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**Mixed Experiences: a study of the childhood narratives of  
mixed race people related to risks to their mental health and  
capacity for developing resilience.**

**Volume One**

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**This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Community and Health Sciences Research.**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AESOP	Aetiology and Ethnicity in Schizophrenia and Other Psychoses
ASBOs	Anti Social Behaviour Orders
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
COSICAPS	Costs, Outcomes and Satisfaction for Inpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services
CRES	Cash Releasing Efficiency Savings
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DOAS	Do Once And Share
E&W	England and Wales
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HAS	Health Advisory Service
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
ISER	Institute for Social and Economic Research
IT	Information technology
KS4	Key Stage Four
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NSF	National Service Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSE	Present State Examination
PSRs	Pre-Sentencing Reports
YOTs	Youth Offending Teams
YJB	Youth Justice Board
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## **Abstract**

### **Background**

The mixed race child population is growing proportionately faster than any other group. Whilst there is a body of research in this country, albeit small, that looks at the experiences of mixed race children, none of this research examines specifically the risks for mental health and the possibilities for developing resilience which may be related to growing up as a mixed race child.

### **Methods**

Twenty-one adults, recruited through the internet, were asked to reflect on their childhood experiences in relation to being mixed race. They were offered a choice of response methods. The majority chose to provide a written account.

A thematic analysis was carried out, within a phenomenological framework. A further analysis was undertaken to assess whether risks to mental health or opportunities to develop resilience could be identified in the findings from the phenomenological analysis using known risk and resilience factors relating to the mental health of children and young people.

### **Results**

The data show that there are some additional risks to the mental health of mixed race young people. As well as difficulties experienced in establishing personal identity, they show that there are specific difficulties in secondary school and that young people of mixed race experience racism and prejudice from both black and white peers. The data indicate a capacity for building resilience, necessitated by their mixedness, linked to supportive families.

### **Conclusions**

The overarching findings from this study mirror many of those from other mixed race studies . However this study shows how mixed race young people may experience some additional risks to mental health which need to be understood and considered by professionals in health, social care, education and justice systems.