself against negative evaluations by dismissing his accountability:

> Sue: "I am so fed up with the prison, Jon's got a nicking for something he said he didn't do and because of that he got into debt, because he was on basic, so he borrowed stuff. He made Hooch [prison vodka] for that person to cover his debt and got caught. It would have never of happened if he had never got accused of something that he didn't do in the first place. He's on basic, and he's banged up, he hasn't got a telly, so he's in lock up twenty-three out of twenty-four...Pete says it's his fault, he made the Hooch, and he got in trouble. I say it's only Hooch Pete, it's not like he's got a load of drugs, or a knife or, it's only a bit of alcohol, a tiny little cup. That's it, but Pete says but it's his fault, he knows the rules".

Unlike Pete and Sarah, Sue implicitly believed her son's recasting of any event, and accepted Jon's denial of culpability in any incident in which he could be judged negatively. This point is significant in that it does not reflect the research findings conducted by Condry (2007), who found that families of serious offenders often

wanted their kin to take some responsibility for their deviant behaviour and acknowledge the harm that had occurred as a result of their actions. Similarly, across all of the other case studies, none of the family members interviewed indicated that their relative should take responsibility for the offence that they had been convicted of. This divergence could be as result of Sue's parenting, which features some traits of a permissive indulgent parenting style. Schroeder, Bulanda et al.(2010) suggest that permissive indulgent parenting does not hold children to account and may result in children with limited moral development, who as adults, have less regard for rules and authority, and who are more likely to engage in violent criminal behaviour. Sue's perception of her own parenting was that she had been an authoritative parent who had tried to put rules and boundaries in place to manage Jon's difficult childhood behaviour. Her reconstructions however communicated a different picture, her parenting style was consistent with the traits seen within a permissive indulgent parenting style; a mother who reported difficulties controlling Jon's behaviour, set limited expectations and hardly disciplined her son (Johnson, 2016).

Pete's position in respect to Jon taking responsibility for the offence and accepting that he had done wrong was more closely aligned to Condry's (2007) findings:

> Pete: "I said to him, what have you done? You are mad. I said to him you must face the consequences now, that's it. You're not going to get away with this, you're going to get nicked for this. He has to accept what he's done and accept his sentence".

5.6.3 Neutralization: Minimising the injury, denying the victim

The way in which the family network made sense of the injury was closely linked to their appraisal of the victim status. All three family members in this case study, minimised the victim status. This was achieved by minimising the level of harm that was caused to the victim. The injuries were cast by all three family members, as being minor or inconsequential. This minimising was also seen by all the family members in case study three. In this case study, any injuries that were sustained were justified on the grounds that Jon had acted in self-defence. In addition, there was no concern expressed for the victim's family. The victim and his mother (Sue's school bully) were cast as the instigators of the attack, which resulted in Jon's imprisonment. For Sue,

the victim threatened Jon with a knife, Jon acted in self-defence. For Pete, although he acknowledged that Jon went equipped with a hammer, this was justified, on the basis that the victim was known to always carry a knife:

> Pete: "Jon said, "I hammered him, I hammered him". I said, "what do you mean you hammered him?" He said, "I took a hammer with me." … But Jon told me, like normally this other lad, normally he carries a knife, that's why he went all tooled up, you know… I knew it was serious, it's a big sentence, but it's the intent to use the hammer isn't it".

Sarah also minimised the victim status and blamed the victim and his family for Jon serving a custodial sentence. Blaming the victims or their family for the imprisonment of their relative was apparent within all four case studies. This was particularly evident in case study three. Sarah's understanding of the event positioned the victim as being responsible for Jon's imprisonment. Sarah expressed feelings of anger towards the other family:

> Sarah: "It made me feel angry…It was the circumstances. I was angry with the other family. They caused it".

Sarah's understanding was that Jon would not go to prison. She only realised that this was a possibility on the day that her mum informed her that Jon had been sentenced. This may be because she believed that the injuries that were sustained were only minor, but more significantly, unlike Pete, both Sarah and Sue did not acknowledge the seriousness of Jon possessing a hammer with the intent of assault. For both Sarah and Sue, the nature and level of injury sustained appeared to determine victim status. If they were to acknowledge the intent and weapon used by Jon in the attack, this would cast Jon as being a dangerous man. In acknowledging this, they would be challenged with having the identity status of being a mother and sister of a dangerous offender. Sarah's denial of the victim, however, was not consistent throughout her narrative. When Sarah was asked about her thoughts in relation to Jon's release, she intimated that he may have caused harm to another. This signals that she may have been contemplating that her brother could be dangerous, but outwardly she chose to ignore this label:

> Sarah: "Well I'm worried if he's changed or not. I'm not sure, I don't know".

Sue did not deny that Jon hit his victim with a hammer, however she did minimise the severity of the attack and normalised Jon's response to the event. The prosecution reported that Jon had agreed to a fist fight but when he met up, he used a hammer to strike his victim several times over the head and shoulders. Sue however, presented a different construction of events. Jon had only struck once with the hammer as a line of self-defence and as a warning, the injuries sustained were minimal:

> Sue: "So John gets up there and the bloke had a knife, and he was j just about to stab Jon, so Jon's got the hammer…The bloke's solicitors said he hit the man twelve times with a hammer. Now if you hit someone twelve times with a hammer there would be more damage, you would be dead. So, Jon's getting madder and madder at the lies in court, hitting him twelve times, he's only hit him once…He only hit him once, even on the photo in court, it was just a little cut. It was nothing, nothing major…Just a little cut on his head, that's all he had. It wasn't hard; it was to warn him basically, so the bloke dropped the knife. It was the tiniest little cut. Jon said to me that he had used the hammer as a warning, the other man had a knife, and he was going to stab him".

Sue described how the judge referred to Jon as a highly dangerous man, a label that she outwardly rejected. It could be that Sue rejected this label as it presents her as having a spoiled identity status of being the mother of a violent offender who poses a risk to others. Sue denied the seriousness of Jon's behaviour in relation to previous assaults which indicated an escalation in the level of violence used. Sue's understanding was that Jon received a custodial sentence because of his verbal outburst in court and not because of a violent assault. Sue did not relate to her son as being a dangerous person:

> Sue: "It was going in his favour throughout the whole of the trial, but the jury found him guilty because of his outburst, the judge said you're as highly dangerous man… If only he hadn't of kicked off in court that day, he would have got off, he would have walked. It was ten months

before his trial and in that time, he never got into trouble, so he can't

be that dangerous, can he?"

The dangerous label assigned to Jon seems to challenge her own reconstruction. Here we see how Sue is questioning if Jon is really a dangerous person. The reality of this unwanted identity was quickly negated by Sue who recast her son by making a hierarchical comparison to other inmates. Sue presented her son as being less dangerous than the other 'real and dangerous' offenders. Condry (2007) suggests that families of prisoners categorise levels of dangerousness not only to help them make sense of what has happened, but to influence the impression that others may have of them and their children:

Sue: "And to think that he is in there with erm, you know, people that

have done a lot worse than him. He said there's a man in there that's

killed his wife and baby and he got 4 years. I just hit someone and

used a hammer, and I got 8 years. He's like stressing over it. How can

he get more?"

5.6.4 Neutralization: Condemning the condemners.

In addition to the victim being blamed for instigating the attack and threatening Jon with a knife, shifting the blame onto those who determined his fate, those perceived by Sue to be in a position of authority, was also a mechanism in which responsibility for the assault was shifted away from Jon. The shifting of blame to those perceived to be in authority was apparent across all the case studies. In case study one, Floyd blames the jury, in case study three Mark also blames the jury for being disinterested and wanting to come to a swift conclusion so that they could go home, and Marie, in case study, four assigns blame onto the legal team who failed to adequately represent her brother. Sue's reality was that the professionals, the probation officer and the judge were instrumental in his conviction. Sue defended against vicarious shame by adopting the coping style of 'attack other' as described within Nathanson's (1992) Compass of Shame Model. The Compass of Shame Model describes four shame coping style scripts; attack self, withdrawal, attack other and avoidance. Velotti, et al. (2014) describes how the 'attack other' is often adopted when shame is not acknowledged and is a strategy adopted to boost self-image. Sue was an advocate mother and attacked the probation officer for his scathing pre-sentencing report and

for the length of sentence Jon received. In Sue's experience, Jon was not a dangerous criminal, her sensemaking was that Jon had been victimised by those in a position of authority and power. The responsibility for Jon's rule breaking behaviour was shifted again, on to others:

> Sue: "The probation lied, the probation are bastards, and I don't care what anyone else says. The one he's got is a dickhead, yeah. He went to see Jon in prison during the presentencing report. He's saying in it, that Jon says he's glad that he hit him, Jon said he would do it again, Jon has said this, Jon said that. So, in the court room I said, "you've said this, Jon?" He said, "I haven't said any of that to probation". So, I said "can we adjourn a minute because my son needs to read the probation report?" So anyway, he went back downstairs for a while, on the way back up he said to the probation bloke "you're a liar, I've not said none of it…Eight years, a minimum of four years. I think this is the extra slapped on by probation".

Whilst blaming the authorities, Sue highlighted concerns that Jon's mental health status and the impact this had on his behaviour had not been considered. In her view, these mitigating factors were ignored from any assessments that should have occurred whilst Jon was in the care of custody, and they were also not considered by the judge in his sentencing:

> Sue: "Whilst the judge is calling him very dangerous, his mental health should have been looked into. In the police station, they should have you know, investigated any medical issues, you know, all of that should have been dealt with instead of you know, you're a highly dangerous man".

This demonstrates the primacy of medical condition for Sue in her understanding and explanation of Jon's behaviour. In framing Jon's behaviour within a biomedical paradigm, Sue negotiates a troubled identity by reconstructing an account that dismisses the notion that her son Jon, is a dangerous man. Assigning a medical label to explain behaviour was also a feature of Julie and Mark's recasting in case study three.

5.7 Theme Two: Sense of Self and Others

5.7.1 Shame and Stigma

Imprisonment often results in families feeling in some way that they are responsible for how their relative has turned out to be and families can sense from others that that they are responsible for their offending actions. Sue experienced a sense of vicarious shame and guilt. Sue experienced an imposed stigma that emanated from others. Feelings of vicarious shame were also present in Gill and Julies recasting in case study three. These feelings, however, were not a feature of Pete and Sarah's experience.

Imprisonment of her son, Jon, and the reaction that Sue felt and believed she received from others made Sue think that she was judged as a bad mother. In her experience she believed that she was negatively perceived by others and that Jon's imprisonment was judged to be a consequence of her parental failings. Sue presented a subjective view of herself as a 'good mother'. This was achieved within a moral frame of defending against being viewed as a 'bad mother' as opposed to explicitly promoting a good mother status:

> Sue: "There were comments from the article in the newspaper, cursing him really bad. Even now, people say, oh god her sons in prison. They look at you like, like oh god, her son is in jail. I mean I'm not ashamed to tell them why, but they don't look at it that way. They just think that he did that and that he's a bad person. She must be a shit mother…You can see it in their faces. When I am asked how many kids I have and I say four and one is in prison, they look at you as if to say, it's just a feeling I get you know. That they think that I have not brought him up right when I have. I brought them all up the same."

> Researcher: "Do you think that they are judging you or do you think these thoughts come within you, is it about how you view yourself?"

> Sue: "I can see it in their faces. I know it straight away. I sense it straight away and I know that I am being judged. They obviously think that I am a bad mother. I found it really hard to walk the streets after that, you know. I felt everyone was looking at me. It's horrible".

The perceived societal mother blaming that Sue felt, was linked to her assumptions that others perceived her to be a bad mother, and that she was in some way responsible for rearing a delinquent son. This narrative reflects Sturges and Hanrahan's (2011) supposition that the parents are often blamed for children failing to live up to societal standards. Significantly, according to Ambert (2014), mothers are most often seen as having prime responsibility for the development of their children, and when children misbehave, mothers are frequently seen as the deficit parent and are blamed for their children's short comings. The impression Sue believed others have of her (real or imagined), resonate with what Cooley (1902) describes as the 'looking glass of self.' This construction of her 'imagined self' was not informed by the opinions of others but rather, her perception of how she thought others saw her and her role in rearing a delinquent son. Sue's appraisal of her 'imagined self' resulted in her experiencing a sense of social stigma and labelling (Bruce et al, 2001). Sue perceived herself to be seen by others as having a bad mother status. This negative labelling presented Sue with an undesirable discrediting identity; it set her aside from what society perceives good mothers to be. As well as experiencing a sense of stigma, Sue described a sense of shame that was linked with social regulation emanating from others (Gunther, 2011):

> Sue: "I stopped in; I stopped in a hell of a lot. I was so embarrassed.
> All the comments, on the telly and online, you know, it's like oh god".

This demonstrates how, when Jon got convicted, Sue limited and withdrew from social interactions and avoided interpersonal contacts with others, it is a strategy that is employed to manage shame and protect the threatened self (DeHooge et al, 2010)

What is most significant, however, is the disparity that is apparent between Sue's 'imagined self' (how she thought others viewed her) and her own 'self-concept', of how she believed herself to be. Sue's construction of her identity was not based upon her 'imagined self' and how she perceived others to understand her (Cooley,1902). Instead, Sue presented an identity based upon her own 'self-concept'. The foundation of her self-image was based on the premise that she was not a bad mother, and that her parenting was not responsible for her son's delinquent behaviour. In recasting herself in this way Sue externalised blame:

> Researcher: "Do you feel like a bad mother?"

> Sue: "No I don't feel like a bad mother; I know I have done everything in my power to help him".

Sissem and Heckert (2002) depict how mothers either internalize or externalize blame for their children's behaviour and actions. Internalized blame is concerned with a sense of guilt and responsibility for a child's non-conforming behaviour. Mothers who think that they are in some way responsible for a child's deviant behaviour internalize and relate to an identity of being a deficit mother. Sue's narrative did not accommodate this internalized narrative, instead, Sue externalized blame. Sue externalised blame by disallowing and rejecting any parental accountability for her son's delinquency. Although Sue did state that she felt guilty, the guilt she felt did not correlate with her parenting deficits. The guilt Sue experienced was situational; the conviction arose and stemmed from her feud with her old school bully. Jon had got involved and defended his mother. The guilt she felt was associated with her connection to the event as opposed to her connection with her son:

> Sue: "I felt guilty because he was you know, defending me from that woman, and even now every day I feel guilty. If only he hadn't got involved. That was mine and her [school bully] problem, and not his".

Sue felt guilt for her son becoming involved, but she did not feel inadequate or accept that she, as a mother, was responsible in any way for his violent offending behaviour. This was also reflected in Julie's reconstruction in case study three. This is in stark contrast to Sturges and Harahan (2011) findings which suggest internalized blame is a common feature for mothers with children who have offended. Conversely, Sue's externalization of blame, suggests Sissem and Heckert (2002), serves to reject the negative identity that links parenting deficits to the behaviour of their child. In externalizing blame, Sue rejects her identity of a bad mother status that she feels is bestowed upon her by others.

Sue defended against the troubled 'bad mother identity' status through constructing and presenting accounts around her mothering, that upheld societal norms and expectations in relation to responding positively to challenging behaviour presented by children. Sue cast herself as a moral authoritative parent, who disciplined and addressed rule breaking behaviour throughout Jon's childhood. For example, Sue described how she implemented strategies to address Jon's poor behaviour to

demonstrate that she was an effective parent. These serve to orientate Sue's parenting techniques towards good parenting practices that are consistent with that of a good mother and defend against poor parenting practices and the lack of parental discipline that is often linked to delinquent behaviour in children and young adults Offering evidence of effective mothering enables Sue to attend to the stereotype of how bad mothers produce bad children (May, 2000), and exonerates Sue and her parenting practices from blame:

> Sue: "When he was living at home as a teenager he was very, very hard work. Jon was always pushing the boundaries and no matter how I punished him. Like, I would take the PlayStation off him. For a week, he would be good, then I would give it back to him and he would do it again and again and again. He was staying at his dads a lot and his dad was like I can't cope he's really hard work".

Pete's experience of Sue's parenting was framed somewhat differently. His portrayal of Sue's parenting style was consistent with that of a permissive indulgent parenting style, whereby the children display little respect for parenting or attempts to effectively discipline (Johnson, 2016):

> Pete: "Sue's too soft with the kids. I don't like the way they talk to Sue. They have done it all their lives. They get mouthy and put her down. If they are cursing their mother off, I won't have it. I mean, if I talked to my mother like that I would get a clip round the bloody ear. She lets them get their own way all the time. When I tell them I'm not putting up with that, Sue's like, oh what have you done Pete, they won't come back. Then she's texting them. Sue's scared of losing them".

Sarah had a similar perspective:

> Sarah: "Jon is always breaking the rules and my mum always defends him. She can't see any wrong in what he does".

Sue however, further defended her parenting style by suggesting that she had been the disciplinarian. Sue casts Jon's father as being too soft with the children, illustrates how Sue externalised blame on to her deceased husband for her son's behaviour:

Sue: "I found his dad very soft with him".

Sue described how despite implementing strategies, Jon's challenging behaviour continued and she, as his mother, had little control over his behaviour.

Sue: "I had to phone the police on Jon a couple of times when he had been really confrontational. He smashed my furniture, so I had to say leave, go, come back when you have calmed down, but he didn't, he would carry on and on, so I had to phone the police…I hated it, having to phone the police but it was the only way I could stop the situation…I didn't feel frightened; I just couldn't cope with his behaviour".

Sue's explanation for Jon's rule breaking behaviour was not as a result of poor, inconsistent parenting but rather as result of Jon having Asperger's or Attention- Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), although this had not been formally diagnosed by a physician. Sue's speculations and labelling supported her sensemaking that Jon's behaviour was a result of a medical condition, which was something that neither she, nor her son could control. Jon could indeed have Asperger's or ADHD. Gray- Brunton et al. (2014) suggest ADHD in the United Kingdom has historically been under diagnosed, this may be because there may only be partial recognition of the condition or because of medical uncertainty. Sue, like Julie in case study three, clearly supported the assignment of a biological or genetic label, which offered her an explanation for cause of Jon's bad behaviour. Sue defended against the wider controversial psycho-social explanations that seek to frame Asperger's and ADHD within a paradigm that links inadequate parenting with the naughty, but ordinary child (Horton-Salaway, 2011).

Sue: "I always suspected he has Asperger's or ADHD. He was always playing up at school and kicking off at school, but no one ever picked up on it…Right from when he was at playschool, he got expelled from primary school. His behaviour from quite a young age was, was challenging and I knew something was wrong but back then there wasn't the help that there is now. He got expelled from Primary School…Nobody would help him. Nobody would listen. They put it down to bad parenting, but I knew that I had done everything thing. Like when he wouldn't go to school, and I would take him and hand

him in. When he would run off afterwards, I could prove it, that I had taken him there myself. When he's there it's their responsibility. I've gone through it with them both [Jon and Sarah]".

It could be speculated that the medical explanation presented by Sue, not only enables her to defend against the identity of the bad mother status but provides her and Jon with a less stigmatizing identity; it supports her experience that her son's actions were a consequence of a medical condition, something over which he or she has very little control. Pete and Sarah's reconstructions did not refer to any medical conditions that could account for Jon's behaviour, these were absent from both their narratives. Medical explanations serve to lessen Sue's parental role and influence on Jon's offending behaviour, and allows Sue not only to distance herself from any parenting inadequacies, but also to dissociate herself further by transferring any biological or genetic link for the condition of Asperger's or ADHD onto Jon's father (now deceased):

Sue: "There is something medical around Jon's challenging behaviour. I think, you know, their dad had Asperger's too. If you look at Sarah, I think she has it slightly. Their dad was a hoarder, always collecting things, a room full of records, and computer games. He was a massive hoarder and that's all part of Asperger's, yeah. I can see a lot of his traits in Jon and Sarah".

5.8 Theme Three: Strategies for Information Control

For Sue, Jon's conviction had resulted in her consciously employing strategies that reduced her risk of being exposed, discredited and being subjected to a spoiling of her identity. As previously discussed, the impression that Sue perceived others to have of her as a mother, reinforced the way in which Sue herself anticipated that she would be received by others. It was not only however, only her assumptions that interfered with Sue's free flow of interaction with others. Sue had experienced a negative response from an old friend, which reinforced the negative way in which Sue anticipated that she would be received by others. Consequently, to avoid further exposure to these insecure contacts, Sue had disconnected and purposely limited contact with her peers. This strategy reduced the potential of her being further exposed to the shaming gaze of others.

Sue: "It's like a friend I have known for years asked me how Jon was. She didn't know that he had been sent to prison. So, I told her about the hammer. The look on her face, she hasn't spoken with me since".

Researcher: "Have you tried speaking to her?"

Sue: "Yes, I have but she won't, like she's really disgusted you know. Yes, I keep myself to myself now…I found it really hard to walk the streets after that. I felt everyone was looking at me, horrible".

Dissimilarly, Pete and Sarah did not perceive that their contacts with others were interrupted because of Jon being in prison. Pete did not feel that other people's impression of Sue's son impacted upon their appraisal of him. Mark, in case study three, also felt that his son being in prison had not impacted upon the way that others in the community related to him:

Researcher: "Has it changed how people are with you in any way, people knowing that Sue has a son in prison who has committed this offence?"

Pete: "Well no, not really, I mean I don't really know that many people here. The people I do know, sort of know what went on anyway, so they don't really mention it to me to be honest. So, I'm quite pleased really because I don't like, I mean if someone said to me is your Sue's lad in prison, I would say yeah, but it's not very often, it's very rare".

The perceived invisibility of the crime also protected the families across all four cases.

Likewise, Jon being in prison did not impact upon Sarah's relationships or interactions with her peers or the way in which she felt she was received by the wider community. This is in contrast to Margaret's experience and to Julie and Gill's evaluations in case study three, who felt ostracised by their community. Sarah had, because of the media exposure and living in a small community, anticipated negative reactions towards her because of her brother's conviction, this however, was not her reality. One explanation for this could be that siblings do not experience vicarious shame in the same way that parents do, because society does not judge them to be accountable, in the same way

that parents are for their children's failure to live up to the expectations of a moral society:

> Sarah*:* "I thought more people would be coming up to me and saying your brothers this, and your brothers that and starting on me, but that never happened".

> Researcher: "Did you think that people would behave differently towards you?"

Sarah stated that she could openly talk about Jon with her existing peer group, but it was not something that she would talk about unless they instigated a conversation. The strategy employed by Sarah and her friends was one of subject avoidance, and again is a feature within all of the case studies. Similarly, it was also a strategy employed by her within new relationships. Sarah did not know if her new boyfriend, who was local to the area, knew if her brother was in prison:

> Sarah: "I think he knows, yeah. It was in the newspaper and that, but we have not talked about it. I wouldn't mind having a conversation with him if he asked but it's not something that I would bring up with him unless he asked".

It could be that for Sarah, the anticipation of being judged in a negative way through the potential exposure of her brother's offence prevents her from being open about her brother's conviction. Sarah's fear of negative evaluations from her boyfriend led her to avoid the subject. This allows her to preserve her identity and avoids the potential for her to experience vicarious shame and stigma.

5.9 Theme Four: The Effects of Imprisonment

The effects of imprisonment are again framed around loss and the different types of loss that different family members experienced. This theme is also concerned with identifying the restorative factors that evolved as a result of having a family member in prison. The effects of loss were more apparent for Sue. Reactive losses for Sue were centred on a loss of self that was central to her identity. For Sue, her entire life revolved around by her son being in prison. It was a factor which seemed to dominate her whole sense of being, often at the detriment to other familial functioning.

Prioritising the imprisoned relative above other significant relationships to the detriment of family functioning was also apparent for Marie in case study four. The reactive losses for Pete and Sarah appeared to be less significant and had less of a detrimental impact upon their wellbeing. They, unlike Sue, were somewhat emotionally detached from Jon and consequently they did not experience a loss of self and their identity because of Jon's imprisonment. Pete and Sue were resistant to the vicarious spoiling of their own identities for the crime that their family member had committed.

5.9.1 Reactive Identity losses

Reactive identity loss was a central feature of Sue's narrative, Jon being in prison was all encompassing to Sue:

> Sue: "When I wake up it's the first thing I think about, it's on my mind, Jon, Jon, Jon. It's horrible… I'm constantly worrying about him. If he doesn't ring up, I'm worrying if he's ok, if he has killed himself, because you hear of that sort of thing. I get myself into a right state and then, the next day I am ill. I'm really ill because I got myself so stressed the day before. Pete says to stop getting stressed, but I can't help it. When you do see him, he's not himself I'm powerless to do anything, and that makes my anxiety worse".

> Researcher: "It sounds as if your whole world revolves around Jon now, like Pete and Sarah say, do you think there is any truth in that?"

> Sue: "Yes, like the phone calls, you have to make sure that you are in at a certain time, and I have to worry about sending him money. That's my first thought, I must go to the Post Office and send him money. I constantly worry, worry about him".

Sarah felt that Jon's imprisonment was also the focal point of her mother's life:

> Sarah: "All she ever talks about is poor Jon".

Sue's preoccupation with supporting her son created tensions that impacted and interrupted the family functioning. One of the tensions centred on a lack of finances. Sue and Pete had different competing financial priorities:

Pete: "She sends him money that we just have not got. The car needs fixing so she can visit him, but I need that money to pay my market stall rent. I can't just not pay the rent as she wants me to, to fix the car. I'm sick of arguing about him".

In contrast to Pete, Sue recounted how she had changed as a person as result of Jon's imprisonment. Sue described a change in her persona, an emotional hardening resulting in a disconnection from others. Sue's interactions, and the depth of her relationships were limited. Her friends denied her mother status to Jon, this was apparent to Sue by them failing to acknowledge or ask about her son. Sue described how she felt that they dare not ask about him, but she did not really expand upon this further. There are many speculations as to why friends may act in this way. One reason may be, that Sue's friends may feel awkward, embarrassed or uncertain of Sue's reaction if they were to ask about Jon, particularly if offending and exposure to prison is not seen as usual or in keeping with their own value system. With Sue's friends the stigma is visible, they know something about Jon, his crime and his imprisonment and this according to (Goffman, 1963) will invariably impact upon the free flow of social interaction.

Sue: "And even now, even then, none of them ask. It's like they are too scared to ask me how Jon is".

Researcher: "Would you like them to ask?"

Sue: "Yeah, it would be nice if they asked about Jon, how's he doing".

Researcher: "What would that mean to you?"

Sue: "Well I would know that there are people out there who care, at the moment, it feels like there is no one who cares. I think that they think what a bad person he is, that's what I think. They think Jon's bad, they just don't say it, and they can't even say it".

The failure of friends and family to acknowledge Jon's existence, not only denies her mother status but, results in her feeling alone and isolated. The denial of Jon and the avoidance of his crime and imprisonment, reinforces the stigma that she experienced. The stigma that she internalises, means that Sue is unable to maintain the identity

norm (Goffman, 1963) of her friendship group. Sue's response to these encounters and fear of rejection is to alienate and withdraw on an emotional and physical level from her friendship groups:

> Sue: "My mates, I've got to the stage now that if anyone wants to see me, they have to come to me. I'm not going running to them. That's how I am now. I don't make an effort to go out and about with them like I used to. I can't be bothered. If they want me, they know where I am. I'm not going to go running to them".

Pete did not identify with any feeling of shame or stigma because of Jon being in prison. One explanation may be because Pete was Jon's stepfather and was not as emotionally connected to Jon in the same way that Sue was. It could be speculated that Pete was emotionally less invested, and this perhaps stemmed from the nature of their relationship before Jon's imprisonment:

> Pete: "I didn't go to Jon's sentencing, Sue went to that, I didn't really want to go".
>
> Researcher: "Why didn't you want to go?"
>
> Pete: "Erm, I don't know, I Just didn't want to go. [Long awkward pause] Yeah, I just didn't want to go. There have always been tensions, Jon used to come here, and I didn't like the way that they talk to Sue. So, when they start to get mouthy and putting her down, I put a stop to it. I say it's wrong, you're not doing it here whilst I'm here, now get out. They would storm off and say that's it, I'm never coming back. Good, good, and then five minutes later, Sue would be like what have you done, I've lost them for ever, they won't come back. Then a day or two later they would worm their way back. I didn't want to go, that's it, and it's as simple as that. I didn't want to go".
>
> Researcher: "Do you feel supportive of Sue?"
>
> Pete:" Erm, well there's not much we can do about it".

Jon did not really answer the question posed. This may be because he misinterpreted the meaning, although it could be an avoidance strategy; he may not be sympathetic

to the fact that Sue supports her son. Goffman (1968) illuminates how people who are obliged to be in contact may not necessarily be accepting of them. Familiarity through relationship ties, does not always equate with acceptance of them or their behaviour. Pete did not accept Jon's rule breaking behaviour and consequently this have impacted upon the level of support he was able or willing to provide to Sue. It could further be postulated that Pete did not accept or support Jon's victim status and which is always supported by Sue.

In contrast to Sue, Pete did not think that Jon's imprisonment had significantly changed his own life:

> Researcher: "Has Jon being inside changed your life?"
>
> Pete: "Well, no, I mean not really. I wouldn't say it's changed that much. Maybe in Sue's eyes it has because it's affecting her more than me. She has never experienced that before [prison]. I've been there, I know what it's like to be in prison. I know what it's all about. But I mean Jon's happy, he's got into a routine and he's happy. He knows what he must do".

Jon's imprisonment did not cause Pete any emotional distress, Pete did not worry about Jon or suffer ill health himself because of Jon being in prison. This is also reiterated in Floyd's narrative in case study one. One explanation for this may be because Pete had served a prison sentence himself and he was familiar with the criminal justice system. Pete's own experiences and familiarity with prison may almost have normalised prison and the experience of being connected to a prisoner. This may be why Pete did not experience shame or stigma.

For Sue, there was a significant emotional disconnect with her husband Pete and her daughter, Sarah. The fracturing of these familial relationships was profound and could be attributed to Sue's preoccupation and inability to disconnect from her adult son on any level (other than the enforced lack of physical contact). Sue's relationship with her son was paramount and the maintenance of this relationship was at the expense of the emotional connection that Sue had with her husband and daughter:

> Sue: "My relationship has changed with Pete and Sarah. I won't take shit from anyone. Pete says that it's his [Jon's] fault, he knows the

rules, blah, blah blah. So, if Pete were to piss off tomorrow, I wouldn't give a shit to be honest, I think, well you couldn't have been much cop anyway. It's hardened me up. Whereas before, if Pete said to me that I'm leaving, I would have been devastated, but if he buggered off now, I wouldn't give a shit. It's really changed me. When I tell them some news, all I get from Sarah is God, that's all you go on about, prison. I think to myself you bloody bitch, that's your brother. All I get from them both is it's his all his fault, he's done it. That's all I get from them both… Pete says that's all I think about. It's like, yeah, it's taken up my whole life because it's my son…I walk off into a different room, I think that's my son. They obviously look at it in a different way to me".

Although Sue intimated in the above narrative that her relationship had changed with her daughter because of differences in their opinions, this was not something that Sarah acknowledged. Interestingly, Sarah unlike Sue, did not perceive a change in her relationship with her mother:

Researcher: "Do you think that your relationship has changed with your mum since Jon has gone to Prison?"

Sarah: "No, it's just the same".

The lack of support that Sue experienced from her husband and daughter was apparent within Sue's narrative. Bessa et al. (2015) describes how a poor emotional support system corresponds with an increase in maternal distress and an increase in mental illness for mothers who have a delinquent child. Emotional support can have significant positive influence and buffer the effects of the maternal distress and its associated effects such as worry, fear, guilt, embarrassment, shame and stigma. The emotional buffering from existing family and existing friends, was absent in Sue's story. For Sue, her closest family members, Pete and Sarah, as well as her extended family and friends, failed to provide her with the emotional support that she needed. The stress of supporting Jon in prison had resulted in Sue experiencing a significant deterioration in her health status:

Sue: "My health, I've always had anxiety, depression and now it's a hell of a lot worse. I had diabetes five years ago that was controlled

by tablets, but now, since Jon, I'm on insulin. I have let myself go. I have Polymyalgia, a form of rheumatism, and it's got a lot worse because of stress. I can hardly walk some days, my joints hurt so much".

5.9.2 Restorative factors.

Restorative factors are concerned with the positive effect that arise within families as a result of their family member going to prison. For this family, the restorative factor emerged from within Sue's and Pete's narrative. Restorative factors were not a feature within Sarah's recasting.

Although Sue perceived there to be little support from family and her old friendship groups, Sue had formed new connections with others who she perceived to share similar experiences; people who like her, had a relative in prison. Sue's experience of connecting with other prisoner's relatives was an invaluable source of support for her:

> Sue: "Well I look forward to the visits and the other relatives, you're all in the same boat. It's like you don't have to pretend; you can just be who you are for a few hours without being judged. It's nice, no one on the outside, you don't have to think about it. I have new friends from the visits and from the online support groups. Without them I don't know what I would do".

Befriending other people who also had a relative in prison, provided Sue with practical and emotional support that she felt was lacking from people on the outside. Sue felt safe and at ease with other relatives of prisoners because in her view they were all experiencing a similar journey. She could be herself, and not what others expected her to be. This supports Goffman's (1963) work who identified that sympathetic others, who share the same stigma, can provide support on a practical and emotional level. Condry (2007) however, found that most relatives wished to dissociate from other criminal families because they sought to separate themselves from what they perceived to be real and dangerous criminals. This separation is seen in case study one, three and four. For Sue however, this was not the case. Sue welcomed friendships with other offenders' families irrespective of the nature of their crime and spent much of her time on the online forums for prisoners' families. The fact that she

felt that she was not being judged was valued and welcomed by Sue. New friendships, that she would not have otherwise encountered, had evolved from her journey, and this is a positive outcome for Sue.

The restorative feature of Pete's narrative was in an improved relationship with Jon. Similarly, in case study four, Ann's relationship with her imprisoned son has improved and a new friendship was formed between Sharon and Dale, the prisoner, which had not been evident before. Since going to prison, Pete described the relationship as being much better than before:

> Pete: "I mean I have had a lot of trouble with Jon, but we are getting on a lot better…We have fun now. Jon likes football, so he will ring up and I put a bet on for him. He rings up and tells me what teams he wants to bet on, and I will put the bet on for him. Then he rings up the next day, it's all a bit of fun".

There are many speculations for why Pete perceived an improvement in the relationship. One may be that the physical separation from Jon from imprisonment meant that there was less contact and less opportunity for Pete to be exposed to and challenge what he perceives to be disrespectable behaviour towards Sue. For Pete, Jon being in prison could bring some respite from the stressors of Jon visiting their family home on a daily basis. This distancing may have improved the status of their relationship for the time being.

5.10 Theme Five: The future

5.10.1 Fear of retribution

Moving forward, the future for the family was somewhat uncertain for all three family members, who all expressed concern about Jon's release from prison. This was also a feature of family three's recasting. The concerns within this case study, featured around a narrative and concern that Jon would re-offend, they all thought Jon would have a desire to seek retribution on his release from prison:

> Pete: "I'm a bit worried because I know Jon, and he will want revenge.
> He likes a drink and when he's had a drink, he doesn't know what he's

doing. So being on a three-year licence is going to be a nightmare. I'm not really looking forward to that really".

Sarah:" He's going to want revenge, so it's all going to kick off again. It's stressful".

Sue: "I would like to move away when Jon comes out, but I'm worried that he will do something stupid. I'm really worried about him doing a revenge attack. I don't know how we will make it happen, we haven't got the money to move and set up somewhere else, but I guess we will cross that bridge when it comes to it".

5.11

Case Study Three
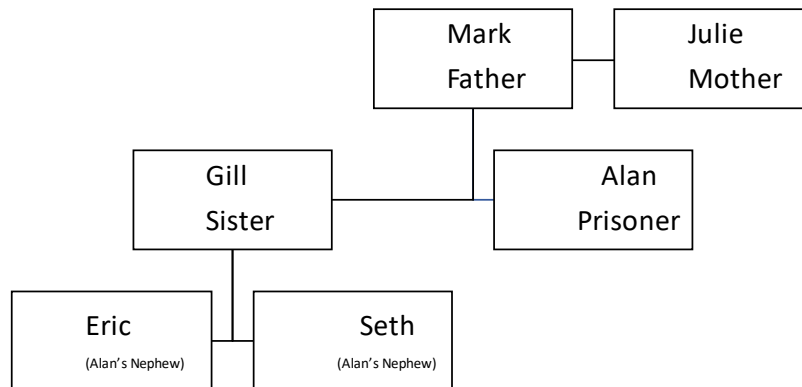
The family structure and relational ties

- Alan is the prisoner serving five and a half years.
- Mark is Alan's father (interviewed)
- Julie is Alan's mother (interviewed)
- Gill is Alan's older sister (interviewed)

Additional information

- Eric aged 7, and Seth aged 5, are Gill's children, Alan's nephews.

The family network.

Mark was a professional who had owed his own company and his wife Julie had worked for the family business. They lived together in a small rural village in the same house that their children had grown up in. Their daughter Gill lived in the same village and was married with two children Eric and Seth.

The conviction

At the time that the interview took place, Alan was in the final year of a five-and-a-half-year custodial sentence for a combined sentence, accounting for a range of convictions against children. Alan pleaded not guilty to the original sexual offences he was charged with, which included the attempted abduction and rape of a teenage boy. After this conviction, however, further historical allegations were made against him, from when he himself was a teenager. The claims were that he had sexually abused two other boys who were the grandchildren of a neighbour. The grandparents of these children were, and continue to be, neighbours of Alan's parents, Mark and Julie. The way in which the family framed Alan's offences is central to how the family and individuals made sense of their experience.

The offence and familial positioning

The framing and understanding of Alan's crimes and prison sentence were presented and recast by the individual family members in a very similar way. Like case study one and four, they had a shared appraisal and response to Alan's offence which is synonymous with a communal coping process (Basinger, 2018); the family network perceived Alan's imprisonment as a shared problem, and they united in their response to face the stress of Alan's offences. There was a shared consensus amongst the three family members interviewed about the nature and extent of abuse that had occurred. All three family members recast their story around a narrative whereby they accepted some of Alan's guilt in relation to some of the 'minor' sexual offences committed against children. This acceptance was predominantly where they could not dispute the evidence presented. They all, however, rejected the claims that Alan had committed the more serious offences against children, such as rape. The way in which the family framed Alan's offences is central to how the family and individuals made sense of their experience. The following section illustrates how the family used a series of narrative strategies to explain what had occurred and how they made sense of what had happened.

5.11.1 Theme One: Troubled Identity, Impression Management and Manifestations of Neutralizations

Unlike Julie and Gill, Mark had been exposed to the full detail of the claims made against Alan. He had been present at the time of Alan's first arrest, the police

interviews, and the trial. Mark had only shared some of this information with his wife and daughter who had not been present. Mark stated that he had selectively omitted some strands of the evidence and kept this information from them. Consequently, in the absence of hearing all the evidential claims and details of the prosecution case against Alan, it could be inferred that Julie and Gill's sensemaking, was in part, informed and influenced by Mark's reconstruction of his own experience. The influence of a family members' reconstruction upon how other family members make sense of an event and present their biographical scripts is also evident within case study four, where Marie's interpretation and sensemaking of events informed Ann and Sharon's recasting's.

5.11.2 Neutralization: Denying the injury, minimising the harm.

The family used a series of discursive neutralizations to support their sensemaking attached to the crime and offence, enabling them to present a less troubled identity. Mark achieved this by denying the injury and minimising the harm caused to the children and their families. Mark was supportive of his son in prison, but he was ambivalent in his response to the offences that his son Alan had been convicted of. He appeared somewhat conflicted in his appraisal of the offences. Mark's experience of finding out about Alan's problematic sexualised behaviour toward children, mainly young boys, was one of questioning disbelief:

> Mark: "On that first day when Alan had been questioned and released on bail, when Alan had gone to bed, Julie and I sat up until three am just trying to discuss it in our heads. Well, is that likely to have happened, could he have done that? It was difficult at that stage for us to get our heads around it…I didn't believe that nothing had happened. In the first conviction he pleaded not guilty, and he was right to plead not guilty because I genuinely believe that he did not do what he was accused of [rape] and I still don't. I still believe he didn't do what he was convicted of. He did you know, commit part of the offence and admitted to that part, he put his hand up, he got caught. But there are other parts that he just didn't do".

Mark's sensemaking of his experience was that Alan was innocent. This was based upon his understanding that the evidence against Alan, for his first conviction, was in

part, circumstantial and untrue. Whilst denying the rape allegations, Mark accepted the conviction for the lesser severity crimes that his son had originally denied. The acceptance stemmed from the presentation of evidence which could not be disputed:

Mark: "It turns out that he had sent them [a girl and her and her brother, who were both minors] explicit texts. He had been viewing pornography, he had been viewing child porn, child rape, sex with boys. This was all like in two to three days before this text apparently had been sent to a young girl, who's about fourteen or fifteen. The text from Alan said meet with me. I can't remember what had been sent but basically the intimation was, meet with me, don't tell anyone, and I will give you some money. So, then the text is one of the charges, then her brother comes forward and says oh by the way he has done this to me. There were various statements. So, he [Alan] was charged with attempted rape of a male, but there were like other charges, coercion, and potential abduction of a child. They [the prosecution] really racked it up and came at him with about 12 charges. It was just ridiculous. The text he admitted to, because he couldn't not, because of the evidence trail there. He admitted to the images and the child images because again, the evidence was clearly there. But the other offences that were meant to have taken place against this lad, he wasn't here. He wasn't here. This lad was quite specific about the type of car he had and the date it happened. And Alan didn't have that car on the date it was meant to have happened, Alan was actually at sea. But the charge was it could, could have happened, anytime between then and then".

Julie also experienced feelings of disbelief and yet in places, like her husband, there seemed to be some recognition of his culpability for the less serious offences where the evidence could not be disputed:

Julie: "I don't think it was possible to do what he had been accused of, for him to do. There was a text message and you have obviously got to live with that, it's there in black and white…I just couldn't comprehend he had done something like that. I didn't think it was

possible what he had been accused of. I just couldn't believe that he had done something. I can't to this day, I can't believe what he did".

Researcher: "You said that you couldn't believe what Alan did, but do you think that he did what he was accused of ?"

Julie: "Some of it. Obviously, he can't deny the text message but some of the other things they said had gone on I don't believe at all. They said he had a certain car at the time. He didn't have the car at the time, things like that…What he was accused of was a phone call saying how do you fancy meeting me today and making one hundred pounds. I don't know where he would have got the money from because he didn't have it anyway. But this text message was there in black and white, so you can't erm".

Mark and Julie's feelings of ambivalence are not atypical responses for parents whose children commit offences against other children. Yoder and Brown (2015) identify how some families try to protect their offspring by completely denying that any such behaviour has taken place, whilst others, like Mark and Julie, predominantly try to support their child, but are unable to confront all of the behaviours. Yoder et al. (2016) suggest that more often, families of youths that display sexually harmful behaviour will minimise rather than entirely reject the notion that an offence has occurred. Mark's experience was that he minimised the behaviour. This may be because of the taboo and serious nature of Alan's offences.

Julie's sensemaking and disbelief was underpinned by her understanding that Alan is a good, caring, likeable sensitive person. These types of descriptors are not typically assigned to adults who hurt and rape children. Sensemaking in this way, endorses her belief that Alan did not commit the more serious offences against children, because caring men, like her son, do not rape children. This disbelief, according to Duane et al. (2002), is a defence strategy employed by relatives of young males who display problematic sexual behaviour against other young boys. It protects them from accepting the perpetrator's actions and from facing the negative personal consequences that may be associated for them with confronting such behaviour. Embedded within Julie's recasting was the way in which Alan's positive characteristics

were projected. Like Margaret, in case study one, Julie made several references to her son's personable characteristics:

> Julie: "When we went to see him at work, we always got good feedback from the manager, whoever he was working under, we were really proud of him, he's got such a lovely personality, a gentle personality… Alan has a very soft and gentle nature, he's very caring. The prison officers say he's a good lad".

When Alan was charged with his second custodial sentence, Mark again, accepted some of the allegations relating to his son's harmful sexual behaviours, whilst completely rejecting the more serious offences of raping two boys. Mark supported his son's version of events:

> Mark: "I said to Alan did anything happen. Just tell me this, did anything happen? He said I may have touched them. Right fine. If you're telling me that's what you have done, what about the rape allegations and everything else, did it happen? No, I touched them but nothing else. I said OK, I believe you…I truly believe that he didn't do anything like he had been accused of. I truly believe that. This time Alan was very open about what he had done…The boys had apparently blamed all their subsequent badness, one of them particularly, on what had happened with Alan when they were younger".

It could be speculated that rape of young boys poses an additional challenge for the offender's parents. Sexual interest in young children and young boys goes against societal norms, and what is deemed socially and morally unacceptable. Alan's behaviour presents the family and exposes them to the risk of negative labelling associated with being connected to, and supportive of a convicted 'paedophile'. Mark attended to this, by rationalising Alan's actions, and suggested that he was not serious in his actions or intent towards harming the children:

> Mark: "I didn't believe that he'd done this to the lad, I really didn't. I didn't believe that nothing had happened, you know. I believe maybe he might have gone too far trying to show off…He sent a text

something along the lines of meet with me, don't tell anyone, and I will give you some money. That wasn't possible because he didn't have any money to pay anyone. That would have been where Alan might have, only jokingly, sent a text to someone. However, it wasn't treated that way".

Marriage et al. (2017) identifies how parents who find it difficult to appreciate the dangerousness and gravity of their offspring's behaviour, try to view it as normal behaviour, and part of the transition into adulthood. Mark's ambivalence to Alan's offences may be because he viewed some aspects of Alan's sexualised behaviour as exploratory, and part of 'normal' teenage development:

Mark: "I think a lot of stuff that has gone on has happened when he was young and immature, confused a bit about his sexuality, confused a bit by his own feelings, he's kind of worked it all out now".

It was somewhat difficult to interpret Julie's sensemaking of the second series of allegations. Julie referred to the episode of the rape of two children as being "*sickening"*. It is unclear however, if it was the allegations of rape that were sickening or whether Alan's actions, his abuse and rape of the two young boys, was sickening to her:

Julie: "The police came to the door and said that there has been an allegation, that he has raped the two boys, the neighbour's grandchildren. That was really sickening this time. Again, really hard to comprehend because we were trying to talk to him at prison visits about what's gone on…In their interviews with the boys, their father and the grandfather, it was if they knew everything about us. The father had been to our house, he knew the exact layout of the house, so he knew exactly to tell the police that it happened in that room, it happened in that room. This is meant to have happened when I was working part time. Alan was at school and finished at 3.40 hrs and I finished at 4.30. That's when he had tied them up, he blindfolded them and that was, that was as I say, it was really, really sickening…They had made claims that he had touched them and raped them".

Gill's sensemaking, like her parents, was also one of disbelief and questioning denial. Gill was also ambivalent to some aspects of Alan's culpability for his crimes. Like Julie, Gill's sensemaking was based on her understanding of her own relationship with her brother and how she perceived him to be:

> Gill: "I remember being in the living room thinking they must be talking about someone else. Still now, when I talk about it, I'm talking about someone else, because it's not the brother I grew up with and that I know, but clearly, maybe, well it is…I know him, I didn't believe it. I still don't believe all of it. I didn't want to think it was true. I didn't want to think that think that my brother could be capable of what was alleged at the time. Even now, I still can't believe it, I'm still very shocked. Even though he's been to court and been charged with it there are certain things about it that I don't believe are true. Whether that's denial, I don't know, but I do know my brother".

Just as in case study one and four, Gill also avoided knowing information about Alan's offences. This could be a protective mechanism from exposing her to the full extent of Alan's crimes and serves to preserve the image that she upholds of her brother:

> Researcher: "When your parents came round to tell you that it was a serious offence, did you ask at that point what kind of offence he had been arrested for?"
>
> Gill: "No, I didn't probe much or ask any questions about his offence because I didn't want to think it was true…I didn't go to court, I suppose I just had to detach myself. To be honest, I've never been told, I've never asked, I've never wanted to know if anything genuinely was proved happened, all I have is the hearsay".

Gill's understanding of the second offence was that Alan had been accused of grooming the two children, but she did not believe that any physical harm had come to the children:

> Gill: "I don't believe anything physical happened to them, more grooming allegedly".

5.11.3 Minimising the victim.

The family network did not acknowledge the severity of Alan's abusive sexual behaviour, or the impact it could have had on the victims and their families. Denial of the victims' families was a feature within all of the case studies. Mark minimised the victim status by shifting blame away from Alan and projecting some of the blame on to the victims and their families:

> Mark: "What do I feel for the victims? I feel that there was a certain amount of, I would say lack of sympathy for the victims. There were an awful lot of lies that were told, that were not simply true. So, my sympathises don't necessarily lie with the victims. Hard but that's a fact you know. I know what the facts are…In court the family [the victims' family] were there on mass, they had come for a day out. They were clearly there to enjoy themselves".

This discursive strategy according to Gueta (2017), offers an alternative to parent blaming, it offers, and opens up the possibility of a different construction of Alan's guilt and culpability. Mark's experience was to blame the victims and their families, he suggested, that Alan's imprisonment was because of their untruths. This can be seen again in case study four, the family blame Dale's imprisonment upon the lies that were told by Kim, the victim of the alleged rape. Hackett et al. (2014) identify how this is a maladaptive behaviour response, the shifting of blame, is a mechanism to control anger and anxiety. Mark's experience of blaming not only suggests that Alan is less culpable for his offences, but it flips the victim status and steers away from Alan. Mark's experience was that Alan is a victim of cultivated lies and dishonesty:

> Mark: "Three months after he had been sent down, then another allegation cropped up from the girl he was supposed to have texted claiming that he had raped her. She was interviewed and the police said that there was absolutely no evidence at all to say he did that. The family that Alan had got himself tied in with [victims], they were quite happy to sling as much as they possibly could. One of the friends of the family also went to the police to make an allegation but again that was thrown out. There was clearly no evidence, and the Crown

> Prosecution just wouldn't progress with it. They just knew it was a load
> of lies".

Mark's understanding of victims of sexual offences, was that they are usually known by the perpetrator. This is in contrast to Marie, in case study four, who perceives that rapists are usually strangers and unknown by the victim. Consequently, for Mark, the likelihood of the first offence, the attempted abduction and rape of a child unknown to him, was not feasible, and thus, supports his belief that the more serious allegations did not occur. The children who accused Alan of the first offence were in Mark's experience completely unknown to himself:

> Mark: "These allegations were about people that we didn't even know.
> I can understand if it had been a close relationship, with people we
> may have known, but it was with people we had no idea about.
> Complete strangers. No acquaintances, nothing whatsoever".

Hackett, Balfe and Masson (2014) identify how parents may be more supportive of the perpetrator when the victims are not known to them, or if the abuse that occurred was by someone outside of the family. In the interview, Mark emotionally distanced himself from Alan's victims and their families and this shields Mark from the consequences of his son's behaviour. It could be, that this distancing enables him to be supportive of his son.

Julie also minimised the victim status through limiting the seriousness of Alan's behaviour. In doing so, she ignores the harm to the victims. Julie's sensemaking was that his problematic sexual behaviour towards children was not really all that problematic. Her sensemaking was that the media and the responses by the criminal justice system had made it more problematic than it was. Julie's sensemaking was based on a belief that because of the rise of high-profile celebrity child abuse cases reported in the media, the criminal justice system, as a response had to be somewhat overzealous and punitive in its response to the alleged offences against her son:

> Julie: "It was sort of, I don't know, blown all out of proportion really,
> what he had done. I think it was because it was all very new, it was
> around the time of all the Jimmy Saville stuff, you know, jump on the
> band waggon type thing".

Gill did not acknowledge the harm that the children and their families may have experienced. Gill's sensemaking was that she did not believe that the children had experienced any physical harm. Within her entire interview Gill distanced herself from verbalising how Alan had been accused and convicted of child rape. Gill described Alan's conviction as being a serious sex offence.

5.11.4 Neutralization: Deny responsibility.

Like in all the other case studies, Mark and Julie made sense of their own experience by presenting a series of explanations for Alan's behaviour that attributed the responsibility for Alan's offences elsewhere. Their sensemaking, focused on the belief that there were a range of medical 'conditions' that could have moulded Alan into being the person that he had become. These 'conditions' stemmed from a belief that Alan had experienced cerebral anoxia (a lack of oxygen to the brain) because of a traumatic birthing experience. Consequently, it was their belief that Alan had experienced difficulties in school, he was diagnosed with dyslexia at high school, and they described him as being somewhat different to, and socially challenged, compared to peers of his own age:

> Julie: "It was a forceps delivery, Alan had severe bruising to his head, he had to go into intensive care for a few days he was starved of oxygen…he cried a lot, he had behaviour problems, he was hyperactive, very hyperactive".

Labelling Alan's behaviour and attributing his actions to a medical condition is something which is beyond her control as a mother. Assigning a medical label to explain behaviour was also a feature in case study two. This labelling not only shifts the culpability and deliberate intent to harm away from Alan, but, for Julie, it also attends to the perception of poor parenting and the notion that mothers are in some way to blame for their children's delinquency:

> Researcher: "Can you tell me what it was like for you as a mother having those allegations about your son".
>
> Julie: "I did think for a time, where have I gone wrong, or where had we gone wrong, or if we had failed, but I still think that when he was

born, he was starved of oxygen for a while, I think that something happened with his brain".

Mark: "Over the last few years we have come to realise that he probably suffers from Asperger's [not formally diagnosed]. When he was born, he suffered brain damage and was slow to develop, bullied at school. Me and Julie pushed when he got to secondary school, to get him diagnosed with dyslexia. This was a private diagnosis that we had to get, so we were always fighting, so there were all kinds of bits like that when you look back, that's why he's probably ended up where he is".

Assigning a medical label in this way helps Julie rationalise his behaviour, which in turn, protects herself from the vicarious shame and stigma that she experiences. Julie and Mark's appraisal of their son's behaviour being in some way attributed to a degree of cognitive impairment is synonymous with research findings. Hackett et al. (2013) identified that thirty-eight percent of British youths, who demonstrated sexually harmful behaviour, had some form of educational or learning impairment.

Mark's experience was that Alan, as a child, had found it difficult to form friendships with his own age group, consequently he formed friendships with people who were either significantly older or younger than himself. It could be that in projecting this information, Mark tries to legitimise Alan's association with the younger children. Mark's sensemaking of these friendships, negates the possibility that Alan's friendship with younger children could be predatory and dangerous.

Similarly, Julie described Alan as being immature, with a tendency for him to develop obsessive traits and inappropriate friendships. Julie benchmarked Alan's choice of friends (wrong sort) against her own perceptions of normality (right sort). Julie remarked upon her positive parenting practices in which she tried to steer Alan into making the right friendship choices, as well as making him aware of the consequences of investing in the wrong type of friendships. Julie assigned a negative label and shifted some of the blame upon the victims She described them as "*not the right type of people".* The choice of words selected, could suggest, that the children themselves, were responsible for leading her vulnerable son down the wrong path:

Julie: "He is quite immature, but he's never been into drink and drugs. He liked his cars and loved his home life. He develops obsessions with things, ghost hunting and gymnastic clubs. I said to him and warned him, that some of the people you get involved with are not really the right type of people. This is what happened with this boy and girl". [children who first accused Alan].

In attributing Alan's offending behaviour to some external factors outside his locus of control, Mark and Julie, like Sue, in case study two, were able to reframe, rationalise and come to an understanding and acceptance of their child's problematic behaviours:

Mark: "When I look at Alan's maturity level, I think well ok, could this have happened? He's always been really immature. Any of his peer line, he's always struggled with, because he's always been seen as odd, the odd one. He wasn't necessarily odd, it was just the way he was, he was bullied. He has always been able to associate with much older or younger people".

Mark's experience was that Alan was a vulnerable adult himself, consequently, he needed additional support:

Mark: "I was Alan's appropriate adult because, he was vulnerable. Alan was distraught, he couldn't remember anything, he was totally reliant upon me and the solicitor, you know. If I hadn't been there, he would have just of had a solicitor and I don't know how he would have coped…Alan was easy meat for the prosecution".

Julie cast doubt upon the plausibility of the victims' statements, but unlike Mark and Gill ,she did not overtly deny the rape of the two children. Julie's experience was, that there were some untruths in the statements and interviews given. Her belief was that the boys' father, and grandfather had influenced their statements. Julie reiterated that that the boys' father had been an employee of theirs, he had been a frequent visitor to their home. Consequently, Julie had come to an understanding, that the children were able to give detailed statements about Alan's home, not because they had visited the residence themselves, but because their father had provided them with the necessary

information. Gill also shifted responsibility away from Alan by suggesting that the downloaded images were not a premeditated or deliberate act:

> Gill: "Viewing images of children, I can probably get my head round that, the internet is a dark place. There are things that you can accidentally Google and things just come up".

In recasting Alans behaviour in this way in this way, Gill made sense of how Alan came to view sexually exploitative images of children. Her reconstruction casts Alan's actions as being unintentional, however, she intimates that Alan was drawn into the dark side of the internet. Recasting in this way allows Gill to reaffirm her belief in the good person she understands her brother to be.

5.11.5 Neutralization: Condemn the condemners.

Gueta (2017) identifies how some parents negate a troubled identity by shifting the blame for their children's imprisonment on to the criminal justice system, as well as upon the victims (a feature seen across all four case studies) and the victim's parents. This was reflected in Mark's recasting of his experience. Mark's sensemaking was that Alan was not given a fair trial, and he apportioned some of the blame for Alan's conviction upon the jury. Mark described how he felt that at Alan's trial there had been some injustices in the way that the jury had treated his son. Mark's understanding was that because Alan had admitted to texting children and downloading porn, the jury had also wrongly presumed his guilt in respect to the charge of rape of a minor. Consequently, Mark attributed and shifted the responsibility for Alan's second custodial sentence on to the jury:

> Mark: "The jury said, well actually he has pleaded guilty to that [texting] and guilty to this [downloading porn] so he must have done that [rape]".

The shifting of blame onto the judge, jury or legal teams was a feature across all four case studies.

In addition, Mark recast the jury as being disinterested. Mark's experience was that the jury reached a guilty verdict on the basis that they wanted to finish the trial and go home. The neutralizations that Mark used, support his narrative of ambivalence by limiting the seriousness of the behaviours that Alan was accused of. Alternatively,

Mark's observations, as a parent and advocate of his son, highlights his perceived injustice. Mark's experience and interpretation of the jury at Alan's trial was that evidence which was presented in Alan's favour was not afforded the critical appraisal from the jury that it warranted:

> Mark: "The jury were completely disinterested; it was awful watching the jury. A couple were doing their nails, one was yawning, they clearly didn't want to be there, looking at their watch all the time. Some of them are not listening or responding to the evidence. They couldn't make a decision; it was fifty. So, the judge sent them back to make their decision. Thirty minutes later, near five o'clock on a Friday, they came back with a guilty decision".

Similarly, Mark felt that Alan's first conviction negatively influenced the jury's appraisal of the evidence at his second trial. Mark's experience was, that Alan was prejudged; his fate was sealed by the jury who had full disclosure of his existing offences. Mark's experience was that Alan had little choice but to plead guilty:

> Mark: "He wouldn't have had a cat in hells chance. As soon as the jury knew he was a known sex offender, the decisions made. So, he pleaded guilty, which means that he didn't have to go on the stand. This meant that he wouldn't get an indeterminate sentence.

Gill also experienced a sense of injustice for Alan. There was an intimation that Alan did not receive a fair trial:

> Gill: "In terms of the judicial system and how it's all gone, it makes me feel quite angry because surely you have a right to a fair trial before you are convicted of anything. From what I have been told, how it was presented in court, there are too many conflicts in the story".

This sense of injustice enables Gill to support her brother:

> Gill: "So to me, I can see him and support him because I do believe that somewhere, there are some wrongdoings. I'm not saying that he is innocent but there are somethings that he is innocent".

Gill's reconstruction had been informed by how others had recast the event. Gill, like her mother Julie did not really know what had happened. Similarly in case study one, Floyd, and in case study four, Ann and Sharon also admitted that they did not really know what has happened. In this case study, Gill avoided asking any questions about the nature of her brother's offences against children:

> Gill: "I will be honest, I have never been told, I have never asked, I've never wanted to know if whether anything genuinely was proved happened, all I have is the hearsay… I didn't want to think that it was true. I didn't want to think that my brother was capable of what was alleged. Whether that's denial I don't know".

It could be speculated that this avoidance strategy supports Gill's sensemaking and her desire for it to be untrue. Avoiding alternative constructions protects Gill from dealing with an alternative reality.

The press was also blamed by Gill for an unfair trail, it was her understanding that their reporting of Alan influenced how he was perceived to be. Consequently, Gill avoided the media:

> Gill: "With anything like this it's in the press within matter of hours. You don't get a fair trial. You're as good as condemned before you have even had a fair chance…I didn't watch any news for a good few months. I've only really started watching the news over the last two years because I was frightened that it would probably be on there. Once it's on the telly, you can't really shake that image, because news is news".

5.12 Theme Two: Sense of Self and Others

5.12.1 Shame and Stigma

Perfect families according to Yoder et al. (2016), present as having stable employment, educational and financial success, as well as having two married parents or a good co-parenting arrangement. To strangers and on-lookers this family presented as a 'normal middle-class family' that appeared on the surface to have healthy functioning relationships; they did not give any signals to the outside world that things within the family unit were less than perfect. Alan's conviction, however,

potentially exposes the family to societal appraisals that could threaten their ability to legitimately project and sustain their presentation of their familial identity. Their new reality was that their son has been convicted of a series of sexually harmful behaviours that occurred during his teenage years and beyond. Mark benchmarked and aligned his own beliefs in relation to the sexual abuse of children to what is perceived as being normal and acceptable conduct within a moral western society. In doing so, he attended to the deviant status of being a parent of a 'paedophile'. This benchmarking process allows him to reposition himself, and create some distance and disconnect between the spoiled identity status of his son, and the staining of his own individual and familial identity:

> Researcher: "So I'm just trying to understand as a father, when you hear that your son has gone or there is an allegation that he has gone beyond societal norms in terms of child abuse, and not only that, with boys and not girls, how do you process that, or did you process that?"

> Mark: "I don't know if I needed to process that, or if I've just accepted it. I mean, it's not the norm, and I've always accepted it's not the norm to want to have sex with children or boys if you're a male or girls either, not one girl, it's just not acceptable".

Unlike Mark, Julie did express how she had experienced a sense of vicarious shame and stigma. Julie's experience was that the visibility of Alan's crime exposed her to negative appraisals from others in her community:

> Julie: "It's a very tight knit community. I just wanted to hide under the duvet, I felt really sickened. I don't know. Its shame, it's embarrassing…I remember walking to the petrol station and seeing his name on the front page of the local paper. I just felt sick".

Julie's experience was that she was also ostracised by some of her work colleagues because of her association to her son and his crimes:

> Julie: "I went to work, and I remember people were looking at me and I knew straight away that they knew I was the mother of Alan. Some people would just ignore you".

The stigma and out casting that Julie experienced does not appear to have changed or lessened over time.:

> Julie: "There is still, you know, people that used to talk to you in the village. People that I know won't speak with you anymore. It's so obvious since Alan's imprisonment. It doesn't bother Mark so much, but when you're a mother, women are a bit more sensitive, the feelings and things like that. Sometimes, I think well you used to speak to me but now you don't speak to me now. The neighbours are new next door and just recently, especially the husband, he has stopped talking to us. We are wondering if his other neighbours [grandparents of the second victims] have said something to them. I might just be jumping to conclusions, I don't know…I would say that there are only four people in the village that have stood by us and will still speak".

There was clearly a difference in how Mark appraised how he was perceived and received by others compared to Julie and Gill. For Mark, his perception was that Alan's offences were hidden, or forgotten about, and consequently, he was able to present as being detached from stigma or shame. This was also apparent in case study four. Unlike Julie and Gill, Mark's understanding was that he had not experienced any differences in his interactions, or in the way friends, colleagues or his wider community related to him since Alan's arrest, conviction and imprisonment. The individual and family identity that he presented to others, in his view, had not been destabilised. At the time of the interview, Mark did not express that he had experienced vicarious shame and stigma that is typically associated with prisoners' families (Condry, 2007). For Mark, his shame proneness, appears to be linked not only to the visibility of Alan's offences, but his own appraisal of Alan's guilt. It could be speculated, that Mark's susceptibility to shame response is reduced, because he does not believe that his son is culpable for all the offences that he has been convicted of:

Researcher: "Tell me what it's like for you, living here".

Mark: "No one asked about, no one knew".

Researcher: "So no one asked what the police vans were doing at your house?"

Mark: "No one asked about it, no one mentioned it. Of course, it helped because Julie didn't see it. It was only me and Alan, and anyone that was local that would have seen it. Whether its fortunate or unfortunate, all the neighbours have changed now. There are only two sets of neighbours local to us that would have originally known what went on. Unfortunately, these are the neighbours, the family that made the second allegations, they still live there. There is also the couple across the road, and they have never treated us any differently form how they did on day one. Everyone else has changed, no one else knows".

In contrast, the perceived visibility of Alan's crimes for Julie and Gill exposed them to a strong sense of shame and stigma. The shame and stigma for Gill, is not only related to her perceived visibility and of the crime but the nature of Alan's offences heightened her sense of vicarious shame and stigma:

Gill: "It's the shame and stigma attached not to just having someone arrested and their story all over the paper but the shame of what it was for, the nature of the crime that's related to a sexual offence and children as well. If it was drugs, or something else, robbery, then it would be like fish and chip paper, wouldn't it? With this nature, it's going to be with him, with us the rest of our lives. It's not something you can brush away. With his parole coming up its going to be visible again, people are going to start talking".

Gill's experience was that being married and having a different surname provided some degree of anonymity and protected her from some exposure. This was also evident in case study one and four.

Gill: "It's a bit easier for me, not to be associated with him. Because of my name change, we don't have the same surname anymore, but if there are local people, people I went to school with, I think there is every chance they know who I am and what was going on at the time. I am always guarded. I say it's not me I've not done anything, but people are people aren't they? It's embarrassing at the end of the day".

As well as the perception of being stigmatised both Julie and Gill experienced shaming responses. Gill described how she had experienced what she believed to be a stigmatising response toward her from her son's school. Her sensemaking was that she was not selected to be a member of the school committee because of her association with Alan:

> Julie: "When my eldest son was at preschool, they were asking for committee members, I put myself forward. There was an x policeman who was on the committee, and he would have known about Alan. I can only imagine that it was one of the parents on the committee, because of my brother and what he had done. I was mortified, absolutely crushed. I thought how they can persecute me for something. I think other people had maybe expressed their discomfort at me being on the committee. If it had been for a real job, I would have fought it all the way, the small- minded people".

5.12.2 Culpability

There is some evidence to suggest that familial members can experience a sense of internal blame and sense of responsibility for their relatives offending behaviour (Gueta, 2017). Mark and Julie did not identify with this notion. Mark expressed that he did not feel any guilt or culpability for his son's actions:

> Mark: "I've not felt any guilt or remorse. I'm sorry that it's happened".

> Researcher: "Did you experience any feelings of shame or guilt?"

> Mark: "Well, I did, and I didn't because I felt at that point, and I still do believe in Alan's innocence…At first you kind of put your head down and think oh shit, everyone knows, but then I said to Julie, rightly or wrongly, it wasn't you who did it and it wasn't me who did it, it was our son. We have nothing to be ashamed about. I said that's the way that we deal with this thing. She was awful about it, she said it's terrible. I said its done and you can't undo it…I didn't do it. I'm not a victim. If anyone even attempts to tar me with the same brush as Alan, then I will smack them".

Mark's experience was that he was able to emotionally detach and separate his own identity and sense of self from his son, and his behaviour. This was also seen with Floyd in case study one and Pete in case study two. Mark was insightful, in that he recognised how his own traumatic childhood experiences had shaped his identity, and this had influenced how he responds to life events. This separation and detachment may be a significant factor in helping him negate shame:

> Mark: "I have often been criticised for being emotionally detached, yeah, and I can do that. I can literally hear different things or experience different things and I can park that emotion, and it can mean nothing to me. Julie [Mark's wife] knows me by now, she knows what I am like, that's how I was formed. My father committed suicide when I was sixteen, I found the body, so you tend to be a bit tough, be a bit hard. So, I grew up with self-developed coping strategies. My mother left home when I was five, you know, so I have sought of developed my own different way of dealing with things, which probably made it easier for me to deal with all this".

Mark also drew upon his professional identity to manage the process of helping and supporting Alan navigate the criminal justice system. At this time his role was to act as Alan's appropriate adult, his professional identity was projected front stage, and his parental role was less dominant (Goffman, 1963). This further enabled Mark, to emotionally detach from his son and his offences, and helped him cope with the process.:

> Mark "I was a disability advocate, so I was used to representing people. You hear stuff but you don't necessarily process it, it can go in one ear and out of the other. I totally went into work mode."
>
> Researcher: "So you almost went into work mode?"
>
> Mark: "Yes, I did absolutely, exactly like I would at work. That's how I managed the whole process, all the way through. From the various interviews, and there must have been at least a dozen. Backwards and forwards to the solicitors, firing off emails. I'd be reading statements and I was in work mode and that's how I deal with it".

Julie, like Sue in case study two, did question her role and culpability as a mother in respect to Alans behaviour, however, her understanding was that, like Mark, Alan's offending behaviour was primarily attributed to birth trauma. Julie's experience was that Alan was a difficult child, and she felt some relief when he got a job at sea and left the family home for several months at a time. It gave her some temporary respite from worrying about him:

> Julie: "It sounds awful, but it was like a relief when he got a job at sea. I sort of felt relief, because he was away, I was constantly worrying about him. We were proud of him when he got his job. We always knew that he had a lovely personality, a very gentle personality".

> Researcher: "Did you ever question yourself as a mother when Alan went to prison?"

> Julie: "Of course you do think like that, where I'd gone wrong, or where had we gone wrong, or had we failed, but I still think, when he was first born, he was starved of oxygen for a while, I think something happened with his brain. Definitely".

Gill perceived that people would judge her in the same light as her brother and think that she was culpable in some way:

> Gill: "I thought oh my god, people are going to know he's my brother. I just thought people are going to think it's me, people are going to think I've done something, I'm tarred with the same brush. It's a small village and people talk. I thought that people would be talking about me and thinking, she must have known. I used to be paranoid about walking to the local shop. He's always been a bit weird; they would be thinking how she could not know. That to me is one of the hardest things that someone could say, how could she not know. Well, I didn't know, I didn't have a clue. I would have never thought in a million years".

Condry (2007) identifies how relatives of offenders can be blamed because they can be seen to be in a position whereby they should have known about the likelihood of an offence occurring and done something to stop it. Gill's experience was that she did

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not have any knowledge that her brother was likely to become an offender. Gill's sensemaking was that she could be viewed by others, as having known about Alan, and not have done anything to prevent his problematic sexual behaviour toward children. The perception that she could be to blame in some way was very distressing to her and created a sense of paranoia.

Gill recast how she believed that people were talking about her, even though, she had not experienced any negative comments from others:

> Gill: "I feel that I am being judged all the time. On a personal level we have been very lucky, we have never had any verbal threatening. You might get a funny look. You can tell people are talking about you, look there's his sister. I have never had it personally thrown in my face, neither have my parents".

This resonates with Codd (2008a) who asserts how in social situations families of prisoners can experience a sense of stigma and shame even in the absence of any apparent hostility or violence. The anxiety can be attributed to their fear of others' perceptions of them which can be a source of constant uneasiness and result in in insecure contacts.

As well as the perception of being negatively judged by her wider community, Gill, like Sue in case study two, also experienced a sense of being talked about and judged by her closest friends:

> Gill "I knew my friends were going to be supportive of me but immediately, for a few months I was paranoid. I thought maybe there was a group of friends that were talking between themselves. I felt a bit of an outcast at that point. I felt quiet paranoid wondering what was being said by my friends. Because we are so close, I could tell them that I was a bit anxious about what I thought was being said.

> Researcher: "So it sounds as if you were thinking that they were having little group chats about you in a derogative way, saying things like she must have known, how could she not know, has he done anything to her and all that kind of stuff?"

Gill: "Yes, yes that's absolutely right. They were like, oh gosh you couldn't be further from the truth. They were saying look, we are all talking about it, but only in the way that we can't believe it. We are all here for you. Right to this day they are, I mean my best friend's parents have even been to see Alan".

5.12.3 Visiting

Although Mark's experience was that he did not experience any internalised feelings of shame or guilt, visiting the prison challenged Mark's ability to separate his own identity from that of his son. It could be speculated that the process of visiting Alan threatens Mark's identity as a decent person. The visits impose a sense of shame onto Mark, that emanates from the prison system. The experience of visiting his son in prison, made Mark not only feel like a criminal himself but his experience was that he was perceived and treated by the prison personnel as a criminal. These feelings were also a feature within case study one and four.:

Mark: "You still feel like some kind of villain. The visits are horrid, horrid. As a visitor to a prison, you are very much meant to be seen as potential offender or an offender, or kind of a less than a normal person. It starts with the booking process. Then when you go on a visit, in the visitor's centre, when you are booking in, that's when the lack of respect starts. Things are not explained and then there are the searches, and you have to walk from one cage to another…The whole process is designed to knock you down before you go in…You're still made to feel like you're a criminal walking through the jail. You're still made to feel that you should be grateful to be let out at the end of the visit. It's still a very unpleasant experience. I understand why you need security, but at the same time you shouldn't be made to feel like you're the one that has done wrong. You're the one that is doing your best and trying to visit".

Gill's experience of visiting the prison was somewhat like her father's. Even though Gill rationalised and separated her own behaviour from her brother's, the institution

and the process of visiting forced her to feel like a criminal and made to feel that she is guilty of an offence:

> Gill: "I had never seen or been to a prison before. It was a huge shock, really scary. I assumed that it was going to be like you see on the telly, but it was nothing like that. I felt that they wanted me to feel guilty. Even when you are in the visitor area you're just made to feel guilty. I feel guilty for just being there, just being there even though it's not me who hasn't done anything wrong".

5.13 Theme Three: Strategies for Information Control

The story that each individual family member presented and their sensemaking of events was predominantly informed by Mark's own sensemaking and recasting of events. Mark, like Marie in case study four directed the familial narrative of how the family network should present to others. With Julie and Gill's consent, Mark conveyed to his family what information he thought they should know. Consequently, Julie and Gill's sensemaking of their own experiences, in the absence of information, was influenced and informed by the information directed to them by Mark. Sharing this dominant ambivalent narrative protects and promotes family cohesion, it defends against the potential for disintegrative shaming responses as typified by Braithwaite (2012) and serves to negate their own sense of individual or familial culpability for Alan's offences:

> Mark: "When it went to trial, I went to the court. I said to Julie, you're not going because you don't want to hear, you don't want to experience it. Let me tell you what I think you need to know. That will help you cope with it. And that's what I tried to do throughout this whole process because I think if she had been exposed to everything, I'm not sure she would have been strong enough emotionally to take it…Yeah, and trying to keep a lid, keep everyone out the loop and let me just deal with it. I felt it was the best way of dealing with it personally…Over the years I have done that, and that process has worked quiet well".

5.13.1 Sheltering

Mark identified himself as the protector, he controlled the information that was conveyed to his wife and daughter. This is again seen in case study four, whereby Marie controls the information that is conveyed to her mother Ann, and daughter in law, Sharon. Mark's omissions and information control was a way in which Mark felt he protected and sheltered his immediate family from the accusations against Alan:

> Mark: "The first thing I did [when the police arrived at the house] was to ring Julie and I said to her, whatever you do, don't come home. Just stay out of the way until I let you know what's happening. I didn't want her to be upset because I know how she would have reacted to that…I try to protect Julie and Gill, keeping them out of the loop a little bit. Let them know what they need to know. Not being obstructive. I've always said you will always find out what you want to know, if you want to know it, there it is. Here are all the files that I keep, if you want to read the statements, what's been said, read them or accept if there is anything you want to know then I will tell you".

Julie and Gill accepted Mark taking control of the information. It shields them from aftermath associated with Alan's arrest, trial and conviction. Mark protects Julie and Gill from the full exposure of the details. They both avoid actively seeking out information or being exposed to situations which could challenge their own sense making of Alan's crimes. Julie and Gill's recasting were predominantly framed around Mark's purposively edited script. It serves to protect them from hearing all the unpleasant details of the crimes that Alan has been convicted of:

> Julie: "It was awful, just devastating. I didn't have any idea what it was going to be like at all. Mark was very protective of me, he was the one who went into the custody suite, and he was just trying to spare me I think from, I don't know what really. From the horrors of what it's like down there. He spoke to me and told me what had gone on…There was the court case, and Mark said don't come, well you can come if you want to, but I don't think you would like it. So, I thought I don't want to go. I wanted to be there for him, but I didn't want to go. Mark

> spoke to me all the time, saying this has happened or that has happened".

These edited scripts and withholding information to shelter and protect family members are also a feature of case study four.

It could be speculated that this avoidance strategy serves the function of protecting Julie and Gill, their sense of self and others. It enables them to avoid the destabilisation or threat to their sense of identity and family identity. It is a coping strategy that enable them to be more accepting and supportive of Alan. The avoidance of information protects the women from the possibility and a different reality, one in which Alan may be capable and guilty of such acts. For Gill, avoiding the information also upholds the notion that she does not want it to be true.

Gill adopted three strategies for information control. Like her mother, on a personal level Gill protected herself by blocking and avoiding information. She did not actively seek out or want to know the information in relation to Alan's crimes. Gill also used a diversion strategy to avoid talking about Alan in social situations. She consciously steers others away from talking about Alan or limits the information that she conveys. It is a strategy that manages the shame and stigma associated with Alan and his crime:

> Gill: "If its first meetings, I will say that I have got a brother, but I will change the subject in case they ask any questions about what he is doing, what does he do, where does he live. I just say he is away at the moment, then I move on. I change the subject. So far, I have always got away with it. I divert. That's my strategy. I'm conscious all the time. I have to be".

The third strategy that Gill adopted was containing the information which she communicated to others. Gill experienced anger at her brother's actions and the impact they had upon their family unit, which she felt she was unable to vent for fear of upsetting her parents and her brother. Gill described Alan as being in "his prison bubble" unaware of the impact that his imprisonment had upon the family unit. Gill supressed vocalising how she was truly feeling for fear of upsetting her parents:

Gill: "He's in his own little bubble. We are trying to get on with our life, but he should stop giving my parents grief, when he is not really in a position to do so".

5.13.2 Intrafamilial Secrets

As well as Mark limiting information to protect his wife and daughter, information about Alan's conviction and imprisonment had been kept as a secret from other close family members. This familial narrative enabled the family to uphold a pretence, that Alan was working away at sea. Julie had regretfully kept Alan's imprisonment from her own mother. Julie's experience was that she had initially kept the truth to protect her mother. Later, she had wanted to tell her that Alan was in prison but felt that too much time had passed to disclose:

Julie: "On the first occasion, I couldn't tell my mum, because she had just lost my dad, my dad always did everything for her…The first time he had served nearly three years, so I thought I can get away with this. She knows he's working on the ships. I just couldn't tell her because it would have killed her. So, of course she would "say have you heard from Alan?" and I would say, "yes". She would say "where abouts is he?". I hated lying to her, I don't feel good about it at all, I really don't. But when he got his second sentence, I thought what am I going to do, and I still haven't told her to this day".

Alan had also colluded with the family secret from prison:

Julie: "I just know when my mum comes to stay at our house, Alan will ring up and we will pretend he's on the ship. Mum will say "where are you?"

Researcher: "Do you warn Alan when your mum is coming to stay?"

Julie: "No I don't warn him, I just say "grandma's coming", and he says "alright, so I will ring you", and I say "ok".

Keeping the secret was hard for Julie:

Julie: "It's a burden, it's very difficult, it's so difficult. Part of me wants to tell her, but I'm afraid to tell her. And yet she's not like some kind of strong person that would disown me or anything like that. She's not like that. She wouldn't dare say anything because she relies on us, it's not a threat".

Although Julie had not told her mother about Alan, she was not certain that her mum did not know that Alan was in prison. There was some doubt in Julie's mind, that her estranged brothers could have revealed her secret, but Alan's imprisonment had not been acknowledged by the brothers or her mother. Consequently, the family were left with a scenario of ongoing pretence, with no one really knowing who knew what:

Julie: "I have a strained relationship with my brothers, nothing to do with Alan. It was strained before. I can't tell my mum because she will tell them, and I don't want them knowing. I know that my brothers know, but they have never said anything to me that they know".

Researcher: "So your brothers have never said anything to you, so you don't really know if your brothers even know, or if your mum has been told, have they not contacted you?"

Julie: "No, I am sure mum doesn't know, she would have said something to me if they had told her".

Researcher: "You mentioned before that you were afraid to tell your mum, but you feel that she would not disown you, so why do you feel you can't tell her?"

Julie: "I don't know. I suppose it's gone on so long; she would be so hurt. She might judge me. She would not have never dreamt in a million years that he could go to prison for anything".

Julie's sensemaking was that she had told a lie to protect her mum, but the lie had escalated. The lie is beneficial to the family identity and solidarity; however, it had got so big, that Julie felt unable to tell her the truth. In Julie's recasting there was a fear that she would be negatively judged by her own family. Julie had not received any support from any of her own family members. This lack of wider familial support could

be attributed to the nature and functioning of the relationships that existed prior to Alan's imprisonment. Julie and her brothers had had a past disagreement, which was not related to Alan, and consequently their relationship had been one of disconnect and purposeful distancing. Despite her belief that her brothers knew about Alan being in prison, they had not acknowledged it. Julie's support was predominantly contained within her immediate family network, Mark, Gill and Gill's husband. Yoder, et al.(2016) identify how familial secrecy is not uncommon in households where a child has committed sexually harmful behaviours. They assert, how the sharing of information, can often be kept to a minimum, to sustain family cohesiveness or avoid negative appraisals from others.

Gill's children, (Eric, age 7 and Seth, aged 5) were unaware that their Uncle Alan was serving a prison sentence. Whilst Alan's existence had not been kept a secret from the boys, the children did not know that Alan had committed a crime or that he was in prison, they had been told that he worked away:

> Gill: "As the boys get older, Alan sometimes rings and speaks with me, sometimes Eric is around, he is inquisitive and asks who is on the phone. Now the first few times I would tell him it's just someone with the wrong number or someone is trying to sell us something. But we had a discussion to say we couldn't keep hiding it forever. They see his pictures , obviously we are not going to turn around and say he is in prison because it's not fair to put that on a seven-year-old's shoulders. How are they supposed to understand that and how on earth would I begin to explain what he's in there for? I just wouldn't be able to do that, so I just say he's away. He has started to ask when can we see him, and where does he live. It's difficult because we don't want to tell him the truth yet, he's not ready to learn the truth yet, obviously what he's in there for has a massive stigma attached to it. We just keep saying he's away, maybe when he comes back, but he's away at the moment".

The lies are justified to protect the boys not only from the vicarious shame and stigma but to protect them from the nature of Alan's convictions. The family's sensemaking of this reconstruction is that it is in their best interests, the children do not need to be

exposed to the truth until they are older, this protects their emotional wellbeing. Lockwood and Raikes (2016) identify how non-disclosure and secrecy is a protective mechanism that is employed by families of prisoners whereby children are told untruths about their relative's whereabouts. This strategy serves to protect them from the social and stigmatising consequences of being associated with a convicted criminal. They depict however, that this strategy is costly for adults as they live with the constant anxiety and concern that their truths will be exposed by others, or that the children will seek out disclosures for themselves as a result of being bullied or told half-truths:

> Gill: "It worries me, in the future I'm sure that they will find out. If they are not told by myself and my husband, which I think will be the best way, I'm sure they will find out from somewhere else. I don't want to tell them; I think it will do more emotional harm than good. But when do you broach it, how do you broach it, when do you tell them? I don't think that this age is suitable, my youngest, it would just go in one ear and out the other. My eldest Eric will ask, he will ask a lot of questions, he will want to know everything. It frightens me to death the repercussions of all this for them when they are innocent in all this".

5.14 Theme Four: The Effects of Imprisonment

5.14.1 Burden of Supporting

Mark and Julie's experience was that whilst Alan was bailed, they had been left to deal with the fall out and aftermath of Alan's actions. This theme was also reflected in Margaret and Floyd's narrative in case study one, when they were left in a position of managing and maintaining his flat. During this time, Mark experienced a loss of self, routine and readjustments. Alan's imprisonment had impacted upon Mark's time and changed what he thought he may have been doing at this stage in his life. Granja, (2016) identifies how parents of the imprisoned, often prioritise their children's needs above their own, losing sight of their own needs and plans. Mark, like Marie in case study four, recast how he had been consumed by the practicalities of building a legal defence for Alan. He perceived that Alan had escaped the stress which his family were exposed to:

> Mark: "Julie and I were left with this, the cloud that was looming, has now appeared, it has zoomed up and it has appeared, it here and hovering…Great for him, he escaped it all, believe it, at the time of his bail, they let him go back and work at sea, he went back and did another six month contract, he came back a bit early, after a few months, I guess he couldn't concentrate. I was going back and forth up to the solicitors to see if there was anything I could do and I attended every one of the meetings. I tried to be strong for him, it's been really tough".

Mark viewed himself and his role as the protector on Alan's release. Alan's pending release presents Mark with an ongoing burden; an obligation to police, monitor and supervise his son's behaviour and actions. Here we see how Mark's sensemaking was somewhat conflicted. On one hand, he conveyed that he trusted his son's version of events, and yet, within his discourse, Alan uses metaphors (fox in a pigeon coupe) that are synonymous with mistrust:

> Mark: "There's the feeling that we have to protect the boys [Eric and Seth], because obviously we do, we need to understand that there is an element of risk, he has been convicted of crimes. You wouldn't put the fox inside the pigeon coupe. You just wouldn't do it unless you were there to watch the fox and have the fox on a lead. That's got to be our philosophy. It's in Alan's interest and it's in the boy's interest and it's in our own interest. He knows that and we have spoken about it with Alan."

It could be speculated that because Mark accepts some of the allegations in respect to Alan's offences his sensemaking is that there is a degree of risk that must be managed on Alan's release. Acceptance of some of Alan's problematic sexualised behaviours towards children may be why Mark cannot fully trust Alan to be unsupervised around children. It could, however, be construed that, because Mark really does not really believe that Alan poses any serious direct risk to children, his felt obligation to monitor and supervise could be one of collusion and one of disguised compliance. Mark could be seen to be externally compliant with the conditions of Alan's release, whilst privately rejecting the notion or need for supervision. The

ambivalence to the more serious offences against children could mean that the family do not fully appreciate the level of dangerousness and risk posed to children. Hackett and Phillips (2014) suggest that this ambivalence could convey messages to offenders that their offending behaviours are not really problematic, and as such could enable the abuse to continue on release.

The continued burden of Alan's actions was also expressed by Gill who experienced a sense of anger towards her brother for burdening the family with their own life sentence as a direct consequence of his offending behaviour:

> Gill: "Half of me wanted to smack him, I was like, how dare you put the family through something like this. I just thought how dare you, how could you be so stupid…I was so angry with him for what he's done for the future, for all our futures. It's going to stay with us forever. He's in his own little prison bubble. And sometimes it's all about him. When things don't go his way, he gets angry. I get angry then, he needs to think about us on the outside. I've told him to stop giving us grief when you're not really in a position to do so".

5.14.2 Loss of privacy

Significantly for Gill, Alan's offences against children meant that she has loss of the right to a family life without intrusion from the state (Council of Europe, 2022) Alan's pending release subjects Gill, and her family to a series of risk assessments in relation to protecting and safeguarding her boys from Alan:

> Gill: "It's having the stigma of having social services involved in your life when it's nothing to do with you personally. It feels that they are questioning me as a parent. Why should I have social services involved in my life, they are not at risk from me. I feel angry that my brother has brought this to our door. I don't like that side of it".

> Researcher: "How do you feel about Alan coming home, if Alan is at home, can he come to your home?"

> Gill: "I suppose I'm wary because you never really do know do you? You think you know that you trust yourself to think, but it wouldn't ever

be fair to leave them in that situation [unaccompanied], or to put Alan in that situation. It's hard. Yes, I will feel wary, I will".

5.14.3 Isolation

Mark's experience of having a son in prison was that he felt somewhat isolated and abandoned. Mark's experience was that there was no external formal support available to him:

> Mark: "When a family member is taken into custody, into prison there is nothing for you as a relative. It's a case of we have just to get on with it, we don't have the option and of course there's nothing and that was the thing that quickly came to light".

Similarly, Gill experienced a lack of formal support that was available to the family. Gill's sense of isolation and abandonment stemmed from her perception that there is a lack of support available for prisoners' families. Here we see how Gill portrays herself to be an unsupported victim of Alan's offences. This theme resonates with what is already known about prisoners' families, that the support available to them is scant and not easily accessible.

> Gill: "There is nothing out there for families, for us as victims. We have never been asked if we wanted any support, any sort of counselling or anything like that".

Julie's experience of isolation was somewhat deliberate and self-imposed. Some of her reluctance to seek support outside her immediate family unit may be attributed to her personality type. Julie portrayed herself as a closed and private person, however the following excerpt illustrates the significance of shame and embarrassment upon her ability to share and talk about her experience:

> Julie: "I feel very isolated, hardly anyone asks about Alan. I'm a very private person. I won't talk to anyone outside, about how I feel or anything like that. I just keep things to myself or to my immediate family. I have never been able to open up like that. You're [researcher] probably the first person that I have ever spoken to in detail about this. It's, I don't know, shame, its embarrassment".

Although Mark and Julie presented as a united couple, they were somewhat disconnected emotionally. Mark was resigned to the fact they he and his wife did not attend to their own or one another's emotional wellbeing. This manifested in the way that Mark and Julie explored and talked about Alan's emotional wellbeing, but they did not attend to their own, or each other's emotions. Their own wellbeing was secondary to Alan's:

> Mark: "We don't ask each other; well how do you feel?"
>
> Researcher: "So you don't sit down with other and share what you are feeling, why do you feel that you don't check out with each other how you are?"
>
> Mark: "I don't know, it's not a case of avoiding it. I don't think it's a case of avoidance. It's a case of we just have to get on, you know".

Gill's experience of anger that was previously highlighted, isolated from her being able to share this aspect of her experience with her parents. Gill felt that she could not openly express her anger for fear of causing her family further emotional harm:

> Gill: "I didn't want to say anything to my brother in front of my parents that would cause them upset or for them to feel that I wasn't supporting him. I was so angry. I was very cross, so I went to see him without mum and dad, and I did say to him that I can't believe that you have put the family through this. I did regret saying this to him afterwards because I could see that I had hit a nerve, my words had impact".

The family experience was that they made a concerted effort to avoid situations which they thought may cause further distress to one another's emotional wellbeing. It could be speculated that as a consequence, some aspects of familial communication is somewhat closed. The need to protect family from further emotional harm, isolates, but takes precedence over open transparent expression of the self:

> Gill: "It's like a sticking plaster, all of us protecting one another".

5.15 Theme Five: Looking to the Future

5.15.1 Uncertainty

Mark was optimistic about Alan's pending release, he was hopeful for his family's future, wellbeing and happiness. Moving forward however, his optimism was tarnished with a concern that that more allegations could be looming on the horizon, just as they did before. Mark was insecure in his feelings for the future. He feared the unknown, of what could be looming in the clouds on the horizon:

> Mark "I can see an end to it, but I could see an end to it last time and then out of the blue came the other allegations".

Similarly, Gill had concerns that further allegations could present in the future:

> Gill: "Half of me doesn't want him to come out because I'm frightened in case he comes out and all of a sudden someone else decides to accuse him again, and we go through it all again. I'm petrified of that. Someone could know that he is coming up for probation. It feels like sometimes there is something else, just waiting".

Mark wanted to draw a line under the episode and hoped that Alan could integrate back into society and have a normal life. Mark benchmarked his aspirations for Alan's release against the expectation that Alan would move out of the family home just like people are expected to do at his age and stage in life:

> Mark: "I've told Alan I want you to be able to come back home but you need to live independently, you have to move on. He's at an age now, where he has to move on and do something with his own life".

> Researcher: "So the decision that Alan cannot live at home with you, has any of that been shaped by the fact that Gill's got her boys and there has to be a duty to protect them?"

> Mark: "No, I'm not worried about him with the boys because I know he won't be on his own with them. The boys will love him to bits. It will be Uncle Alan's home, it will be good fun for them, I think that we are all excited".

Gill was less optimistic about Alan being able to live independently on his release.

> Gill: "I don't know where he will live when he comes out. I mean he's not really self-sufficient. Let's face it, it's going to be difficult getting a job and moving forward in the future. He has always been looked after; he will always need looking after. I don't think on a personal level that he is capable of living on his own and be left to his own devices, but that's just my view".

Julie's experience was that she was uncertain of some of the processes and decisions made in respect to her sons pending release. Julie expressed her confusion in respect to Alan's Parole hearing date and her perception that the professionals were not conveying the correct information to her:

> Julie: "His probation officer was saying that a category D prison would be good for him, but then we found out that where they said he could go he can't go because they don't allow sex offenders there, but the probation officer had not told us that. Someone is not telling the truth somewhere. I don't really understand the parole process properly. His sentencing report said his parole hearing was yesterday, but he's still waiting for all his reports to be done. I think that there has been a mix up. I personally think that he has been given longer than he should, but I'm not in the system so I don't know".

Julie was also uncertain of where her son would be allowed to live. Her experience was that they were suspended from being able to make any short-term plans for Alan's release, but stated how they eventually wanted Alan to have his own home:

> Julie "The probation came to see us and told us that Alan can't live at home, and we asked why. We were told, it was because the grandparents [of his second victims] live next door but one, but we said the grandchildren don't live there anymore, so of course there is some disagreement there. We know that Alan will have to go for to a hostel for a while. Although we have told him we want him to come home, we have told him it can't be permanent. Home is just a stop

> gap, you need to find your own place, gain your own independence
> and stand on your own two feet".

Julie acknowledged that the future was going to present some challenges. This hardship was not expressed in relation to her own sense of self but for Alan and his future. It does however signify a loss of a predicted future, and a realisation that this experience means that things are somewhat different and will continue to remain so. Different for Alan, represents an uncertain future for Julie moving forward:

> Julie: "We understand that he will not be allowed in the company of
> anyone under the age of 16 on his own".
>
> Researcher: "How does that make you feel?"
>
> Julie: "Sad for him really because we want him to come home or be
> wherever he is, and have a happy relationship, which again is going
> to be different for him. Disclosing his past to someone, it's going to be
> very hard for him if that other person has children. There are a lot of
> ifs and buts, but it's, take a day at a time, just take it from there".

Gill's main concern was a fear for her boy's future and the uncertainty for them. This illustrates the ongoing burden of imprisonment for the family, even when Alan has been released. The implications for the family unit, go beyond the custodial sentence, it stays with them and the next generation:

> Gill: "It frightens me to death the repercussions that they will be for
> them when they are innocent in all this. It frightens me the most, for
> them and their future. It worries me as they get older. They shouldn't
> be persecuted of tormented. All I know that I will protect my boys and
> I would never put them, or my brother at risk".

5.16 Case Study Four

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                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │     Ann     │
                    │   Mother    │
                    └─────────────┘
         ┌─────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
  ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
  │   Marie    │ │   Karen    │ │    Dale    │ │    Kim     │
  │            │ │   Sister   │ │  Prisoner  │ │ The Victim │
  └────────────┘ └────────────┘ └────────────┘ └────────────┘
      ┌──────────────┐
      │     Lisa     │
      │  (Marie's    │
      │  Daughter)   │
      └──────────────┘
      ┌────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
      │  Marie's   │ │   Sharon     │
      │    Son     │ │  (Marie's    │
      │            │ │ daughter in law) │
      └────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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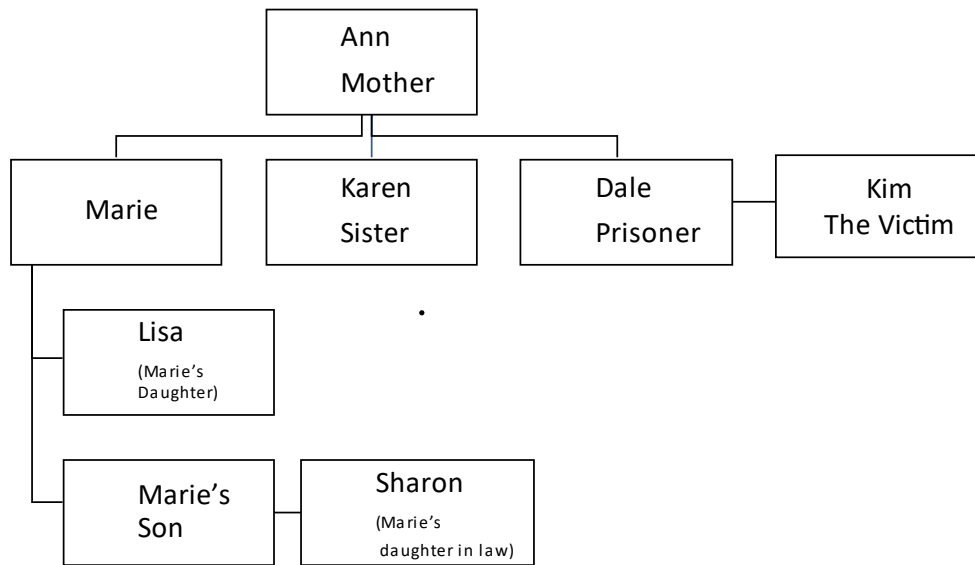
Family structure and relational ties

- Dale is the prisoner serving eleven years.
- Kim is Dale's wife -the victim.
- Marie is Dale's sister (interviewed)
- Ann is Dale's mother (interviewed)
- Sharon is Marie's daughter in law (interviewed)

Additional family information

- Lisa is Marie's daughter, Dale's niece
- Karen is Ann's daughter, Dale and Marie's sister

The family network.

The family network consisted of Ann, Marie and Sharon. Ann is Dale's mother, she lives with her second husband, who is the stepfather to all five of her grown up children. Marie is Dale's younger sister. At the time of the interview Marie had a small business as a care home provider within the private sector. Marie's daughter in law Sharon, who worked part time as a care assistant, also agreed to take part in the interview. At the

time of the interview Sharon had a two-year-old daughter and was pregnant with her second child.

The dynamics within this family were somewhat historically fractured. Ann had five grown up children, but her reconstruction focused on her relationship with just three of her children, Dale, Marie, and Karen. Prior to Dale's imprisonment, Ann's relationship with Dale had been severed for more than two decades. Ann claimed that Dale had distanced himself from her to appease his wife's (Kim's) wishes. Ann was estranged from her eldest daughter, Karen. Ann thought Karen disliked her second husband and, therefore, tensions within their relationship had occurred. Similarly, Marie also reported that her relationship with Karen has been severed due to historical familial conflicts. These familial tensions with Karen were not related to Dale's arrest and imprisonment.

The conviction.

At the time that the interview took place, Dale had served two years of an eleven-year custodial sentence for two counts of rape, intimidation and a threat to kill his wife, Kim, whom he had been married to for over twenty years. Dale denied the allegations and was in the process of trying to appeal his conviction on the premise that his wife had lied and had made false rape allegations against him.

The offence and familial positioning

The family network, Marie, Ann and Sharon shared the same appraisal of the event. Their positioning was that that Dale was innocent, that he had been falsely accused, and that he was the victim of a miscarriage of justice.

5.16.1 Theme One: Troubled Identity, Impression Management and Manifestations of Neutralizations

This section presents the familial reframing of their experience and depicts their sense of self that supports their evaluations of the crimes that Dale was imprisoned for. All three family members strongly rejected the notion that Dale raped his wife. Unlike the previous three case studies which employed both denial and minimisations as discursive neutralisation techniques, within this case study, denial was the central discursive technique that all three family members employed to support their appraisal

of events. The family network all used a series of inextricably linked denial neutralizations that denied Dale's role in any wrongdoing and shifted blame elsewhere.

5.16.2 Neutralizations: Deny responsibility, deny the victim, deny the injury.

The family network all denied the victim status of Kim; they did not acknowledge Dale's wife as being his victim, or that she may have sustained any physical or psychological harm. Their sensemaking was that there was no victim status because no crime that had been committed. Consequently, in denying and recounting their narratives in such way, Dale is released from any responsibility for his convictions. Their sensemaking was framed around a belief that women frequently make false accusations of rape and sexual assault against innocent men for offences that did not occur. According to Weiser (2017) rape myths like these are generally untrue, but commonly held assumptions, which serve to deny or justify the sexual aggression of men against women.

Marie, Ann and Sharon's experience was that Kim, had made false allegations against Dale. In recasting in this way, Kim's status as a rape victim was denied. Denying the rape victims status was also reflected in case study three, where the family recounted that the children had lied and made false allegations against Alan. Marie recounted several incidents that portrayed Kim to be a flawed character who was untrustworthy and lacked moral integrity. These descriptors cemented Marie's understanding that Kim had lied about being raped. It reaffirmed her evaluation that her brother was not responsible for, and he was not the perpetrator of intimate partner abuse. Marie's understanding was that it was Kim, not Dale who was the immoral other. Situating the victim as an immoral other was also a feature of Floyd and Margaret's recasting of Lydia in case study one. Marie's discourse in respect of her sister- in- law Kim, emphasised negative character traits that could discredit her as a reliable victim:

> Marie: "Kim had been going out and drinking, sleeping with other men and whist she was doing this Dale was concerned about her not supervising their teenage girls properly…She was lying and claiming tax credits illegally, and she would just spend all the money."

Conversely, just as in all the other case studies, Marie portrayed her brother to be a good, decent person:

> Marie: "Dale is a good father and works really hard, he looked after them all, and he paid all the household bills and the maintenance".

Ann also disbelieved that Dale was guilty of such an offence. Her sensemaking was framed around how she identified with Dale as a child. Dale had been a good child that had matured into a good man. Ann's understanding was that good people are not capable of such a crime:

> Ann: "Dale had not been in any trouble. Just normal teenager stuff, not coming home on time, smoking a bit of weed, not heroin or anything like that. That's why it has come as such a shock to us, he was a grand lad…He's always worked hard and brought home the money".

For Marie, when her brother told her what he had been accused of she outwardly rejected the notion that he would ever commit such an act. In denying the rape, she also denied the victim, the injury and any responsibility that her brother may have had:

> Researcher: "So when your brother told you what he had been accused of what were your thoughts around that?"

> Marie: "My brother wouldn't rape her. He didn't rape her, there is no way that he would do that".

This reconstruction was also supported by Ann:

> Ann: "I just don't understand it, it's not Dale. He wouldn't force her. I don't believe that's my son…We were so shocked at the eleven-year sentence. He didn't see the seriousness of it because he just let them find a solicitor. I think he thought it would just blow over, that's the only way I can think of it".

Ann's understanding of Dale's innocence was also recast around her belief that Kim had lied about the rape:

> Ann: "There is no way that Kim said no…She told Marie that she had lied and that she was thinking of pulling out [retracting her statement] because she said that Dale didn't rape her… She's been heard to say, I didn't think it would go so far".

Sharon did not believe that Dale had raped or threatened to kill his wife. Sharon did not have any attachment to Dale or his wife prior to the custodial sentence. Consequently, unlike Marie and Ann, her appraisal of Dale's innocence was not based on how she had identified with Dale before he had been sent to prison. Her sensemaking of Dale's innocence was primarily informed by Marie's reconstruction of what had occurred and through her own subsequent assessment of visiting Dale as a convicted prisoner:

> Sharon: "Marie told me what had happened because she was going to the trial. I don't think that he has done it… I have known since day one, that he has not done it. I would be very shocked if he did say that he had done it".

Unlike Marie and Ann, Sharon did not offer any explanations for his conviction or try to assign responsibility for his imprisonment on to others. Sharon valued the relationship that had formed and believed she would continue to invest in the relationship irrespective of an admission of guilt from Dale:

> Sharon: "If he said something had gone on, I would still go and visit him. I have built up a bond with him. You can't just build a bond and then stop".

Similarly, Marie believed that she would support her brother unconditionally, irrespective of any guilt. This unconditional support, however, was not a feature of case study one, where Margaret had intimated that she may not be supportive of her son Owen, if she found out he had killed Lydia. . Although Marie strongly denied that the rape had occurred, she had experienced some quiet moments of doubt whereby she had questioned the plausibility of Kim's allegations against her brother:

Marie: "I have asked him openly, you haven't done it, you're not covering anything up are you, and he has said no, and I believe him. If he had done it, I would still support him, he's my brother and I would still love him". Marie did, however, intimate that if Dale had been abusive in any way towards Kim, it would have been because he had been provoked by her to behave in such a way. This shifting of blame from Dale, onto Kim, within Marie's reconstruction resonates with rape myths that suggest that the

rape victim is at fault because they may have provoked the perpetrator to act in a certain way (Hockett et al, 2016):

> Marie: "One of his daughters had said in court that he had thrown a tin of beans at Kim over an argument, but a lot of it was because she would have wound him up".

For Marie, the ownership for any abuse that may have occurred within the relationship belonged to Kim. The indicators present in domestic abusive relationships such as coercive control (Walby & Towers, 2018) was, according to Marie, a feature of Dale and Kim's relationship. Elements of coercive control were also cited by Margaret and Floyd in case study one to project Lydia as a controlling abuser and situate Owen as the victim. Marie believed that the victim status should be cast to her brother because Kim was the controlling abuser and not the abused.

> Marie: "She controlled him from day one basically. I personally didn't like her. She gave him ultimatums; she didn't like our mum, so she made him choose. It was her or mum. I could see what she was doing to him, she controlled him. She was nasty and vindictive. I just tolerated her because she was his wife".

Similarly, Ann also portrayed Kim as the instigator of arguments, however, unlike Marie, she did not depict Dale as being a victim of abuse. Her experience was that both of them had a responsibility for the toxic relationship:

> Ann: "She used to wind him up. They were both as bad as each other, six of one and half a dozen of the other and their daughter had said so in court. It got that bad that I said to him why don't you just leave, but the baby came along, and it just never got any better".

When Marie heard the telephone conversation in court of Dale's threats to kill his wife, Marie minimised the evidence which was presented and Dale's intent to harm Kim. Marie's interpretation was that Dale was drunk, consequently he didn't mean what he said, and the jury had misconstrued his intent:

> Marie: "He didn't go anywhere near her or harm her or anything, it's not like he threatened to go round there and stab her with a knife. It

was a drunken phone call, he just said to her, you do realise that if I get banged up the girls will go into care, and you will die".

Zutter et al. (2017) articulate how false allegations of rape can be motivated by several factors such as material or emotional gain, revenge, regret, or to produce an alibi or to attract attention or sympathy. It is also acknowledged within their research, that the accusers may not always know why or what has motivated them make such claims. Although Ann did not offer any motives as to what Kim would gain from the accusations of rape against Dale, her own sensemaking was founded on a rape revenge motive (Kanin, 1994) whereby her own estranged daughter, Karen, would gain from causing harm to their family network. Typically, where false accusations of rape have been made, it is the accuser who attempts to gain something. In this case, however, Ann's understanding was that her own daughter Karen was responsible for conspiring and encouraging Kim to file a complaint of rape against her son to gain some type of retribution against them:

Ann: "Myself, I think Karen has pushed her to do what she has done".

Marie also thought that her sister had a negative influence upon Kim:

Maria: "I don't speak to Karen either. The two of them together [Kim and Karen] were lethal. They would sit there gossiping and cause a lot of problems within the family. His wife [Dale's] didn't need any extra help from our sister".

Marie did not assign responsibility for Dale's conviction on to Karen. Karen was merely viewed as an active supporter of Kim:

Marie: "Kim went to Karen and said she has been raped, and my sister [Karen] believed her. Prior to that, Karen didn't have a close relationship with Dale, but they were still talking".

Marie and Sharon's evaluation of Dale's innocence was supported by the visual stereotype that they held in her own minds of what they believed a rapist would look like. Dale's facial features did not conform to the stereotypical image that they had both conjured up of a criminal. Busching and Lutz (2016) assert how these mental images of people's facial attributes, which are often influenced by the media, inform

judgements as to whether we believe a person is capable or culpable of criminal activity:

> Sharon: "I just think that deep down, when you see him, or look at him, he doesn't look like a kind of person to do that".

Marie's image of a rapist was also incongruent with how she visualised her brother:

> Marie: "You can tell by looking at him, he's not a rapist. You can tell by looking at him, he's an everyday good guy, he's a dad. Dale doesn't look like a rapist".

> Researcher: "That's interesting when you said he doesn't look like a rapist. How do you think a rapist looks?"

> Marie: "Well when you see them in the papers and on the TV, I watched a thing last night about that poor man who got acid thrown in his face. The guy who did it, when you looked at him you could see the evil".

By drawing on their visual assessment of the facial characteristics and benchmarking against how they perceive a rapist to look; rapist (evil) versus Dale's appearance (good), both Marie and Sharon were able to draw a conclusion that supported their sensemaking that Dale did not rape Kim.

Marie's reconstruction also illustrates that it is not just the way she imagined a rapist to look that invalidates the rape allegations against her brother, but it is the way in which she constructed the act of rape. Lynch et al. (2017) suggests that how we label an incident and come to describe it as rape is informed by social and cultural norms. They identified that although intimate partner rape is more prevalent than acquaintance and stranger rape, it is not always validated as 'real rape' because of the gendered social and cultural schemas of what is deemed 'appropriate' and 'normal' sexual conduct between partners. Marie's perception of what constitutes 'real rape', seemed to be related to a schema commonly held, whereby the perpetrator is unknown to the victim or is an acquaintance:

> Marie: "To me rapist generally go and hunt, like predators and drag their victims behind a tree. Well, that's my opinion anyway".

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For Marie, her perception of 'real rape' was not based upon intimate partners within a domestic setting. Although Marie did acknowledge that intimate partner rape could occur, she discounted this version of events. It could be speculated that because the alleged rape did not fit with Marie's imagined rape scenario; a predatory stranger or acquaintance ambushing his helpless victim, it makes it even less likely, in her mind to have occurred. On Marie's wedding day, Marie had observed that Dale and Kim were a united happy couple. Marie's appraisal was that if Kim really had been raped the previous night by Dale, as asserted, she would not have presented in the way that she did at her wedding reception. To Marie, Kim did not look or behave as a rape victim would; she did not look like she had been forcefully ambushed and taken behind a tree. Kim was not withdrawn and did not show any signs of injury. It could be inferred that because Kim did not fit Marie's image of what constitutes a 'real victim,' it was not feasible to her, that a rape could have occurred.

> Marie: "The rape was supposed to have taken place on the night before my wedding, and again on my wedding night. They were at my wedding together with their girls and they looked very happy, really happy".

Marie intimated that the rape had not occurred because she would have instinctively known when something was wrong with her brother and his wife:

> Marie: "You can usually pick up on things, when they are not right or something has gone on, can't you?"

Marie's close relationship with her sibling, reaffirmed her sensemaking, that Dale is not a rapist; it is unimaginable to her that she would fail to pick up on any discord between Dale and his wife. To have missed the signs is problematic for Marie as it potentially challenges and cast doubt on the sibling closeness and bond of how she believes and constructs her relationship with Dale.

Ann also made sense in a similar way to Marie. Ann had observed the couple (Dale and Kim) to be happy at Marie's wedding. Her understanding, and the denial of rape, was informed by a conversation that she had shared with Kim on the day of Marie's wedding. Up until this point Kim had not spoken with Ann for nearly two decades: Kim had previously disconnected from Ann without any argument having taken place:

> Ann: "They looked happy. She [Kim] came over to me at the wedding and said that she and Dale were thinking of renewing their wedding vows again".

In recounting such a conversation Ann signals that that it was her understanding that if a woman who had been raped the previous night would not really consider renewing her wedding vows.

5.16.3 Neutralization: Condemn the condemners.

As well as denial, condemning the condemners (Sykes and Matza ,1957), was also a technique of neutralization used by two of the interviewees to shift responsibility for Dale's imprisonment onto the judiciary and Dale's legal team. Marie's held her brother's legal team accountable for his false imprisonment. Marie felt that the first legal team that were assigned to his case were inexperienced, and he did not receive adequate representation in court:

> Marie: "You go along with solicitors and legal advisors; you're putting your life in their hands and you're thinking that they know what they are doing. I can clearly see now that they didn't, his so-called solicitor was a junior legal advisor, she wasn't a solicitor. In court they didn't use any witnesses to defend his [Dale's] character, she had witnesses, and not one witness was called to back my brother".

Blaming the legal team supports Marie's belief and sensemaking that the case against Dale was flawed, and that he was falsely imprisoned for a crime that he did not commit.

Ann, like Sue in case study one, shifted some of the blame onto the Judge. Ann's reconstruction supported Dale's narrative and reaffirmed her own evaluation of the crime and conviction. Ann's understanding was that the prosecution had tried to coerce Dale into an admission of guilt Ann believed it would be unreasonable for the Judge to expect a demonstration of remorse from Dale when Dale has nothing to be remorseful for:

> Ann: "The judge said that he was being arrogant and showed no remorse when he sat quiet in court, but it's like he said, how can I show remorse for something that I did not do? They have all been

trying to get him to admit that he did it. He said I'm not going to admit
it when I did not do it".

Shifting the responsibility on to the condemners was not a feature of Sharon's reconstruction.

5.17 Theme Two: Sense of Self and Others.

This theme focuses on the way that the subjective view of self and how they perceive that they are seen by others. The analysis revealed that the family were ambivalent to others knowing that Dale had been imprisoned but visiting imposed a temporary sense of shame and stigma that stemmed from the institution and its personnel. The temporary sense of shame associated with visiting the prison was articulated across four of the case studies.

5.17.1 Shame and Stigma

The belief of wrongful conviction meant that Marie, Ann and Sharon avoided experiencing feelings of vicarious shame and stigma relating to Dale's offence from friends, colleagues and wider community. Their resistance to shame seemed to have a positive correlation with the belief in Dale's innocence:

> Researcher: "Does it bother you, people knowing about your brother?"
>
> Marie: "No, because I believe him that's why it doesn't bother me, and I think people will make their own minds up, they make their own minds up don't they. I have found it strange [not feeling embarrassed], whether that's because I believe him, I do believe that he didn't do it, so it's nothing to be ashamed of. I want to prove his innocence".

Ann was also ambivalent to others knowing about her son being in prison:

> Ann: "I don't believe that is my son. The whole world could know for me. I know my son, it's upsetting, but there is nothing I can do about it".

Ann's perception that Dale did not commit any crimes against his wife meant that she differentiated Dale from the other prisoners. Ann believed Dale was wrongfully in prison and yet all the other prisoners were rightfully convicted:

Ann: "I mean they are all in prison for something aren't they?"

Ann openly acknowledged that other prisoners were in prison because they had committed an offence and yet, Dale was not categorised by her in the same way. This framing supports Ann's understanding of him as a person; the good boy that she can relate to. If Dale is perceived as being different to the other prisoners (innocent) then she cannot experience vicarious shame and a spoiling of her identity. This differentiation may be a mechanism that enables Ann to negate shame and stigma. The 'spoiling' is assigned to relatives of the guilty prisoners, and Ann did not categorise herself as being in this group. Ann had set herself, and Dale, aside from the less desirable others.

Marie's experience was that people appeared to be supportive of her and her family. She had not experienced any secondary victimisation because of her brother being a convicted rapist:

Researcher: "So people seem outwardly supportive of you, do you worry what they might be saying behind your back?"

Marie: "They may have, but I have not heard anything. Most people have taken my opinion that my brother's been convicted of rape, but he is maintaining his innocence and that I believe him, and they have gone along with that".

The shame avoidance (Nussbaum , 2004) could be attributed to a degree of anonymity that the family network experienced because their ties to Dale were somewhat invisible. All three interviewees had a different surname to Dale and lived in a different geographical area. Marie and Ann recognised that because there was no obvious connection to Dale, this may have been helpful in negating any feelings of shame or stigmatisation that other family members were subjected to:

Marie: "We all have different names and we have remarried as well. No one knows us because we all live in different areas".

Ann: "Nobody round here knows Dale, only my friend who lives four doors up. I don't see anyone, only neighbours who just say hello, so nobody knows".

Conversely, Marie reported that her dad and step mum had experienced stigma and a fear of retribution from the community because of their association to Dale was visible to others. The visibility of the crime was related to adverse appraisals from others:

> Marie: "My dad got grief when Dale was convicted. In the newspapers, it said Dale's surname and my dad has the same surname. He got mostly nasty comments from people in the pub, like oh I believe he's got done for rape and I hope you don't think he's coming back to live here. My step mum got a bit worried; they were thinking of getting CCTV cameras in case they did anything to them".

5.17.2 Institutional shaming

Although Marie and Sharon did not experience vicarious shame from their family, friends and colleagues, visiting the prison did impose a sense of shame and stigma upon them. The temporal transformation into prison visitor seemed to destabilise their shame proneness. The institution and its personnel impose a transitory spoiling of their identity:

> Marie: "The whole process of visiting is debilitating, no one explains the process of visiting, they just assume that you are a regular, and there were no information leaflets. There is no dignity or respect from the staff and the way that they speak to you. We are not the convicts. You're constantly thinking and having to watch your back, fearing that you are going to jeopardise the visit in some way. They have you over a barrel".

And:

> Sharon: "It's degrading, it looks degrading doesn't it. The staff just think that you are nothing, the way that they look at you and stuff".

5.18 Theme Three: Strategies for Information Control

5.18.1 Sheltering

Marie set the tone of the familial narrative which supported Dale's account of events. Marie had been the only family member that had been to the trial, consequently Ann

and Sharon's reconstructions were predominantly framed around the information which was conveyed to them from Marie and Dale. Ann had read one newspaper article in respect to Dale's sentencing. Sharon had not been exposed to any media coverage. Ann and Sharon had not been actively involved with the legal defence team and therefore were not privy to all the details surrounding the case. Marie, like Mark in case study three, assumed the role of protector by controlling the information that was conveyed to the family. She sheltered her mum, Sharon and other family members from their new reality, right up until it was beyond her control. The disclosure avoidance by Marie, could be interpreted as a coping strategy. The withholding or hiding of information is a recognised coping strategy across all the four case studies that helps to sustain and maintain relationships, it also serves to protect the self, and shields others from having to confront the undesirable situation (Maguire, 2012).

This sheltering may have occurred because she thought that her brother would be found not guilty and therefore there would be no need to expose them to the lies that she thought had been told about Dale. Marie only told her mother when the local evening newspaper was going to expose Dale's crime:

> Ann: "Marie rang me, she told me that there is a cutting in the evening post that we get. I saw that and I was really upset because they really rattled at him…I didn't know anything about it until it went to court".

> Researcher: "How did you feel about not knowing about all this going on?"

> Ann: "I would have like to have known. I said why didn't you tell me? She said that I had not been so good, I haven't been good for a while. She was just protecting me".

Despite Sharon being a regular visitor to Marie's house, in the beginning, Sharon knew nothing about the arrest and claims that had been made against Dale. It was only when the trial had begun that Marie disclosed some limited information to Sharon about her brother's case:

> Sharon: "Marie told me because she was going through a bad time, I didn't know anything about it. Marie was going to court; she was

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crying a lot at the time. She told me that her brother was in court and stuff".

Researcher: So, what did Marie tell you at the time?"

Sharon: She told me that her brother was in court because of his wife. At the time I didn't know anything about the charges or why".

Researcher: "So she didn't tell you about the charges or why?"

Sharon: "No, it was only afterwards".

Researcher: "Why do you think the detail wasn't talked about until near the end of the court case?"

Sharon: "I don't know, I'm not sure, it might have been because it was in the newspapers, but I didn't see it".

Sheltering, by limiting and controlling information exchange is also a mechanism which could protect Dale from the 'others' who may cast judgement and set him aside. Goffman (1963) identifies how those who are not in close contact with the stigmatised are less likely to be accepting of them. Marie may have withheld information to protect her brother from negative appraisals from within the family. Similarly in case study three, Mark withheld information from his wife and daughter to influence their appraisal of Alan. Ann and Sharon did not share a close and supportive relationship with Dale prior to his conviction. Ann had a fractured relationship with her son. Dale had severed ties with his mother over twenty years ago:

Ann: "Dale just stopped coming. Kim had said that he had not to come and like he said, "I'm sorry mum but I have to live with her" and I said "yes". It was upsetting. I don't know why it happened, there was no argument between us, they all came and then it just all stopped".

Sharon felt that she had been excluded and information was not shared with her because of her outsider status (not blood kin):

Sharon:" I only knew what the allegations and what he was supposed to have done when it was coming to the end of the trial. I'm not sure if my husband knew, we don't really talk about stuff. I'm an outsider.

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> They [Marie and Sharon's husband] probably did talk about it but not to me".

Sharon herself avoided the topic and did not initiate conversations about Dale to Marie because she was unsure of how to respond or talk about it. Sharon was concerned that talking about it would further upset Marie:

> Sharon: "It's hard [long pause].You don't know what to say to them or do. I didn't want to talk about it in case it upsets Marie even more. I wait for Marie to bring it up first".

Chui (2016) asserts that because going to prison is not a common social occurrence, the family do not have pre-existing rules which determine how they should behave and interact with each other when a loved one is sent to prison. The social awkwardness Sharon experienced is akin to the way in which the topic of bereavement is often ignored. Pitman et al. (2018) asserts that the discomfort stems from an individual's own and others insecurity relating to the rules of social interaction when faced with a loss.

The desire to avoid conversations was also a key feature that occurred within the prison visits. This was communicated in all the case studies, apart from case study one. Ann's strategy and coping mechanism during visits was to try to keep the conversations positive:

> Ann: "Sometimes he is very down and at other times he tries to cover it up. I don't speak to him about it, I play along, I don't know why. I don't want him to think that he is hurting me…You can see that things are not right, but you don't ask him about it because it might upset him, he might think that he is upsetting you. I wait till the next phone call and then say how are you feeling, and he tells me he's alright".

> Researcher: "So it seems that everyone is busy protecting one another and no one talks about what is really going on for you?"

> Ann: "That's right. We all play along with it. We are, silly, aren't we?"

Sharon's experience was similar to Ann's reconstruction. Sharon's described how the act of visiting was more important to Dale's emotional wellbeing as opposed to the

discursive content of the interaction which she perceived as being somewhat irrelevant. Real issues such as acknowledging and attending to one another's true emotional state were again, secondary to the performance of "jollying the visit along":

> Sharon: "We don't really talk about the crime and what he has been sent down for. We try to cheer him up. You can tell when you see him that there is something wrong, you can tell by looking at him or the way he sounds. Dale wouldn't talk about it".

> Researcher: Would you ask him what is wrong or acknowledge that something's not right?"

> Sharon: "No we just try to jolly the visit along, try to cheer him up a bit, trying to make sure he is ok by the end of the visit".

> Researcher: "So you all sit there knowing something is wrong, but nothing is said?"

> Sharon: "Yes, generally by us going to visit cheers him up anyway".

The conversations that occurred during visits could be interpreted as being somewhat superficial, with all parties avoiding the real issues and being protective of one another's emotions. Avoiding venting negative emotions such as anger, frustration and disappointment and adopting prosocial communication is seen by Maguire and Kinney (2010) to be useful in abating stressful situations.

Marie presented as if she was indifferent to people knowing or finding out that her brother was in prison. Her experience was that she did not try to hide the fact that her brother was in prison from people at work or acquaintances.

> Researcher: "If you were to meet someone new, how would you handle that?"

> Marie: "I'm not bothered; I don't know why. If I met someone new, I could openly say that my brother's in prison. I say he is maintaining his innocence; he was done for rape. That's it. I wouldn't go into great discussion. I won't say that he had done it. I just say they said he did it. You don't give any more information than what they need".

Marie did not deny Dale or the fact that he was in prison, however she consciously directed and signalled the audience to believe her reconstruction of the offence. Although Marie said that she was not perturbed by revealing to new people that her brother was in prison, the way in which she limited the detail to avoid further disclosures blocks the conversation from developing. This was a feature within all of the case studies. Framing the discourse to strangers, around her belief that Dale has been wrongly accused and is maintaining his innocence could be a technique employed to defend against any negative evaluations of her and her brother. This strategy is suggestive that Marie actively signals to others that there is no alternative construction or evaluation of the offence. In 'managing' the conversation in this way she evades confronting any unwanted judgements and spoiling of identities.

Ann did not actively conceal Dale's imprisonment; however, Dale's imprisonment was concealed from others, not because of any sense of shame, but because there was no one for Ann to speak to about it other than her own family and one friend. Ann was socially isolated and because of distance and different geographical location, the chance of others making the link and the association with Dale was quite remote. Consequently, Ann did not experience insecure contacts with others (Goffman, 1963).

5.18.2 Intrafamilial secrets

Whist Sharon was open to her own family and friends knowing about Dale's offence and conviction she did conceal that she visited Dale on a weekly basis and that she took her child (preschool) with her to the visits. Sharon purposely hid the fact that she visited Dale from her own parents:

> Sharon: "I used to visit my brother in prison when I was a teenager with my mum and dad. I don't tell anyone, not even my parents, that I go and see Dale. They wouldn't judge me because my brother's been in there, but they wouldn't like me taking their granddaughter into prison. I would tell them that I'm going out with Marie for the day or going to see Ann".

For Sharon, it is the fear of negative reactions to her parenting decisions in respect to her own child that results in her lying to her own mum. The secrecy is based on an avoidance strategy. The deceit was contained for the moment, but Sharon had not thought of how her secret might have to be managed as her daughter got older:

Researcher: "If Dale does not win his appeal, as your daughter gets older, she will be able to speak and there is a chance your parents could get to know. What will you tell her about Dale, where he is and why?"

Sharon: "I have no idea, I had not thought of that, there will come a time when we have to start telling her and my mum, but I don't know how we will work through that".

5.19 Theme Four: The Effects of Imprisonment

5.19.1 Reactive Loss

Reactive losses which are concerned with a loss of the self or a relationship that is seen as central to our own identity (Weigert & Hastings,1977) were a feature of Marie's story. Marie, just like Sue, in case study two, had prioritised supporting Dale and preparing for his appeal above all else. Marie felt a sense of responsibility to prove Dale's innocence, she led and directed his appeal. Marie assumed this role because she felt that other members of the family would not have been able to cope with it. Marie experienced a sense of duty to take on the responsibility of securing a legal firm to defend her brother:

Marie: "My older sister is supportive, but I feel if I had not taken over, he would not have got as far as he is now. I don't think anyone else could have coped with it. I don't think that they would have got him a solicitor or got things done as quickly. I am the one that is constantly pushing the solicitors and trying to find information. I'm pushing and driving it forward".

Marie was the most invested family member, consequently the effects of Dale's imprisonment were most significant for her. Marie experienced a loss on a practical and emotional level:

Marie: "When I look back now, I see that my life revolves around him. My week starts by booking everyone's visits, making sure that I am there to visit. Making sure that he has money and clothes, it's all time consuming. I come over and pick my mum up to take her visiting. It's

like you don't get a break from it at all, and then in the meantime you have the phone calls from him. I'm meeting myself backwards with all the jobs, I look at the clock and I'm still up and its six am. It's impacted upon my business, and it's shown in my business reports, my staff don't see me, I've not been there for the past six months. I'm funding him, his appeal is costing over fifteen thousand pounds. I don't give a fuck about anything else. My main thought is getting a good solicitor and getting him out".

Marie had also experienced a loss in her own health status as a result of worrying about Dale in prison. Prior to Dale's imprisonment, Marie had been happy, healthy and content. The constraints of separation and not knowing where her brother had been located immediately following his conviction was stressful for Maria. These feelings also resonated within Sue's reconstructions in case study two.:

Marie: "I didn't know for two days where he was, nobody telephoned me for two days. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, and I couldn't drink. I didn't get to see him for three weeks; can you imagine that?"

The emotional impact was significant for Marie:

Marie: "I am gutted. I have been through some shit in my life, but I have never been as heartbroken, never. I have cried my eyes out. My husband sees me heartbroken; he knows what it means to me". [Marie begins to cry, interview suspended for several moments].

Marie also experienced a continuing sense of fear for her brother's safety because of Dale's vulnerability, having low mood and depression, as well as a fear of violence from other prisoners because of his conviction:

Marie: "I would not put it past him to commit suicide, that worries me more than anything else. The fear that he would self-harm or take his own life…I go to every visit thinking am I going to see a bruise of some sort. I've always dreaded that if he got battered. Sexual offenders, they are not protected; they are not supervised like they should be".

The fear of violence had impacted upon Marie's emotional wellbeing. Her fear of violence for her brother, from others, may stem from a belief that Dale is more

vulnerable due to the nature of his offence and the stigma of being a convicted sex offender. Berg et al. (2017) report how sex offenders viewed their relationship with prison staff and fellow inmates as being more unsafe compared to prisoners who had not committed sex offences. Marie did not feel reassured when Dale was assigned a Vulnerable Prisoner status (VP) and had been segregated from the general prison population for his own safety. Marie's experience was that she still felt that her brother was vulnerable to being victimised by other prisoners.

> Marie: "Even on VP wings they are not protected, they are not supervised like they should be, you know what I mean, because they are sex offenders. They are under constant threat".

Ann's greatest fear for Dale was that he would attempt suicide:

> Ann: "I worry about him committing suicide, because he tried to do it once when Kim had finished with him. You just don't know. We are keeping him busy with books and he loves painting".

5.19.2 Proactive Loss: Family connectedness, discord and tension

Most significantly for Marie, Dale's imprisonment had resulted in familial tensions, divided loyalties and a loss of a relationship that she had previously enjoyed with her own daughter, Lisa. Marie had experienced a degree of disconnect with Lisa because Lisa had maintained a friendship with her Aunt Karen (Marie's sister) who continued to support Kim and believed her version of events over Dale's. Therefore, Marie experienced a change in the interaction and dynamic with her own daughter. This signifies a proactive identity loss for Marie, her identity as a close mother had changed. Again, these feeling of loss were also expressed by Sue in case study two, who stated that her relationship with her husband and daughter had changed because of Jon's imprisonment. Marie had lost the trusting relationship that she had previously enjoyed with her daughter because Marie had prioritised the relationship with her brother above that of her daughter. To some extent Marie isolated those who she did not perceive to be as supportive of Dale as she thinks they should be:

> Marie: "I don't have the same relationship with my daughter Lisa anymore because I don't trust her, we don't have that same closeness. I know that she sees my sister and Dale's wife. My sister believes her stories, over her own brother, she believes that he raped her. I did say to Lisa that she cannot go and see Dale because I don't want her to be privy to information that she can take back to them. Lisa feels excluded from my life now and gets upset because I no longer talk to her about things".

In contrast, Ann perceived that there had been no change to the intrafamilial relationships as a consequence of Dale being in prison. Ann described her relationship with Marie as being very close and yet she was oblivious to a change in the relationship that had occurred between Marie and Lisa:

> Researcher: "Can you talk to me about your other family members, has there been a change in relationships because of this?"

> Ann: "No there has not been any changes, no one has walked away. Everybody has said that they support him one hundred percent. There has been no change, we are all just plodding along".

Similarly, Sharon was also unaware of any changes to the familial dynamics or how people perceived one another to be.

5.19.3 Restorative features of imprisonment

In contrast to Marie's experience of loss, imprisonment for this family network, had some restorative features. For Ann and Sharon, Dale's imprisonment has enabled them to gain and build relationships. This building of relationships with the prisoner was also experienced by Pete in case study two. For Ann, imprisonment had meant that she had been able to reconnect and heal her fractured relationship with her son. Ann's identity as an estranged mother to her son had changed, her relationship with her son had been restored. For Sharon, Dale being in prison had presented her with an opportunity for a new friendship to develop that had not previously existed:

> Sharon: "Marie asked me if I would visit Dale. It's nice, I didn't know Dale before he went to prison, but we have a friendship that we didn't have before. We just chat, I think it's important to support family. I

have built up a bond with him. I want my daughter to know him and have a relationship with him".

5.20 Theme Five: **Looking to the Future**

For Marie, her focus for the future was about securing Dale's identity:

Marie: "It's about clearing Dale's name so when he is released, he is not branded a rapist and a sex offender".

For Marie losing the appeal was inconceivable, the future beyond this had not been conceived:

Researcher: "What happens if the appeal fails Marie, have you thought about that?"

Marie: "I don't know; I know he will still be there [at his current prison] because there is nowhere else to go really because of his categorisation".

Sharon expressed concerns for Dale's release. She feared that release could expose the family to victimization from the community. The fear was related to how Dale might be received by others, there was concern that there could be some retribution because of the nature of his conviction:

Sharon: "We would love him back but the people that obviously do know, some people might not like him being back. If it's in the paper, they could target the family or whatever. They could get people coming up to them and stuff like that. People will judge Dale because they don't know him".

5.21 Researcher Positionality and Data Collection

Qualitative research and researcher reflexivity emphasises the importance of researcher 'insiderness' during data collection and is concerned with presenting aspects of the self which most align with research participants. Such insider status can aid in not only encouraging people to engage and participate in the research, but it can also support their frankness and ease any awkwardness in the process (Chavez,

2008). Insiderness, can also facilitate rapport building within the context of interviews by helping to put people at ease through an assumption of shared understanding and experience (Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009). Having insider status, as discussed in chapter three, helped me to recruit families from the visitor centre (once I had negotiated access with staff) and through Facebook. However, insider status can, according to Berger (2015), have dangers at this stage of the research and highlights how participants can overly assume a shared knowledge or agenda, so do not reveal underpinning issues they take for granted or may disguise competing discourses they fear will be met negatively.

5.21.1 Data Collection: Conflict in the multiplicity of positions

In approaching the interviews, I was very aware of these possible tensions between the usefulness, and dangers of insider positionality and so endeavoured to mitigate against this. Thus, prior to doing interviews I deliberately ensured I did not know details about the nature of the offence that participants' relatives had been convicted of, other than to check they met the selection criteria. I avoided the temptation to read about the incident before conducting the interviews, although I was curious, I felt that I needed to suspend judgement to ensure that despite fore fronting my insider status to this point, I also maintained my integrity as a researcher and positioning as an outsider by not judging the offence or the circumstances surrounding the crime. To read around the offence in advance of conducting the interviews would have tainted the data. I would not have been able to avoid forming judgements and ideas about the case and surrounding issues, which would impact on my ability to allow them to tell their story in their own way. Going in 'cold' meant that I would be better able to get their narrative accounts as they presented and understood it. This is what the focus of the study is about, it is not about getting to the truth, the study is concerned with their experiences and sensemaking of the event. It was important to allow the participants to tell the story as they wanted to, complete with any narrative strategies, embellishments or denials, to understand their way of presenting the issues before I looked up the case from external sources (media and court reporting). I also chose not to share my own story with them until the interview had taken place. Again, this was to prevent any influences that could detract from how they wanted to present their narratives. This approach also enabled me to set aside any preconceived ideas of how they would be in advance of meeting them. I was keen to ensure that I presented myself to the

families as 'neutral' as, because of my insider status, I was very aware of the insecure contacts (Goffman, 1968) that can arise as a result of the fear of being judged. In order to build rapport quickly within the interview, therefore, I tried to put families at ease, and I used multi-positioning of roles to achieve this. At the forefront of these roles was, by necessity, my researcher status due to the requirements of the formalities of obtaining consent, completing the pre-interview documentation and offering explanations to how the interviews would be conducted ethically. In addition to this role, I also highlighted my former occupation as a nurse in a safeguarding role. I felt that this would help to ensure that participants did not censor their accounts to 'protect' me from shocking information, or because they feared I would not understand or judge them.

The purposive nature of the interview setting resulted in me presenting my researcher status, although this was not dominant in my internal dialogue. In doing role performance in this way my authentic self was challenged. This led me to analyse the assumptions that participants maybe making about me, and the impact this may have on data collection in terms of gaining participants and how they talked to me. In commencing the interviews, because from my insider position, I was acutely aware of the judgements that can be made in respect to not only the perpetrator but also the associated vicarious shame and stigma that many families experience because of their kin connection. I used my insider status to align myself and to reinforce rapport and establish a 'safe space' for them to talk in. Thus, I informed them at the outset that I would be happy to share my story with them after the interview as I did not want to influence the retelling of their own stories in any way. Adopting this strategy of approaching the interviews 'cold' meant that I was not able to be critical of their accounts within the interview. As a result, I found myself almost colluding with the recasting of their constructions as I did not challenge what, I later realised, were partial or embellished retellings of the case. My response could, therefore, perhaps be regarded by the participants as supportive of their accounts, although this was not my intention; I only wished to support them in telling their account, not in confirming my agreement with it. In re-reading the interview transcripts and listening back to the recordings, I can appreciate that where I am endeavouring to ensure rapport, participants may read more into my uninformed responses. For example, in the extract below the participant is recounting a narrative of how her son, who was convicted of

murder by deliberate asphyxiation, tried to save his girlfriend from strangulation (the son was convicted of murdering the victim by strangling her following or during non-consensual sexual activity).

> Participant: "I said to him, you know, how did it get to the point where it was too late for him to save her, you know? I asked him that, I said how, why didn't you realize something was wrong [the accident resulting from sexual experimentation], and he said, I don't, I just, I just didn't, you know".

> Researcher: "But it can happen quickly, can't it? If you're experimenting, you might not know what's happening".

There were benefits in utilising my insider positioning within interviews, for example, it was helpful to facilitate access and establish a degree of trust in a very limited time. Presenting my membership status on Facebook as 'one of them' led them to make assumptions about me, my family and experiences which was underpinned by a set of what Mazzei and O' Brian (2009) describe as intersectionality, which is a term that endorses this sense of 'sameness'. For example, most people accessing and posting on the closed Facebook groups were, like me, women related to a prisoner; most commonly being either mothers, partners or sisters. Thus, they assumed I had similar experiences to them. However, the difference in our shared identities was apparent in the closeness of the kin connection to the prisoner and the high level of active support and visiting they engaged in. This was evident from the nature of the conversation strands that were posted, often focussing around practical and emotional issues related to prison visits, telephone conversations or letters between family members and the prisoner. Unlike the group members, I was not actively communicating or visiting my cousin in prison, although I actively supported those directly affected by their imprisonment. I felt a degree of disconnect and could not contribute to these conversations. Similarly, because I was trying to recruit participants, I felt I could not fully immerse myself fully in the conversations that were taking place. I had to be careful about what information I did communicate, too much disclosure could compromise the data collection process. Consequently, holding back and being somewhat guarded left me feeling like I was prevented from being my authentic self.

At times, intrinsically I felt like an imposter and questioned if I should be occupying the space.

During the interviews most of the participants saw me as one of them, sharing an experience akin to all being in the same boat. Although this was very helpful, on occasions participants tried to relate to me as a friend. Participants openly confided in me, telling me sensitive information about their most intimate aspects of family life. This was experienced by them covertly whispering how they felt, so as not to be heard or offend their partners that they were discussing. As a researcher this made me feel uncomfortable and almost disloyal to the other research participants. One such example was when a participant went on to disclose how if her husband were to leave her, she would not care anymore. Her son going to prison had changed her to such a degree that she no longer felt emotionally invested in her husband. My initial thoughts, as a guest in their home, were to try to move the interview on quickly as I feared that he would hear us from the next room, and this made me feel extremely uneasy. As a researcher, however, I was keen to be regarded as neutral, and pleased they trusted me and were able to open and feel comfortable talking to me. This demonstrates how we managed to build up rapport quickly to facilitate candid data collection. Similarly, within another case study, a participant disclosed how he secretly despised another family member.

The interviews also seemed to provide the participants with an opportunity to raise and discuss difficult issues with their own family members which they had previously avoided or denied. For example, during an interview it emerged that a participant's husband had not and did not visit her son in prison. When I asked why she thought this maybe she was unable to answer, however, after the interview and in my presence, she asked him this question directly. Similarly, in another case study, a participant disclosed to their partner for the first time that they did not want to implement their plan and move closer to the prison. The interview seemed to create a space where difficult subjects could be approached in the safety of the researcher's presence. This indicates that there is a need for family mediation to support the wellbeing of families in this position.

Within some of the interviews, I experienced a disconnect between what I had conveyed in respect to suspending my judgement and the practical difficulties of doing

this. I found, for example, that an awareness of my prior safeguarding professional expertise did influence my line of questioning in some circumstances. Here it was important to intrinsically acknowledge this and to separate and distinguish my role as an interviewer/ researcher and my responsibility to safeguard. When I asked Mark in case study three, (the prisoner's father) about what he felt in relation to the victims I was startled at his attitude towards them.

> Researcher: "What do you feel for the victims?" [the children who had alleged that his son had sexually abused and raped them].
>
> Mark: "I would say a lack of sympathy for the victims; there were an awful lot of lies that were told by them that were completely untrue. Hard but that is a fact you know. So, my sympathies don't necessarily lie with the victims. Hard, but that's a fact, I know".

This interchange challenged who I authentically was in that moment. As a researcher, a safeguarding practitioner, and as a mother were all highlighted and presented competing responses to this statement. My initial instinct, and surprisingly most strongly felt, was a desire to challenge this statement and question how he would feel, as a parent, if his son had come to him with allegations that an adult had sexually abused him as a child? Would he not believe and support him, just as he is supporting his son as an accused perpetrator of offences against children? But equally, I could understand his desire to protect his son by blaming the victims and casting doubt on their accounts. I also considered the implications from my previous safeguarding practice; I was acutely aware of the importance of conveying to children who make disclosures that that they are supported in their construction of events, and yet here I was being told by a participant that these children had lied about their allegations against his son. The father believed some of the aspects of the children's accounts, which could not be disputed by the evidence presented, and yet for the more serious allegations he denied his son's accountability. As a researcher, however, I knew that to challenge the legitimacy or authenticity of the account at that time would jeopardize the interview and inhibit gaining an accurate understanding of how he presented the offence to himself and to persons outside of the family. I also questioned how the participant viewed me and my role to feel he could make statements of this kind, it was evident that a level of trust had been established, which may have stemmed from an

assumption by the participant, that because we both shared an insider status, that I also shared his view of the world.

The interviews had the potential to raise some ethical issues. For example, in some of the interviews, I had to determine if participant confidentiality may have to be breeched in order to protect and safeguard the public or participants. For example, in case study one, Alan had been convicted of committing sexual offences against children and was at a stage in his sentence where he would be eligible for parole. The family were considering what his release may entail and how they were planning to integrate him back into their family life. Interviewing the prisoner's parents and his sister, who had two children, raised some potential safeguarding concerns. From interviewing each member of this family, it was apparent that the mother and the sister did not know the true extent of the allegations and the evidence that had secured a conviction. This was because the father, as a protective strategy, had selectively filtered the information that was conveyed to his wife and daughter about their son. In this situation, I felt that I had a duty to explore the participant's perception and level of understanding of risk and future harm. The concern was to what extent they could protect other children in the family network if they were unaware of the true extent of the allegations against their family member. Without knowing all that factors that pose a potential risk, he could in the future pose a further risk to children. The following excerpt illustrates assessing risk.

> Mark:" I said to Julie [the prisoners mother] and to Gill [the prisoner's sister], you're not going to the trial, you're just not going because you don't want to hear, you don't want to experience it. Let me tell you what I think you need to know. That will help you to cope with it. And that's what I tried to do through the whole process because I think if they had been exposed to everything, I'm not sure she would have been strong enough emotionally to take it. I'm probably wrong. I'm not being obstructive. I have all the files and it's all there if they want to read the statements for themselves".

> Researcher: "You felt that you needed to protect her?"

> Mark: "Yes, and trying to keep a lid on it, keep everyone out of the loop and just let me deal with it."

> Researcher: "So, the decision that Alan cannot live at home, has any of that been shaped by the fact that Gill has her boys and that as a family you have a duty to protect them?"
>
> Mark: "Oh no, it's a good question. That decision has nothing to do with Gill and the boys and the feeling that we have to protect them, because obviously we do, we need to understand that there is an element of risk and we do, he has been convicted of crimes. You wouldn't put the fox inside the pigeon coop, you wouldn't do that unless you were there to watch the fox and have the fox on a lead."

This signalled to me that the family were accepting of some of Alan's conviction and with my professional identity, I was aware that there were process and procedures that would ensue as part of the release plan to ensure that the family were aware of the potential risks posed to children. Without this professional knowledge some researchers may have voiced concerns, jeopardising trust of the participants and the interview. It must be considered however, that the participant was aware of my previous role as a safeguarding lead, this information is publicly available, and could have tailored his response in accordance with what he thought I wanted to hear.

5.22 Chapter Summary

Chapter five has presented the research findings from the four case studies. These case studies, reflect the themes and subordinate themes of the co- constructed family narratives. The findings show how in the pursuit of a less tarnished identity, and to combat labelling and marginalisation, families consciously and unconsciously co-create alternative biographical scripts that serve to reconstruct their sense of self. This is achieved by employing a range of discursive neutralizations (Sykes and Matza, 1957) and minimisations which serve to, explain rationalise and justify the offending behaviour. All the participants shifted blame away from their family and externalised blame onto the victim.

Within this study, for some individuals, shame and stigma was not a recognised feature of their reality. The findings show that the visibility of the crime and the way in which prisoners' families interpreted how they appear to others or, how they imagine

they appear to others, is linked to their shame susceptibility. Proneness to feeling shame and stigma also seems to be influenced not only by the participants sensemaking and appraisal of the offence but, the extent to which their own identities are 'connected' or 'interwoven' with their imprisoned family member. All the participants identified with heteronomous shame, albeit this is something that family members did not always recognise themselves. This study identifies that there are distinct gender differences in the way in which shame and stigma is experienced with females having a greater propensity to experience shame and stigma compared to males.

The findings highlight that where familial positioning and reconstructions relating to the offence were not consistently aligned, family cohesion was threatened. Family cohesion and family relationships were protected by employing a range of strategies such as the keeping of secrets and subject avoidance which impact upon family functioning and wellbeing. The findings from this study reveal how imprisonment of a family member can be a painful experience with families experiencing losses on many different levels and yet these are rarely acknowledged, validated or supported by other family members who are deemed to be in close proximity to one another.

Reflective accounts have been given to illuminate the issues that arose from occupying a multiplicity of researcher positionalities during the data collection process. The following discussion chapter will analyse and compare and contrast the themes generated across the four co-constructed family case studies.

Chapter Six

Discussion

This chapter integrates the findings from the four case studies presented in the previous chapter. The eighth stage of data analysis, the functioning and theorising phase, as described in chapter four, is further developed and explores the issues across the case study family networks, to provide an analysis and critical discussion of how families construct and manage their identity, as well as examining and theorising upon the impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion, relationships and wellbeing. The presentation of the final discussion is structured around the objectives of the study.

6.1 How do Family Members Construct and Present their Identity?

The first objective of this study was to explore how individuals and family members all connected to the same prisoner (convicted of a serious stigmatising crime), construct and present their identity. Whist other studies have explored individual experiences of familial imprisonment and identity (Condry, 2007; Comfort, 2008; & May, 2000), how familial identity is constructed and presented by different members of the same family has not been examined within the context of identity work and prisoners' families. Through conducting individual interviews with multiple family members, it has been possible not only to elicit how the individual, but importantly, for the first time, how the family as a network construct, and present their familial identities.

In the narratives that have been communicated in the four case studies, the prisoners' families have given an account of themselves and of their identities. Mclean et al. (2017) suggests how the biographies and personal accounts that we construct, cannot be separated from the cultural context in which we live; they are crafted in relation to a '*cultural master narrative*'. Cultural master narratives are the shared stories that are often unconsciously internalised and provide us with a dominant narrative of what is valued and respected in society; in essence these standards provide a framework for defining the self in relation to the cultural spaces that we occupy. Arnett (2016) identifies that to attain the status of having an accepted and respected identity, for example, being 'a good family', our biographies must align with the socially dominant cultural master narrative. Having an association to a prisoner who has committed a serious offence can cause a biographical disruption to the anticipated life story (Exley

& Letherby, 2001), it can threaten who we believe ourselves to be and who we think we may become (the real or imagined self). As such, families can experience a sense of marginalisation for their failure to align to the cultural master script, they can be set aside and labelled, as being somewhat deviant or inferior. One such example whereby a biography may not align to an established western cultural master narrative could be when a child truants from school. The parents could be seen to be diverging from the cultural master narrative because they have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Failure to adhere to societal expectations can result in them being perceived and labelled as a 'bad' parent.

The findings from this study reveal how in the pursuit of a less tarnished identity, and to combat labelling and marginalisation, families consciously and unconsciously co-create alternative biographical scripts that serve to reconstruct their sense of self. These *'alternative master scripts'* not only enable them to try to make sense of what has happened but, importantly, serve to realign themselves and their family network to the dominant cultural master narrative. Where families are unable to realign, they may try to align themselves with smaller alternative groups seen as 'sympathetic others' (Goffman, 1968). The sympathetic others are those who are perceived to share similar alternative master narratives to their own reconstructed biographies (Mclean et al, 2017).

To negotiate a less blemished identity, the family networks employed discursive neutralization techniques to present themselves as good, decent, moral citizens. This narrative exchange was achieved by employing a process of sensemaking strategies such as denial, minimisation, and the adjustment of a new script that externalised blame and shifted culpability and responsibility away from the prisoner and the family. Individual reconstructions offered a series of explanations that tried to rationalise how their relative had ended up in prison. What has emerged from this study is that the practice of reconstructing the alternative master narrative, created its own boundaries and parameters for the family. The individuals 'inside' of the alternative master narrative were those that believed, or at least conveyed to others, that the prisoner was innocent and not culpable of committing the offence. Conversely, the outsiders were family members or members of the wider community who were perceived by the insiders as not believing in the prisoner's innocence. Consequently, the insiders excluded, disassociated or distanced themselves from those individuals who they

perceived were a threat to, or whom they believed, did not support their alternative master narrative.

The purpose of reframing in this way, is to try to establish some kind of acceptance of a viable identity. The narrative that families reconstruct and project about the crime is, according to Condry (2007), a process that enables family members not only to make sense of what has happened but enables the reconstruction of self and identity; it assists them to restore a coherent sense of self. Within this study, the data across all four case studies showed that at the time that the interviews took place the families communicated that their relatives had not committed the serious offence that they had been imprisoned for (murder, rape and causing grievous bodily harm with intent). The sensemaking of the offences was directly linked with the way that families reconstructed and presented their identities. All four of the family networks were unable to accept that their relative had committed such serious crimes. Some of the families categorically denied guilt whist others accepted (when the evidence could not be disputed) that their relative had committed some 'lower-level offence'. All the prisoners within this study had been convicted of a serious offence and had met the threshold criteria of being found guilty of their offence(s); a jury had decided that the evidence against them was beyond reasonable doubt and yet all the families within this study had made moral judgements that their relative was not guilty. For these families, there was no prior indication that their relative was capable of committing a crime, all the individuals within the case studies described feeling a sense of shocking disbelief at finding out about the serious offence that their relative had been accused and convicted of. For three out of the four family networks, the offence seemed to come out of nowhere. This was because there had not been any previous involvement with the criminal justice system, or any known offending or behaviours that would suggest to them that their relative was a potentially dangerous and violent aggressor. In cases of serious offences, this is however, not uncommon, according to Hirschi and Goffredson (2017) serious crimes such as murder, rape and the rape of children are often associated as being a one-off offence.

The familial positioning and new alternative master narrative was always recast as a joint enterprise, they presented their familial identity as a collective enterprise in which their identities had clearly shifted and emerged as a result of experiencing a significant disruption to their expected biography. The detail may have deviated somewhat within

the individual accounts given, but the overarching reconstruction of what had happened and their sensemaking of events was cast around a denial of their relative's culpability or a combination of denial and minimisations. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the offenders within this study may not have committed the crimes, some prisoners do experience wrongful imprisonment and are eventually exonerated for the crimes that they have been convicted of (Poyser and Nurse, 2018). The purpose of this study, however, was to explore the familial experiences and not to assign judgment in relation to the reliability or truth related to conviction or their reconstructions.

6.1.2 Maintaining a viable identity and the role of denial and minimisations.

According to Craissati (2015), denial and minimisation techniques protect identity and influence the perceptions others may have of us. Denial and minimisation's enable families to provide justifications for offending behaviours by attributing culpability and causality elsewhere, shifting blame away from their convicted family member and themselves. Denial serves to neutralise societal disapproval of the offence and the offender, it not only lessens the accountability assigned to family members but, denial also enables families to continue their support of their relative. Denial within this study, was achieved by the families employing four out of the five recognised techniques of neutralization as described by Sykes and Matza (1957). These were denial of the injury, denial of the victim, denial of responsibility and condemning the condemners. The range of neutralization techniques that the families adopted in this study did, however, differ to the types of neutralizations employed by the relatives of serious offenders interviewed in Condry's (2007) study. Condemning the condemners was a feature across all four of the case studies, and yet this neutralization technique was absent in Condry's (2007) seminal work. Within this study, the judge, jury and legal team were all cast as being in some way responsible for the conviction and imprisonment of their family member. Condemning the condemners is a way of shifting blame and communicates to themselves and others that their relative was in some way wronged by the criminal justice system and that they were imprisoned unjustly. These types of neutralizations reaffirmed their understanding of the offender's identity and enabled the family unit to reject the notion that their relative is a dangerous individual, who has been convicted of a serious stigmatising offence. The fifth neutralization technique described within Sykes and Matza's (1957) framework,

'appealing to higher loyalties', was used by the participants in Condry's study (2007), however, it was not used to explain or neutralise the offence by families within this study. Appealing to higher loyalties was only used to justify their continued support of their relative as opposed to the criminal act itself. Perhaps the difference in the types of neutralizations used could be because of differences in sampling and sampling bias. All the interviewees in this study denied that the prisoner had committed the serious offence, whereas in Condry's (2007) study, some of the interviewees accepted that their relative had committed an offence and wanted the offender to take responsibility for their crime and behaviours. The participants within this study were quite different in that they did not communicate any disapproval of the offence and, the families did not indicate that they wanted them to take responsibility for the crimes that they had been convicted of, or that they should take responsibility for any behaviours that had put them in the position whereby it was possible for them to be accused of such crimes. This was because the families either felt that no offence had taken place, or if they did acknowledge that an offence had occurred, their relative was deemed as not being culpable.

What was strikingly apparent was that the families within this study, did not always use denial alone as a mechanism to defend their relative's perceived non guilty status; complete denial was only exclusively used by all members within case study four. Thus, during the analysis, it became apparent that Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralizations framework (1957) did not fully capture the ways in which families were describing and projecting their identities. Consequently, this theoretical framework was further developed to include neutralization techniques that allowed for minimisations to be explored alongside denials. For example, the family members in three of the case studies used a combination of denial and minimisation techniques to describe and assimilate meaning to their reconstructions of the offence. Minimising the injury, minimising the harm, and minimising responsibility were a central feature of how families presented their account and experiences of what had occurred. Minimisations were adopted by families as a primary or secondary neutralization technique, and this was particularly pertinent when relatives were somewhat conflicted in their appraisals; whereby they may have acknowledged that some harm or offence had occurred but could not accept that their relative was culpable. Denial and minimisation of the offence were usually apparent where the evidence against the

perpetrator could not be evidentially disputed. Crewe et al. (2016) assert how for prisoners' serving a long term of imprisonment, the denial of their crime is not uncommon, and it can take the prisoner several years to accept some degree of responsibility for the crime that they have been convicted of. Hogue (2017) also identified how denial is not uncommon in the prison population, suggesting how nearly half the male prison population (48%) in Wakefield Prison continued to deny their offence and responsibility for their criminal behaviour. This study demonstrates that for the family of prisoners, this acceptance is just as difficult.

6.13 Sensemaking from selective scripts

Families formulated their own commentary of what had happened by assimilating information to try to make sense of what had happened and why. Their appraisal and recasting's were informed not only by the accounts given by the offender and their family members and friends, but from other secondary sources such as professionals within the criminal justice system and the media. Some family members actively chose not to know the detail of what had occurred, but for those that did hear accounts, the level of detail that families heard from the offender differed depending on the nature of the relationship. Some individuals heard the offenders primary account in significant detail, whilst others had limited opportunity to extrapolate the details either because of restricted access and conditions associated with visiting, or there was a sense that they dare not probe for information for fear of upsetting and jeopardising their relationship with the prisoner. The prisoner was not interviewed in this study; therefore, it is impossible to assess to what extent the families' reconstructions mirrored the offender's reconstruction of events, or indeed if the families had ever mistrusted or challenged the plausibility of their accounts relating to the offence. It is also important to note that none of the relatives within this study alluded to the notion that they were, or had been conflicted in their appraisals, for example, outwardly and publicly supporting the offender whilst not really believing their innocence. This is not to say that this was not a feature of their experiences. The views that relatives held at the time of the interviews represent one moment in time. The way in which we perceive things to be, and our response, recollection and reconstruction of events change over time, place and who we are with (Loseke, 2017). For example, finding out about the offence and having absolute belief in the offender's story, does not necessarily convey the reality of the participants as it was unfolding at the time. It is also important to

acknowledge that the stories and external presentation of self may be different to the accounts they may have shared privately within the family network, or the internal dialogue held within themselves.

In two of the case studies (three and four), the 'alternative master narrative' was significantly influenced and directed by one core family member (Mark, case study three, and Marie, case study four). In both these cases, the information was controlled by the relative who was privy to the most information; they were the individuals who had liaised with the legal team and who were also the first point of contact for both the prisoner and the family network. They directed the interfamilial narrative and the external presentation of the alternative master narrative. Their experiences and sensemaking of events influenced the way in which other individuals within the family network framed their own stories and externalised blame onto the victims. Consequently, the family network adopted the recasting without some members really knowing the details of the event or knowing about the alternative versions of the truth that were presented by the prosecution. For example, in case study three, Mark was the information controller, he decided what information he thought his wife and daughter needed to know. The family network adopted Mark's recasting of events without seeking out or questioning the account. In case study four, Marie set the tone of the alternative master narrative, she was the information controller and decided what information would be shared with or withheld from the family, as well as controlling when the information would be released. For example, Marie only told the family of Dale's rape charge after the court case had taken place. In both case studies, the family adopted the alternative master narrative created by one family member's interpretation and evaluations of what had occurred. Unlike the other two case studies, who did not have an information controller, the family members did not seek out information for themselves. By evading discrediting information, alternative theories of what had, or could have occurred, were denied.

Where the alternative master narrative was adopted, the recasting, in places, mirrored verbatim the information controller's script. This 'group consensus', enabled the family network to present a more credible, united identity that supported the familial script. It enabled them to maintain their belief in the offender as well as assisting them to preserve their understanding of themselves and their family network. The 'not knowing' was a protective factor that shielded their identities; it protected them from becoming

someone that they could not identify with or be identified as. Thus, denial and minimisations of the crimes, enabled them to attend to the dissonance between the view of self and how others (real or imagined) may have perceived them to be (Mead, 1934). Denial and minimisation, for the offender's relative, may be a strategy which delays the unwanted creation of a new narrative of self and a different, somewhat troubled identity. For example, Julie (case study three) and her perception of being a good mother, versus becoming the type of mother responsible for rearing a child rapist.

6.14 Blame judgements

Alicke et al. (2008) identify that when a harmful event is evaluated moral judgements are made about what has happened and who is to blame. Moral judgements are an everyday occurrence, and our evaluations are dependent upon the type of information we acquire (information input) and the way in which we process and perceive the information to be (Gugliemo & Malle, 2017). To evaluate events, Gigerenze and Gaissmaier (2011) suggest that people search through a labyrinth of information to formulate an opinion about what has occurred and where to assign blame. When a norm has been breached, blame judgements are cast, which typically depend upon the evaluations of the following factors identified by Alicke, (2000); i) if the actor was deemed responsible for causing the event, ii) if the intention were to cause harm and iii) if there were any mitigating circumstances that could have influenced the outcome. These three factors enable judgements to be assigned in respect to how much control the actors had over the harmful event. In evaluating or assigning blame, people assimilate information and then either accept or reject the information based on the desirability of the outcomes for the actors (prisoner and the family).

As previously discussed, the families interviewed in this study assimilated information from a limited range of sources and selectively filtered information that supported their blame judgements. Most individuals formulated their appraisal of events without knowing the details of the offence, information was selectively filtered, and a new lens was applied. For example, Margaret and Floyd (case study one) formulated their appraisal that Lydia's death was accidental, that she herself had tied the ligature around her own neck. This evaluation was formulated without having any real solid foundation on which to base this upon. Despite this limited appraisal, this conclusion framed their sensemaking and the story that was communicated. All the individuals interviewed within this study, selected sources of information that supported their

reconstruction and either avoided, blocked or ignored discrediting information that threatened their evaluations. In some cases, a combination of all three strategies were employed. Distancing the self from discrediting information, enabled alternative constructs and possibilities that did not support their stories and understanding of events to be ignored. This study reveals that the discrediting information was managed in three distinct ways (see table 4).

Table 4: The Control of discrediting information

Strategy	Examples
Avoidance	Not going to court, or being present during police interviews Not seeking out information from a variety of sources to attain a balanced appraisal
Blocking	Counter arguments blocked; evidence presented by the prosecution was dismissed
Ignoring	Ignoring the harm to victim and their families. Ignore the condemning evidence against their relative.

6.15 Problematising denial and minimisation

The families across all four case studies colluded with the offender by normalising, minimising or accepting problematic behaviours. They were not open to alternative realities that did not support their new alternative master narrative which framed their imprisoned relative and their own identities in a positive way. Within each case study, the family gave a positive impression of themselves by emphasising ways in which they aligned to the cultural master narrative; their identities were framed within narratives of being a 'good family', or 'a good parent'. They conveyed that their convicted relative was indeed a 'good person', signalling and reinforcing to the audience that the deviant label did not fit or belong to their family. It is understandable why families may not want to hear or believe that their relative has caused significant harm to others because of their actions, denial is a normal and protective mechanism (Blagden et al, 2011). It shields them from the distress of acknowledging the harm that the victims and their families may have experienced because of a loved one's immoral actions.

For families of prisoners' denial of their relative's guilt can be extremely problematic. It is important to understand how families make judgments about what has happened and who was to blame. The continued denial and, or minimisation of the offence does not open them up to the possibility that their relative could be dangerous, or to the fact that they may have caused harm, or that they have the potential to cause future harm. It is widely accepted that prisoners' families are seen as a key asset in preventing recidivism (Farmer, 2017), however, for families who are in denial of their relative's guilt, this means that they may be unable to recognise or ignore the significance of being able to support the offender to manage risky behaviours that could resurface on their release. If families do not believe that their relative is guilty of the offence that they have been imprisoned for, they are less likely to support the offender on release in complying with the terms of their offender management plan, and this could ultimately result in recidivism. In real terms, families of serious offenders could exercise 'disguised compliance', whereby on the surface, they falsely acknowledge and communicate to the professionals (Garstang & Sidebotham, 2019) that they understand the seriousness of the offending, whilst privately, they dismiss the notion that their relative is dangerous and has caused harm. Disguised compliance can have serious safeguarding consequences; collusion can result in families normalising problematic behaviours which in turn, could signal to the offender that their problematic behaviours are indeed appropriate and accepted. In respect to case study three, for example, disguised compliance from Mark, Julie and Gill could become a real possibility and place children at risk of further victimisation by Alan. The family could convey to probation that they recognise the risk and know that Alan must comply with the terms of the offender management plan and yet, in private, behind closed doors, they could allow unsupervised contact with the children (Gill's two boys), because they do not really believe, or want to believe, that Alan is an adult who poses a risk to children. This is of particular concern, especially when on release, the potential 'supervising adults' Gill and Julie, do not know of, and ignore accounts that disclose the full extent of Alan's problematic sexualised behaviour. In preparation for release, the probation officer assigned should undertake a risk assessment of the families' ability to protect and safeguard the children. Within this family, there was a real risk of disguised compliance and a failure to adhere to the release conditions, placing Alan and children at risk of further offences. The family had spent the past five and a half years refuting Alan's guilt and believing that Alan had not raped children. It therefore

seems quite unrealistic to expect them to accept his conviction and be open to the possibility that he is a potential risk to children just as he becomes eligible for parole. At the time of the interview the family stated they had not received any support to enable them to process the nature of the crime and the seriousness of Alan's problematic sexualised behaviour involving children.

Whilst the relationship between denial and recidivism for prisoners remains a contested issue, Blagden et al (2011) identify problems associated with family denial, suggesting that the family themselves can play a significant role in keeping the prisoner in denial They assert how belief in the prisoner's accounts can prevent the prisoner from being able to tell the truth and take responsibility for their crime. Blagden et al. (2011) identified how prisoners felt that they could not disclose the truth to their family for fear of jeopardising their relationship and support. Consequently, the family who are in denial threaten the opportunity for the prisoner to desist because the stakes are too high; the prisoner needs to maintain the 'performance' of the character that they have been projecting (Goffman, 1959).

6.16 Maintaining a viable identity by externalising blame.

For families of prisoners, there has been little exploration as to how they process information to support a non-guilty belief in relation to their own relative's culpability when they have been found guilty and convicted of a serious offence. Applying an established criterion model of blame, The Path Model of Blame (Malle et al, 2014), (Figure 1) is a useful way to begin to understand and conceptualise the cognitive processes by which prisoners' families make moral judgements that inform their sensemaking of the offence that they communicate to others. Blame emerges if the social observer (the prisoners' family) believes that a social norm has been violated (event detection - the commission of the offence) and if the agent of causality (the prisoner) is understood to have caused the social norm to be violated (prisoner culpability). If the family member did not perceive the prisoner to be linked to the offence, then blame does not arise, and the prisoner is evaluated as not being guilty of his offence.

If the agent of causality is confirmed by the prisoners' family to be their relative, then the family would make an evaluation as to whether the prisoner brought about the incident intentionally. Having made this judgement there are two distinct routes to

blame. If the prisoner has been judged to have acted intentionally, the reasons for acting will be considered. If the prisoner is thought to have unintentionally caused the incident the family will consider if the prisoner should have prevented the incident from occurring (obligation) or whether they could have prevented the incident (capacity).

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What has been established is that blame is greater when someone is perceived as being the cause of the harmful event or if it is deemed that the agent could have prevented the event (Byrne, 2017). Although the model is useful in that it provides a conceptual framework enabling pathways of blame to be explained, it does not consider how prisoners families' shift the pendulum of blame on to the victims. It was quite striking that across all four case studies, the families of the prisoner completely denied, ignored or minimised the victim's status. They did not acknowledge the victims' families and the pain and grief associated with a traumatic death or purposeful violation against another; they shifted blame away from the prisoner and placed it with the victim. Whilst victim blaming is not uncommon, particularly in rape cases (Niemi & Young, 2014), the cognitive processes for understanding blame judgements requires further exploration in respect to families of serious offenders. By integrating Alike's (2008) theory of Counterfactual Reasoning with the Path Model of Blame (Malle, et al, 2014) a greater understanding of how prisoners' families maintain denial and shift culpability elsewhere can be achieved.

Figure 1: Path Model of Blame (Malle et al, 2014)

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Event Detection   │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                               ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐        No
                    │   Agent Causality   │──────────────────▶   No
                    │ Did the perpetrator │
                    │    cause the        │                       Blame
                    │     event?          │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                         (Yes)  │
                               ▼
         (Yes)      ┌─────────────────────┐      No
                    │   Intentionality    │────────┐
                    │  Did the perpetrator│        │
                    │ intend to cause the │        ▼
                    │       event?        │   ┌──────────────┐
                    └─────────────────────┘   │  Obligation  │──────┐
                               │              └──────────────┘      ▼
         ┌──────────────┐      │            Yes   │          Low/No
         │   Reasons    │      │                  ▼           blame
         └──────────────┘      │            ┌──────────────┐
                               │            │   Capacity   │
                               │          Yes │       No    │
                               ▼            └──────────────┘
                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │    Degree of     │◀──────────
                    │      Blame       │
                    └──────────────────┘
```
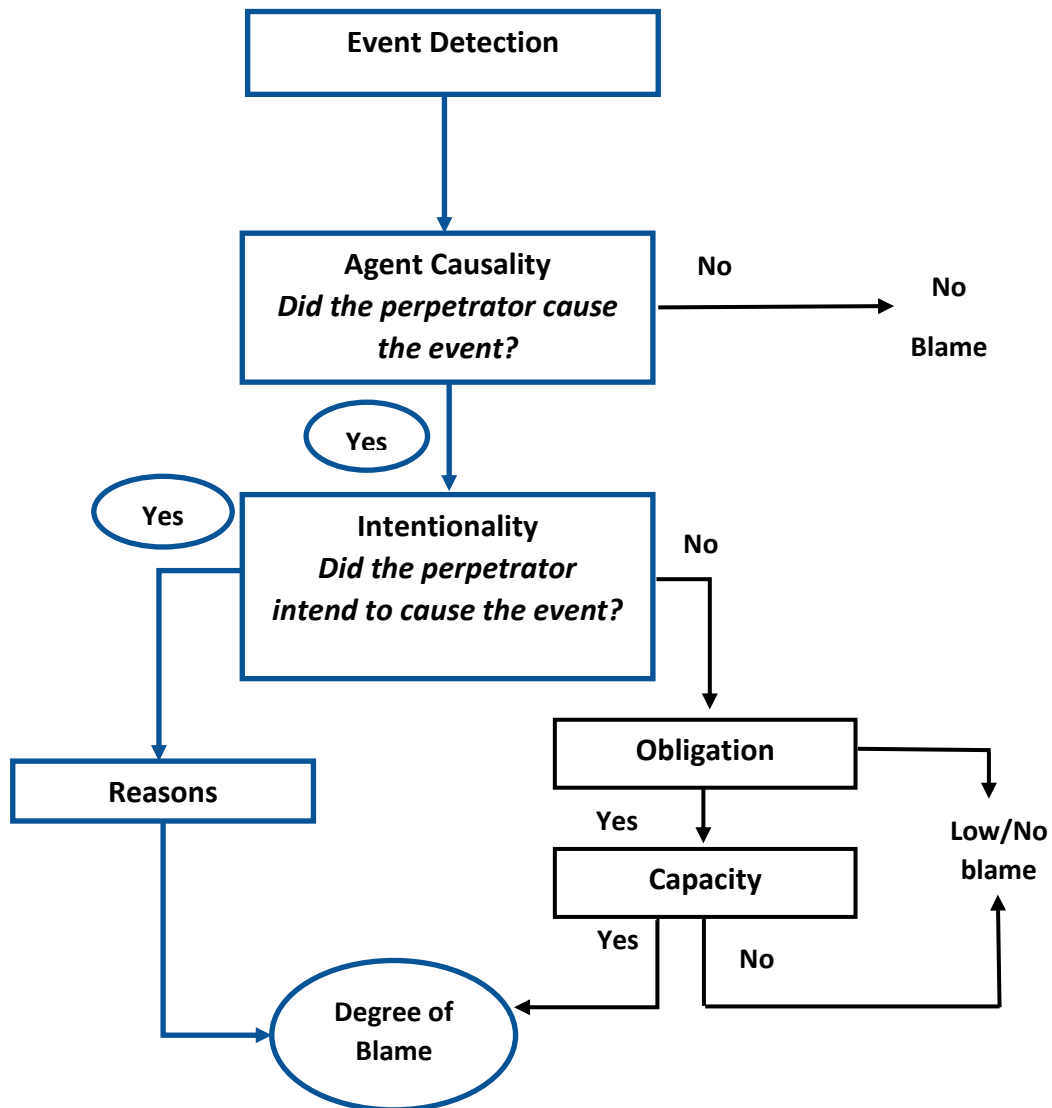
6.17 Counterfactual reasoning and shifting of blame.

Byrne (2017) asserts that counterfactual reasoning is often triggered and mobilised in response to an adverse, unanticipated harmful event and, it is a process by which people seek alternative causal explanations to their experience by mentally mutating an element of reality to align with their own beliefs and suppositions (Alike, 2008). Counterfactual reasoning seeks to identify, explain or defend past events or actions by mentally creating alternative assertions or models about how the outcome could have been different if these assertions were true. These assertions, which may or may not be correct, differ from, and evaluate better than the facts. Such harmful events typically result in causal and attribution activities as people try to make sense of past events and realign themselves to the dominant master cultural narrative.

Counterfactuals have an affect regulation, enabling people to feel better about their present reality, and they can also be useful in promoting as sense of control over events that have occurred. Alike et al (2008) suggest that people emotionally respond to harmful scenarios and will seek counterfactual explanations that increase or decrease blame by focusing on the mutable features of their reality. Sherman and McConnell (1996) illuminate that the element that is most easily mutated will become the causal factor of the harmful event. In this study, prisoners' families not only imagined possibilities that captured a different reality (how things would be if their suppositions were true) (Byrne, 2017), but they constructed and presented these assertions as a reality of their experience. The most significant and obvious mutable feature of their realities was the victim. In attributing blame to the victim, the families were able to maintain the reality of their experience, that being, that their own relative was indeed a victim of a failed system and not guilty of a serious crime. Externalising blame for prisoners' families is a process that neutralises the staining of their individual and familial identity.

The victims in this study were understood to be the cause of harm (agents of causality), in three out of four cases, the prisoners' families believed the victim acted intentionally. Condemning the condemners, seems to be a secondary way to explain the conviction. In case study one, both Margaret and Floyd described how Lydia was the agent of causality, Lydia had placed the ligature around her own neck, this narrative absolved Owen's role in causing the death. In case study two, the familial narrative was framed around an understanding that Jon's victim was the aggressor, he had gone to the fight equipped with a knife and Jon acted in self-defence. In case studies three and four, the rape victims were perceived to be the agent of causality because they had lied (the adult victim and the child victims) to the police by deliberately making false accusations.

For denial to be upheld the prisoners' families mutated the agent of causality, shifting the blame from the prisoner to the victim. This was achieved by the families employing a process of counterfactual reasoning (Alike, 2008). This process enabled them to externalise blame onto the victims and sustain their belief that their own relative was not guilty of the serious offences they had been convicted of.
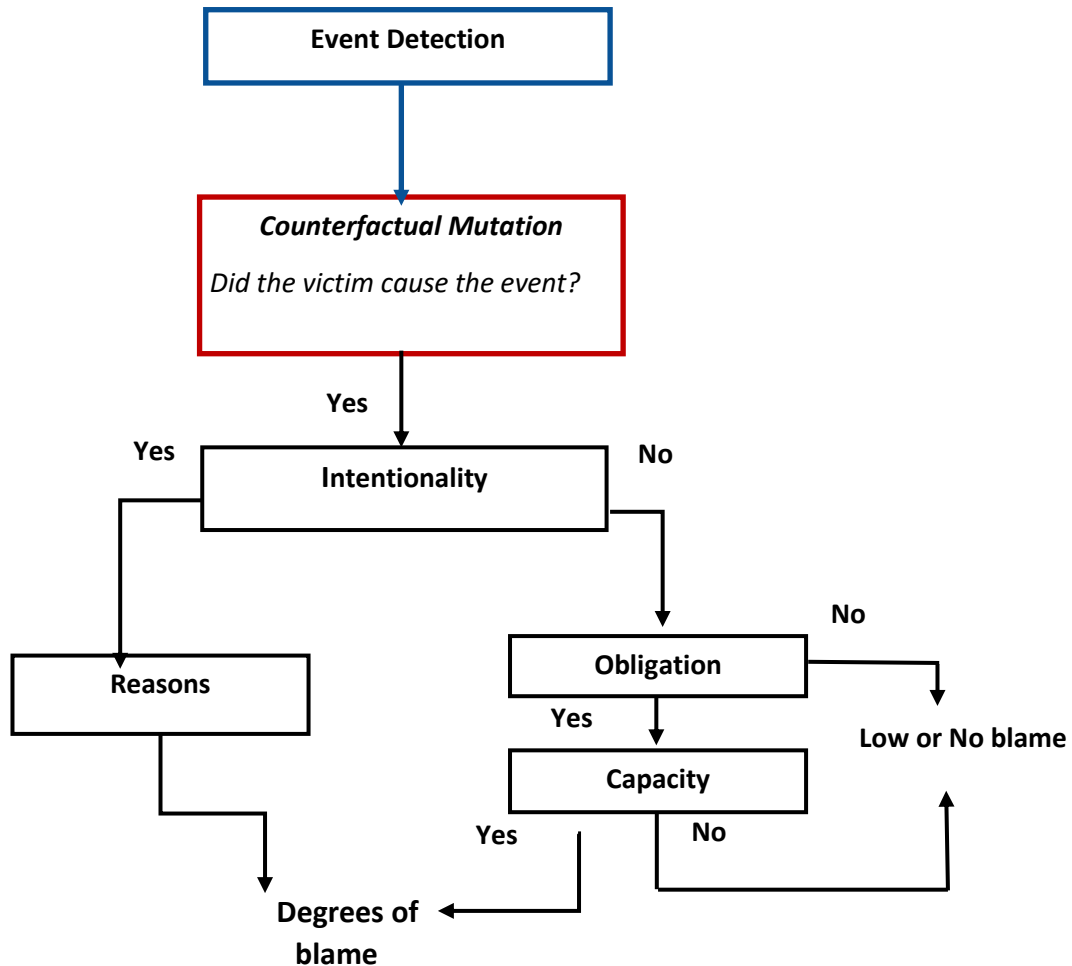
Table 5 below, summarises how blame was transferred from the offender to the victim using counterfactuals to mutate an element of reality.

Table 5:Transferring blame through counterfactuals.

	Counterfactual	Mutation of reality	Agent of Causality
Case Study 1	It was an accident	Lydia was a sexual deviant who coerced Owen. Lydia placed the ligature around her own neck	Lydia was to blame
Case Study 2	A fight took place, but Jon did not instigate the fight. He only tapped him once with a hammer, not twelve times.	He acted in self-defence. He only took a hammer because he knew that the other lad carried a knife.	Sue's school bully's son was to blame
Case Study 3	Something may have gone on, Alan might have touched them, but he did not rape them.	The children lied; it got blown out of proportion.	The children and their parents were to blame.
Case Study 4	A rape did not take place.	Dale's wife lied and she would not retract the lie.	Dale's wife was to blame.

The application of the Path Model of Blame (2014) (Figure 1) combined with counterfactual reasoning (Alike, 2008) offers a new functional model that can be applied to families of prisoners to explain how they mutate an element of their reality to support their sensemaking that the victim is to blame. This model becomes a victim focused model of blame whereby the victim and not the prisoner is evaluated by the family as the agent of causality event.

Figure 2: The New Victim Focused Path Model of Blame (an adaptation of Malle, et al. Path Model of Blame, 2014)

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     Event Detection     │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Counterfactual Mutation│
                    │                         │
                    │  Did the victim cause   │
                    │       the event?        │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                               Yes
                                 ▼
       Yes      ┌─────────────────────────┐      No
        ┌───────│      Intentionality     │───────┐
        │       └─────────────────────────┘       │
        │                                          ▼
        │                              ┌─────────────────┐      No
        ▼                              │    Obligation   │──────┐
┌───────────────┐                      └─────────────────┘      │
│    Reasons    │                          Yes                  │
└───────────────┘                           ▼                   ▼
        │                          ┌─────────────────┐   Low or No blame
        │                          │     Capacity    │
        │                          └─────────────────┘
        │                      Yes              No
        ▼                       ┌────────────────┘
   Degrees of ◄─────────────────┘
     blame
```

6.2 The Familial Appraisal of Shame, Stigma and Guilt

The second objective of the study was to explore how the family appraised shame and stigma. A review of the extant literature in chapter two illustrated how families typically experience feelings of shame and stigma because of having a relative in prison for committing a serious offence, however, dissecting the lived realities of this phenomena and how the experience of shame is understood and encountered by families has not been explored in any significant detail. To date, as illustrated in the literature review, the discourse has predominantly focused upon the ways in which individuals respond to a notion of a devalued self (Leeming and Boyle, 2013) and the types of coping strategies families employ to protect and preserve their identities, such as socially

withdrawing, censoring communication and moderating and distancing the self from interactions with others.

Although the previous literature implies that stigma and shame is a common feature amongst families of prisoners, the findings within this study show that for some individuals, stigma and shame is not recognised as being a feature of their reality. For the family members interviewed, experiences of stigma and shame seemed to be influenced not only by their appraisals of the offence but the extent to which their identities were 'connected' or 'interwoven' with their imprisoned family member. For the purposes of this discussion, a connected identity is where there is a relational link to the prisoner and the offence, either through kinship or friendship ties, and there is some capacity for the individual to distance and separate identities. An interwoven identity is where identities are not only connected, but significantly, there is an inability to separate or distance the self from the offender. The family members whose identities were 'connected' but not 'interwoven' with the prisoner, were able to compartmentalise their own identities from that of the offender and they experienced less stigma and shame compared to those whose identities remained not only connected but interwoven. The findings from this study show where identities remained interwoven, shame was a distinct feature of the relatives' experience. Whilst it is acknowledged there are many ways to conceptualise sigma and shame, by applying the construct of connected and interwoven identities to the following discussion, it may be possible to offer some explanations as to why there may be variations within experiences and understand why some prisoners' family members experience stigma and shame whilst others do not.

6.2.1 Appraisal of the offence

The way that the families appraised the offence seemed to have a distinct influence upon shame susceptibility. For the two-family networks who could not categorically deny that their relative had committed some type of offence, shame was a feature of some, (n=3) but not all the individual reconstructions (n=3). There was a positive relationship between the perceived visibility of the offence and shame proneness.

Table six below illustrates how sensemaking and visibility of the offence corresponds to shame susceptibility.

Table 6: Sensemaking, visibility of the offence and shame susceptibility

Sensemaking	Who experienced a sense of shame	Who did not experience a sense of shame	Families' perception related to the visibility of the offence		Identity inextricably linked?
Case study one Categorical denial of murder. Death was accidental	None of the participants	Mother Stepfather	Mother Stepfather	Not Visible Not Visible	No No
Case study two An assault resulting in injury had occurred. Denied the assault was with intent	Mother	Stepfather Sister	Mother Sister Stepfather	Visible Visible Visible	Yes No No
Case study three Downloading sexual images of children had occurred. Denied the rape of children.	Mother and Sister	Father	Mother Sister Father	Visible Visible Not Visible	Yes No No
Case study four Categorical denial of rape. No intimate partner rape had occurred	None	Mother Sister Niece	Mother Sister Niece	Not Visible Not Visible Not Visible	No No No

In contrast, shame was not a feature of individual reconstructions when the sensemaking of the offence was that there had been no purposeful intent to cause harm (e.g., case study one, the death was accidental), or, where the sensemaking of the offence was one of categorical denial (e.g., case study four). Denial of the offence therefore is a protective mechanism against shame (Blagden et al, 2014), it enables culpability to be deflected away from the offender and the family unit. In shifting culpability, the individual and the family unit separate and distance themselves and their identities from the offence. This separation negates negative evaluations of the

self (internalised shame) and how one perceives they are evaluated by others (externalised shame).

Participants who perceived that the offence and their connection to the prisoner was visible to others (case study two and three), experienced more shame than those who believed that the connection to the offender and themselves was somewhat less obvious to the outside world. The visibility of the crime and the way in which prisoners' families interpreted how they appear to others or, how they imagine they appear to others, is linked to their shame susceptibility. This resonates with Cooley's (1902) "Looking Glass of Self" theory which emphasises how our mental image of self and identity is not only shaped by our own self appraisal but is determined by how we imagine how we appear to others. Residing in a different geographical location to where the offence occurred, having a different surname and minimal media coverage of the event were protective factors that mitigate against exposure and feeling stigma and shame. Where individuals perceived that their connection to the prisoner and the offence was known, they recalled how they had encountered stigmatising reactions from friends and the wider community. As well as experiencing stigma, individuals perceived that they could have been discriminated against and excluded because of their association and connection to the offender. It must be noted however, that shame is a persistent possibility in everyday lives (Nussbaum, 2004) and for prisoners' families, dormant feelings of stigma and shame are likely to resurface when the crime becomes more visible, for example, in case study three, when a convicted sex offender becomes eligible for parole and public interest in a case is re-ignited.

6.2.2 Familial blame and shame

The familial appraisal of shame and stigma was informed not only by how the families appraised the offence, but their own sense of culpability for the offending behaviour. The notion of familial blame for another member's actions as a construct has been widely examined and there is a plethora of research which situates the family as being a significant influence and predictor of offending behaviour (Farrington et al, 2017). The idea that families are in some way responsible and blameworthy for the behaviour of other family group has been examined by Nussbaum (2004) who asserts that the relationship between familial blame and shame in offending behaviour can be linked to three distinct constructs. A family member can be blamed and shamed for their relative's deviance either because of something they omitted to do (omission),

because of something that they did (commission), or something that they continue to do (continuation). Nussbaum (2004) describes an omission as being concerned with a sense that the family should have known and could have but did not do anything to prevent the offending behaviour. Commission is concerned with something that the family member did; relatives can be blamed for creating and influencing behaviours, or it may be deemed that they have colluded with their immoral behaviours. Finally, family members may be deemed as being deserving of a continued stigmatised status because they appear to endorse the offender's behaviours, and this may be reflected through their continued support of the prisoner. Whilst there have been several studies (Condry, 2007; Comfort; 2008; May, 2000; Gueta, 2017) which have illustrated how familial blame is often willingly assumed by family members themselves, the results of this study reveal quite the opposite. The findings within this study challenge the notion that 'relatives of serious offenders feel shame in their own eyes'(Nussbaum, 2004, pp 284). In stark contrast, none of the participants believed that they themselves, were culpable or blameworthy in any way for their relatives offending behaviour. The assumption of individual and familial blame was denied both in the participants where shame and stigma were a feature of their experience, and equally, for those participants who did not recognise shame and stigma as being a feature of their experience. Although the notion of familial blame was rejected, this is not to say that family members did not privately feel a sense that they could have been responsible for their relative's offending behaviours. It could be that the narrative that they chose to convey, enabled families to project an image of a moral self that conforms to societal norms of a good family (May, 2000). The question of familial culpability had arisen within some of the reconstructions, with some of the participants questioning where they had gone wrong, however, these thoughts were quickly reconciled by averting culpability away from themselves and shifting the blame elsewhere. All of the participants disconnected from the offence, none of the participants recast themselves as being culpable for their relative's offending behaviour, their evaluations of self, appeared to be derived from how they imagined that they were perceived by others (Mead, 1934). Leeming and Boyle (2013) identify how people may not see or recognise themselves as being shameful, but shame emerges because of how they believe that they appear in the eyes of others (Mead,1934). Within this study heteronomous shame, which is defined as, the fear of exposure or the experience of disapproval because of moral failings to adhere to the societal norms (Maibom, 2010),

took precedence over the participant's self-evaluations of blame or guilt and influenced the shame experience.

The mothers in this study all negotiated a troubled parenting identity by recounting stories which reframed motherhood; this enabled them to resist cognitive appraisals (of the self and by others) that poor mothering produces bad children' (Melendez et al, 2016). Recounting stories of good mothering defends against perceptions of poor mothering and protects and preserves their identities (May, 2000). This enables them to attend to cognitive dissonance (Festinger,1967). For example, the personal belief of being a good mother but one who is overtly aware of judgements in relation to societal mother blaming and conflicted in how they view themselves and their reality of failing to produce children who comply with societal rules and expectations. The mothers attended to cognitive dissonance by recounting narratives that tried to renegotiate and align themselves, and their spoiled identity, to the social and public norms of society This was achieved by emphasising their good mother status defending against bad mothering and by externalising blame elsewhere. Although shame and stigma were not a feature of all the participants' experiences (other than that imposed by the prison institution and its personnel) heteronomous shame was still a feature of their narrative recasting, albeit this is something that family members did not always recognise themselves. An assumption was made about how their identity would be negatively decoded by society, consequently, every family member interviewed, including those who did not categorise themselves as being shamed or stigmatised, employed strategies to preserve their identity and protect them from running the risk of becoming discredited. Table seven illustrates the range of discursive strategies that were adopted to protect the self from a spoiling if identity.

Table 7: Strategies employed to protect identity from shame and stigma.

Information Control	Limit or block conversations from developing.
Avoidance	Isolate self from forming new relationships.
Deflection	Deflect responsibility for the behaviour elsewhere.
Selective discourse and partial concealment	Allow others to know of the conviction but do not expand upon any detail.
Considered disclosure	Information shared with trusted individuals

These strategies were something that were both consciously and unconsciously activated to prevent the risk of being discredited in social interactions both within and beyond the family network. Some family members did not recognise that this was something that they were actively doing, and it was only through retelling their story that they began to recognise that they were actively managing potentially discrediting information about themselves and their families. These protective strategies were more salient when the family did not know the decoding capacity of their audience (Goffman, 1963), for example, when the family was uncertain of what information others knew about them.

6.2.3 Heteronomous shame and prison visiting

The prison visit bestowed a sense of temporal shame and stigma upon the family, this was apparent even in the individuals who had not explicitly expressed feeling stigma and shame. Ujang and Zakariya, (2015) describe how the physical spaces that we occupy and the experiences that we have in different places (place identity) informs and influences individual and group identities. Visiting the prison created an unwanted place attachment to the prison establishment, whereby the families adopted a temporary identity in which they became categorised and labelled as prison visitors and had to abide and comply by the rules and regulations of the establishment. For these families, the temporal stigmatising shame stemmed from the institution itself and having to comply with the humiliating but necessary operational procedures, restrictive rules and surveillance that are required to maintain the security and safety of the prison. The power and control of the institution made the families feel that they had the same inferior status as the prisoner that they were visiting (interwoven identities). These findings are synonymous with previous research findings (Codd, 2008; Dixey & Woodall, 2011; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2011; Hutton, 2016) which identified how the security procedures associated with visiting are perceived by visitors to be shameful and embarrassing. Whist many of the families accepted that the security procedures were necessary, they felt the way that the processes were managed could have been conducted with more understanding and respect.

A further source of shame and stigma that the families' experienced was that imposed upon them by the prison personnel; namely the prison officers and the staff who were employed by the visitor centres. The accounts that the families gave within this study illuminated how they had experienced shame because the interwoven nature of the prisoners' and family members identities; some prison staff were unable to differentiate between the prisoners, those who had been convicted of a crime, and the prison visitor who had not committed a crime.

Although some family members reported that they were treated with respect by the prison personnel, this was not always a consistent feature of their experience. Within the accounts that the families gave, there were clear tensions between the way the families felt that they should be treated and how they perceived that they were treated. On occasions, staff were perceived to be obstructive, lacking empathy, respect and understanding, this did however, depend upon the prison and the staff member who was working. Prison personnel seemed to be viewed by most of the families as the enemy within; staff were perceived not only to exercise power and control over their relative's, but this power and control was extended to the families of prisoners. Prison visiting created a temporary shift in identity whereby subordination and compliance was deemed necessary; families feared that the visit may be jeopardised or their relative may be compromised in some way if they were to raise a concern. Whilst most prison personnel who work directly with offenders and their families do recognise the value of family contact (Dixey & Woodall, 2011) this research illustrates how the recommendations of the Farmer Review (2017) which state how "the family must be treated with respect and decency by all staff in prisons"(pp18) was not at the time of data collection, being consistently operationalised within prisons and the visitor centres.

Prison staff do work in very stressful and charged prison environments, where there is a persistent threat of violence to themselves and other inmates. It could be that because of the threat of violence and the multiplicity of roles, that some staff may have difficulties in transitioning from their role on the prison landings to supervising prison visits and liaising with the general public. Dixey and Woodall (2012) identified how some prison officers object to visits because visiting poses a security threat to the establishment; contact with the outside world creates an avenue in which illegal substances can enter the prison system. Visitors can be treated with suspicion by

prison personnel and staff can resort to a default position which prioritises control and supervision over fostering rapport and trust of the prisoner and their family. This mistrust, in turn, can reinforce to the visitor, that they too, are no different (interwoven identities) in the eyes of the staff, to the prisoner that they are visiting. The families interviewed within this study all perceived that as a prison visitor, they had been treated with disrespect, they all recounted incidents in which they had been made to feel ashamed and their experiences of having of prison visitor status had changed the way in which they were seen and believed to be treated by others.

6.2.4 The gendered nature of shame

This study identifies that there were distinct gender differences in the way that shame and stigma was appraised. Within this study some mothers experienced a sense of shame and stigma (n=2) whilst others did not (n=2). For two of the mothers, shame was negated because they identified that their relative was not guilty of any offence; no crime had occurred and therefore there was nothing to feel shame or guilt about. For the two mothers who did experience shame, they could not categorically deny that some type of lesser offence had occurred. Another significant difference between these two groups of mothers, however, was the degree to which that they had separated their own identities from their adult children. The two mothers who did not experience shame had been able to separate their identities from that of their adult children whereas, those identities which remained interwoven with their adult child experienced stigma and shame. (See table 6, pg. 215).

By applying a theory of separation individuation and the concept of interwoven identities, it may be possible to offer an explanation as to why some mothers experienced shame whilst others do not. There are many factors (biological, psychological, emotional, social and cultural) which influence a positive transition of the maternal-child bond and separation of identities; however, successful separation individuation is dependent upon optimal neurodevelopment maturation during adolescence and early adulthood. Wood et al.(2018) suggest that if neurodevelopment has been interrupted during early childhood, this can compromise the capacity of the child to separate from the parent and assume expected adult roles and responsibilities.

Separation individuation theory of the parent-child bond is usually discussed in relation to the capacity of the child to transition and separate from the parent, and yet the

significance of the parent and their capacity to separate from the child has been somewhat overlooked within mainstream separation individuation theory. Blos (1967) describes how the goal of parenting is for the child to become an autonomous responsible adult with a separate sense of individual identity, whereby the emerging adult becomes less reliant upon parents for support and emotional wellbeing and begins to structure and define a unique and distinct coherent sense of self that is different from that of the parents. If a parent perceives that the adult child lacks the agency to transition and assume the usual adult roles and responsibilities expected throughout the life course trajectory, separation individuation may be disrupted. Parent- child identities can remain interwoven because of a perceived and continued sense of dependency of the adult child upon the parent. The two mothers who experienced shame in this study, felt that their child had additional needs or developmental delay, which had impeded upon their child's capacity and agency to separate from the parent and assume the expected roles and responsibilities of the emerging adult. According to Wood et al. (2018), a child with interrupted neurodevelopment (like Jon in case study two and Alan in case study three) are more likely to experience a range of conditions that can impede intellectual or emotional functioning; cognitive immaturity can impede the degree to which an emerging adult is able to make sound decisions, regulate their own emotions and use utilise a range of problem solving skills in order to negotiate social interactions and relationships. They suggest that these children are more likely to experience difficulties in education, become involved in risky or delinquent activities, which in turn further interrupts the successful separation individuation and transition to adulthood. For these mothers, the perceived delay in their child's psychosocial maturation meant that they perceived that their child was unable to transition through the life course and achieve independent status. Their experiences of parenting a child who was understood to have additional educational and psychosocial needs, over and above that of their peer group (Jon was perceived to have educational and behavioural issues, and Alan had dyslexia, he was bullied and had difficulties negotiating and maintaining friendships) meant that separation individuation of parent child identities had not been realised. There was an inability for the mothers to separate from the child, because of the unique challenges that are associated with parenting a child who is perceived to be 'different' from that of his peer group. For these mothers, their identities remained deeply interwoven with their adult children and the notion of individuation, whereby the relationship between

the parent and child becomes somewhat diminished throughout childhood and less important during emerging adulthood had not been realised. It could be inferred, that because of a perceived interruption in their child's neurodevelopment, the two mothers in this study had a greater propensity to feel shame because their child had not transitioned through the anticipated life course trajectories in the usual way. Their children had difficulty in making sound decisions, they were emotionally over dependent upon their parents and had difficulties in negotiating social interactions and behaviours. The shame that they experienced could be because as a parent, their child had not achieved societal norms and expectations that should occur when parents support their children to attain successful parent child separation individuation.

Irrespective of whether shame was experienced by another family member, none of the men (n=3) interviewed stated that they had experienced a stigmatising response (real or imagined) or, experienced shame or guilt outside of visiting the prison. In the two-family networks where a sense of shame was experienced (case study two and three), the females experienced shame and stigma, whilst the males did not. These findings support the work of Ferguson and Crowley (1997) who found that females report higher levels of shame compared with men. One possible explanation for the difference in gender appraisal of shame within the family networks could be attributed to the sentiment that men have a greater ability to separate their identities from the offender. Lewis (1971) suggests that males have a stronger ego identity compared with females and they can defend against shame and culpability because they are able to externalise or isolate an event. For example, Mark (case study three) did not experience shame or feel responsible for his son's crimes because he was able to clearly separate his identity (father) from that of his son's and isolate his son's actions and behaviours from that of his own.

Being a stepparent may have enabled the two of the men to further externalise and isolate an event. Two out of the three males interviewed (Pete and Floyd) were stepparents, and it could be argued that they were able to negate feelings of shame and guilt because they did not feel that they were morally responsible or accountable for the actions of their stepchildren. Their identities were connected by marriage however, having the label of stepparent, enabled them to distance themselves and create distance in the eyes of others, from the offender.

An alternative explanation as to why none of the fathers experienced shame may be linked to gender constructions and parenting. Mothers are less able to separate their identities from that of their children because of the role and expectations that society places upon the mother. Melendez et al (2016) identify how in most societies, whilst fathers do take on some responsibility for the care of the child, it is the mother who is still perceived as having ultimate responsibility for the care and emotional development of their offspring, and as such it is the mothers who are perceived to be the ones accountable and blameworthy for how the children turn out to be. When children fail to follow the established rules, it is the mother as opposed to the father who will be judged, blamed and socially marginalised for their failure raise a child of sound moral character.

6.3 The Impact of Imprisonment Upon Family Cohesion, Relationships and Wellbeing

The third and final objective of the study was to explore the impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion, relationships and wellbeing. The cross-case analysis of data clearly reveals that imprisonment does change and destabilise how families relate to one another and the outside world. This study illustrates that imprisonment imposes significant identity losses that challenge family cohesion and biographies; it interrupts their individual and familial sense of self and others, who they thought they were, and how they believe themselves to be.

Family cohesion was stabilised by the way in which family members interacted and communicated with one another and the outside world. A shared sensemaking and positioning in respect to the offence was a key factor in promoting familial cohesion. Within this study, secrets were kept by a deliberate withholding or omitting information relating to the offence and conviction to individuals on the inside of family unit. Strategies such as the keeping of secrets and subject avoidance were adopted to protect familial relationships and the prisoner.

Imprisonment not only creates a space whereby families become physically disenfranchised from their family member, but because of the stigmatising serious offence that they have been convicted of families' may become emotionally disenfranchised from any grief associated with their loss. Unsupported grief and

identity transitions had a significant impact upon health and wellbeing. Female family members experienced a greater deterioration in their mental and physical wellbeing compared to the males that were interviewed. For a minority of the interviewees, imprisonment had resulted in improved familial relationships. That said however, families were fearful of the future and felt abandoned and unprepared for the social reintegration of the prisoner on release into the family and wider society. The following discussion will synthesise the findings from the cross-case study analysis in respect to the main themes identified in respect to the third objective.

6.3.1 Family cohesion and communication

The sharing and performance of the same alternative master narrative was conducive to promoting familial cohesion. This shared reconstructed alternative narrative promoted a degree of relational wellbeing and support for those on the inside of the story. Families created their own social world, which separated the *in-group*, (individuals who shared the same positioning and sensemaking) from the *outgroup* (those who have or are perceived to have an alternative narrative and who may pose a threat to the new alternative master narrative) (Goffman, 1963).

Where familial positioning and reconstructions relating to the offence were not consistently aligned, family cohesion was threatened. For example, within case study two, Pete and Sara, did not believe that Jon was always an innocent victim of circumstance, and this created tensions within the family network. Sue felt somewhat hurt and betrayed by their appraisals that did not always align with her sensemaking. Sue's relationship with her daughter and husband had fractured, and yet this change in the familial dynamic did not feature within Pete and Sarah's reconstructions. This illustrates that whilst some of the family members recognised and acknowledged that imprisonment had changed the nature of their relationships within the family network, other members within the same family network did not identify with this change or acknowledge that there had been a deterioration in familial relationships. Whilst Sue had emotionally withdrawn and distanced herself from her family, and sought emotional support outside the family network, Sue's daughter believed that there had been no change within their relationship, and Pete seemed unaware of how fragile his relationship had become with Sue. McCubbin and Patterson (1983) relate this withdrawal and distancing process as maladaptive family functioning, whereby the withdrawal of a family member (Sue) from the family network, can result in a family

level of functioning which is less than before the stressful event occurred. According to Vangelisti and Young (2000) dissatisfaction with family members can cause additional pressures to an already distressed family system. Individual withdrawal from the family network can not only deplete the ability and resources of its members to cope but, as exemplified within this study, it can also have a detrimental impact upon physical and psychological wellbeing.

6.3.2 Avoidance

Family cohesion and the maintenance of viable relationships was in part fostered by the way in which family members communicated with one another, either ignoring or avoiding issues. Protecting relationships through subject avoidance was a feature across all the four case studies. According to Afifi et al. (2005), subject avoidance is a communication coping strategy employed to protect the self, to protect another or to protect significant relationships. Families, in three out of the four case studies, identified how they or the prisoner rarely talked about the crime, what had occurred, or discussed the continuing impact that it had had upon the family left on the outside of the prison walls. The families experience of communicating with the prisoner during the visit was predominantly to "jolly the visit along" and engage in prosocial communication strategies that served to strengthen the relational bond and demonstrate their loyalty and continued support of the prisoner (Jardine, 2017). Prosocial communication was achieved by avoiding or ignoring the harm that was caused to the victims. All of the families', including the prisoner, did not attend to the harm that had been caused to the *primary victims* (that being the subject of the crime and their family), but just as significant, they also avoided the harm that had been bestowed upon them, the *secondary* victims of the criminal justice system. Applying a typology of primary and secondary victims is by no means meant to suggest that one type of victim is more deserving of an acknowledgement of harm, however by adopting this typology, a clear distinction is made that that the victims of serious offences extend beyond the more obvious subjects of harm, for example, the girl who was murdered, or the boy who was raped and their families. The perpetrators' family need to be recognised as victims in their own right because the consequences and losses that they experience can be just as significant, if not too dissimilar, to the consequences experienced by the primary victims. Despite the extant research identified within the introductory chapter, which recognises a victim status for prisoners' relatives, the

recognition and support they receive has yet to be operationalised to the same standard that the primary victims. These primary victims are to date are predominantly publicly perceived to be the only '*real deserving victims*' of the of serious crime and the criminal justice system.

One reason that the families gave for avoiding difficult conversations during their interaction with the prisoner was a concern for the prisoner's wellbeing. They did not want to cause the prisoner additional stress by imparting the challenges of their own realty upon them. The families shielded the prisoner because they feared for their relative in prison; they feared that by exposing the prisoner to their stressors may trigger a deterioration in their relative's psychological wellbeing. Similarly, some of the families reported how avoiding issues was also a protective communication strategy that was also employed by the prisoner who tried to protect them from the difficulties that they were experiencing adjusting to their sentence and life in prison. For some family members however, the prisoner appeared to be somewhat self-absorbed and inconsiderate to the effect that imprisonment had upon the family.

Protective sheltering for both the prisoner and family members can be important in maintaining and protecting family cohesion. Arditti (2012) highlighted how the interactions that flow during the visit can be encouraging, or destructive. Avoidance of difficult or sensitive issues seems to act as a mechanism that reinforces family loyalty and communicates belief in one another and protects from confronting stressful, unwanted or painful information. This strategy can however be somewhat problematic not only in terms of the rehabilitation of the offender and the eventual resettlement into society but for the continuing functioning of the family system. Although the primary motive seemed to be one of protection, Lockwood and Raikes (2016) identify how this approach can be somewhat counterproductive as it can prevent or delay the prisoner and family members from confronting the reality and consequences of behaviours. This study demonstrates how relatives consciously and unconsciously collude with the perpetrator on many levels to project and communicate to themselves, the prisoner, and the outside world a more plausible, viable and accepted identity. Sheltering through information omission or commission is a tool that prevents the family, as secondary victims, from being transparent to the harm and fears that they have because of their relatives' imprisonment. It could be that unless the perpetrator is supported to understand and accept responsibility for the harm caused to both the

primary and secondary victims, the process of rehabilitation of the offender and the capacity of the family to adapt to their own transitions and extend support could be somewhat impaired. Whilst avoidance can keep both the prisoner and the family from confronting and being open to alternative versions of reality, greater emphasis should be upon supporting the family to build resilience and enable them to develop skills that that promote transparency of communication to enable them to support and challenge one another without the fear and risk of jeopardising the relationship or the family system. The repair of harm to families' is a significant issue that needs to be addressed as an integral part of the part of the Offender Managing Sentencing Plan. Prisoners' families are victims and deserve support, and yet these needs are still not seen as being independent of the prisoners' reform and rehabilitation.

6.3.3 Intrafamilial secrets

Whist avoidance of issues was a protective communication strategy employed within the family network, the keeping of intrafamilial secrets was also a strategy adopted to protect the self, the family and others. Within this study, secrets were kept by a deliberate withholding or omitting information relating to the offence and conviction from other family members. This secret, or elements of the secret were kept from individuals on the 'inside of family network' as well as secrets which were hidden from family members who were cast by the insiders, as being 'outside of the family network'. According to Termini (2018) the keeping of family secrets is not unusual particularly when families are faced with events that result in them feeling judged, ashamed or embarrassed. The secret creates a vacuum of isolation, those on the inside of the story isolated themselves from others, depriving themselves of the opportunity to access the wider familial support networks of those they cast to be on the outside of the alternative master narrative.

Whilst some of the families maintained existing friendship groups most of the families' avoided forming new relationships. The avoidance of formulating new friendship by limiting their exposure to new social settings was not something that the families always recognised themselves, however, it was a distinct feature within the accounts that were given. All the families experienced social isolation; some individuals gave examples of how they had been openly shunned and ostracised by friends and

colleagues because of their association to the prisoner, whilst for others, it was the perception that they would be negatively judged that resulted in a self-imposed social isolation. According to Granja (2016) prisoners' families purposively select a limited group of people that they trust and maintain close relationships to disclose information to, although within this study disclosure or partial disclosures were also made from necessity; for example, when time off from work was needed to attend court or visits. Sometimes partial disclosures enabled the individual to take control and direct the type of information that they were prepared to share. For example, some individuals felt comfortable communicating that they had a relative in prison but were not prepared to disclose what they had been convicted of. Metaphorical boundaries were created which signalled to the audience what could and could not be discussed. Although this protective strategy reduced the risk of being discredited, it created a barrier to developing and sustaining meaningful and secure relationships.

In three out of the four case studies there was an individual who was central to maintaining the cohesiveness of the family network. They shielded the family network, directing the alternative master narrative, signalling who should be privy to information and deciding what content was appropriate to disclose and when. The leadership role that they assumed was not gender specific, rather it appears that the relationship that they had with the prisoner before the conviction and the roles that they previously occupied within the family system appear to have influenced their subsequent behaviours and interactions with other family members in the aftermath of the arrest. For example, Sue (case study two) and Marie (case study four) usually assumed responsibility for the family unit. Similarly, Mark (case study three) was the patriarchal figure who provided direction for his family network to follow. In case study one however, there did not appear to be a dominant leader. Margaret and Floyd seemed to have an equal fluid role in the control and dissemination of information to the wider family system. This may again, be attributed to the relationship and roles they have previously assumed within the family system.

Within this study the family purposefully withheld information and formulated a series of lies to protect and shield themselves and others from the pains of being exposed to the implications of a new unwanted reality. The families interviewed created ambiguous stories not only to protect children within the family from knowing about the imprisonment but, stories were also crafted to protect family members who were

deemed to be fragile and emotionally less equipped to cope with the real or imagined social responses that could be encountered as a result of disclosure (Almund & Myers, 2003). Whilst Lockwood and Raikes (2016) identify how concealment of information from children is not an uncommon practice, the impact of keeping secrets about imprisonment from other adult family members is somewhat less well documented. Whist keeping family secrets can be initiated as a protective mechanism, secrets from within families can threaten the stability and cohesion of familial relationships. Mamby et al. (2014) suggest that keeping the secret is stressful and can result in insecure contacts as families have to constantly revaluate and balance the cost and benefits of revealing or maintaining concealment of the secret. Families not only run the risk of their secrets becoming exposed by others, but there may come a time when they must disclose the secrets that they have been keeping to those they have tried to protect. There is an agreement amongst agencies who provide support to families of children with a parent in prison, that telling children age appropriate, honest accounts about what has happened at an early stage is best practice (Families Outside, 2012).This study illustrates how families who have kept secrets from child and adult family members' feel unprepared for disclosure and become caught up in a web of lies and deceit. For example, the family in case study two, feared that as the children in their family were getting older, they would find out about their uncle's imprisonment for themselves, or, their secret would be revealed to them by someone else. The family realised that it would be better if they themselves, told the children that their uncle was serving a prison sentence however, they felt totally unprepared and uncertain to manage the process of disclosure. Similarly, in case study four, Sharon had told lies to her parents about being a prison visitor and although this strategy worked for her in the short term, she was uncertain how she would manage the lie in the future; she had not considered that in time, the infant that she was taking to the visits would develop the art of speech and could disclose the secret of the visits to Sharon parents. The families' interviewed did not know of any type of support that that was available to help them manage the process of disclosure. Although the sources of support to prisoners' families are limited, there are some useful resources that families could access. It would appear however that these need to be more widely publicised if families are going to be able to access the appropriate information and guidance to support their disclosures.

6.3.4 Restorative function of separation

This study illustrates that for some individuals, imprisonment can strengthen family cohesion. Whilst imprisonment sometimes results in a loss of interpersonal relationships, for some of the interviewees, imprisonment had resulted in improved relationships with the prisoner and resulted in the fostering and development of new relationships. For some of the interviewees, imprisonment of their family member had restored relationships that had been previously estranged, whilst for others it appeared to offer the family a degree of temporary respite from the burden of having the responsibility for their adult relative on the outside.

6.3.5 Losses and disenfranchised grief

This study illustrates that imprisonment imposes significant identity losses that challenge family cohesion and biographies. Not only did families experience a loss of their predicted or anticipated futures but they also experienced a loss of self, often prioritising the needs and wellbeing of the prisoner above that of their own. Although individual and familial accommodation and responses to imprisonment will invariably differ, Doka (1999) suggests that relatives of prisoners' experience multiple grief type losses and yet, because of the stigmatising or taboo nature of the offence that their relative has been convicted of, the loss and pain that prisoners' families experience is not always validated by society and as such they families may become emotionally disenfranchised from their grief associated with their loss (Jones & Beck 2007). Cohen and Samp (2018) identify how the non-death loss of a family member to prison is not always validated or supported in the same way that those who experience loss through non stigmatising circumstances and consequently prisoners' families can be denied the time and space to mourn and adapt to their loss in the conventional way. The case studies illustrate how families of prisoners experienced both reactive and proactive identity losses (Weigert & Hastings, 1977). The reactive and proactive identity losses due to enforced separation not only threatens both individual and familial identity but necessitates a redefining of past relationships as well as renegotiating future roles and relationships. Weigert and Hastings (1977) suggest how grief type responses to these events must be successfully resolved to re-establish stable capable selves. The narratives presented within this study illustrate how the denial or interruption of significant relational bonds, which are seen as central to our own character and sense

of personal identity, can have a detrimental impact upon the grief process and impact upon health and wellbeing.

Chapple et al. (2015) illuminate how people who have experienced bereavement through traumatic or stigmatising deaths (murder, substance misuse or suicide) receive different reactions from those who are bereaved through illness and as such they can become more vulnerable to marginalisation and isolation (Sveen & Walby, 2008). Bailey (2018) identifies how grief and the extent to which support is received is largely determined by societal appraisals and as such, bereavement and non-bereavement losses associated with a sense of shame, guilt or responsibility receive less sympathy, particularly if it is deemed that they were responsible for their own downfall or that the family was deemed to be culpable in some way. For families of prisoner's' the relationship and loss is not always recognised because perpetrators of serious crimes are frequently objectified as being inhumane and therefore it can be hard to comprehend the existence of people who care and support them. Bailey (2018) describes that to the outside world, the loss may not be understood because there may be a perception that the family is better off without an offender in the family unit or, the family may be viewed as being culpable in some way for the offending behaviours and as such they are not deemed deserving of sympathetic support.

Having a relative in prison for committing a serious stigmatising crime and the identity transitions associated with such a loss were not always acknowledged or supported. This study reveals how imprisonment of a family member can be a painful experience and yet this pain is not always perceived to be validated by other family members who are deemed to be in close proximity to one another. Within three of the case studies, members of the family network did not adequately attend to one another's emotional wellbeing. Mitchell (2017) asserts how when grief through non death losses is denied or delayed this can have significant adverse impacts upon health and wellbeing. The experience of being disenfranchised from their grief was most significant across the case studies for the women within this study. Some of the women experienced greater stress, psychological harm and a deterioration in their mental health compared to the men interviewed. Again, this may be because the men were able to separate their own identities from the prisoner compared to the women. However, it may be as Lewis (1971) suggests, that those women are more likely to internalise their feelings and isolate themselves and their emotions, and as such are more likely to experience

mental health issues and a deterioration in their health status. Cohen and Samp (2018) identify how families of prisoners are unlikely to seek out help from health practitioners because of a desire minimise disclosures. Unmet health needs, however, can threaten the stability of the family system; if an individual is struggling to meet their own needs, their ability function and to support other family members may be compromised.

6.3.6 Unsupported transitions

For all the families there was a sense that the arrest, conviction and sentencing of their family member had taken them down a path in which they did not feel equipped to navigate. A lack of information relating to the judicial system and legal processes was a significant stressor for the families. The families interviewed cited how a lack of basic information throughout their experience had negatively impacted upon their wellbeing which had resulted in stress and anxiety. A delay in being informed about the location of the prisoner and how families could establish contact with them was a significant and yet avoidable source of distress for some of the families. Families described how the experience of being separated and not knowing which prison that their relative had been detained in or when or how they would be able to make initial contact with their family member immediately after sentencing very distressing. Moreover, from the accounts given, there appears to be no consistent approach in respect to how different prison establishments manage initial contact with the families of prisoners. Some families were notified in a timely manner as to where their relative was being detained, whilst others had to wait in anguish, not knowing which prison they had been allocated to or how they could initiate contact.

This study highlights how families of prisoners not only feel unprepared and uncertain of how to adapt to their identity and role transitions, but they felt unprepared and fearful for the future.   The interviews revealed that for most families, the idea of the eventual release of their family member from prison was not associated with feelings of relief and happiness but with feelings of trepidation and dread. Some of the families feared that release could result in further victimisation for both the offender and the family. Comfort (2008) asserts how reintegration of the prisoner into the community can result in the crime becoming visible again; it may attract more media coverage or remind the community or the families of the primary victims that the offender is being released back into society. Despite communicating that their relative was not guilty of the crime (s) they had been convicted of, some of the families were concerned about their

relatives' future behaviour and the possibility that they would not desist from crime. The families described experiencing a continuing sense of responsibility to ensure that the prisoner would comply with the terms of their parole, illustrating a blurring tension of familial roles. For some of the families (case study one, three and four) the nature of the serious offences would mean that for some, future family life would not be free from public and state monitoring and intrusion.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

Within this chapter the findings from the four co-constructed family case studies have been integrated to provide a coherent and critical discussion of the themes that have emerged from the study to illustrate how different family networks not only construct and present their identity and reveal how shame and stigma is appraised and managed. The impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion, relationships and wellbeing has been examined and illustrates that there are features of the familial experience within the case studies that that are both particularistic and shared. The next chapter will consider how this study contributes to advancing knowledge, theory and practice, as well as considering the limitations of the study and identifying scope for further research in the field.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

In the previous discussion chapter, the findings of the individual family co-constructed case studies were integrated to provide a coherent analysis and critical discussion of how families of prisoners serving a prison sentence for committing a serious indictable offence construct and manage their identity. Within this final chapter, to demonstrate how this study contributes to what is known about the phenomena, an outline of the key discussion points from the study is presented. The limitations of the study will be acknowledged within this chapter before the potential impact, implications, and recommendations for practice and policy developments are considered, as well as identifying scope for further research in the field. Finally, the chapter concludes with a final reflection upon the research journey.

7.1 Contribution to Knowledge

Through employing and combining novel methodological sensemaking frameworks, this exploratory study has generated new knowledge and understandings into to the way that prisoners' families make sense of and experience imprisonment and manage identity transitions and relationships. This study, for the first time, has captured how multiple family members all connected to a prisoner construct and present their individual and familial identities. It offers a unique insight into how families connect and reveals the strategies that are employed to maintain or reframe family identity and cohesion. The research develops what is currently known in the field and advances our understanding of the families of prisoners' as well as providing new theoretical orientations to identity theory, shame and stigma theory, family systems theory, and grief and loss theory.

7.1.2 Summary of key discussion points and original contribution to the field

This study has shown that in the pursuit of a less stigmatised identity, and to combat labelling and marginalisation, families consciously and unconsciously created alternative biographical scripts (alternative master narratives) to create a more viable and accepted individual and familial identity. This serves to realign themselves and their family network with the dominant cultural master narrative (Arnett, 2016). To have

a valued identity, our biographies must align with the dominant cultural master narrative.

One strategy to align biographies involved the reframing of biographies. This was achieved through a process of engaging in discursive neutralization techniques that externalised blame away from the prisoner and their family. The families co-constructed and assimilated information to support their blame narratives from a limited range of sources and selectively filtered information that supported their sensemaking of events. Within this small sample, this filtering was often controlled and directed by one family member. The information controller constructed the intrafamilial narrative and directed the external presentation of the alternative master narrative. What is evident is that other family members adopted this recasting without really knowing the details of the event and avoided seeking out alternative versions of the truth. This process itself creates its own boundaries; the individuals inside of the alternative narrative believed, or at least, conveyed to others, that the prisoner was innocent and not culpable of committing the offence. Those on the outside of the alternative master narrative were family members, or members of the wider community, who were perceived by the insiders, as not believing in the prisoner's innocence. Consequently, the insiders, excluded, dissociated or distanced (emotionally and physically) themselves from those individuals who posed a threat or did not support their reconstruction of events.

Within this study, the overarching reconstruction of what had happened was cast around a denial or a minimisation of the prisoner's culpability. These discursive neutralization techniques protect familial identity by attending to the dissonance between how the participants viewed themselves, and how they imagined they were perceived by others. By employing the process of counterfactual reasoning (Alike et al, 2008), combined with a new victim-focused model of blame this study offers new insights as to how families make sense of their relatives non guilty status. For prisoners' families, an element of their reality was mutated to inform and sustain their belief that their relative was not guilty of the serious offence that they had been convicted of. The families achieved this by changing the agent of causality for the offence, from the prisoner to the primary victim. This mutation enabled the family to create and project a more viable identity by externalising blame and culpability away from themselves, the prisoner, and their family network. In victim blaming, the families

seemed to regard blame and culpability as one; the more blame that they could cast onto the primary victim, lessened the blame for their own family.

This study illustrates that the type of neutralizations that are utilised in families differ depending upon their sensemaking of the event. The families in this study, were in denial of the offence, they did not communicate that they wanted the prisoner to take any responsibility for the crime that they had been convicted of, or that they should take responsibility for any behaviours that had put them in the position whereby it was possible for them to be accused of such crimes. This study has highlighted that denial is not uncommon in families who are connected to a prisoner who has been convicted of a serious stigmatising offence. Just like prisoners who are in denial, it may take several years for families to recognise or accept responsibility for their relative's criminal behaviour. Continued denial and/or minimisation of the offence, does not open families up to the possibility that their relative could be dangerous, that they have caused, or have the potential to cause future harms. For families who are in denial of their relatives' guilt, they may be unable to recognise, or choose to ignore the level of risk that they pose. This is significant, as they may be unable to support the offender to manage risky behaviours that could resurface on release. There is a real threat that families of offenders' exercise disguised compliance. This could have serous safeguarding consequences, with families colluding to normalise problematic behaviours.

This study has explored how the family appraise shame and stigma. A thread interwoven throughout the conceptual review of the literature in chapter two was that families of prisoners' experience shame and stigma, however this study uniquely reveals that shame and stigma was not always a feature of the participants' reality. Where shame and stigma were prevalent, it was not always recognised by the participants themselves. Susceptibility to internalised and externalised shame responses were linked to the way that family members appraised and made sense of the offence. Where individual and familial reconstructions of the offence, were that there had been no purposeful intent to cause harm, or where the sensemaking of the offence was one of categorical denial, shame was negated.

This study also illustrates how there are distinct gender difference in the way that shame and stigma are experienced. Other than when visiting the prison, none of the

males interviewed within this study stated that they felt shame or that they had experienced a stigmatising reaction from others, whilst some of the females reported that they had experienced stigmatising responses from friends and colleagues. This result is consistent with previous research findings (Lewis, 1971 and Crowley, 1997) which suggest that males have a stronger ego identity compared to females, and as such, they can defend against shame and associated familial culpability because of their innate ability to separate their own identities from others. This is achieved by distancing, and through externalising and isolating an event or person. The females, in particular, mothers, had a greater propensity to experience shame and stigma compared to the males interviewed. Denial again seems to mitigate one's proneness to shame and stigma. The findings from this study show that shame and stigma are apparent only when the offence cannot be categorically denied.

A significant feature of this study is that it has been possible to elicit some explanations as to why some women experience shame and stigma whilst others do not; this phenomenon has received very little examination within the extant literature to date. This study has shown that for the mothers that did not experience shame and stigma they had, like the males, been able to separate their own identities from their adult children, whilst the mothers whose identities remained interwoven, experienced shame and stigma. What this study shows for the first time, is that a key factor in the ability of mothers to separate their identities from their adult child seems to be related to the degree to which successful parent child separation individuation has been realised. Perceived interrupted neurodevelopment in a child, can disrupt the process of successful separation individuation, resulting in children who remain reliant upon their parents. This lack of individuation can lead to mothers continuing to feel responsible for the decisions and actions of their adult child. Significantly, the ongoing sense of responsibility correlates with a greater vulnerability to feeling shame and stigma.

The familial appraisal and experience of shame of was not only informed by how the participant appraised the offence but how they assessed their own degree of culpability for the offending behaviour. This study is unique in that it challenges the documented notion that familial blame is often willingly assumed by family members (Condry, 2007). Strikingly, the participants within this study projected narratives which asserted they were not culpable or blameworthy in any way for their relative's

behaviour. Avoidance of culpability was achieved by deflecting the blame elsewhere, this was predominantly shifted on to the primary victim or members of the judiciary who were deemed responsible for the unjust imprisonment of their relative.

Although shame was not a feature of all the participants' experience, a fear heteronomous shame was a feature of the narrative recasting. This fear of exposure, or disapproval, was not always recognised by the participants themselves and yet, all the participants consciously and unconsciously employed discursive strategies to protect their identity from becoming tainted. Prison visiting, and the prison personnel bestowed a sense of temporal shame and stigma upon the family. This was apparent even in individuals who had not explicitly conveyed that they felt shame and stigma. The way in which prison visits were processed resulted in family members feeling humiliated and devalued. All the families conveyed how they had experienced shame and stigma from prison personnel because of the perceived interwoven nature of the prisoner and the family's identity. Some of the participants felt that staff were unable to differentiate between the prisoner's identity, those who had been convicted of a crime, and the prison visitor's identity, those who had not committed a crime. Consequently, family members were compelled to demonstrate subordination and compliance for fear of jeopardising the visit. It is important to acknowledge that data collection took place before the Covid 19 pandemic and as such, the landscape of prison visiting, and the impact of face-to-face family contact may have changed. Moving forward, there is significant scope to examine and evaluate the impact of alternative methods of contact that have been implemented during the pandemic upon the family such as an increase in phone calls and the use of video visitations (Minson and Flynn, 2021).

The study has explored the impact of imprisonment upon family cohesion, relationships, and wellbeing. Imprisonment of a family member changed and destabilised how families related to one another and the outside world. Again, not all family members recognised that imprisonment had changed the nature of their intrafamilial relationships, or the way that they engaged with the wider community. Family cohesion was promoted when the family members sensemaking and positioning in respect to the offence was aligned. Disclosures or partial disclosures were only made of necessity and the families created metaphorical boundaries which signalled to those on the outside of the alternative master narrative what information

could or could not be discussed. Although this protective strategy reduced the risk of being discredited, it created a barrier to developing and sustaining meaningful and secure social and personal relationships. Keeping a secret can cause additional stress and result in insecure contacts as the family constantly revaluate the cost and benefits of revealing or maintaining concealment of the secret. The shared reconstructed alternative narrative created a degree of relational wellbeing and support for those on the inside of the story. Family cohesion was threatened if the prisoner's character, actions, or behaviour was challenged by anyone on the inside of the alternative narrative. Where this occurred, maladaptive family functioning (McCubbin & Patterson,1983) was triggered, resulting in family members withdrawing from each other, and relationships became strained and fractured.

Whilst imprisonment can result in a loss of interpersonal relationships, this study has emphasised how it can also result in restoring and improving relationships. Enforced separation can improve family cohesion, as it can provide the family some temporary respite from any stressors that were occurring with their relative before the arrest. Within this study, imprisonment did not always result in a severing of family ties. Imprisonment, in some cases, had a restorative function where family members who had been previously estranged had reconnected, and for some, new family connections and friendships were formed.

Family cohesion and the maintenance of viable relationships was fostered by the way in family members communicated with each other either by ignoring or avoiding issues. Subject avoidance was a central feature of this research, with the family, and the prisoner, rarely conversing about the crime, what had occurred or sharing with one another the impact of imprisonment upon the family network. Intrafamilial relationships were protected by the family engaging in prosocial communication strategies which avoided or ignored the harm to the primary victim and their families. This was a mechanism that also protected their own familial relationships. Families of prisoners did not feel that they could be open and challenge one another, for fear of jeopardising the relationship and risk further destabilising the family system. During the visits, the family sheltered the prisoner from their own realities. This protective sheltering served as a mechanism that reinforced family loyalties and communicated a belief in one another, and protected families from confronting stressful, unwanted, or painful information. Avoidance, however, can be problematic and can result in the

family colluding with the perpetrator on many levels. It can prevent the prisoner and the family from confronting and being open to alternative versions of reality that could be instrumental in repairing the harms to the family.

The keeping of intrafamilial secrets was another strategy employed to protect family cohesion. Secrets were kept by a deliberate withholding or omitting of information relating to the offence and conviction. Secrets, or elements of a secret, were kept from both individuals on the inside of the alternative master narrative and were also hidden from family members who were deemed to be outside the alternative master narrative. The families purposefully withheld information and formulated a series of untruths, not only to protect children within the family, but stories were crafted to protect family members who were deemed to be fragile and emotionally less well equipped to cope with the real or imagined social responses that could be encountered because of disclosure. Secrets within the family can threaten the stability and cohesion of family relationships. The secret creates a vacuum of isolation; those on the inside of the story isolated themselves, depriving themselves of the opportunity to access the wider familial and social support networks of those they had cast to be on the outside of the story. Whilst some participants maintained existing friendship groups, they avoided forming new friendships and actively avoided interactions in new social settings. This feature was however, not always recognised by the participants themselves. Where secrets are kept, families run the risk of exposure or there may become a time when it is necessary to disclose to the individuals that they have tried to protect. This research illustrates that the practice of disclosure is problematic, with families feeling ill equipped and unsupported in managing the process.

This study also shows that families of prisoners' experience both reactive and proactive identity losses due to enforced separation which requires a redefining of past relationships, and a renegotiation of future roles and relationships. The narratives expressed within this study, have illustrated for the first time, how the losses that prisoners' families experience (the secondary victims) can have many similarities to families who have suffered a loss as a result of violent, traumatic or sudden deaths (the primary victims). Families who experience loss through traumatic or stigmatising circumstances experience different reactions from those who are bereaved from an illness. For these types of families, where the loss is linked with a sense of shame, guilt or responsibility, the relationship and loss are not always validated by society.

The family may be viewed as being culpable in some way and as such they are not deemed as deserving of support. The families within this study, were disenfranchised from their grief and the identity transitions, and the pain associated with their loss, were not always, acknowledged, or even validated by the family members who were in close proximity to one another. The families on the inside of the alternative master narrative did not adequately attend to one another's emotional wellbeing or seek support from health care practitioners. The women experienced more stress, psychological harm, and a greater deterioration in their mental health compared to the male participants. This is a significant finding, as unmet health needs can have a detrimental impact upon the individual and the family system and reduce the capacity for individuals to support one another and the prisoner. If health needs remain unmet, this can result in long-term debilitating health impacts and socio-economic hardships.

The families interviewed felt isolated and unsupported. Separation and a lack of information relating to the judicial system, legal processes, and information from the prison, combined with procedural variances from prison to prison, were a source of significant and unrelenting stress for the family. Notably, this study shows that there are no consistent standards in England and Wales in respect to the timing and type of information that is conveyed to families. This study also highlights how families felt unprepared and fearful for their own futures. The idea of eventual release of the prisoner was not associated with a sense of relief and happiness but approached with feelings of trepidation, and dread. Importantly, this study shows that for families of prisoners' who have committed a serious offence, there are ongoing challenges to identity and role transitions that extend far beyond the terms of their relative's prison sentence.

7.2 Limitations and Consideration for Further Research

Whilst this exploratory study has provided a valuable insight into the experiences of prisoners' families, it is not without limitations, and these must be acknowledged. The focus of this study was to capture the experiences of families who were connected to a male prisoner serving a sentence of four years or more for committing a serious indictable offence, consequently, the experiences of other prison populations such as families of juveniles, female prisoners, and prisoners serving short or whole life orders are not represented. Moreover, the families interviewed did not reflect the typical

demographic of prison residents in England and Wales which is characterised by a population of prolific repeat offenders, who are more likely to be on shorter prison sentences and who come from disadvantaged communities and experience a range of inequalities such as low socioeconomic status, and poor educational attainment (Cuthbertson, 2017). Three of the families within this study, were classed as being white middle class professional families and were atypical of the stereotype troubled criminogenic family (Holt 2021). Only one of the family networks interviewed was of low socioeconomic status, and unlike the other families interviewed, their relative had some previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

The sample within this exploratory study is somewhat limited in that it does not portray the variations in experiences of different ethnic and cultural groups. Although families of different ethnicities were approached to participate in the study, none were recruited. Abass (2015) suggests that families of black and ethnic minority prisoners are more likely to engage if they can relate and identify with someone who shares the same culture or ethnicity as themselves; as a white female middle class researcher, the families may not have identified with me. That said, there may be some similarities amongst the different prison populations and some of the findings and recommendations from this study could be transferable. Further research is necessary into the way in which individual and familial identity is constructed and presented for families of different prison populations at different stages of their journey. The sample in this study does, however, represent the characteristics of the population who are prosecuted for an indictable offence. According to the Ministry of Justice (2020), 75% of the males prosecuted for indictable offences are white males.

This study captures the experiences of families at one point in time, and the families interviewed were at different stages of the sentence. It important to recognise that the narrative and how the participants recount, and project their narrative may indeed change over time. Recalling experiences retrospectively, may produce a different narrative compared to those captured closer to an event.

All the families interviewed in this study believed, or at least conveyed, that their relative was not responsible for the crimes that he had been convicted and were actively supporting the prisoner. Capturing the experiences of family members who believe that their relative is guilty of an offence may have resulted in different

reconstructions and biographical scripts. It may be that families who deny their relatives guilty status may have been more willing to take part in the study because it offers them another forum to share their narrative and project how they wish to be seen. If we are to fully understand how families on the outside of the alternative master narrative construct and manage their identity, further research is required to elicit the views of unsupportive or disassociated family members. Similarly, this research does not capture the experiences of family members who may have changed their mind about their relative's role and culpability. Further research that explores how and why this occurs could provide valuable insights into this unexplored construct.

7.3 Theoretical Contributions

This study illustrates that when a harmful event has occurred, there is a relationship between identity maintenance and blame responses. Despite being convicted of a serious indictable offence, all the participants interviewed denied their relatives' guilt and shifted blame onto the victims. To understand and explain the cognitive processes associated with blame judgements and gain a deeper understanding of how families mutate an element of their reality to support their sensemaking and shift the blame onto the victim, a new victim focused pathway of blame has evolved from this study. The new victim focused model, introduced in chapter six, provides a useful framework to understand blame judgements with families and contributes to the theory that is situated within family systems literature. Introducing the victim focused model of blame into support work with prisoners and their families can create a real opportunity and scope for families to explore family functioning, risk, sensemaking and their responses to events. Moreover, the underpinning principles of the model are applicable and transferable to a multiplicity of contexts and settings where there is a reluctance to accept responsibility and ownership for behaviours where victim blaming is apparent. For example, the model could be applied to work with perpetrators of domestic abuse and their families, or in a school setting where the bully blames the victims for their behaviours and actions.

The literature relating to discursive neutralization techniques has predominately focused on denial (Sykes and Matza, 1957) as the primary mechanism employed by families to externalise blame and shift culpability away from the prisoner and the family. This study shows how denial as a neutralization technique, does not capture

the way that families neutralise the event. This study illuminates how minimisations are a distinctive feature of the familial recasting. As a result of conducting this study, Sykes and Matza's (1957) theoretical framework has been extended to incorporate minimisations as a legitimate neutralization technique.

The findings illustrate that families engage in a range of sheltering strategies as a means of protecting their individual and familial identities. Whilst it is recognised that families keep secrets and omit truths from those on the outside of their network to protect their identity and safeguard against experiencing shame and stigma, this research reveals that protective sheltering, as a construct, exists and is utilised extensively within the family network. Families shelter and maintain family cohesion by selectively controlling information that is communicated within and amongst their own family networks. Secrets and lies are created to safeguard and protect the alternative master narrative. A distinct feature of this study shows that intrafamilial communication is characterised by avoidance, blocking, or selectively ignoring information that can threaten the alternative biographical script.

This study contributes to the theoretical knowledge and creates new and valuable insights into shame and stigma and how it is experienced and managed by different members of the same family. Although the prevailing literature asserts that families of prisoners' experience shame and stigma, the findings from this study challenge the notion that families automatically experience shame and stigma when a relative has been convicted of an offence. Although it has been acknowledged in the literature that heteronomous shame and stigma imposed by the prison and its personnel is a recognised feature of the family's reality (Hutton, 2016), what this study does reveal, is that outside of this, shame, stigma, familial blame, and culpability are not always experienced, recognised, or assumed by individual and family members.

This study provides fresh insights into the factors that enable families to resist shame and stigma. Factors that help negate and resist shame and stigma are closely connected to the sensemaking, the positioning and the commitment to the co-constructed alternative master narrative. Categorical denial of the offence, and the capacity of the individual to separate and isolate themselves from the person or the event are also factors that help mitigate shame proneness.

This study reveals for the first time, that there is a relationship between separation individuation and shame proneness for mothers of adult prisoners. Where identities remain tightly interwoven and successful separation individuation has not occurred, this can lead to mothers continuing to feel responsible for the decisions and actions of their adult child. The theory of separation individuation is usually discussed in terms of the child's ability to separate from parents, however, it is clear from undertaking this study, that a new lens could be applied to separation individuation theory which focuses on the parents' ability, and not the child's ability, to separate from their children to achieve separation individuation. This reversed theoretical approach, could offer new insights into connected identities, and isolate the factors that promote or inhibit successful separation individuation of the parent from their adult child.

This research provides an original contribution to theory of loss and disenfranchised grief in that it that it identifies how the losses that prisoners' families experience (the secondary victims) has many parallels to those families who have suffered a loss as a result of violent, traumatic stigmatising or sudden deaths (the primary victims), and yet, their grief is not always recognised or validated in the same way by society or one another. The similarities in the way of grief and loss are experienced between the primary and secondary victims is quite remarkable, and yet remains an overlooked phenomenon within grief and loss literature. Further research in this field is required but this could be useful in developing therapeutic interventions for both the primary and secondary victims.

7.4 Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The following section highlights recommendations for different sectors that should be implemented to support prisoners' families.

7.4.1 Identifying and communicating with families.

As families of prisoners are often a hidden marginalised group, greater partnership working between the police, prison visitor centres, probation, health practitioners and non-government agencies is necessary. Targeted campaigns and interventions that encourage and signpost families to recognise and seek help relating to their own losses and unmet health needs must be established.

When a serious crime has been committed, it is recommended that the investigating officers provide written information detailing the support that is available to families. This should include details of health care practitioners and mental health support services as well as details of non-government (NGO's) agencies who provide support and information to families. Imprisonment and its associated losses can result in family members experiencing a deterioration in mental and physical health, and result in a reduced socio-economic status. This can threaten the stability of the family system; if an individual is struggling to meet their own needs, their ability function and to support other family members may be compromised. When serious indictable offences are brought to court, if the defendant is remanded into custody, partnership agreements need to be established between agencies, including clinical commissioning groups, to allow sharing of information at the earliest opportunity, so that these vulnerable families can be identified, and targeted support offered in a timely manner.

Having established that the prison and prison visits impose a sense of temporal shame and stigma upon family members, the way in which the visiting process is operationalised could reduce the shame that families experience. Having a pool of designated prison staff that frequently work in the visits could be instrumental in building rapport and trust with the family, as opposed to staff being infrequently deployed to the visiting hall or centres. Prison visits and visitor centres should be internally audited annually to ensure prison visitors are treated with dignity and respect as recommended within the Farmer Report (2017).

7.4.2 Standardised information

A standardised communication protocol for establishing initial contact must be developed and adopted by all prison establishments. Separation and delays in being informed about the location of the prisoner and how families can establish contact with them is a significant, and yet avoidable source of distress for families. As a minimum standard, a named family member should be notified within two hours of the prisoner arriving at the place in which he is being detained, and at this point the relative should receive information about the prison and how to arrange a visit. The prisoner should be able to call a relative within four hours of arrival.

Procedural variances amongst different prisons are a source of stress and anxiety for families. Information about prison visiting and the procedures should be unified across establishments, yet specific to each category of prison. Each visitor centre should have a dedicated space explaining the procedures and rules of visitation. This information should also be prominent for families at the time of booking the visit. At the first visit to the prison or visitors centre, a named family member should be given an appointment to meet with a staff member and be given information about the prison, visiting procedures, how to contact family support workers and how to raise a concern. This information could subsequently be cascaded to other family members. Information must be provided in a language and format that the family can understand.

7.5 Education and Dissemination of Research Findings

Prison personnel at all levels, should engage in regular educational and training events to enable them to develop and embed innovative evidence-based research into practice. Governors need to develop a culture that supports and encourages staff to identify and prioritise work with families using a solution focused approach.

Health care practitioners including general practitioners, nurses, health visitors, mental health nurses, and school nurses also need to be aware of the impact of imprisonment upon the health and wellbeing of the family. This would enable them to be more proactive in identifying families and promoting the services which are accessible to them.

7.5.1 Dissemination

The findings of this study will be disseminated to key stakeholders and the wider academic community through publications in peer reviewed journals, presentation at conferences, workshops and seminars, as well as the findings being promoted at networking events.

7.6 Future Research

As the focus of this study was to capture the experiences of families who were connected to a male prisoner serving a sentence of four years or more for committing a serios indictable offence, further research is necessary into the way in which individual and familial identity is constructed and presented for families of different

prison populations at different points in their journey. A longitudinal study would be helpful to locate the identity transitions that occur over time. There is also scope to consider how the findings from this study could be relevant to families where there is a non-custodial sentence, particularly for crimes which are perceived to carry more shame and stigma, such as sex offending or child abuse.

The participants within this study were all actively supporting their family member in prison. Although the hope was to capture the views of family members who were both supporting and not supporting the prisoner this did not occur. This research does not capture the experiences of those family members who have dissociated from the prisoner and other family members. Some family members who disassociate with prisoner may feel shame and stigma however their experiences and identity transitions were not captured. Further research is required to explore the experiences of disassociated family members.

The sample within this study is limited in that it does not capture the variations in experiences of different ethnic and cultural groups. Further research is required that captures the experience of different cultural and ethnic groups.

The theory of separation individuation is usually discussed in terms of the child's ability to separate from parents however further research is required to explore the impact of the failure of the parent to separate their identity from their adult child before therapeutic interventions to support individuation can be recommended. Understanding separation individuation through a different lens could be instrumental in addressing issues with the family, such as unintentional collusion, disguised compliance culpability, and responsibility.

Greater exploration into how primary and secondary victims of crime experience loss could be developed further. For these types of families, where the loss is linked with a sense of shame, guilt or responsibility, the relationship and loss are not always understood or validated. This research identifies how there appears to be many similarities to the way in which the primary and secondary victims experience grief and loss. Understanding the parallels associated with loss could be instrumental in helping the families in the grieving process.

7.7 Final Reflection on the PhD Journey

As I reflect upon my PhD journey, it has been a very challenging but positive experience. Undertaking a PhD requires commitment, stamina and resilience, but I have learned that what really gets you to the end of the journey, is a genuine interest and enthusiasm for the subject, and real desire to contribute new knowledge to the field.

7.7.1 Impact of Covid 19

At the point that the pandemic broke, I had been feeling very engaged and enthused about my study. I had completed my data collection and I had just finished analysing the data for the four co-constructed family case studies, and I was about to start a separate discussion chapter in which in which I would analyse, compare, and contrast the themes generated across the four co-constructed family case studies. The pandemic interrupted this and had a significant impact upon my capacity to engage with my research. I, like many others, struggled with the transition of working from home fulltime, trying to adapt to new online teaching methods, as well as home schooling my children, who at the time were aged eight. I felt totally overwhelmed; the home school timetable mirrored the children's school day and there was an expectation that a parent would facilitate this learning. My husband could not work from home, so I had to assume this role. My children were not independent in their learning at this time, which resulted in me juggling my work commitments and home schooling. I constantly felt frustrated and guilty about not being able to dedicate enough time to either responsibility. The stress was further compounded by the fact that we were two years into building our own house, and the pressure was on to complete the build and move in. I had no choice but to suspend the PhD for a period of nine months. Reengagement in the research was difficult after this suspension period because of the time that had lapsed. I applied for a short sabbatical from work which helped me to immerse myself in the study again without distractions. The intention was to publish as I went along. Pre pandemic, I had presented my research at two conferences, and I was working towards a journal publication with my supervisors. Moving forward, the priority is to disseminate my research through publishing and attending conferences and networking events.

7.7.2 Professional growth

One of the biggest challenges that I have overcome is the fear of writing. Some days, the thought of writing has paralysed me, and the more I tried, the more difficult it became. I have spent days trying to write and perfect a paragraph; this is something that I had experienced from being in secondary school. Expressing my ideas on paper is a very slow arduous process. I realised that I was blocking the writing process, my lack of confidence in my own writing ability, and a fear of not getting it right was the root cause. I could verbalise and express my thoughts to others, so I tried to audio record my ideas with a view to playing them back so that I could type the words. This strategy did not help because I became awkward when the recording started, and I could not articulate what I wanted to write. I recognised that I needed support to break the cycle, so I attended a writing workshop which helped me develop the art of free writing. Free writing is where the initial ideas are written down and then the theoretical components and references are infilled afterwards, and then, the final piece of writing is further refined. This strategy has helped me to develop my confidence and develop my academic writing style. A reflective journal was also helpful in this process, my thoughts and ideas were written freely and afterwards, I could refer to this and explore the concepts and develop my ideas. Finally, I am no longer afraid to fill the blank page.

My supervisory team have been key assets in my professional development, at the outset, in the early days of supervision, I felt a little intimidated by their wealth of expertise, but with their ongoing, unrelentless support, I have found the confidence to freely articulate and develop my ideas. Meeting regularly and having a clear set of objectives to address before the next supervision date has helped me to stay on track and focused. Without setting these goals, I believe that I would have procrastinated and avoided doing the work I needed to do. For me, this would have been counterproductive and resulted in additional stress. I recognise that my stress is relieved by doing and completing a task as opposed to leaving or avoiding it. The process of having monthly supervision will also help me in my own transition to become a PhD supervisor. My supervisors have different styles, and I can see how I can integrate elements of their supervision practices as I develop my own style and way of working within a PhD supervisory team. I have already begun this process; I am a third supervisor for a PhD student who is developing a study with a focus upon

prisoners' families. The next stage for me is to complete the PhD supervisors training and establish myself as a second supervisor on a PhD supervisory team.

I have developed new knowledge in the research process, and I have begun to apply this to the research modules that I lead and contribute to. I am already integrating the theory that has been generated from my research into teaching sessions, sharing my subject knowledge and the new skills that I have acquired as a qualitative researcher. I also feel more confident in my ability to engage in academic debate, this extends far beyond my subject expertise. I feel that the PhD journey validates my position and title of being an academic. I am looking forward to networking and disseminating my research and finding ways to influence and inform policy and practice. To bring about real, sustained change for the family of prisoners, policy responses and therapeutic interventions must prioritise, separate, and address the needs of the prisoner's family, from that of the prisoner's own reform and rehabilitation. Only when this is achieved, should the family be seen as a potential asset in supporting the prisoner to reform and desist from future offending.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

SREP Proposal

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

Name of applicant: Tracey Hardy
Title of study: The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity.

Department: Human and Health Sciences   Date sent:

Issue	The impact of imprisonment upon family members was first examined by Morris (1965) and although nearly half a century has lapsed since the initial publication there remains a distinct paucity of UK research in respect to what is known about the identity transitions families' face. To date, research has predominantly focused upon children with a parent in prison and the impact upon and outcomes for the children and their parents (Fishman, 1990; Boswell, 2002 and Salmon, 2005). The body of knowledge that does exist in respect to how family members live with the consequences of imprisonment and the support that is available is, suggest Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo and Knapp (2007), scattered, with organisations rarely identifying this hidden marginalised population within the remit of their work. Several studies relating to the familial impact of imprisonment describe how families experience shame, guilt and stigma (Arditti, 2003; Condry, 2007 and Codd, 2008) however, the material is dated and there is a distinct lack of analysis as to what this really means for family members in respect to how they perceive and manage their individual and familial identity within and outside their immediate and extended community.
Researcher(s) details	Tracey Hardy
Supervisor details	Main Supervisor- Dr Carla Reeves. Co Supervisor- Graham Gibbs
Aim / objectives.	**Aims of the project** This research aims to explore how families of prisoners serving prison an indeterminant sentence of four years or more, for committing a serious crime construct and manage their social identity. It will explore what factors influence how different family members related to a prisoner manage their individual, familial and extra familial identity.

	More specifically it will aim to: -
	• Explore the factors that influence the individual and familial appraisal of stigma, shame and guilt. • Examine how families manage their identity within and outside of their immediate and extended social network.
Study Start & End Date	Start Date PHD: October 2013 End Date 2021 Start Date Data Collection: 2015 End Date Data Collection 2017
Permissions for study	University of Huddersfield
Access to participants	Access to family members will be primarily through HMPS services and facilities. Permission would be sought to work collaboratively relevant organisations who support prisoner's families such as Partners of Prisoners families. Families will also be invited to take part in the study from support groups for prisoner's families that are available via Social Media Networks, incorporating digital sites such as Facebook. Administrators of the sites will be contacted in the first instance and permission sought to access the group. Introductory posts will ask for expressions of interest to take part in the outlined study. Interested parties, with their permission would be sent the additional information pertaining to the study via private messaging facilities. In addition, calls for expression of interest to take part in the study will be advertised. One such example may be calls for expression of interest via staff message board on the University's Homepage.
Confidentiality	The interviews will take place in a private room at a Visitor Centre or in mutually agreed location such as the family's home. In order to maintain confidentiality only the interviewer and participant will be present in the room during the recorded interview. The participants will have the right to withdraw at any time. The researcher will assure that any information obtained from participants and nominated participants will not be disclosed either verbally or through non-verbal communication to either party. The interviews will be recorded, stored and managed in line with the University of Huddersfield's data protection standards. Pseudonyms will be used when the interviews are transcribed, and no identifying information will be included. All electronic files which contain personal data will be stored in a password protected file. All data and recording equipment will be securely stored and transported Access to data (audio or written) will be limited to researcher, the supervision team and other academics who may be involved in the analysis of the data for academic purposes.

Anonymity	Participant's names and any other identifying information such as names of relatives, friends and demographics will be changed in order to protect the identities of the participants. Any quotes that are used will be anonymised and participant anonymity will be maintained in the dissemination of the research.
Psychological support for participants	Due to the sensitive nature of the research participants s will have the right to withdraw from the study, suspend or terminate the interview at any point. Permission would be sought to use any data already obtained or it will be destroyed in accordance with the participant's wishes. Participants will be directed to sources of support such as the General Practitioner or organisations that support families of prisoners. All participants will be de-briefed following their participation in the research.
Researcher safety / support (Attach complete University Risk Analysis and Management form)	The research may involve interviewing participants in their own home. If this is the case, then standard protocols for lone worker will be followed. The researcher will leave information about their whereabouts with a member of the supervision team (or another designated person) and will contact them by mobile phone before and after the interview. Please see appendix.
Identify any potential conflicts of interest	None
Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy	
Information sheet for Participants	Yes
Consent form	Yes
Letters	Yes
Questionnaire	Not Applicable
Procedural Interview guide and Themes	For researchers use only
Dissemination of results	Results will be disseminated through conference papers and submitted to appropriate peer reviewed discipline focused journals. The work will be submitted for my Doctoral thesis.
Other issues	Contact Sheet, Risk Assessment, Supervisors Report
Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee / External Agencies	NOMS
All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)	Please confirm. This proposal will not be considered unless the supervisor has submitted a report confirming that (s)he has read all documents and supports their submission to SREP

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

Proposed Revisions to Previously Approved Application

Applicant Name: Tracey Hardy

Title of previously approved study: The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoner's manage their identity.

Date Approved 09/07/15.

Issue	Please clearly identify below revisions made to previously approved SREP application
Researcher(s) details	Tracey Hardy
Supervisor details	Carla Reeves
Aim / objectives.	
Methodology	
Permissions for study	
Access to participants	**Accessing participants from HMP Visiting Facilities**- NOMS permission required and sought. **Changes made to eligibility criteria**. Focusing on Indeterminate sentences only is limiting the scope of the study, consequently changing the criteria to include determinant as well as indeterminate sentences with a tariff of 4 years or more will widen the number of families eligible to take part. **Recruitment of participants.** In addition to recruiting participants that are identified through organisations that work with prisoners' families the amendment to the proposal will now incorporate seeking access to participants via support groups that are found on social Media Networks such as Facebook as well as advertising calling for expressions of interest for example University emails.

Confidentiality	
Anonymity	
Psychological support for participants	
Researcher safety / support (attach complete University Risk Analysis and Management form)	
Information sheet	
Consent form	
Letters	
Questionnaire	
Interview schedule	
Dissemination of results	
Other issues	
Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee	NOMS Research Application Appendix 10
All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)	All revised documentation has been seen by Carla Reeves in light of recommendations made.

Signed: _____ _Mardy_ _____
      (SREP Applicant – electronic signature acceptable)

Date: ___20/11_/2015_____

SREP Approval

Dear Tracey,

Further to Jane's email below, I am writing to confirm that full ethical approval has now been granted with regard to your research project as detailed above.

With best wishes for the success of your research project.

Regards,

Kirsty
(on behalf of Dr Jane Tobbell, Deputy SREP Chair)

Kirsty Thomson
Research Administrator

☎: 01484 471156
✉: K.Thomson@hud.ac.uk
🖥: www.hud.ac.uk

School of Human and Health Sciences Research Office (HHRG/01)
University of Huddersfield | Queensgate | Huddersfield | HD1 3DH

From: Jane Tobbell
Sent: 04 December 2014 08:19
To: Tracey Hardy
Cc: Carla Reeves; Graham Gibbs; Kirsty Thomson
Subject: RE: Your SREP Application - Tracey Hardy (Staff PhD) - APPROVED SUBJECT TO AMENDMENTS - The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity (SREP/2014/079)

Thanks Tracey, that's fine you're good to go. Hope it all goes well.

Dr Jane Tobbell
University Teaching Fellow

☎: +44 (0) 1484 472588
✉: j.tobbell@hud.ac.uk
🖥: www.hud.ac.uk

Department of Behavioural and Social Sciences
University of Huddersfield | Queensgate | Huddersfield | HD1 3DH

Appendix 4

National Offender Management Service Decision

Mrs Tracey Hardy
University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH
t.hardy@hud.ac.uk

National Offender Management Service
National Research Committee
Email: National.Research@noms.gsi.gov.uk

17th December 2015

NATIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE DECISION

Ref: 2015-360
Title: The familial impact of imprisonment – an exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity

Dear Mrs. Hardy,

Further to your application to undertake research across NOMS, the National Research Committee (NRC) has considered the information provided, alongside the requirements set out in the NOMS research instruction (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/research) and is unable to support your project at the present time.

- The Committee felt that the potential benefits to NOMS (including how the findings could be operationalised) were insufficiently elaborated and did not justify the use of establishment Visitor Centres as an interview location.
- However, the Committee notes that there is no reason this research project cannot go ahead, with the assistance of Partners of Prisoners (Pops) and Prisoners Family and Friends Service. Where staff members from these organisations can identify suitable participants, and interviews do take place other than in Visitor Centres, NRC approval is not required (for example, approval would not be needed were the partner agencies to distribute recruitment leaflets on behalf of the applicant inside Visitor Centres)
- During the application evaluation process, members of the NRC made the following points regarding your application which we hope you might find useful in the continuation of your work:
  - ➢ Where previous applications have been received by the NRC which require interviews with the family and friends of prisoners, the Committee has strongly advised the applicant to encourage potential participants to discuss their involvement with their family member/friend who is in prison prior to taking part.

- ➢ It might be of interest to also consider potentially the positive impact on wider families of the imprisonment of a family member, with particular reference to an increase in stability and security of location, and the ability to access support services.
- ➢ Some Committee members posited that multiple short sentences might prove to be more disruptive for the wider family, and require more support, than a single longer term of imprisonment
- ➢ Could a sibling be an appropriate primary contact, as well as partners and parents?
- ➢ The application states that children of prisoners will not be interviewed, but does this include adult children?
- ➢ Given the sensitive nature of the topic, it was felt that there should be a strategy in place to deal with distressed interviewees, including the capacity to direct them towards support afterwards should they need it.

We appreciate that this may be disappointing for you and that this is not the response you would have hoped for.

As set out in the NOMS Research Applications Instruction (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/research), consideration can be given to one resubmission.

Yours sincerely,
National Research Committee

Appendix 5

Waiting Room Flyer

The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity.

As a parent or partner of someone serving an indeterminate or determinant prison sentence, you and your family are being invited to take part in this study exploring the impact that imprisonment has had upon you.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the impact of imprisonment when a member of your family has been sentenced to prison for committing a serious crime. It seeks to capture your views and experiences as an individual and a family. This research will give you an opportunity to tell your story, to have a voice about how imprisonment affects you and your family.

If you have a relative serving a determinant or indeterminate sentence for committing a serious crime, serving a minimum tariff of four years we would like to hear from you. As this research seeks to capture a variety of views from different family members it is important that at least two other adult members of your family agree to take part in the research before you are interviewed.Children will not be interviewed.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research you and your family members will invited to take part in an interview.You will be invited individually to tell your story. This can take place in the comfortort of your home or at an agreed location.

Will my identity be disclosed?

All information will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed.

Interested?

Please contact Tracey Hardy on 01484 471359 t.hardy@hud.ac.uk

Information Sheet for Primary Contact

Information Sheet for Participants

Primary Contact

The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity.

As a parent or partner of someone serving an indeterminate or determinate prison sentence you and your family are being invited to take part in this study exploring the impact that imprisonment has had upon you. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you and your family members understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the impact of imprisonment for relatives when a member of their family has been sentenced to prison for committing a serious crime. It seeks to capture the views and experiences of different family members all connected to the same person serving a custodial sentence. This research will give families a voice and raise the profile of how imprisonment affects individuals and families.

You must have a family member serving an indeterminate or determinate sentence for committing a serious crime, serving a minimum tariff of four years to be eligible to take part in the research.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you and some of your family decide to take part you will all, individually be asked to sign a consent form. You will be free to withdraw at any time during the interview and up to four weeks after the interview has taken place. You will not have to explain why you wanted to withdraw from the research. If you choose not to take part you will not be disadvantaged in any way whatsoever.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research you will be invited to take part in an interview in your home or at location of your choice. The interview will take place on a one to one basis, so a room with some privacy will be required. The interview will be recorded and should not last more than one hour. Some written notes will also be taken during the interview. In preparation for the interview, you may find it useful to select some photographs or newspaper cuttings to help you tell your story of your life before, and after sentencing.

As this research seeks to capture a variety of views from different family members, it would be helpful if you could share the yellow form 2, *Information sheet for relatives* with your family. Please provide the contact details of your family members who would like to take part in this research. With their permission please enter their contact details on the blue form 3, *Participant Contact Sheet.* It is important that at least two other members of your family agree to take part in the research before you are interviewed.

A family member does not have to be a blood relative, it could be a close friend who you consider to be part of your family.

Please post this form to Tracey Hardy using the envolope provided. Tracey will then contact you and your relatives to arrange an interview.

Will my identity be disclosed?

All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential, and the identity of all family members will be anonomysed (except where legal obligations would necessitate disclosure by the researchers to appropriate personnel). No information from your interview will be shared with any other family members who have agreed to participate in the research. All data will be combined and therefore it will not be possible to identify individuals within published work.

What will happen to the information?

This research is being undertaken in order to fulfill the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Human and Health Sciences and is supported and funded by the University of Huddersfield. It has received approval from the University of Huddersfield Research and Ethics panel.

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names will be removed in order to ensure anonymity. It is anticipated that

the research may, at some point, be published in a journal, report or presented at conferences. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings but your name or any identifying details will not appear in the text and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me, Tracey Hardy at the University of Huddersfield, Queensgate HD1,3DH

E-mail t.hardy@hud.ac.uk

Telephone 01484 471359

The research is being supervised by Dr Carla Reeves at the University of Huddersfield who is happy to be contacted if required, to provide you with any additional information regarding the research or your rights as a participant. She can be contacted on 01484 472549 or email c.reeves@hud.ac.uk

Information Sheet for Relatives

The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity.

As a relative of someone serving an indeterminate or determinant prison sentence you are being invited to take part in this study exploring the impact that imprisonment has had upon you and your family. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you and your selected family members understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the impact of imprisonment for relatives when a member of their family has been sentenced to prison for committing a serious crime. It seeks to capture the views and experiences of different family members all connected to the same a person serving an indeterminate or determinate custodial sentence. This research will give families a voice and raise the profile of how imprisonment affects individuals and families.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will be free to withdraw at any time during the interview and up to four weeks after the interview has taken place. You will not have to explain why you wanted to withdraw from the research. If you choose not to take part you will not be disadvantaged in any way whatsoever.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research you will be invited to take part in an interview. The interview will take place at a mutually convienient location. The interview will take place on a one to one basis, so a room with some privacy will be required. The interview will be recorded and should not last more than one hour. Some written notes will also be taken during the

interview. In preparation for the interview, you may find it useful to select some photographs or newspaper cuttings to help you tell your story of your life before, and after sentencing.

Will my identity be disclosed?

All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential, and the identity of all family members will be anonomysed (except where legal obligations would necessitate disclosure by the researchers to appropriate personnel). No information from your interview will be shared with any other family members who have agreed to participate in the research. All data will be combined and therefore it will not be possible to identify individuals within published work.

What will happen to the information?

This research is being undertaken in order to fulfill the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Human and Health Sciences and is supported and funded by the University of Huddersfield. It has received approval from the University of Huddersfield Research and Ethics panel.

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names will be removed in order to ensure anonymity. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal, report or presented at conferences. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured. It may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings but your name or any identifying details will not appear in the text and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me Tracey Hardy at the University of Huddersfield, Queensgate HD1,3DH

E-mail t.hardy@hud.ac.uk Telephone 01484 471359

The research is being supervised by Dr Carla Reeves at the University of Huddersfield who is happy to be contacted if required to provide you with any additional information regarding the research or your rights as a participant. She can be contacted on 01484 472549 or email c.reeves@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 8

Contact Form

Please complete this form and email to t.hardy@hud.ac.uk or post it to T Hardy, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Harold Wilson Building HW2/26. Huddersfield West Yorkshire

Your Name

Your Address

Your Contact Details
Telephone Number   Home   Mobile

Your Email

I confirm that have approached the following people and given them the **Relative Participation Information** sheet and they have agreed that their contact details can be shared with the researcher and would like to be approached take part in the research. Relatives will only be approached where a signature has been obtained giving permission to share their details with the researcher.

Your Signature

Relative's Contact Details

Name of Relative	Relative's Email	Relative's Telephone number	Relatives, please sign to agree for researcher to contact you.

Appendix 9

Consent Form

The Familial Impact of Imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoner's manage their identity.

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details, please contact myself Tracey Hardy t.hardy@hud.ac.uk Tel 01484 472359. The research is being supervised by Dr Carla Reeves at the University of Huddersfield who is happy to be contacted if required, to provide you with any additional information regarding the research or your rights as a participant. She can be contacted on 01484 472549 or email c.reeves@hud.ac.uk

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research.

I consent to taking part in it.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason.

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym)

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researcher will have access to the information provided.

I understand that my identity will be protected using a pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report.

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project, please print your name and sign below.

Signature of Participant:	Signature of Researcher:
Print:	Print:
Date:	Date

Appendix 10

Interview Schedule and Check List. (Researchers use only)

The familial impact of imprisonment- An exploratory study examining how families of prisoners manage their identity.

Aim -The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the impact of imprisonment for relatives when a member of their family has been sentenced to prison for committing a serious crime. It seeks to capture the views and experiences of different family members all connected to the same a person serving a custodial sentence. How families construct and manage their individual and familial identity will be examined. The aim is to capture a variety of perspectives on how imprisonment impacts upon different members of the same family. This research will give families a voice and raise the profile of how imprisonment affects individuals and families. On the basis of this improved understanding, it may be possible to inform policy and identify ways in which families can be further supported.

Procedural issues

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to participate. Check understanding of the aim of the research.

How long interview is likely to last.

Check consent One copy of consent to be retained by participant / one copy to be retained by researcher.

Rights of participants (to suspend or terminate interview)

Confidentiality

Record   name of participant, time and date and location of interview.

Relationship to prisoner

Nature of crime and type of sentence

Length of sentence served at time of interview.

Any questions from participants

Start recording and explore themes.

Theme Life before the offence

Sub themes

Nature of relationship to offender- Kin and perceived closeness of relationship

Roles (perceived identity, e.g., mother, matriarch, functioning within perceived role-good/supportive) mother.

Support network (who were your main sources of support within and outside family network)

Health status of participant (physical/ mental wellbeing)

Daily life, employment routine

Theme Finding out, trial and sentencing.

Sub themes

Feelings in respect to roles participant 9 how they think they should act compared with how they act)

Shame, stigma, guilt, relief (Manifestations)

Support / tensions (familial, friends, professionals)

Disclosure, impression management, information control (conscious or unconscious, management by family)

Significant stressors/ tensions (financial conflict managing work/ information control, supporting others)

Any health impact Interfamilial and external networks

Theme Post sentencing

Sub themes

How do you see yourself (identity of self in relation self, others, prisoner. Your role in what has happened e.g., blame, guilt, responsibility, anger)

 Support network (Interfamilial and external networks -relationships family, friends, support, tensions)

Impression management (disclosure, information control, risks, conscious/ unconscious awareness)

Health

Life now

Procedural Issues

Stop recording.

Post interview, thank you and debriefing.

Checking out participants wellbeing

Signposting to support.