WORK BASED PROJECT

TITLE OF INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Emotional Resilience and the Professional Capabilities Framework: Identifying what Emotional Resilience is, in the Context of Social Work Education, Training and Practice.

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ABSTRACT

In 2009, the Government introduced measures to improve social work training and practice in response to having analysed findings from Serious Case Reviews in the aftermath of a series of child deaths. One of the most significant of these improvements was the introduction of a new training framework, entitled the 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (The College of Social Work, 2012d). Emotional resilience was, for the first time, identified as a required capability within the 'Professionalism' domain of the framework.

The aim of this research was to identify what emotional resilience was in the context of social work practice in order to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework, thus addressing the Government's new directives for improved social work education and training.

A research study was undertaken to collect data relating to emotional resilience within a social work context involving ten focus groups of between 3-5 participants. The participants were chosen because of their experience in relation to emotional resilience and social work, either through being employed, studying or working in partnership with the University of Derby. The groups comprised, social work team managers, newly qualified and experienced Social Workers, practice educators, lecturers, social work students from all three years of the Social Work Degree Programme and service users and carers. All of the focus group discussions were audio-taped, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

The study produced a definition of emotional resilience specifically for Social Workers which identified core traits of optimism, self-awareness, empathy and stability as well as the ability to remain calm and demonstrate appropriate empathy. The necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient was confirmed, and causal factors in the development of emotional resilience such as adversity in life, reflective supervision and a supportive working environment, were highlighted.

Valuable information was also obtained about how students might be educated and trained to become emotionally resilient professionals, in order to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework. The findings indicated that challenging role plays, self-awareness activities, preparation for practice modules, the use of explicit case studies, reflective supervision and statutory placements, were all effective mediums for promoting emotional resilience.

Keywords: emotional resilience, Professional Capabilities Framework, social work education and training, social work curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AYSE	Assessed Year in Employment
BASW	The British Association of Social Workers
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BJSW	British Journal of Social Work
CCETSW	The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
CQSW	Certificate of Qualification in Social Work
CSS	Certificate in Social Services
CTSW	Council for Training in Social Work
CWDC	Child Workforce Development Council
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
GSCC	General Social Care Council
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
NOS	National Occupational Standards
PCF	Professional Capabilities Framework
PSHE	Personal Social Health Education
SEAL	Social Emotional Aspects of Learning
TCSW	The College of Social Work
SWRB	Social Work Reform Board
SWTF	Social Work Task Force
UoD	University of Derby

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter One explores the main reasons for undertaking the research and provides justification for doing so. The chapter also identifies the main aim and the objectives of the research, and includes an outline of the contents to offer navigation through the main sections of the study.

1.2 Main Reasons for the Research

There were several reasons underpinning the desire to carry out this particular area of research, which were as follows:

- The personal interest this subject held for me and links with previous research that I had undertaken.
- The implications for social work education, training and practice.
- An obligation following a Government directive to cultivate knowledge relating to emotional resilience, which was a new concept in the field of social work education and practice.

These reasons are explored more fully in the following sections.

1.2(a) Personal Interest

The first time that I heard the term 'emotional resilience' was at a Joint Social Work Education and Research (JSWEC) Conference at the University of Hertfordshire in July 2009. A presentation entitled '*Developing Emotional Resilience in Social Work: Supporting Effective, Reflective Practitioners*' was led by Louise Grant, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire, and

Gail Kinman, a Chartered Psychologist, and Professor of Occupational Health Psychology at the University of Bedfordshire. Having just completed a Master in Education in researching the relationship between emotional intelligence and social work education and training, the term 'emotional resilience' and its connection with social work, greatly interested me.

An initial search of the literature see (pp.23-26) revealed that the concept of emotional resilience and its relevance to social work practice and education, had been under-researched over the years. Wilson and Kelly (2010) found that there were very few texts, reports or research studies relating to it being germane to social work practice. I decided therefore, that the lack of research available, and the reasons outlined on (p.11), meant that it was an area of study worthy of further exploration at Doctoral level.

1.2(b) Implications for Social Work Education, Training and Practice

My research into the topic of emotional resilience and social work coincided with a time of heightened awareness of social work education and its effectiveness. This was as a result of a succession of child deaths within the U.K, which had undermined confidence in Social Workers' ability to do the job effectively (British Association of Social Workers (BASW), 2013). In particular, the death of Peter Connolly and the resulting negative media coverage (Batty, 2009, Adams and Sheard, 2013), had led to renewed concerns about the profession, and called for an overhaul of the Social Work Degree (Department of Health (DoH), 2008). As Williams (2011) pointed out, questions were being raised about how social work teaching and learning might be improved, in order to better equip social work students with the tools to be effective practitioners.

Attention had also been drawn to any changes in training being imposed as a 'knee jerk' reaction by the Government, as an attempt to allay the public's concerns (Loughton, 2010). This had raised uncertainty from those in the social work profession, about the likelihood of a new training framework being effectual enough to prevent another child's death (Warner, 2013). Indeed, the last few

decades had seen several changes to social work education and training which according to O'Hagan (2005), appeared to have done little to alter the situation.

1.2(c) Government Directives

The focus of my research predominantly centred on Government directives arising from the initial recommendations of the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) (2009a) in relation to social work education and training, to their implementation by The College of Social Work (TCSW) (2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). More recent reports by Narey (2014), Advisor to the British Government, and Croisdale-Appleby (2014), Chair of Skills for Care, considered the impact of these reforms on training since they were introduced in 2009, but these were published after completion of my data collection. Nevertheless, recommendations from these reports have been discussed in Chapter Five and reflected upon in relation to practice implications in Chapter Seven.

The SWTF (2009a), an expert group appointed by the Secretaries for Health, Children and Education, was set up to advise the Government on social work reform. Its remit was to review frontline social work, for both children and adults, and to propose recommendations for reform across the whole of the profession (SWTF, 2009a). It was at this point in my research that my interest and curiosity about the concept of emotional resilience really started to develop, and I began to examine in more detail the SWTF's recommendations for the future education and training of Social Workers (SWTF, 2009a, p.12).

The Final Report of the SWTF (2009a, p.12), set out fifteen recommendations for future social work education and training. The first three, relating to the calibre of entrants, curriculum, and practice placements, were areas that I chose to target for my research, with a specific focus on emotional resilience. According to the SWTF (2009a), adhering to these recommendations promised a more coherent and effective national framework for the education and training of Social Workers. It was within this Report (1.13. p.12), that the concept of resilience was mentioned explicitly, as an integral factor that defined the meaning of social work:

> *social work calls for a particular mix of analytical skills, insight, common sense, confidence, **resilience**, empathy and the use of authority* (SWTF, 2009a, p.17).

and it was clearly stated by the SWTF in the Final Report (2009a, s.1.4, p.12), that they considered students to lack the '*maturity, **resilience** or life experience*' to become good Social Workers. To address this they recommended that selection interviews should:

> *evaluate the life and work experience of course applicants, their communication skills, creativity and **emotional resilience*** (SWTF, 2009a, p.21).

This was not the first time that emotional resilience had been identified as a determining factor for effective practice, for amongst the backdrop of proposed reforms within social work, Lord Laming's Report (2009) on the protection of children in England, pointed out that Social Workers needed '*to develop the **emotional resilience** to manage the challenges they will face*' (Laming, 2009, p.55).

Overall, the Final Report (s1.9, p.18), appeared to criticise the present social work curriculum for being too loosely defined, and not being focussed enough on linking theory with practice (SWTF, 2009a). It indicated also, that certain areas of knowledge were not being covered in sufficient depth such as, communication skills, and managing conflict and hostility (SWTF, 2009a, s1.9, p.18). There were suggestions too, that lecturers were not always up to date with current practice, and that the curriculum needed to remain '*responsive to the changing realities of practice*' (SWTF, 2009a, s1.20, p.18, 1.24, p.19). It followed then, that one had to assume that this '*changing reality*' necessitated the need to be emotionally resilient, and if that was the case, that it was essential to consider how emotional resilience would be defined in relation to its applicability to social work, in order to determine how students might learn and demonstrate the ability to be resilient.

Evidence had come to light that Social Workers were not resilient in practice and this was reflected in higher than average rates of illness and stress amongst Social

Workers, as opposed to other professionals, factors that Morris (2009) considered attributable in some way to resilience, or indeed to a lack of it. As Smith (2010) pointed out though, it was not just a lack of emotional resilience that was a causal factor of high levels of stress, organisational factors such as, lack of supervision and high caseloads, also had an impact. Notably, there was recognition that the job had changed in recent years. As Siebert (2006) noted, the number of cases Social Workers were expected to work with had risen, and the resulting escalation of paperwork left little time for direct contact with service users. The provision of supportive and effective supervision to manage this increased workload was also lacking (Siebert, 2006). In response to this, an annex to the Final Report of the SWTF (2009a) '*Building a safe, confident future'*, *'Annex A 'Organisations and Workloads – a 'health check'* (SWTF, 2009b) promised, with its 'health check' framework, an audit of issues affecting staff workloads. However, as a Community Care Survey undertaken in 2010 revealed, this 'health check'(SWTF, 2009b) had not successfully addressed the concerns, as 89% of the 600 Social Workers who responded, believed high caseloads were affecting their ability to practice effectively, and 82% said that their caseloads had increased since the previous year (Smith, 2010). Overall there was little disagreement therefore, that reform was required in relation to organisational issues which were adversely impacting on Social Workers' ability to do their job effectively (Smith, 2010).

This sentiment was echoed by The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report (2011), (Munro, 2011) which built on the work of the SWTF (2009a), Social Work Task Force (SWTF) (2010), and the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) (2010), and published following a review of social work with children and families, which noted that previous reforms had led to an increase in bureaucracy and prescriptive processes in child and family social work, in an attempt to improve services. It was evident that relationship-based social work had changed to become more focused on collecting information via paper based assessments, rather than on face-to-face sessions (Department for Education (DfE), 2011). Findings from the Munro Report (2011) suggested that there were two obstacles hindering good practice, firstly, a lack of consensus about the role and responsibilities of social work and secondly, inappropriate models of practice. The Munro Report (Munro, 2011) acknowledged

that it was also becoming increasingly difficult to ignore underpinning concerns relating to problems in recruiting and maintaining Social Workers in post.

Following recommendations from the SWRB (2010), TCSW (2012d) was tasked with implementing the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) (Appendix 1), in which emotional resilience featured significantly within the 'professionalism' domain of the training framework. This framework provided a focal point throughout my research study and required Social Workers, from the point at which a prospective student applied to a social work programme, to Advanced Social Worker level with managerial responsibility, to be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to the use of self and emotional resilience. It should be noted that although the PCF provided a training framework for the duration of a Social Worker's career, my research study focused solely on the period of education and training from the point of recruitment and selection, to the end of the last placement and three years of study on the Social Work Degree Programme.

The introduction of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) highlighted the increasing focus and apparent applicability of emotional resilience to future social work training and practice (SWTF, 2009a). It was within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), that the term 'emotional resilience' was utilised for the first time within the context of social work education and training, having previously been commented upon in relation to social work practice by Lord Laming (2009) and the SWTF (2009a). At this stage in the research it was unclear about why the concept of emotional resilience had been identified as being significant enough to be included in the new framework for social work education and training. The growth in its potential relevance to social work though, and confirmation that social work was a demanding profession, was upheld by Croisdale-Appleby (2014, p.15) who recommended the need for Social Workers to have '*the ability to exhibit resilience under conditions of high pressure'*. This supported the view, that research in relation to the applicability of emotional resilience within the sphere of social work education and training, was required.

Unfortunately, little discussion or guidance was provided by TCSW (2012d) to inform educators and trainers about how the PCF might be implemented in relation to teaching, assessing and evidencing emotional resilience, although curriculum guides were available for other subject areas (TCSW, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). The intention therefore, was for my research to address this gap in knowledge, by providing information about emotional resilience in the context of social work education, training and practice.

1.3 Justification for the Research

Justification for undertaking research relating to emotional resilience within a social work context was highlighted by O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009) who recognised that the teaching of social and emotional competence should be an essential part of the social work curriculum. This view of the importance of the emotional aspects of the social work role had been recognised by the Government. Introduction of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) meant that it had become a requirement for academics, alongside employers and practice educators, to ensure that social work students were recruited (TCSW, 2011) and trained in the emotional aspects of the job (Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) 2012, Skills for Care, 2013).

In light of these developments, I considered my research to be timely, and of significant worth, because of its potential to increase awareness about emotional resilience within a social work context, and to provide academics, both at the University of Derby and at other Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), with information and direction for planning, developing and delivering a curriculum that aimed to meet the education and training requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

From a professional point of view, it was concerning that the necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient had increased in relevance, due to evidence which had emerged over the last decade regarding the high levels of stress and burnout in the social work profession (Grant and Kinman, 2014). An online survey of 925 Social Workers and students caseloads by Community Care (2012), revealed that half of the Social Workers surveyed, had witnessed at last one of their team

leave their job because of excessive workloads in the last year. Fifty eight percent of the respondents stated that their caseloads had increased over the last year, 22% said that they had stayed the same, whilst 12% reported their caseload had decreased, and 8% provided no comment (McGregor, 2012).

Concerns about high staff turnover and retention had led McFadden et al (2012), to undertake a study involving 162 child protection Social Workers in Northern Ireland. The findings supported those of Community Care (2012), in that excessive caseloads were found to be a major contributory factor in staff 'burnout'. Factors which enabled staff to be resilient included, good management, supportive peers, and a 'cohesive' team. These findings concurred with those of Collins, (2007, 2008), who also examined factors associated with resilience, which might assist in maintaining Social Workers' health and well-being. Collins (2007, 2008) found that, support from peers and work colleagues, nurturing supervision and having an optimistic personality helped Social Workers to cope with stress. Personal traits and demographics also played a part in McFadden et al's (2012) study, in that high resilience was linked to personal accomplishment, being female, length of service and being older. McFadden et al's (2012) findings supported the notion of carefully selecting the right candidates at the interview stage, as a high congruence was found between 'burnout' and a lack of understanding of the realities of the job, areas that could be investigated during recruitment. McFadden (2013) acknowledged that the job was a demanding and stressful one, but emphasised the need for Social Workers to take some responsibility for their well-being, by becoming aware of, and utilising strategies, to avoid, and deal with these stresses.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) (2013), Annual Statistics Report, showed that social work remained one of the professions with the highest rate of work related stress in the UK, closely followed by health, (nurses in particular), education and defence. Atkins (2013) found that these other human service professionals shared problems in common with Social Workers, but the main factor which differentiated Social Workers from the rest of the professions, was that Social Workers tended to work only with service users who had high levels of need and social exclusion, unlike the other professions, who normally dealt with a cross section of the population.

It was concerning to note these statistics, because from professional experience, I knew that social work could be a difficult and complex job, but that it could also be extremely rewarding. Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) agreed, despite the fact that research and evidence suggested otherwise. They identified in their literature search of stress factors and social work, that Social Workers '*face similar problems and stresses that other individuals encounter*' but overall, the majority of social work staff were not off work due to stress related illnesses (Collins, Coffey and Morris 2008, p.257). These Social Workers seemed to enjoy the job, found it rewarding and were coping well with its day to day demands. What they discovered was that Social Workers were able to cope well with stress, and remained resilient, if a number of different factors were in place, firstly and most importantly, that Social Workers were supported by colleagues, secondly that they received effective supervision, and finally, that their working environment was manageable in terms of aspects such as caseloads, time constraints and availability of services. Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) concluded, that emotional resilience played a large part in Social Workers being able to cope with the demands of the job, and deciding to remain in the profession, from both an individual and organisational perspective. The findings of which, supported the recommendation in the SWTF's Final Report (2009a), that there was a need for newly qualified Social Workers to receive regular supervision, and to hold manageable caseloads (SWTF, 2009a, s24, p.29).

I therefore considered it to be the responsibility of social work employers, educators and trainers, in line with recommendations from the Government (SWTF, 2009a, SWRB, 2010, TCSW, 2011, TCSW, 2012d), to prepare students to be capable of coping with the pressures and demands of the profession. This I felt was necessary, both for the students and Social Workers' health and well-being and for the welfare of the service users they were supporting, who deserved to receive intervention from practitioners who were well equipped to be 'resilient enough' to do the job (McFadden, 2013).

Ultimately, it was envisaged that the findings from my research would help to shape the learning, teaching and assessment curriculum, in order to better equip social work students to be able to cope with the demands of the job. I recognised that it was essential, if any changes were to be made to the social work curriculum,

that they would be empowering to others, and robust enough to offer a more effective service (Norton, 2009).

1.4 Primary Aim and Objectives of the Research

This section outlines the main aim and objectives of the research study. Firstly, it is acknowledged that the main aim of the research was to:

Identify what emotional resilience is in the context of social work education, training and practice in order to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework (TCSW, 2012d).

Thereby addressing, a wider agenda of educating and training social work students to be emotionally resilient, to enable them to cope in an emotionally challenging profession, retain their services once qualified, and equip them to provide an effective and consistent social work service.

Secondly, this aim was underpinned by several objectives, which were established to contextualise knowledge about the research topic as follows:

- Determine a definition of emotional resilience that relates to social work from the perspective of those involved in social work education, training and practice.
- Examine the necessity for emotional resilience in the social work profession.
- Consider significant factors relevant to the development of emotional resilience in order to help Social Workers cope with the emotional demands of the job and
- Explore how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed to meet the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

By meeting these primary objectives the intention was for the research to:

- Address the Government driven directives in relation to social work education and training, with a particular focus on emotional resilience, as proposed by SWTF (2009a), SWRB (2010), the Munro Report (2011) and implemented by TCSW (2012d).

- Generate information for those involved in the selection and recruitment process of students onto Social Work Degree Programmes.

- Provide social work teaching teams with research findings to assist in the developmental stages of creating, implementing and revising the social work curriculum and training, in relation to emotional resilience and

- Disseminate the findings to support other HEI's with similar programmes.

1.5 Contents of the Study

The overall structure and presentation of this research takes the form of seven chapters. A Glossary of Terms has been provided for abbreviations that are most frequently used. Chapter One introduces the research study and the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Chapter Two examines the literature in relation to what emotional resilience is, and how it can be taught and learnt. The Third Chapter focuses on the methodology used for this study. Chapter Four presents the findings from the focus group discussions, undertaken during the course of the research, targeting the main themes that have been identified, whilst Chapter Five analyses and discusses these findings. In Chapter Six, dissemination strategies are identified and reflected upon and the final Chapter, Chapter Seven, revisits the reasons for undertaking the research, and highlights findings which are original contributions to research, and those which have implications for theory and social work practice. Recommendations for future research are also considered. Lastly, Appendices provide the necessary supporting information to facilitate an understanding of the background information and processes.

1.6 Summary

This introductory chapter highlighted the need, following recent Government investigations (Laming Report, 2009, SWTF Report, 2009a, SWTF Report, 2010,

SWRB, 2010, Munro Report, 2011, Croisdale-Appleby Review, 2014 and Narey Report, 2014), for Social Workers to be 'emotional resilient', a term appearing for the first time in the context of social work education and training in the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). The chapter concluded by examining factors related to the necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient in order to cope with the stressful aspects of the job. Research is therefore required to determine what is meant by 'emotional resilience' in the context of social work from the perspective of those involved in social work education, training and practice, to examine the necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient, to consider significant factors in the development of emotional resilience and to explore how students might be educated and trained to be emotionally resilient Social Workers, in order to meet the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) and improve services.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the search strategy utilised to obtain relevant literature, and throughout, presents a critical review of the literature, by examining a number of issues pertinent to the aim and objectives of the research. The first section of this chapter explores the origins of emotional resilience, and examines different theoretical perspectives, in order to develop a broad understanding of emotional resilience, before defining what it is in relation to social work education, training and practice, thereby addressing the main research aim and objectives of the research outlined on (pp.20-21). The second section of the chapter explores how emotional resilience is being taught in educational settings to children and young people, and to nursing students in the health profession, and investigates how it can be taught and learnt in social work.

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

This research study was undertaken primarily to generate knowledge about emotional resilience, in order to educate and train social work students to meet the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). In order to source current literature to meet this aim, a review of material relating to emotional resilience, the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) and social work education and training, was undertaken utilising a structured search strategy built around a Population Intervention Comparison Outcome (PICO) Framework (Sayers, 2008). PICO related as follows to my research: the specific population being, Social Workers, the intervention, social work education and training, the type of comparison, qualitative research and the outcome, emotional resilience. By using these headings and listing other synonyms associated with them such as, SOCIAL WORKERS - student, professional, SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION & TRAINING – social work curriculum, placement, social work practice, Professional Capabilities Framework,

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – focus groups and EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE – emotions, resilience, four lists of key words were created. These key words were then entered into several different search engines such as SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence, EBSCO, PsycInfo, ATHENS, Social Work Abstracts, BASW (British Association of Social Work), HEA (Higher Education Academy), JSWEC (The Joint Social Work Education Conference), Sage Online and Skills for Care's Research Knowledge Base, TCSW (The College of Social Work) and Community Care.

Google Scholar proved to be particularly useful in generating material and putting in certain key words to the website produced the following results:

- emotional resilience – 326,000

- emotional resilience and social work – 282,000

- emotional resilience and social work – 282,000

- emotional resilience and social work education and training – 152,000

- social work students and emotional resilience – 195,000

- social work and the Professional Capabilities Framework – 88,300

- emotional resilience and social work education and training and the Professional Capabilities Framework – 36,300

- emotional resilience and the Professional Capabilities Framework – 35,600

- emotional resilience and social work education and training (2005-2015) – 568 and with the addition of Professional Capabilities Framework - 461

The initial search of the key words 'emotional resilience' produced 326,000 results, which related to research from any date and to different professional fields and subject areas. Additional key words such as 'social work education and training' and 'Professional Capabilities Framework' helped to reduce the number of hits to 36,300. Refining the search by adding a date range (2005 – 2015), in order to maintain the currency of the research, to the key words 'emotional resilience' and 'social work education and training', produced only 568 results which, with the addition of the words Professional Capabilities Framework, reduced the results further to 461, making the process far more manageable.

A search of academic books and journals undertaken through the University of Derby Library Plus search engine and library catalogue, and an Advanced Search of Online Sage Journals and Taylor and Francis Online, proved to be helpful in producing relevant texts and journal articles, as did searching for journals that related specifically to social work, such as, the Journal of Social Work Practice, Journal of Social Work Education, Research on Social Work Practice, the British Journal of Social Work, Practice: Social Work in Action and the European Journal of Social Work. These articles and books were screened for relevance in terms of their title. A high number of the articles did not relate to social work or social work education and training, despite the relevant key words being entered into the search engine, but presented themselves because they contained closely related words such as, 'service', 'emotion', 'emotional' and 'social support'. Finally, reading the Abstracts helped to determine whether or not the full article was read.

Familiarising myself with the two main types of available research, conceptual and empirical, as identified by Dodd and Epstein (2012), proved to be supportive in enabling me to gain knowledge of theory and current debate from a conceptual point of view, as well as establishing and refuting my own research with findings from empirical research such as, statistics relating to stress and workload pressures (Smith, 2010, McGregor, 2012 and HSE, 2013) (see Literature Review, pp.15-18). Other forms of information that assisted in reviewing and supplementing the literature were those documents relating to Government reports, policy, legislation and frameworks such as the Department for Education (2011) Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report – A Child-Centred System, the Health and Care Professions Council (2012a) Mapping of HCPC's Standards of Proficiency against the PCF, the HCPC's (2012b) Standards of Continuing Professional Development, the HCPC's (2012c) Standards of Education and Training, the HCPC's (2012d) Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England, Reports produced by the Social Work Task Force (2009a, 2009b, 2010), the Social Work Reform Board (2010) and The College of Social Work's Professional Capabilities Framework (2012d).

The outcome of searching the literature as described, revealed that the research which was most current and held the greatest relevance to my research was that

undertaken by Grant and Kinman from 2009 – 2015. Other researchers such as Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein (2006), Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008), Cohn et al (2009) and Rajan-Rankin (2014) had explored factors and issues relating to stress and resilience, but Grant and Kinman had specifically focussed their research on emotional resilience within a social work context, and explored ways in which emotional resilience could be enhanced. Overall though, the literature search failed to produce any studies that specifically focussed on emotional resilience in relation to social work education, training and the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). This gap in the literature confirmed the necessity for research in this area.

2.3 What is Emotional Resilience?

The main aim of the literature review in this section is to define emotional resilience within the context of social work. In order to develop an understanding of emotional resilience from an holistic perspective it has been necessary to explore its origins and examine research relating to emotional resilience in children and adults, Social Workers and student social workers, taking into account determining factors which relate to traits, process and a combination of these. According to Hurley, Martin and Hallberg (2013), these include a wide range of aspects relating to the individual, in terms of personal traits, attributes, skills and experience, as well as social, cultural and environmental factors, such as support from family and friends and a nurturing work environment.

2.3(a) Origins of the Term

Whilst researching the literature in relation to the origins of the term 'emotional resilience', the most helpful source of information was Zolkoski and Bullock's (2012) review of literature on resilience, dating back from the 1970s to 2012. Their study identified that the term 'resilience', featured mainly within the fields of developmental psychology and psychiatry. It appeared that Werner (1971, cited in Zolkoski and Bullock, 2012, p.2297), first used the term whilst studying the effects of trauma and deprivation on children. Her study in 1955, involved 660 children living in Hawaii. The children were assessed at different stages throughout their lives, at birth, during adolescence and at 32 years of age. Werner (1971) was most

interested in trying to find out why a proportion of the children growing up with adverse life conditions, had managed to disassociate themselves from some of the expected adolescent behaviours, such as, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and unemployment. The results indicated that resilience was linked to the children having a good attachment, if not with a parent, with significant others in their lives such as peers, teacher, or step–parent. Following her study, Werner (1971) reported that she felt strongly, that resilience should be seen as being a process, rather than a trait, and that resilience developed over a period of time. It will therefore be interesting to find out if the results from my own research corroborate this. Werner's (1971) study was an important one, mainly because of the longitudinal nature of it, and because the results were endorsed by other theorists interested in resilience at the time. These included, Garmezy (1973 cited in Masten and Tellegen, 2012) who studied recovery rates for schizophrenic patients, and was interested in why some patients were more resilient than others, and Rutter (1975), who explored the idea of 'protective mechanisms' being utilised by children to deal with risk factors in their lives.

2.3(b) Theoretical Perspectives of Emotional Resilience

From a psychological perspective, theorists, such as Bowlby (1951) and Rutter (1975, 1985, 2007), considered emotional resilience to be a characteristic that developed in childhood, and proposed that children who grew up having formed secure attachments in their childhood, were more likely to have positive mental health, self-confidence and high self-esteem later on in life. A growing rise in children and young people's mental health problems (Young Minds, 2006), had led to an increased interest in children's emotional wellbeing, and the need to be able to identify risk factors which might undermine resilience. This heralded a change in thinking about the definition of resilience, from one of individual traits being the main determining factor, to that of taking into consideration certain processes involving risk and protective factors that might enhance resilience (Aronwitz, 2005).

This shift in thinking was demonstrated by Collishaw et al (2007) who, in order to gain an understanding of factors that differentiated resilient individuals from others,

undertook a longitudinal study in 1964, of 571 children, aged 9-10 years to middle age 44-45 years. The children were selected because they were known to the Authorities as having been physically or sexually abused. When interviewed and tested in adulthood half of the participants showed no psychopathological effects. The findings indicated that the most important factor in remaining resilient was having good quality relationships in childhood, which included, positive parenting (not normally associated with abuse), and supportive peer and marital relationships, which corroborated Werner's (1971) findings discussed on (p.27).

Whilst the outcome of Collishaw at al's (2007) study provided an indication of interpersonal factors that play a part in resilience, the research could be criticised because it did not consider the individual personality or genetic make-up of the individuals, nor external factors such as input from professionals, employment and the environment. Other limitations included, difficulties in quantifying the adversity of the life conditions experienced by the children, in order to determine their resilience at the follow up (aged 44-45yrs), and reliance on the participants to report accurately about their abuse. However, the sample was a good size, with 378 participants, 70% of those traced being followed up in adulthood, a large enough sample to make some generalisations, and arguably, to reduce the possibility of participant bias (Whittaker, 2009). The remainder of the participants who were traced, were either, too ill to take part, or chose not to. The study also had good credentials (Streubert and Carpenter, 2011), having been undertaken by developmental psychiatrists and having the backing from the Local Education and Health Authorities.

The relevancy of Collishaw et al's (2007) study to my own research, concerned the association between resilience and supportive relationships in both childhood and adulthood. For the purpose of my research, being able to establish the existence and nature of the student's support network is helpful in providing some indication of the student's likely resilience at the recruitment stage and whilst undertaking social work training.

Ungar (2006, 2008, 2012) was critical of the fact, that most of the research of children and young peoples' resilience, concentrated solely on personality traits or

protective factors such as, secure and supportive attachments, as well as being based on a westernised point of view. Findings from his study in 2006, of an International Resilience Project involving over 1500 at-risk young people, from eleven countries in five continents, evidenced that there were aspects to resilience which were associated with culture and environment, which could promote healthy emotional and psychological growth and resilience. According to Ungar (2006, 2008, 2012), there was a lack of recognition in literature and research, that resilience was a process which could vary, and be dependent upon culture and context, so that the importance of traits such as self-awareness or optimism for example, might not be viewed as defining the meaning of resilience across all cultures. According to Ungar (2006, p.54), the eurocentric nature of resilience related research had led to a bias in utilising research design and data analysis methods, which did not take into account the experiences of those from '*minority or marginalized populations*'. Therefore, Ungar's (2006) definition of emotional resilience which stated that:

> *Resilience is both an individual's capacity to navigate to health resources and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these resources in culturally meaningful ways'* (Ungar, 2006, p.55)

took into account the fact that resilience was a combination of the child or young person's personal traits on an individual level, and risk and protective factors which related to the family, social and cultural context. This stance was supported by Gilligan (2001), who agreed that resilience was a process which involved interactions between the child and their environment, rather than one which focused solely on particular fixed traits.

Ungar (2008, p.225) regarded the definition of resilience to include, the ability of the child or young person to be able to utilise personal traits to '*navigate their way to health sustaining resources',* as much as the structures and environment that existed for young people when they were faced with adversity. Resilience was therefore seen as a '*shared quality of the individual and the individual's social ecology*' (Ungar, 2012, p.17), and deficiencies of resources in the environment were viewed as impeding, rather than nurturing, resilience. Developing this further,

Ungar and Liebenburg (2011) were of the opinion, that if resilience was not just a trait, but rather something that could also be fostered through protective factors, life experience and a supportive environment, resilience could then be developed, learnt and improved upon.

In more recent years psychopathology researchers have become involved in assessing and understanding resilience in relation to how adults cope with stressful and difficult life situations (Connor and Davidson, 2003), for example, following traumatic events such as war and natural disasters (Bonanno, 2004). In occupational settings, Ruch, Turney and Ward (2010) maintained, that there was a wide range of factors associated with resilience which included, optimism and self-motivation, coupled with a particular set of skills and abilities such as, problem solving and coping mechanisms, which seemed to make it possible for people to 'bounce back' from adverse situations. According to Ruch, Turney and Ward (2010), this combination of intrapersonal traits and interpersonal skills, enabled individuals to remain resilient, whilst working in environments which were often unpredictable and risk laden.

Findings from Pooley and Cohen's (2010) research, based on four studies of adolescents in schools, women and domestic violence, children in separated families, and students adjusting to University studies, supported the view that resilience was evidenced by a combination of factors, such as the ability to act positively, recognise the potential of support from others, and be able to adapt to change in response to particular environmental and cultural factors. Their definition:

> *the potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges* (Pooley and Cohen, 2010, p.34).

which was very similar to that of Ungar's (2008, p.225), perceived resilience to be ever changing and developing through a transitions and life span process. They viewed this as being one that presented individuals with a range of difficulties, that required the use of internal and external resources and varying levels of resilience, dependent upon the nature of the issue and context at the time.

Adamson, Beddoe and Davys (2014) endorsed the view of resilience as being a process which was constantly changing and developing. They proposed that with experience and over a period of time, individuals were able to employ strategies to cope in order to not become overwhelmed, however, this did not mean that those individuals would never feel stressed or unable to cope. Working in a caring profession such as nursing or social work for example, they perceived to be contexts, which demanded the ability to cope on a regular basis, with high levels of emotional labour in terms of high caseloads, increased paperwork, limited resources, constantly changing policies and procedures and poor supervision. Adamson, Beddoe and Davys (2014), therefore considered the context to have a significant impact on emotional resilience, but did not dismiss altogether the importance of the role played by personality traits and protective factors.

This section has evidenced a change in thinking in theoretical perspectives relating to emotional resilience from that of focussing on individual traits and protective and risk factors (Werner 1971, Collishaw et al, 2007) to that of seeing the development of resilience as a fluid process influenced by environmental, contextual and cultural factors, with an emphasis on the ability to utilise internal and external resources (Ungar, 2006, 2008, 2012, Pooley and Cohen, 2010, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014). More recently, theorists have considered resilience within an educational and occupational context from a strengths based perspective, which combines the self, the practice context and mediating factors such as, effective supervision and self-care (Ungar and Liebenburg, 2011, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014). However, in order to address the main aim of the research which is to define emotional resilience from the perspective of those involved in social work education, training and practice, the following section focuses specifically, on a theoretical understanding of emotional resilience in a social work context.

2.3(c) Definition of Emotional Resilience in Social Work

As discussed in Chapter One (p.14), the term 'emotional resilience' was a relatively new one in the field of social work, having been brought to Social Workers attention only recently by Lord Laming (2009, p.55), who argued that present day

social work training needed to enable Social Workers to develop their '*emotional resilience*', in order to cope with the demands of the job. The SWTF (2009a) also viewed it as an essential quality which should be sought during interview at the recruitment stage (see Chapter One, pp.13-14). Whilst undertaking the literature search, determining a definition of emotional resilience which related specifically to social work education, training and practice, in order to contextualise the research study, proved to be difficult.

Initially a definition by Confucius (551BC- 479BC) provided some insight into the concept of emotional resilience which could easily be applied to current social work practice, he stated that, '*Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising up every time we fall*'. The quotation seemed at first sight to be applicable, as from personal experience it was noted that social work called for people who could cope with situations that were emotionally testing and challenging, and who recognised that they might not always be able to empower service users to change their life situations. However, in spite of this, they managed to remain positive, hold a strong belief that people's situations could change and saw the job as a continual learning process (Ferguson, 2011). In my opinion, these Social Workers could be described as being 'emotionally resilient'.

Nevertheless, this was a personal interpretation of emotional resilience and reviewing the literature highlighted the concept to be a far more complex one. McMurray et al (2008, p.304) for example, stated that emotional resilience:

> *was so intricate and multi-layered, it could mean different things*
> *to different people, in different contexts* (McMurray et al, 2008, p.304).

McMurray et al (2008) undertook a study to explore Social Workers' understanding of the concept of resilience in relation to assessing and promoting resilience in 'looked after' children and young people. It was assumed in advance of the study that the Social Workers would have a good understanding of the term 'resilience' in order to work effectively with the children. The results were surprising though, because the Social Workers indicated that the concept of resilience was an intricate one to comprehend, and produced only scant information to define it. Although

these findings were interesting, it should be noted that in McMurray et al's (2008) study, participants were asked to define 'resilience' rather than 'emotional resilience', so, although the term and the study were similar, it was not possible to say that there was a direct correlation between the findings of McMurray et al's (2008) research and my own (Dodd and Epstein, 2012). The study also examined the meaning of resilience in relation to children and young people and not to adults.

There were other limitations too, firstly, the sample size was very small (Dodd and Epstein, 2012), only nineteen Social Workers took part and they were a purposive sample rather than a random one making it difficult therefore, to generalise the findings to the wider population (Alston and Bowles, 2003). It was not clear either, how experienced the Social Workers were. Although it was mentioned that all but one of the participants were qualified, there was little indication of the amount and type of experience of each worker. Prior experience, mainly in adult care, could for example, have influenced the lack of awareness of the concept of resilience in connection with children and young people. Despite these shortcomings, McMurray et al's (2008) findings were still important, as they linked to my research in terms of providing some prior warning of the difficulties there might be, in determining a definition of resilience that applied to social work practice.

The complexity of defining emotional resilience was supported by Grant and Kinman (2013a, p.5), who described emotional resilience as a '*complex and multi-faceted construct*', an opinion which was strengthened by the findings of their study involving 100 qualified Social Workers and 200 social work students, which sought to determine an understanding of resilience from a practitioner and student perspective (Grant and Kinman, 2013b). More recently, from the perspective of 35 social work educators at 80 Higher Education Institutions, Grant, Kinman and Baker (2015) found that a definition of emotional resilience included a combination of interpersonal and intrapersonal factors, which were influenced both positively and negatively, by support systems which were personal, environmental and organisational. Overall then, the wide range of definitions and understanding of resilience that emerged, confirmed that it was a difficult concept to define. Adamson, Beddoe and Davys (2014) in their study of practitioners understanding of resilience, indicated that ultimately, despite its complexity, resilience could be

identified in terms of a combination of three categories, which related to personal attributes, mediating factors such as, effective supervision, and the social work environment, in relation to organisational structures, policies and procedures.

The studies explored in this section highlighted the fact that emotional resilience was not an easy concept to define, and that one definition was not likely to suit all. Different professions, for example, would consider it to have a meaning which was pertinent to them and would most likely connect it to the type of work being undertaken and the people involved (Mann, 2010). It was important though that Social Workers had a definition which related specifically to their profession, although it had to be general because of the wide variety of practice areas, in order to satisfy the capability requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). The intention therefore, was that my research study would provide a definition of emotional resilience, from the perspective of those involved in social work education, training and practice, which could be utilised by students, practitioners and educators, to evidence their capability in this area.

The following section provides information about resilience which is pertinent to social work students and helps to further develop an understanding of what emotional resilience is in a social work context.

2.3(d) Resilience and Social Work Students

This section focuses on the necessity for social work students to be emotionally resilient and examines the factors that predisposes them to be able to cope with the complexities and difficulties of undertaking social work education and training in preparation for practice.

One of the most recent studies, which was of greatest significance because of its direct connection with my research, was that of Kinman and Grant (2011), whose study of factors that promoted resilience in social work students, highlighted the importance of emotional competencies in enhancing the well-being and resilience of students. Their study, involving 240 student social workers, examined four factors: emotional intelligence, reflective ability, empathy and social competence.

These factors were chosen because they were considered to be key traits and skills pertaining to the social work role. The findings indicated that students were more resilient if they demonstrated high aptitude in these areas. Most importantly, Kinman and Grant (2011) found that resilience could be enhanced, if students were able to manage stress, reflect on practice, had developed reliable self-care skills, and received good support from supervisors and peers, findings which concurred with studies examined in the Literature Review (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, Cohn et al, 2009, Pooley and Cohen, 2010) and those outlined by the Munro Report (DfE, 2011).

The findings from Kinman and Grant's (2011) study added substantially to an understanding of emotional resilience, despite the fact that the research had some limitations, one of these being the use of a cross sectional design, as cause and effect could not be firmly established by using this methodology (Engel and Schutt, 2009). A longitudinal design was required over a longer period of time. Other limitations included, the fact that although a significant amount of data was gathered to support the research, Kinman and Grant's (2011) explanation of the sample selection criteria required more detail, and the study did not analyse variables such as age, gender and ethnic differences. Another, was the bias towards a particular set of characteristics or skills being linked to resilience which did not allow for other possible factors to be explored (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). However, the results were consistent with the aims of the research and the discussion related to the findings and overall the study produced useful data which helped to inform my research.

Unlike Kinman and Grant (2011), who viewed resilience to be competence related, Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein (2006) considered contributing factors associated with resilience to be predominantly trait based. Their small scale study carried out at San Diego State University investigated the relationship between resilience and personality traits. The findings indicated that of the 132 undergraduates who took part, the most resilient shared particular characteristics which included, being non-neurotic, being extravert, conscientious, task orientated and in receipt of good support. Good support being a factor which was also highlighted in the studies of

Werner (1971), Collishaw et al (2007), SWTF (2009a) and Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) cited in the Literature Review (pp.27-47).

Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein's (2006) research was of a worthy standard and provided some useful data in relation to resilience and personality, however, it did have several limitations. One had to be critical of the study because a newly devised questionnaire tool had been utilised to measure resilience which had never been tested or proven (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Furthermore, the students who took part in the study could not be seen to be representative of the general population, because of their age and intellectual ability. The results could not therefore be generalised to middle aged or older adults or others without a similar academic ability. Their experience of childhood trauma was also limited. The findings of the study were interesting though, firstly, in relation to certain personality traits being found to be associated with resilience and secondly, in relation to the importance of good support. Finally, discovering that task oriented skills were linked to resilience was helpful, particularly in relation to recognising that training could enhance resilience, as the development of these skills form the basis of the teaching on the 'Preparation for Social Work Practice' module at the University of Derby.

An understanding of social work students' emotional resilience was further enhanced by Cohn et al's (2009) study of 120 University students, which involved measuring the students' emotions by using scales and questionnaires. They found that having positive emotions enabled students to build resources that helped to deal with life's difficulties. They also discovered that moderately high levels of positive emotions could protect against the effects of negative emotions, and that resilient individuals tended to use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. They suggested that the reason for this was that, being positive or optimistic, acted as a protective mechanism factor that could build up over a period of time, and assist in times of real adversity. According to Cohn et al (2009), people who were happy, tended to have effective coping strategies, supportive relationships and good mental health. This enabled them to adapt to ever changing environments, as was often the case in social work, which enabled them to '*bounce back*' (Cohn et al, 2009, p.362)*.*

The study did have its limitations though, one of the main ones being the researchers' reliance on personal opinion from diary data, to determine day to day emotions and self-reports, rather than on empirical data. The research was therefore subject to reliance on the genuineness of the students' accounts and recall bias. As Smith (2009, p.125) pointed out though, it was impossible to extricate recollection that might seem inaccurate or inconsistent and because of this, the information provided by the participant had to be accepted as '*an important part of their stories, rather than a reason for excluding them*'. The validity of the data was strengthened by the fact that it was computerised, although the validity could have been further improved if the self-reports had related to measurable performance and life outcome tasks. The data was obtained on a daily basis over one month, which could be viewed as being too short a period to make any definite claims of causality (Engel and Schutt, 2009). From an ethical stance there was no mention of the study having been approved, and although it was stated that the participants were given an explanation for the significance of the project, there was no indication of how well they were informed about its purpose (Dodd and Epstein, 2012). Finally participants were recruited via newspaper advertisements and posters, with money being offered as an incentive to take part. Having no personal interest in the research, and money as an incentive, might have encouraged falsification of the data (McLaughlin, 2009). Overall though, the study was useful, because it focused on optimism as being one particular trait that might be associated with resilience, rather than on a wide range of different factors.

Tugade and Frederickson (2004) and Collins (2007) also identified optimism as being linked to resilience, and proposed that positive people tended to use positive emotions to 'bounce back' from negative emotions and situations. If there was a link between positivity and resilience, as Tugade and Frederickson (2004), Cohn et al (2009) and Collins (2007) studies suggested, then having a positive or optimistic personality might be seen as being important in predicting someone's ability to work as a Social Worker. The job required individuals who could cope with day to day stresses and demands, and it appeared, that those who remained positive, were likely to stay in the job (Collins, 2007). This resilience, according to Tugade and Frederickson (2004, p.331) acted as a '*psychological and physiological buffer against negative emotional life experiences*'. Consideration therefore, needed to be

given to the topic of optimism being built into the social work curriculum, and actively sought for as a desired trait during the recruitment and selection process.

The importance of a strong sense of self-identity was found by Rajan-Rankin (2014), to be closely associated with managing emotions and resilience. Her study of 10 undergraduate social work students was helpful in determining an understanding of emotional resilience from a student's perspective. The findings that emerged suggested that the emotional aspects of the social work role could be difficult for students to manage, and that showing emotions was viewed by some of the students in the study, to be unprofessional. Containing or suppressing emotions was a common theme, and having a strong sense of identity, being self-aware and acknowledging that emotion was an aspect of the social work role that had to be managed, defined the ability to cope and be resilient. Other findings that were significant included the importance of having good social support systems, which involved friends, peers and family (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, Collishaw et al, 2007, Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008, Pooley and Cohen, 2010, Kinman and Grant, 2011, McFadden et al, 2012), receiving effective supervision (Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008, SWTF, 2009a, Kinman and Grant, 2011), and being able to demonstrate empathy (Kinman and Grant, 2011).

Whilst the findings from Rajan-Rankin's (2014) study provided a good basis from which to develop a greater understanding of emotional resilience, there were limitations to the study which had to be taken into account. There were for example only 10 students in the study, which limited its generalisability, and the term 'resilience' was not used in the study, so the link between students' definition of coping and managing in the social work role was only an implicit one. The research was well conducted though, in terms of its reliability and validity, this being demonstrated by the researcher's efforts to be impartial, by not having any previous knowledge of the background or personal details of the participants, and by engaging independent people to transcribe and code the data, which assisted in reducing any bias. Using a phenomenological approach also ensured that the students' thoughts and opinions were told from their own perspective. The purpose of Rajan-Rankin's (2014) study, in defining emotional resilience from a social

work student's perspective, also linked closely with the main aim of my research, so it was therefore considered to be relevant and informative.

Research undertaken by de las Olas Palma-Garcia and Hombrados-Mendieta (2014), added to the body of knowledge which linked certain personality traits with the development of resilience in a social work context. Their study included 479 participants from Malaga in Spain, of which 304 were Social Workers, and 175 were students studying on a three year Social Work Degree course at Malaga University. The purpose of the study was firstly, to determine if certain personality traits were associated with resilience and secondly, to ascertain if student social workers were able to learn and develop these traits through education and training. The findings indicated, that whilst training, students were developing traits relating to openness and extraversion, traits that were found to be positively associated with resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006), in addition to other traits including kindness and accountability. Recommendations from the study highlighted the importance of including in the social work curriculum, activities that could enhance and develop these personality traits, as they were seen to be associated with resilience, and the ability to cope with adversity in the workplace.

As this section demonstrated, theorists appeared to be somewhat divided in their opinions of what emotional resilience was. As the studies indicated in this chapter on (pp.26-39), there were those theorists who concentrated on the characteristics of resilience such as optimism (Tugade and Frederickson, 2004, Collins, 2007, Cohn et al, 2009), and openness and extraversion (de las Olas Palma Garcia and Hombrados-Mendieta, 2014), and others who considered it to be a process in which individuals utilised certain skills, such as, being reflective, and looking after their well-being and managing their emotions (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, Collins, 2008, Cohn et al, 2009, Kinman and Grant, 2011, Rajan-Rankin, 2014). External factors too, were taken into account such as good support networks (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, Collishaw et al, 2007, Collins, 2008, Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008, Pooley and Cohen, 2010, McFadden et al, 2012), and the environment and culture (Ungar, 2006, 2008, 2012). There was also research which suggested that emotional resilience was a combination of factors

(Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010, Grant and Kinman, 2013b, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014, Grant, Kinman and Baker, 2015).

The following section expands on an understanding of the meaning of emotional resilience within a social work education and practice context and explores in more detail how emotional resilience can be taught and learnt.

2.4 How can Emotional Resilience be Taught and Learnt?

The previous sections examined a definition of emotional resilience in relation to it being a trait, process or a combination of both, and identified research which suggested that there was a nurture, learnt and social ecological element involved in its development. Thus far though, little consideration has been given to the processes by which students might be taught, and learn, to be emotionally resilient. This section explores this further, by examining evidence from literature and research predominantly from a social work context, but for comparative purposes, extending the discussion to children and their education and to the teaching and nursing profession.

2.4(a) Emotional Resilience: Education and Children

McLaughlin (2008) noted, that there had been an increase in policy, debate and academic research in relation to emotional well-being and resilience in children and young people in schools, the relevance of interpersonal behaviour and emotions having grown, particularly within the education sphere as explanations for disruptive behaviour in schools had been sought. Increasingly, interest had been directed towards considering how children were able to survive under adverse conditions, and findings were utilised from research that identified resilience as a process, rather than as a particular personality trait (Gilligan, 2001, Daniel and Wassell, 2002), with an emphasis being placed on providing children with protective factors such as, problem solving, and social competence skills to enable them to cope. Gilligan (2001) and Daniel and Wassell (2002) found that children

with higher levels of emotional, behavioural and social wellbeing, achieved more highly academically.

The importance of enabling children to develop these skills had been highlighted in the U.K with the introduction of legislation and policy such as the Children Act (2004), and the Every Child Matters agenda (2004), both of which had at their heart the intention to maximise children's opportunities in life (Brammer, 2015). The Government therefore, saw the potential for the school curriculum to enhance the emotional well-being, and resilience of children, and as a result the core subject of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education) was introduced, within which the subject SEAL (Social, Emotional, aspects of Learning) was taught in some schools (DfES, 2006, Hawkey, 2006). At Key Stage 2 level for example, 'Circletime' was introduced into Primary Schools as a class based activity, designed to explore children's personal and social issues such as, bullying, friendships and families. The intention being, that within the school curriculum, children were provided with opportunities to develop emotional resilience, through awareness of own, and others, emotions and issues (DfES, 2006).

Following a three year study commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2003), to investigate the effectiveness of emotional resilience classes, in twenty two Secondary Schools in Britain, over a three year period, the report of the study concluded that the emotional resilience classes had no influence in areas such as, life satisfaction, academic, behavioural and absence scores. However, they did find that there was some immediate impact on disruptive behaviour, although this was not sustained, and the most significant improvement was found to be with the worst performing children, possibly because of the benefits they received from having the extra attention.

Similar findings were produced by Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum's (2013) two year study involving 41 secondary schools. They also found that SEAL had no desirable impact on emotional well-being or conduct issues. The reliability and validity of the self-evaluation method utilised to gather the data for the Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum's (2013) study was questionable though, as

it relied on the children's honesty and understanding (McLaughlin, 2009) and was interpretative rather than empirical in nature (Smith, 2009).

The aforementioned studies could be criticised for drawing conclusions from such short term research. Three years might be considered to be too premature to be able to assess the full impact of the teaching, as the benefits might only be noticeable once the children have had the time to encounter major life challenges. As Blincow et al (2009) pointed out, emotional resilience was something that had to be taught and developed over a lifetime, not just over a three year period, a view shared by Werner (1971) discussed in the Literature Review (p.27). How far these findings could be translated to adult teaching and learning, was also debateable.

More recently, the Department for Education (DfE) (2015a) reviewed the impact of PSHE on pupil outcomes and the findings were more encouraging. Schools were seen to be environments which could enhance resilience, as evidenced by the DfE (2015b) who stated that:

> *Schools have a critical role to play in helping to shape rounded resilient young people that can face the challenges of the modern world with confidence* (DfE, 2015b, p.2).

Overall there appeared to be some benefits for children and young people, both in the short term and long term, although it was acknowledged that it was difficult to evidence the outcomes, due to factors impacting on pupils from outside the school environment.

2.4(b) Emotional Resilience: Social Work Education and Training

Whilst reviewing the literature, it was concerning to discover that there appeared to be no clear definition of what constituted preparation for social work practice and that Higher Educational establishments were able to interpret its requirements differently (Burgess, 2004). Doel, Deacon and Sawdon (2007) highlighted the fact, that as a result, there appeared to be significant variation in relation to, what was taught, its structure, time spent on teaching and work, shadowing and observation

input. Doel, Deacon and Sawdon (2007) pointed out, that there was also a lack of definition regarding the content of the curriculum and its design, and argued that changes in the curriculum needed to be made, in order to standardise the inconsistencies in the content and delivery nationally. This view was supported by the SWTF (2009a, p.22), who in their Final Report, clearly recommended, that '*an overhaul of the content and delivery of Social Work Degree courses*' needed to be undertaken due a number of concerns relating to variable placement opportunities, lack of depth of teaching of core subject areas, and academics being seen to be 'out of date' with practice issues.

In light of this, O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009) undertook a study of an undergraduate "Preparation for Practice" module, in order to describe and evaluate curriculum design and content for preparing students for practice. Forty one, year one students, studying at a London University, took part in the survey. All of the data, which was qualitative, was obtained from self-completed questionnaires with open ended questions, attitude measures using scales, observations, and focus groups. Students commented on a wide range of areas such as, work shadowing, observational learning, and critical reflection, as being of importance for practice, but interestingly, did not comment on the need for students to be emotionally resilient. The findings of their research, taken at face value, suggested that emotional resilience was not a significant factor. However, the curriculum at that time was regulated by the General Social Care Council (2002), with practice requirements being driven by six professional competences, none of which overtly mentioned resilience as a necessitating factor.

Despite the fact that students did not identify emotional resilience as being of significance, one of the main conclusions from O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni's (2009) study, was that teaching social and emotional competence should be an essential part of the curriculum. O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009) suggested that in order to prepare students for a job that was stressful and complex, the curriculum needed to incorporate teaching, with a particular focus on awareness of self. This study did have its limitations though, particularly as it was such a small sample, comprising only forty one students with data being obtained from only one year group, over the period of just one year. Had the study been conducted over a

longer period of time, with other year groups and a larger sample, the results would have had more validity (Dodd and Epstein, 2012). It was also difficult to generalise the findings, as the module investigated was specific to that particular University (Whittaker, 2009).

Rajan-Rankin (2014), supported the recommendations of O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009), that social work students needed to develop a strong sense of self and identity through their education and training, as this was seen to enhance resilience, and emphasised the need for the social work curriculum to take into account the difficulties faced by students, in managing their emotions in a professional way (Cooper, 2012). According to Rajan-Rankin (2014), social work educators had a responsibility to provide a social work curriculum that taught students to manage their emotions, and encouraged students to seek support and guidance to enhance resilience. This support also needed to extend to the workplace though, as practitioners too, struggled to cope with the emotional demands of the job.

Chung (2010) expanded the debate, by suggesting that social work students did not just need to be emotionally resilient to cope with the demands of the job, they also needed to be able to demonstrate the ability to be emotionally resilient, in order to cope with the emotional demands of, and rigour of, social work training. In judging how emotionally resilient a student might be as a Social Worker, Chung (2010) stressed the importance of not disregarding resilience whilst training, as it might be that warning signs regarding difficulties in coping with stress were evident early on in the process. It was important therefore, that lecturers and practice educators were aware of this. As highlighted by the SWTF (2009a) (Chapter One, pp.13-14), the profession required workers who were able to meet the emotional needs of their service users. If Social Workers were not resilient enough to cope with their own emotional demands, then it seemed unlikely that they would be in a position to help others (Collins, Coffey and Morris. 2008). The reality of working with service users could seem very different to that presented in the class room, and being faced with situations, which were emotionally testing, could leave students feeling frustrated, useless and fearful (Grant and Kinman, 2014).

Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) suggested, that even prior to being offered a place on the social work programme, students needed to be selected in terms of their current strengths, commitment to social work, and previous challenges that they had overcome in their personal lives, and most importantly, whether or not they had managed to resolve them. They believed that some students were just not resilient enough, or what they termed as being 'hardy' enough, to remain in training, or in the job, once they qualified. The PCF requires prospective students at the recruitment and selection stage to be able to '*demonstrate an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2). This provides an opportunity for prospective students to be asked to present personal examples of why and how they have been resilient. An example of the effectiveness of this approach being evidenced by Rajan-Rankin's (2014) study, discussed on (pp.38-39). Students were asked a research question which required them to explore life events, and experiences that they had found challenging, and how they had coped. This technique, Collins (2007, 2008), thought could offer useful insight into how successful students had been, in using coping strategies to deal with difficulties and adversity in their lives, adversity being seen as a positive factor in relation to developing emotional resilience, but only when issues had been worked through or resolved (McGregor, 2010). Emotional stability and its links with resilience, were therefore seen to play an important role in being able to work with other people's issues and problems, and this is an area that my research study will explore in more depth.

Gibbons et al (2007) argued, that it might be certain traits that were to blame for a lack of emotional resilience such as, being less empathetic, more narcissistic, or holding extreme moral beliefs, and that students should be tested and assessed rigorously at the recruitment and selection stage. Reupert (2009) agreed with Gibbons et al (2007), and put forward the view that social work students could be taught relevant knowledge, values and skills, but what might be more significant in the making of a resilient Social Worker, were the traits and attributes that were inherent prior to training. Grant and Kinman, (2013b, p.361), on the other hand, were keen to point out though, that whilst some students might be '*more naturally resilient, through innate factors or early experiences*' there was evidence to indicate, that it was possible for students to develop resilience through social work

education and training (Luthans et al, 2007), and that resilience was not necessarily an inherent trait.

Grant and Kinman (2012, p.605) were interested in discovering how the curriculum could be devised in order to provide students with what they termed 'a tool box of strategies', in order to help them to '*manage and promote own safety, health and well-being and emotional resilience*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2). The findings from Grant and Kinman's (2012) research provided the most useful information for my research, due to the similarity of their study's aims and purpose which were, to define emotional resilience, determine how social work students could be equipped to cope with the emotional demands of the job, and to create a curriculum that might assist in promoting resilience. The main differences between Grant and Kinman's (2012) study and my own research, was that firstly, one of the main objectives of my research related to the taught, learnt and assessed aspects of emotional resilience in relation to meeting the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) whereas, Grant and Kinman (2012) explored curriculum aspects far more generally and did not provide specific links to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Secondly, the data for my research was obtained from a wide range of participants, including social work practitioners, educators and service users, whilst Grant and Kinman's (2012) sample group, comprised only students. Lastly the methods of data collection were very different, as I utilised focus groups as a qualitative approach for collecting data (Krueger and Casey, 2009), whereas Grant and Kinman (2012) employed a quantitative approach via the use of scales to measure emotional resilience (Hartas, 2010).

In analysing Grant and Kinman's (2012) research, it was noted that there were some limitations. The sample was a good size, that of 240 undergraduate Social Work students, but it was not clear how the sample was chosen. An email invitation was sent to students asking if they would like to take part in the research, but whether it went to all students was not clear, nor was the reason for it being sent to students in only Years One and Two, and not to Year Three students. It was stated that validated scales were used to measure resilience but there was no mention by the researchers of the reasons for choosing these methods, the credentials for the scales' creators, nor the reliability and validity of them (Engel and Schutt, 2009).

However, one of the advantages of Grant and Kinman's (2012) research, was that it offered a discussion about contributing factors to emotional resilience, which was pertinent to my research. Their findings were very useful in contributing to theory development in two main areas, testing prospective social work students at the recruitment stage, and suggesting a 'tool box' of coping strategies for assisting students to manage their well-being whilst training. The main conclusion from Grant and Kinman's (2012) study, was that Social Workers needed to be resilient to cope with the demands of the job. Factors such as, supportive work colleagues, effective supervision, and a manageable work environment, in terms of caseloads, services and time constraints, were considered to help Social Workers be resilient. On the other hand, a consequence of not being resilient was that Social Workers might experience serious health issues.

The findings of a study undertaken by Beddoe, Davys and Adamson (2011), of social work practitioners' understanding of resilience in the workplace, concurred with those of Grant and Kinman's (2012). Beddoe, Davys and Adamson (2011) concluded, that working in the caring professions, demanded the ability to cope with high levels of emotional labour, and that insufficient attention was being paid to the stresses of working as a Social Worker. This, they felt, had resulted in students when qualifying, being ill prepared for coping with the realities of the job. Their research findings advised that social work education needed to better equip students to be resilient in the workplace, a view shared by Fouche and Martindale (2011), who examined work-life balance and practitioner well-being in the social work education curriculum. Although recognition was given to the part individual traits and organisational factors played in determining resilience, it was social work education, that emerged as having the greatest influence in Beddoe, Davys and Adamson's (2011) study.

2.4(c) Methods of Teaching

One of the main responsibilities of TCSW (2012d) was to enhance the professional nature of social work education, which involved decisions being made about what the curriculum looked like, how the content was taught, and how emotional resilience in the social work role was developed. There appeared to be a significant

gap though in the literature, regarding what was known about the effectiveness of using different methods to teach, and assess, social work student's emotional resilience. This, I considered to be partly due to the complexity of the concept itself, in terms of firstly, defining what emotional resilience was, in order to be able to teach and assess it, and secondly, it was only since the introduction of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) that emotional resilience had been overtly identified as being a necessary requisite for social work education, training and practice.

In terms of evidencing capabilities in relation to emotional resilience students were only expected to '*describe the importance of emotional resilience*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2), prior to their first placement. The theory pertaining to emotional resilience was not expected to relate to practice until the end of the first placement when students were assessed as being capable of showing '*Awareness of own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2). Even then, the focus of the assessment appeared to be on awareness, as a reflective quality, and the students' ability to seek advice about their resilience, rather than on any progression or development of emotional resilience as a skill or trait. By the time students had finished their last placement and were ready to qualify there was still only an expectation that they '*recognise the need to manage and promote own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2). It might be argued therefore, that there was a real difference between the concept of recognising the need to manage and promote emotional resilience in a theoretical sense, to that of developing emotional resilience in a more practical sense.

Crisp et al (2006) proposed, that students could be taught about the theory of resilience, and stressed that developing skills relating to situations when resilience was required, was vital. According to Crisp et al (2006), students had to be given the opportunity to relate this knowledge to practice. He suggested that situational reconstructions such as case scenarios and role plays might provide the vehicle through which students could learn how to relate theory to practice. Although not 'the real thing', these methods of learning provided opportunities for reflection and debate, which included for example, reflecting upon, and analysing different options for dealing with difficult situations on a personal, cultural and structural

level. From an assessment point of view, role plays provided an insight within the safety of the classroom, of students' abilities to deal with difficult and complex situations, which could highlight those students who were at risk. By utilising such a method Crisp et al (2006), proposed that students would increase their confidence and resilience in adverse situations.

Chung, (2010) was in agreement with Crisp et al (2006), that role plays were one way of teaching students how to be resilient. Chung (2010) found that when students were asked to role play certain situations, they gained a clearer insight into service users' needs, and this helped them to feel more confident; being able to put themselves 'in their service users shoes' appeared to be helpful in allaying some of their fears and provided them with a clear sense of direction. Chung (2010) concluded, that it was important for students to be able to recognise, and care for their own emotional wellbeing, as this correlated with their ability to empathise more successfully with service users.

This view was examined more closely by Wild (2011), an academic and Social Worker specialising in child protection work and training, who following the death of Daniel Pelka in 2012, raised concerns about the adequacy of teaching and training in child protection. In relation to preparing students for practice, he shared the same opinion as Crisp et al (2006) and Chung (2010), that the skills required by students to work in child protection social work, could most effectively be acquired through 'active learning', that is, students being taught and assessed via scenarios, situations and simulated activities, that reflected what might be encountered in practice. He suggested that dealing with situations which required resilience, such as communicating with threatening and hostile parents (Taylor, 2011), called for certain skills that could not be developed through paper exercises, but necessitated rehearsal in the classroom involving service users and carers if possible. Challenging students, by taking them out of their comfort zone, was therefore thought to be stressful for them initially, but something that could be outweighed by what they were likely to gain subsequently (Wild, 2011). Consequentially this concept is one that should be explored further by educators when devising the curriculum and teaching plans.

In terms of providing a link between academia and practice, a framework such as Heron and Reason's (1997) is a valuable tool to consider, especially in light of criticisms from the SWTF (2009a), regarding the present social work curriculum not focusing sufficiently on the importance of the relationship between theory and practice, and at the same time encouraging the development of emotional resilience. The results of Clapton et al's (2006) review of social work education were in accord with this, as their review concluded that the gap between theory and practice, within training programmes was increasing, and a concern was, that as a result of this, transfer of learning was less likely. More recently, Croisdale-Appleby's (2014) Independent Review, which involved a wide range of participants from all spheres of Social Work, both from the UK and internationally, recommended that teaching should involve greater links between theory and practice. As Croisdale-Appleby (2014, p.15) stated, students and practitioners needed to be educated in a manner that was '*theory-informing-practice and practice-informing-theory*', so that theory and practice, whether as part of the curriculum, on placement, or in practice, could be intrinsically linked.

Boud and Garrick (1999) suggested that other possible teaching methods might include self-awareness activities that heightened students' abilities in relation to analysing what it was they were doing, and enabled them to reflect on why, and how, these actions impacted on themselves, and others. However, Reupert, (2009, p.767), disagreed with this method of teaching, stating that many self-awareness activities '*fail to bridge the gap between insight and practice*', whereby students often had no direct link between self- reflection and its application to practice and professional settings. Contrary to this though, (Redmond, 2006, Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014, Howe, 2015, Ruch, 2015) all viewed reflection as being an essential factor in developing, and promoting, emotional resilience and well-being.

Grant, Kinman and Alexander (2014), undertook a study of 28 first year social work students, on a three month placement, to ascertain the effects of experiential teaching on their emotional well-being, in light of evidence from research undertaken by Wilks and Spivey (2010), that social work students could find placements overwhelming and traumatic. Grant, Kinman and Alexander's (2014) findings indicated, that experiential teaching enhanced students' feelings of well-

being, and enabled them to develop their ability to reflect and empathise. Students reported benefits from being able to work with, and listen to, Social Workers discuss how they had managed their emotions when dealing with complex cases, which in turn, enabled them to talk more freely about their own emotions. The students also found completing a reflective log to be beneficial, in relation to becoming more self-reflective, findings, which corresponded well with the views of the SWRB (2010), and Redmond (2006), that the ability to reflect in, and on practice, was an essential skill for effective social work practice, and was a concept that featured prominently within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Field, Jasper and Littler (2014), found that supervision which offered students the opportunity to be self-reflective, enhanced emotional resilience.

Grant, Kinman and Alexander (2014) acknowledged that there were limitations to their study such as, small sample size and no control group. They also pointed out, that it was possible that the students wrote in a more self-reflective manner in their journals, than they might otherwise have done, had they not been taking part in the research. It did appear though, that the students became more reflective and experienced enhanced emotional well-being and resilience, as a result of being with other Social Workers, and gained confidence and insight through working with 'real life' situations. The findings from Grant, Kinman and Alexander's (2014) study were therefore beneficial in providing valuable insight into the impact of experiential teaching on students' emotional resilience.

Knowledge gained from these findings was built upon by Grant, Kinman and Baker (2015). They examined social work educators' perspectives on emotional resilience and the necessity for the development of an emotional curriculum. Results from the study indicated that the 35 educators from 80 Higher Education Institutions who took part in the research were:

> *unanimous in considering an evidence-based 'emotional curriculum' to be vital in order to develop healthy, satisfied and competent practitioners* (Grant, Kinman and Baker, 2015, p.2351).

Other findings suggested, that tools needed to be made available, which could accurately measure levels of student emotional resilience at the recruitment stage.

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of processes such as, supervision, which focussed on self-awareness and reflection. Interestingly, the findings of the study also indicated that the educators were aware of the PCF's (TCSW, 2012) requirements for teaching and assessing emotional resilience, which was pertinent to the main aim of my research, but recognised that they needed the resources to develop the curriculum appropriately, and highlighted this as an issue.

Overall this section of the literature review has examined in more detail, the impact that social work education and training can have on the development of social work students' resilience. The literature and research has suggested that emotional resilience develops via a process which involves a combination of internal and external factors, learnt over a period of time, and enhanced through the cultural and social context of the University and practice placements, rather than one which is dependent upon the necessity for particular innate traits.

2.4(d) Resilience: Education and Training in the Caring Professions

It would seem that the necessity for resilience training is not something that is specific to the social work profession, evidence suggests that it is also essential for other caring professions. Chang's (2009) study of teachers in the USA for example, sought to provide explanations for stress and burnout in the teaching profession. His study involving 2,710 teachers in their first four years of teaching, explored how teachers regulated and coped with their emotions in the context of student misbehaviour. The findings suggested that it was the teachers' perceptions of the student behaviour that influenced the effects on their emotional experience and coping capacity. Chang (2009) found that if the emotions became too uncomfortable, the ability to cope was compromised, leading eventually to burnout. He suggested that teachers needed to be trained to recognise and manage their perceptions of students' behaviour in order to be become more emotionally resilient.

It is difficult to generalise the findings of Chang's (2009) research though because the sample, although initially quite large, that of 2,710, was ultimately reduced to 492, because of a poor response rate of 26.45%, and final reduction of numbers in

line with suitability of the respondents. The method of data collection relied on a self-report survey (Fowler, 2009), which required the teachers to describe a situation in the classroom that made them feel emotionally challenged, and then to rate the intensity of feeling this produced. The difficulty in measuring the intensity of the emotions therefore affected the validity of the study (Alston and Bowles, 2003). The reliability and validity could have been improved by utilising an approved emotion regulation scale. The study was interesting though and provided some useful comparisons between teachers and Social Workers and stress. In the same way that teachers' perceptions of their students affected their emotional wellbeing, so too, might it be the case, that Social Workers perceptions of service users, and their behaviour, affects their emotional resilience. Education and training which identifies and offers insight into this possibility may therefore be helpful.

McAllister and McKinnon's (2009) review of literature relating to research of resilience in nursing education, highlighted the importance of resilience as a determining factor, in staff being trained to work in nursing. They pointed out, that for those working in the nursing profession, there was a cost to their physical and emotional health, as a result of working in busy and bureaucratic environments (Wieclaw et al, 2006). Changes in the structure of the Health Service and advances in medical science meant that nurses were caring for patients with increasingly complex health needs, and having to become more involved with life changing decisions (McShane, 2014), all of which meant, that the ability of nurses to be able to draw on their resilience had become a requirement.

McAllister and McKinnon (2009) recognised the necessity for nursing students to be able to develop their resilience, and recommended that the curriculum for educating health professionals, be designed to engage students in activities which enhanced their resilience, by promoting their professional identity and sense of worth, whilst also developing their coping and leadership skills. Reflection was also considered to be an important factor, along with opportunities to shadow and work alongside experienced and resilient practitioners who were willing to share and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and experience. By acting as positive role models, who had faced adversity, and were managing the day to day challenges of the job, these practitioners were teaching and transferring strategies for building

resilience, to students in training. The benefits of students working alongside experienced practitioners in order to develop resilience, was supported by the findings of Grant, Kinman and Alexander's (2014) research, discussed in this chapter on (pp.50-51).

Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough (2007, p.1) advised, that for nurses to be able to cope with the emotional challenges of the profession, a proactive approach was required for '*surviving and thriving in the face of workplace adversity*', which included, taking responsibility for becoming aware of the stresses caused by their job, and developing strategies to cope with this by facilitating resilience. Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough (2007) suggested that nurses could be taught to recognise and identify risk and protective factors associated with resilience such as, the ability to build good relationships with peers, work interprofessionally, have a positive attitude, develop emotional self-awareness, be reflective and maintain a good work-life balance, factors which had also been identified as being relevant to social work (see pp.32-52). It was envisaged that nursing students could learn these interpersonal and intrapersonal skills from peers and practitioners, through nursing education which incorporated resilience training, and mentorship programmes in practice. Graften, Gillespie and Henderson (2010) agreed that a self-care approach to developing and maintaining resilience was important, but also stressed the need for organisations such as the Health Service, to recognise the role they played in creating a working environment, that was supportive and conducive to engendering resilience. This view concurred with that of Siebert (2006), and Smith (2010), (pp.14-15 of the introductory chapter), who highlighted that many of the issues contributing to stress in the social work profession, were created by the Organisation.

2.5 Summary

This chapter considered the origins of emotional resilience, and a definition of emotional resilience within a social work context. Ways in which emotional resilience was thought to develop, which included the possibility of it being an inherent trait, process or combination of factors, including culture and context, and how it might be taught and learnt, were investigated. Comparisons were also noted

in relation to similarities between teaching, nursing and social work, and the requirements and necessity for the development and maintenance of resilience, in order to cope with the emotional demands of the job.

Reviewing the literature located a number of pertinent issues relating to my research study. These issues which are referenced and paged according to their location in this chapter are summarised as follows:

- Defining emotional resilience was difficult due to its complexity and the lack of a definition relating specifically to social work practice (McMurray et al, 2008, Grant and Kinman, 2013a and 2013b, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014, Grant, Kinman and Baker, 2015) (pp.32-34).

- Emotional Resilience in children and young people was a combination of factors which included, personal traits, and risk and protective factors (Werner, 1971, Bowlby, 1951, Rutter, 1975, 1985, 2007, Aronwitz, 2005) and related to a family, social and cultural context (Gilligan, 2001, Collishaw et al, 2007, Ungar, 2006, 2008, 2012) (pp.28-30).

- Both in childhood and adulthood, a range of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors were involved, which included, the ability to utilise internal and external resources to adapt to, and deal, with difficult situations (Gilligan, 2001, Ungar, 2006, 2008, 2012, Pooley and Cohen, 2010, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014) (pp.28-31).

- Being optimistic was a particular trait associated with emotional resilience (Tugade and Frederickson, 2004, Collins, 2007, Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough, 2007, Cohn et al, 2009, Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010) (pp.36-54). Other personality traits included, openness, extraversion, conscientiousness and kindness (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, de las Olas Palma-Garcia and Hombrados-Mendieta, 2014) (pp.36-39).

- Good support from family, friends, work colleagues and the organisation was strongly associated with emotional resilience in children and adults (Werner, 1971, Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006, Collishaw et al, 2007, Collins, 2008, Coffey and Morris, 2008, Kinman and Grant, 2011, Grant and Kinman, 2012, Rajan-Rankin, 2014) (pp.27-48).

- Recruitment had a significant role in the early identification of emotional resilience (Gibbons et al, 2007, Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008 (pp.45-46), McFadden et al, 2012) (p.18).

- Adversity in life helped to promote emotional resilience, providing personal issues had been resolved prior to training and practice (Collins, 2007, Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008, McGregor, 2010) (p.45).

- Emotional resilience was a process which developed over a lifetime, rather than in a single episode or specified period of time, and varied, depending upon the circumstances and context (Werner, 1971, Ungar, 2006, 2008, 2012, Pooley and Cohen, 2010, Adamson, Beddoe and Davys, 2014) (pp.27-31).

- Emotional resilience could be taught, and educators had a responsibility in meeting the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), to train and educate students in this area (Crisp et al, 2006, Collins, 2007, 2008, Ungar and Liebenburg, 2011) (pp.30-52).

- Taught modules which involved preparation for social work practice were helpful in relation to developing emotional resilience and self-awareness (Boud and Garrick, 1999, O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni, 2009, Rajan-Rankin, 2014) (pp.43-50).

- Role plays were an effective method of teaching emotional resilience due to their applicability to 'real life 'situations (Crisp et al, 2006, Chung, 2010, Wild, 2011) (pp.48-49).

- There was an association between experiential teaching and emotional resilience (Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014) (pp.50-51).

- Practice educators and practitioners had an essential role in the process of learning to be emotionally resilient by enabling students to:

  - Relate theory to practice (Clapton et al, 2006, Croisdale-Appleby, 2014) (pp.49-50).
  - Have shadowing opportunities (O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni, 2009, McAllister and McKinnon, 2009) (pp.43-53) and
  - Develop reflective and self-analytical skills (Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough, 2007, McAllister and McKinnon, 2009, Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014) (pp.50-54).

- The opportunity to be reflective was beneficial in enhancing emotional resilience (Redmond, 2006, McAllister and McKinnon, 2009, SWRB, 2010, Grant and Kinman, 2011, Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014, Howe, 2015, Ruch, 2015) (pp.50-54).

Overall, the knowledge produced by this literature review provided an informed platform from which to instigate my research. Chapter Three examines the process of undertaking this research in more detail.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter examines the underpinning research philosophy and presents the context of the research. A thorough explanation of the research design is given, along with the method of analysis and ethical considerations, and throughout, the section is supported by information provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Philosophy of the Research

This study was primarily concerned with people, their behaviour, social interactions and organisations; hence it followed, that the ontological assumption was that the topic being researched, entailed subjective interpretation (Letherby, Scott and Williams, 2013). From a social constructivist stance, emotional resilience was a term that had been socially created and its meaning generated by the perspectives of those involved in this research (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). As a form of research, social constructivism acknowledged the previous knowledge and experience of the participants, in relation to the field of enquiry (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009), which in this case, was emotional resilience and social work education, training and practice. Although emotional resilience meant different things to different people (McMurray et al, 2008), participants views were key to the research process and the definition produced by this research made sense to those in the social work profession (Engel and Schutt, 2009). The research was dependent upon finding out from the participants themselves, how they viewed the world, and was not conducive to experiments within controlled environments, or testing of a pre-determined hypothesis (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Emphasis was also placed on an in depth understanding of the social context, rather than a statistical measurement of emotional resilience (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Whilst the findings from this research added to a body of knowledge about emotional resilience, it was accepted that it had not produced an '*absolute*

knowledge of any of its properties' (Kukla, 2000, p.5), the research was therefore considered to be more allied to social constructivist principles, than to scientific or positivist ones (Fox, Martin and Green, 2008).

From a social constructivist perspective it was difficult to measure social reality (Crotty, 1998), on the other hand, positivists were concerned with establishing whether reality was of an objective nature and considered it to be meaningful, only if it was measureable or verifiable (Cresswell, 2007). A positivist approach therefore, was one which sought to provide a '*true and precise law about human behaviour'* (May, 2011, p10.), whilst social constructivists believed that individuals constructed their own meaning of the world, rather than there being a universal law to explain it (May, 2011). As Lincoln and Guba (2000 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) explained, the difference between social constructivists and positivists, was that one had findings which were 'created', and the other had findings that were 'true'. For social constructivists, human experience was seen to play a large part in this, as was, what was considered to be true or not to those individuals (Radnor, 2002). As the main aim of this research was to construct knowledge, and to develop an understanding of emotional resilience, rather than trying to test or prove something, I considered that it conformed more closely to a social constructivist stance (Crotty, 1998). The research also related directly to the values of social work, because the views of service users and carers were taken into account (Padgett, 2013).

Although I considered social constructivism to be the main ontological approach underpinning this research (Crotty, 1998), in determining an understanding of emotional resilience, I noted that there were some aspects of the research which were also positivist in nature (Cupchik, 2001). For example, the research study utilised a tightly structured interview schedule, and thematic analysis, which had a structured coding and staged approach. This suggested that there were elements of the research process which were positivist and quantifiable (Cupchik, 2001). However, even though the participants provided accounts of their experiences, which were factual and of a positive stance, the manner in which these experiences were presented in the focus group discussions, was constructivist (May, 2002). As Hoffman (1992, p. 290) pointed out, this indicated that a dual positivist and

constructivist approach was being utilised because of the *theoretical bias of interpretation and the 'reality' of what the experience had been'*. I realised that this combination of constructivist and positivist approaches was indicative of a pragmatic approach (Welford et al, 2011), an ontological stance which derived from the work of Peirce, James, Mead and Devey (1992) and more recently, Patton (1990) and Cherryholmes (1992) (Weber, 2010). Pragmatism incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods, in order to produce data which was examined, in both a statistical and descriptive manner (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), and was best summed up by Weber (2010, p.11), as an approach to research which:

> *opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis* (Weber, 2010, p.11)

Whilst my research produced no quantifiable data, because it utilised only open ended questions in the focus groups, interpretation of the data via the use of thematic analysis, could have been considered to have been positivist, because of the structured approach to eliciting and presenting codes and themes. Therefore, in developing an understanding of emotional resilience in relation to social work education, training and practice, it could be argued that the approach utilised in this research was a pragmatic one, because it considered both social constructivist and positivist approaches, to complement, rather than to oppose each other (Cupchik, 2001). The research fitted with a pragmatic approach, as it was undertaken in a social context, and the method and approach employed, best met the aim of the research; factors which Cresswell (2007) stated, were indicators of a pragmatic stance. Adopting pragmatism as a philosophical position was therefore considered to be advantageous, because it incorporated both objectivity and subjectivity, thus enabling me to utilise different theoretical and ontological approaches, in order to address the main aim and objectives of the research (Weber, 2010).

As the research study was primarily concerned with people, their behaviour and emotions it was considered to be more appropriate to undertake qualitative rather than quantitative research (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2006, Davies, 2007). Quantitative research, which relates to a positivist view of the social world, views

inquiry to be based on scientific observations and measurable data (Denscombe, 2007). However, as already discussed, investigating the concept of emotional resilience involved the researcher in a process of seeking to explain the social world in terms of understanding peoples' views, perceptions and feelings which were based primarily on subjectivity, rather than objectivity (Fox, Martin and Green, 2008). The fact that qualitative approaches were, according to Norton (2009, p.60), '*un-theorised descriptions of practice*' and not from the positivist, scientific tradition, did not mean that they were any less relevant (Sarantakos, 2005). In fact, the research aimed to add new understanding of emotional resilience which related to social work practice, had it been purely scientific, it might not have had any practical relevance (Robson, 2002).

This research study aligned with Atkinson et al's (2007) view that qualitative research had the following characteristics: firstly, that there was a focus on natural settings. The setting for my research was the University of Derby. Secondly, that the research was undertaken to generate a greater understanding of the concept of emotional resilience (Shank and Villella, 2004), and that 'inside' knowledge of social work training and education was obtained in order to achieve this (Alston and Bowles, 2003). As a lecturer and Social Worker, I considered that I was both physically and intellectually close to the subject and group being examined, and therefore, appreciated to a greater extent the world they lived in (Sheppard, 2004), and understood the complexities of the profession and training involved (Knight, 2002). I was well aware of the culture of the group and understood the language and specialist terminology being used within the social work profession (Orme and Shemmings, 2010), so for example, interpreting what participants said, was more straightforward for me than it might have been for someone who was not accustomed to social work terminology (Trevithick, 2009).

As the topic of emotional resilience was a relatively new one within the curriculum and assessment framework (TCSW, 2012d), I was aware that I too, alongside the participants, had been involved in a journey of discovery which had developed my knowledge and understanding as much as it had others. The main aim of the research had been to provide what was termed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.83) as a '*thick description*' that is, detailed material and data about new ideas and

concepts, in order to create a greater awareness and analysis of emotional resilience, in a social work context (Flick, 2006). Therefore, the research focused on generating an in depth understanding of emotional resilience and how it was being taught and learnt, rather than testing or producing a particular theory or hypothesis (Thody, 2006).

The research involved an open minded approach, with the intention that few assumptions, theories or hypotheses were considered beforehand. Although I had not started this research with any particular expertise or specialist knowledge of emotional resilience, it was still acknowledged, that as this was insider research, it was impossible to enter the research process completely free of assumptions and with a totally open mind (Rajendran, 2001). Although the primary intention of the research was to produce findings which added to a body of knowledge relating to emotional resilience, rather than making any judgements on it, recognition of any potential bias, ensured honesty and integrity (Becker and Bryman, 2004).

For the purposes of this research, focus groups were considered to be the most appropriate and effective method of collecting relevant data (Bloor, 2001, Barbour, 2005). One of the main advantages of using focus groups was that it enabled an intensive exploration of the subject content from the participants' viewpoint in order to provide context (Atkinson et al, 2007). Interviewing participants as a group within their own social context, provided opportunities to capture insights through shared beliefs, feelings and experience (Rabiee, 2004). According to Crotty (1998, in Weber, 2010, p.9), focus groups enabled participants to generate data, which created an understanding shaped by their experiences and views, which were social and '*arising in and out of interaction with a human community*'. Other methods such as surveys and individual interviews, because of their focused and individualistic nature, did not necessarily provide the same opportunity for dispersal of communication and information (Alston and Bowles, 2003). The research design was considered to be robust and rigorous, as it involved careful and thorough planning, data collection, analysis and presentation, via the use of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Because of this, the findings produced by the research were viewed as being of sound worth and value (Stenbacka, 2001),

and most importantly, evidenced a deeper understanding and knowledge of emotional resilience in relation to social work education, training and practice.

3.3 Social Work Research

The topic that was chosen, that is, emotional resilience and social work education and training, was viewed as having current relevance, essential to effective social work practice (O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni, 2009), and helpful for those developing the curriculum as well as for those putting it into practice, for receivers of the information and for service users (Norton, 2009). According to Corby (2006, p.173), '*research based knowledge should be one of the key underpinnings of social work practice*', so thorough investigation of emotional resilience in relation to social work education and training, via literature searches and independent research, was considered to be necessary to achieve this.

Recent changes in the academic and practice curriculum had led to the research topic being highly relevant, however, as social work knowledge was continually changing, developing and being improved, it was envisaged that this might not always be the case (Thompson, 2009). As Seale (2012) suggested, social work research was in essence politically driven, and social work training was possibly subject to more changes in the future. Recommendations from the Narey Report (2014, pp.43-44) and the Croisdale-Appleby Report (2014, pp.85-90) had borne witness to this. However, for current students undertaking social work training, emotional resilience was regarded as an essential capability (SWTF, 2009a, SWRB, 2010, TCSW, 2012d) and one which this research sought to explore in some depth. It was intended that findings from this study would assist the social work team at this University in planning, developing and delivering a curriculum that would meet the training requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). The requirement for emotional resilience to be evidenced in the 'professionalism' domain of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), meant that this needed to be addressed. The research would help to increase awareness of emotional resilience within a social work context and determine how it could be taught, learnt and assessed in the social work curriculum.

3.4 Data Collection Method

This section clarifies the reasons for opting for focus group discussions as the most appropriate method for collecting data for this research.

3.4(a) Focus Groups

One of the primary reasons for choosing focus groups as a method for generating data, included the fact, that there was a main topic for group discussion, in this case, emotional resilience and social work education, training and practice. All of the participants were involved in this subject area, which meant that they were able to share their perspectives, and assist in the research process (Schostak, 2002). As Corby (2006, p.147) pointed out, focus groups normally brought together people who had been 'targeted', because of their knowledge about a specific area of the research. These participants had relevant experience and insight about emotional resilience (McLaughlin, 2009), and had been chosen because they were 'information rich' (Plummer, 2001, p.133).

Focus groups were viewed as being an effective method for data collection because they offered several advantages that other data collection methods did not provide, one of them being, the opportunities they provided for the generation of a range of participants perspectives, feelings and experiences (Moule and Hek, 2011). They also allowed for the involvement of an increased number of participants compared to individual interviewees (Smith, 2009), and encouraged participants to speak their mind in a way that they might not have done, in a one-to-one interview (Krueger and Casey, 2009).

However, there were a number of disadvantages to using focus groups for data collection which were considered before the research was undertaken and these included, the potential for participants to feel that their contribution was not as valid as others, thus resulting in a reluctance to speak for fear of appearing less informed (Gilham, 2005). There was also the possibility of some participants being more vocal than others, and dominating the discussion, which was off putting for those who would have contributed more, had they been interviewed alone (Cousin,

2009). Another concern was that participants were unwilling to discuss personal experiences and histories in as much depth as they would have done in a face to face individual interview situation (Rabiee, 2004). The size of the group was important, because if it was too large, it encouraged individuals to split off and start their own discussions, rather than contributing to the whole group discussion (Kitzinger, 1995). Without skilful manoeuvring then, it was difficult to bring them back to being able to focus on the task (Bloor, 2001). The introduction of ground rules outlined on (p.67) identified some of these main concerns, and as a result participants were better informed, and more aware of the necessary requirements for having a fruitful and meaningful discussion.

Another issue that was considered beforehand was the difficulty in maintaining confidentiality, which could only be enforced by participants trusting the focus group members not to discuss what had occurred in the group, however, there were no guarantees, despite the ground rules, that this was maintained when the focus group disbanded (Smith, 2009). It was important to recognise when the participants felt that they had said all they intended to say about the topic and had reached saturation point (Curtis and Redmond, 2007). There was also the possibility of discussions of emotionally charged situations or issues being traumatic for some participants, especially if their examples had been based on memorising life stories (Berger and Luckman, 1966). As Berger and Luckman (1966) highlighted, people were constantly interpreting and reinterpreting events in their lives and their accounts were not necessarily always true or objective. In seeking the truth, it was recognised that participants provided information about their experiences, beliefs, values and perceptions, which might have changed with the passage of time. Despite this, it was important that as a researcher I took these accounts at face value (Bell, 2005).

Although one of the main reasons for choosing focus group discussions was to gather full and sufficient data, it was recognised that it was a principal limitation of the methodology, due to the large amount of data that was often generated (Krueger, 2002). Krueger (2002) advised, an hour long interview produced approximately 10,000 words, which was more than sufficient data to analyse, and that each interview took approximately 6-8 hours to transcribe. The length of time

for transcription was therefore somewhat concerning. Initially consideration had been given to the use of an independent person to undertake the transcriptions, but this was dismissed because it was felt to be beneficial to be 'hands on' in order to gain a greater interpretation of the data (Morgan, 1997).

Individual interviews were also thought to be a useful method for collecting data. However, they had been discounted, for whilst it was known that key informant interviews could capture more detailed information through in depth discussion (Smith, 2009), use of individual interviews precluded the opportunity to extract multiple viewpoints in a reasonably short period of time (Holliday, 2002). Pre-devised questions were regarded therefore, as being the most appropriate method for obtaining responses to the research questions within a reasonable period of time. It was recognised though, that an interview schedule might inhibit spontaneity and free flow discussion however, there were a number of questions that needed to be asked in order to generate data about the research questions (Kitzinger, 2005). Bryman (2011) pointed out, that this involved a fine balance between addressing the main aim and objectives of the research, and giving participants the freedom to discuss issues that they felt were pertinent. On reflection though, whatever the method chosen, the main aim was the same, it enabled the researcher to listen and learn from others in order to gain a greater understanding of the issue being studied (Fowler, 2009).

It was acknowledged that presentation of the data demonstrated bias in some way because choices had been made about the themes to be explored, the terminology and the quotations (Stake, 2005). The effect of this was lessened, and authenticity maximised, by utilising word for word quotations from the transcripts. The participants were aware that the transcripts from the focus group discussions were available if they wanted to see them.

Despite these limitations, a qualitative research design was considered to be most appropriate, because it produced fuller and more useful data than quantitative data (Flick, 2006). The findings from the data collected from the focus group discussions emerged in an inductive manner rather than from the standpoint of an existing theory or hypothetical stance (Padgett, 2013). Most importantly, the use of

a qualitative approach enabled participants to express their points of view, and understanding of emotional resilience from the familiar context of social work in order to meet the main aim of the research (Smith, 2009).

3.5 The Research Process

3.5(a) Focus Group Interview Schedule

A focus group interview schedule (Appendix 3), adapted from Whittaker (2009, p.56) was devised in order to provide a structured format which was focused, and designed to encourage participants to feel comfortable enough to fully take part in the discussion. The questions were constructed to obtain information that related to each of the study's focus group questions.

The format was arranged in a structured manner with an initial introduction which provided the opportunity to do a number of things, namely to:

- Thank the participants for taking part
- Briefly explain the research
- Remind participants about any information already received
- Discuss the consent form and obtain signatures
- State the ground rules regarding confidentiality, withdrawal, respect for other people's views, listening and not speaking at the same time as others and to
- Clarify the difference in my roles as researcher and lecturer.

Warm up questions were included which encouraged participants to discuss their journey, the weather and interests such as sport in order to help them relax (Walliman, 2006).

The interview schedule then continued with a format of questioning described by Morgan (1997, p.41) as the 'funnel approach'. Initially, the format provided the opportunity for general discussion in order to enable participants to explore and discuss their own perspectives of emotional resilience. Asking questions 1 and 2,

'*What is your understanding of the term 'emotional resilience' in relation to social work practice?*' and '*How would you describe someone who is emotionally resilient?*' were designed to gauge participants' awareness and understanding of the topic being investigated in readiness for the more focussed questions (Q's 3 to 5). Q3 '*How necessary do you think emotional resilience is for working in social work?*' and Q4 '*Why do you think social work students have to evidence that they are capable of being emotionally resilient?*' were included to establish the importance of resilience and provided links to the PCF whilst Q5, '*When, where and how does emotional resilience develop?*' was meant to be more probing. This required participants to respond in a more analytical rather than descriptive way.

The key question, Q6, '*Do you think that emotional resilience can be taught, learnt and assessed and can you provide examples of how it might be taught, learnt and assessed?*' was designed to elicit responses to the main research question. By this stage, the participants had settled down and felt relaxed enough to share their thoughts and experiences.

Q's 7 to 9 '*What factors might undermine resilience?*', '*How relevant is emotional resilience for other professions?*' and '*What are the consequences for Social Workers who are not resilient?*' were meant to encourage participants to consider other relevant issues, not necessarily key to the research, but nevertheless applicable. Finally, Q10, a profession specific question, provided the opportunity for participants to add more detail to responses given to questions posed earlier on in the interview, within an area of the topic that had specific relevance to them. Participants were then asked if they had anything to add at the end of the interview, and this marked the closure of the focus group discussion.

The intention of utilising this particular format as an interview schedule, was that it allowed data to be compared, contrasts to be considered and answers to be cross checked, in the hope of identifying information that was common to all, unusual, interesting or where there were any gaps (Walliman, 2006). The interview schedule, following adaptations suggested by the pilot study, was a culmination of refining and re-crafting these questions, a process discussed in more detail in the next section

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken in order to tailor the interview schedule so that it was fit for the purposes of this research. Nineteen people took part following a request for volunteers. The group comprised one social work team manager/practice educator, one placement co-ordinator, two senior lecturers (Social Work), two senior lecturers (Adult Nursing), one senior lecturer (Occupational Therapy), one manager (Social and Community Studies), four social work students, three health and social care students, two service users and two carers. All of the participants were connected to the University of Derby through studying, teaching, researching, assessing or interviewing in relation to the Social Work Degree Programme.

The group commented that Question 1 as a 'warm up' should not include the words 'social work practice'. They felt that it needed to be a general question about emotional resilience rather than being one which focused on its place within social work. However, following discussion with the group, the necessity for its link to social work was recognised and accepted. There was consensus that Question 2 was a useful question to ask. The response in relation to Question 3 was one of affirmation for the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) to be presented in diagrammatic form alongside the question. There was some lengthy discussion about Question 3. The pilot group was not comfortable with being asked '*How necessary is emotional resilience for Social Workers?*' because it implied that a scale should be used to rate it. They suggested asking participants '*Do you think emotional resilience is necessary for Social Workers?*' There was consensus about Question 4, as it was considered to be important to establish the need to ask why it was necessary to be emotionally resilient. Question 5, '*How do you feel?*' they thought needed greater clarification. The question was changed to being more specific and asked participants '*When, where and how*'. The pilot group suggested that the remainder of the questions should not be changed. They also commented that it was useful to ask profession specific questions.

The pilot group made several general comments which related to different methods employed by focus groups. Brainstorming was a suggestion that most of the pilot group liked, but they recognised the need for a more structured schedule for this

research, in order to obtain relevant information. The service users and carers voiced well thought out opinions about the necessity to have separate groups for carers and service users as they felt that each group had different experiences to talk about. Overall, the views of the pilot group proved to be useful in refining the structure of the interview, and as discussed in this section, were incorporated to improve the design of the interview schedule where appropriate.

3.7 Sample

Ten focus groups took part in the research study. For ease of presenting and analysing the data, the participants of the ten focus groups were formed into four subsets: Practitioners, Students, Educators and Service Users and each were given abbreviated titles and different colours which helped to distinguish them. This information was presented in tabular form (see Table 1: Participant Make-up).

Participants	Participant Abbreviations	Subsets
Social Work Team Managers	TM(1-5)	Practitioner
Experienced Social Workers	ESW(1-4)	Practitioner
Newly Qualified Social Workers	NQSW(1-3)	Practitioner
Year One Social Work Student	SWS1(1-4)	Student
Year Two Social Work Student	SWS2(1-5)	Student
Year Three Social Work Student	SWS3(1-3)	Student
Lecturers	L(1-4)	Educator
Practice Educators	PE(1-3)	Educator
Service Users	SU(1-4)	Service User
Carers	C(1-5)	Service User

(Table 1: Participant Make-up)

The groups comprised social work team managers, experienced Social Workers, newly qualified Social Workers, social work lecturers, practice educators, service users, carers and students from each of the three year groups studying on the BA (Hons) Applied Social Work Degree Programme at the University of Derby. All of the social work team managers were managing statutory social work teams, the newly qualified Social Workers had been employed as Social Workers in statutory social work teams for less than two years, whilst the four experienced Social Workers, had more than twenty years of social work experience and had been employed in a variety of social work settings. Four, year one social work students took part, having experienced one placement experience in their training, five, year two social work students had experienced two placements and three, year three social work students had completed three placements. The four lecturers had between three to ten years of lecturing experience and all had a wide range of practice experience. The practice educators, three in total, were qualified Social Workers with between ten to twenty years of experience in social work and practice education. The four service users, had received, or were still receiving support from Social Services and finally the five carers had many years of experience of caring for family, friends or others. All were affiliated to the University of Derby through being involved in the development, teaching and assessment of social work training. They all therefore, had a vested interest in being involved in order to ensure that the Social Work Degree was meeting the necessary training requirements for the profession. In order to maintain anonymity of the participants, detailed information about the characteristics of the individuals in each focus group was kept as generalised as possible, so for example, the exact number of years of experience in relation to teaching, training, social work practice, receiving services and caring for others was loosely defined in order to protect the anonymity of the participants.

The focus groups were not particularly large, each comprising 3-5 participants however, although Morgan (1997) suggested between 6-10 participants as an optimal number, the pilot study found that not all the participants had time to comment on each of the questions. It seemed that a smaller group size enabled and encouraged each participant to put across their point of view (Mulhall, 2003). As Rabiee (2004) pointed out though, the group size was determined by who showed

up on the day. Bearing this in mind, six participants were invited, anticipating that at least four were able to participate. The sample, although it was not an exact replica of all Social Workers, team managers, practice educators, lecturers, social work students, service users and carers, did closely resemble the population as a whole, albeit in a miniature version (Seale, 2012). The focus groups were not mixed as the intention of the data analysis process was to compare, contrast and consider gaps in knowledge between the different groups of participants (Punch, 2001) (see Chapter Four, pp.82-146).

The participants were selected, because the focus of the discussion was on the topic of emotional resilience and social work education and training, and all of the participants had a connection to social work. It was therefore a 'purposive sample', because it targeted individuals who were likely to be particularly knowledgeable about the topic (Fowler, 2009). The justification for using this particular sample was that the research required those participants from whom '*one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research*' (Patton, 2002, p.46). The participants therefore had something to contribute about the topic (Rabiee, 2004), and were empowered by being able to share information and ideas (Smith, 2009).

It was acknowledged that the participants might have known each other, but not necessarily particularly well. The students and lecturers for instance were better acquainted than the remainder of the participants. According to Krueger (2002) there were positive aspects to this, one being that if the participants knew each other, they were more likely to engage in the group discussion, and feel more at ease to challenge each other's views, something that was observed in the pilot study. However, it could be argued that the participants knowing each other, meant that that they were less willing to speak, for fear of disclosure, and therefore talked more about issues only pertinent to them (Bloor, 2001).

The focus group discussions were held between November 2011 and May 2012, and there were three to five participants in each group. Each focus group discussed the questions outlined in the Focus Group Interview Schedule (Appendix 3). Gaining access to participants outside of the University, following ethical approval,

was via an information sheet (Appendix 4), and participation was on a voluntary basis. I introduced and explained the purpose of the research to those participants within the University via Team Meetings and at the start of a lecture. Prior to writing the research proposal (Appendix 5), initial discussions were held with a wide range of people to gauge interest in this area of research in order to ensure that there was sufficient interest to make the involvement in the focus groups a possibility (Turnock and Gibson, 2001).

The next section examines in detail the ethical considerations that were addressed in order to undertake the research.

3.8 Ethics

Bowles et al (2006) presented a useful framework for consideration of ethical implications. Firstly, they suggested that the character of the researcher was of significance, especially in relation to whether or not values were held which enabled that person to act in a manner for the good of others, and to use sound judgement in relation to undertaking the research, as well as in social work practice (Banks, 2006). As a registered Social Worker I adhered to a Code of Practice (HCPC, 2012c) that ensured I was

> *acting from the right reasons, have taken all the right circumstances into account and have considered everyone's interests* (Bowles, 2006, p.24).

Secondly, this connected with what Bowles et al (2006, p.57) described as 'deontological' ethics, that is universal moral laws or rules that applied to being a researcher, as well as those that applied to being a Social Worker (Butler, 2002). In adherence to this, prior to undertaking the research, a request was put forward to the University for ethical approval which included giving consideration to a number of standard ethical considerations (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2004) (Appendix 6).

It was essential that participants' involvement in the research was on the basis of informed consent, and that they were not coerced in any way (Jessop and Miller, 2002). They also required sufficient information in order to be able to make an informed choice about whether or not to take part in the research (Butler, 2002). This was ensured via the use of an information sheet (Appendix 4), and consent form (Appendix 7), which required a signature prior to taking part in the focus group discussions. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time, up to the point prior to the data being analysed (Corby, 2006).

In terms of confidentiality, all material was presented in a manner that did not identify any individual by name, but instead identified the participants by category and number, for example, as a newly qualified Social Worker (NQSW1-5). All data was kept in a locked cabinet, and on the computer, password protected in recognition of the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (Brammer, 2015). Participants were made aware that transcripts and findings were available for them if they requested the information (BERA, 2004).

McLaughlin (2008) advised that following the research, it was important to destroy the data within an agreed time limit which in this case was once the doctorate had been successfully completed, and issues of authorship, publication and dissemination had been decided upon. In the case of this research sole authorship of the research was held by me, but I acknowledged the contribution of all the participants. Publication and dissemination was dependent upon the progress and outcomes of the research and this is discussed in a later section on dissemination strategies (Chapter Six, pp.191-198).

Finally, as Bowles et al (2006) pointed out, there was an ethical requirement to take into account, any future consequences that could be reasonably foreseen, and acted upon in a manner that would ultimately benefit the service user, and provide improvements in practice. It was acknowledged that this type of research did have ethical implications, as it required participants to give of their time in taking part in the focus group discussions, in order to explore the concept of emotional resilience.

Whilst it might have been argued that most of the participants benefited in some way in terms of their academic, personal and professional development, it did seem unfair for example, that students were asked to take time out from their already busy academic schedule. It was also recognised that participants might have felt obliged to take part in the research because of the relationship I had with students, which was a dual one of researcher and lecturer (Gearing, 2004). Because of this, it was essential, that students were able to take part on a voluntary basis and did not feel coerced to do so (see p.67), and that a time limit of approximately one hour was imposed (Royse, 2008).

3.9 Data Collection

Data was collected via ten focus groups, utilising the focus group interview schedule, a pre-determined schedule of ten questions (Appendix 3), which had been refined by the Pilot Study (pp.68-69). The focus groups were asked the same nine questions for consistency, however, the tenth question was different in order to obtain more profession specific data (Appendix 8). Each focus group was asked questions by the researcher and in the case of the carers by a lecturer from the Social Work Team (due to the carers and service users being in their focus group discussions at the same time).

The focus group discussions were of approximately one hour duration, and there was approximately fifteen minutes of extra time for information and warm-up question time. The focus group discussions were highly structured in a manner that did not allow for supplementary questions to be asked or participant responses to be followed up by the researcher. It was recognised that this particular method might elicit only partial answers to the questions (Corby, 2006) however by doing this, a certain degree of consistency and standardisation was maintained (Smith, 2008). Having a more flexible schedule of questions would have provided the opportunity for discussions to flow more freely (Krueger and Casey, 2009) however, giving the participants the opportunity to answer all the questions in the allocated time of one hour, necessitated asking set questions. To minimise the effects of this, at the close of the focus group discussion, participants were provided with some 'open space' in order to comment on anything that they had not had the opportunity to express (Krueger, 2002). The focus group discussions were audio-taped and each

discussion was transcribed, which although time-consuming, provided an opportunity for familiarisation with the data (Silverman, 2001).

3.10 Data Analysis

The type of analysis undertaken was that of thematic analysis, (outlined in detail in the introductory section of Chapter Four on pp.83-86). This method was chosen because it provided the possibility of extracting '*rich thematic description*' from each of the focus groups (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.83). As the issue of emotional resilience was an under researched area in the social work profession, and the views of the participants were as yet unknown, it was hoped that this proved to be an informative and insightful method of investigation.

Thematic analysis as an inductive approach allowed for coding to occur without any preconception of a particular coding framework and the data produced led the analytical process (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). I was aware that it was impossible to totally remove any preconceptions or particular theories that I held in relation to the research topic and I recognised that the coding of data was inductive, rather than being theoretically driven (Palmer et al, 2010).

By keeping an open mind, emerging themes were reported, rather than those that necessarily linked with existing theories (Patton, 2002). Some of the themes had been considered in the Literature Review, but others had not, neither had they been predicted in relation to the questions presented to the participants in the focus group sessions (Fielding and Thomas, 2008). Investigation of the themes was undertaken in a manner which analysed the data rather than one which presented it in a purely descriptive way (Bernard, 2010). Concerted efforts were made throughout the study to maintain impartiality by audio-taping and transcribing the data, word for word, and utilising quotations. I also asked a member of the social work teaching team, who was not involved in any of the group discussions, to read one of the transcripts to check their understanding of the discussion, in comparison with my own.

One of the main advantages of utilising thematic analysis to analyse the data in this research study was the fact that it did not seek to provide an explanation for the

issue, but rather uncovered in depth data, which was the main purpose of this research. Another advantage was that unlike other theories, thematic analysis was not linked to a particular theoretical framework, and could therefore be situated within any theoretical stance (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006), suggested that thematic analysis was a method of analysis in its own right, and one which offered a flexible approach that could provide a wealth of data, unlike methods such as interpretative phenomenological analysis, which had a more rigid data analysis framework (Smith, 2008). One of the main disadvantages of being this flexible though, was the lack of clear guidelines, which could lead to confused presentation, and difficulties in analysing the data.

Another disadvantage was that analysis of the data was often complex, due to the necessity of comparing, contrasting and interpreting the findings from a range of participants (Healy and Perry, 2000). However, thematic analysis as an analytical approach recognised that participants provided different, but equally valid accounts of their thoughts, feelings and experiences, from a variety of different perspectives (Maxwell, 2013). It was therefore worth the time and effort it took to undertake the analysis, as it produced detailed findings on the research topic (Radnor, 2002)

3.11 Generalisability and Objectivity

The research was generalisable within the context of social work training and education at the University of Derby, which is where the study was undertaken. However, it was anticipated that the findings might be of interest to other HEI's, as they were also utilising the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) to educate and train social work students. Although the findings were generalisable within the context of social work, consideration was given to the fact that other allied professions might also find them beneficial for comparative purposes.

Because little was known about emotional resilience and its relationship to social work education and training prior to undertaking the research, an exploratory method was decided upon as being the most appropriate method to produce meaningful data (Lecroy, 2010). It was recognised, that the study lacked a certain element of objectivity, because as a researcher there was a vested interest in the

outcomes of the research. This related mainly to the processes of introducing a new social work training framework for educating social work students (Thompson, 2009) so it was therefore very difficult as a researcher to remain totally impartial (Gearing, 2004).

It was also noted that being employed as a lecturer and researcher at the University influenced the research study in other ways. For example, it was possible that my position as a researcher was confusing and ambiguous for some of the participants, because they normally encountered me as a lecturer (Oliver, 2010). The distinction of these roles was something, therefore, that I clarified prior to the focus group discussions taking place (see p.67). I was also aware that working as a lecturer could influence the responses of the participants. According to Gearing (2004), participants might have answered the focus group questions in a manner that they thought I wanted to hear, or they might have held back in saying things that they would have voiced to an independent researcher. As a researcher and social work lecturer I was also knowledgeable about the social work curriculum (Rajendran, 2001) but not that familiar with the concept of emotional resilience, as it was a newly introduced term within the field of social work education and training. There was a danger though, that I might have viewed myself as a key informant, rather than enabled the participants to present their own vision of emotional resilience. Ideally, having no prior knowledge of the subject area or pre-conceived ideas eliminated this possibility (Wolcott, 2001), although Alston and Bowles (2003) argued that this was unlikely to be case. Even so, Robson (2002) did not perceive it to be an issue, as he considered research of this nature to require an insider's perspective.

Finally, as a Social Worker, there was an autobiographical element to the research, which had influenced my decision to opt for emotional resilience as a subject area worthy of study and exploration. I recognised that was the case and undertook the research in an honest manner, in order to be persuasive in demonstrating that this potential bias was minimised (Silverman, 2005).

3.12 Critique of Methodology

It transpired that the methodology utilised to undertake the research in order to collect and analyse the data, proved on the whole to be appropriate. In hindsight though, and with the experience and knowledge gained through undertaking this research, there were some areas of the process, discussed in this section, which could have been improved upon.

In terms of the data collection process the employment of a tightly devised focus group interview schedule (Appendix 3) with pre-determined questions gave me little control of the discussion being held by the participants (Bloor, 2001). On reflection, this could have been counteracted by the use of a more flexible schedule of questions allowing for greater input from myself and discussions to flow without being time constrained (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Open ended questionnaires and surveys might also have provided a more adaptable approach, with respondents being able to comment more generally about emotional resilience, rather than being restricted to providing answers to predetermined topics (Corby, 2006). Had it been evident that the participants were familiar with the concept of emotional resilience beforehand, the focus group discussion could have focused on the main research question, which was to identify what emotional resilience was in the context of social work education, training and practice, thereby allowing for this type of free flow discussion (Flick, 2006).

In hindsight, key informant interviews could also have been implemented, not in place of, but in addition to, the focus group discussions. It was possible that they might have captured more detailed information via in-depth discussion (Smith, 2009), thus reducing the likelihood of possible constraints being placed on participants through feelings of inferiority (Whittaker, 2009), lack of knowledge, (Rabiee, 2004), and discussions being led by certain individuals (Dodd and Epstein, 2012). However, use of individual interviews would have precluded the opportunity to extract multiple viewpoints in a reasonably short period of time (Silverman, 2001). Another factor which might have influenced the responses of the participants was the presence of an interviewer who was employed as both a lecturer and researcher at the University. It was possible that participants answered

in a manner that they thought appropriate, or held back in saying things that they might have voiced to an independent researcher (Gearing, 2004)

The aim with all of these methods of gathering data was the same though, in that as a researcher, it was essential to employ good listening skills in order to gain a greater understanding of the issue being studied (Fowler, 2009). I also wanted to ensure parity across the focus groups, in terms of the same questions being asked, so that information relevant to the aims of the research could be obtained. Most importantly, the participants were given the opportunity, having volunteered to take part in the focus group discussions, to express their points of view and understanding of emotional resilience from the familiar context of social work (Smith, 2009).

On reflection the sample size was an issue that could have created difficulties. The intention had been to have between four and six participants in each focus group so that all of the participants would have an opportunity to respond to the questions in the allocated time (Mulhall, 2003). Although all the participants agreed to attend, not all of them turned up on the day. As noted in Table 1: Participant Make-up (p.70), none of the focus groups comprised six participants, and in three of the focus groups only three of the six participants attended. As it transpired, the groups did manage to discuss all of the interview schedule questions in the designated time, and produced useful and informative data, however, the time factor did mean that the groups with five participants were a little rushed in their responses, and the groups of three had more than enough time to respond.

It was interesting to observe that overall, throughout the discussions the groups were very respectful towards each other and tended, without prompting, to give each other time to respond in turn rather than talking over one another. I did not witness certain participants dominating the discussions (Corby, 2006), or others being less confident and not voicing their opinions (Whittaker, 2009). The participants also appeared to be quite comfortable with each other and were willing to discuss the issues presented to them. As Smith (2009) commented, focus groups, because of their collective nature, could often help participants to discuss issues freely and in a more relaxed manner than they might otherwise have done in a one-

to-one interview situation, I certainly noted this to be the case. As the focus groups were made up of participants who had similar expertise and experience this seemed to help to empower them (Fowler, 2009, Smith, 2009). On reflection then, the optimum number of participants for this particular research was four, six would have been too many. When undertaking similar research, the time allocation for the number of questions to be asked would be checked, and more participants than required invited to attend, to allow for those who dropped out (Rabiee, 2004, Whittaker, 2009).

The data analysis process, as predicted, was time consuming (Walliman, 2006, Padgett, 2013) but a necessary one. Listening to the recordings and doing the transcriptions helped me to fully engage with the data and although a software package such as NVivo (McLaughlin, 2009) would have reduced the time aspect, I chose not to utilise it, because I knew I would gain a greater understanding of the data by retrieving the codes and themes and interpreting them myself. As Dodd and Epstein (2012, p.184) pointed out, from a contextual perspective I knew the topic, issues and participants better than anyone else, so I was in the best position to '*make sense of*' and analyse the results. Although I was concerned about how the data, which was extensive, over 50,000 words in total, would be managed, I found that the analytical process was made easier by employing Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, because its phased approach offered a methodical and rigorous approach to interpreting and analysing the data. Although there were some limitations to the methodology it was noted that many of the issues that might have occurred (see pp.78-81) never came to fruition. Nevertheless it was still important that these issues had been afforded full consideration in advance of the research being undertaken (Dodd and Epstein, 2012).

3.13 Summary

This chapter illustrated that careful and considered thought had been given to the research design. Having determined that the philosophical approach was one which incorporated mainly social constructionist principles, although some aspects of positivism and pragmatism were discussed and evidenced, it then followed, that a

subjectivist stance best enabled those, most closely involved in, and with the research, to participate in producing the data. This decision proved to be fruitful in yielding a wealth of data, which once analysed, produced findings which were then themed. These findings are presented in detailed form in the next chapter (Chapter Four, pp.83-146).

Finally, in hindsight and on careful examination of the research process, section 3.12 of this chapter revealed that there were some aspects of the research process, relating in particular to the method of data collection, which could have been improved upon and these will be taken into consideration when undertaking similar research in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an account of how Braun and Clarke's method of thematic analysis was used to derive the themes of this research, and the findings are depicted as quotations with commentary. A transcript of the participant responses (Appendix 11) is provided to contextualise the quotations utilised in this chapter.

The findings of the focus group discussions presented in this chapter, were produced following an extensive analysis of the transcripts, carried out by utilising 'thematic analysis' The six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, pp.87-93), provided a staged approach to collecting, '*generating an understanding*' (Stenbacka, 2001, p.551), managing, and analysing the data, in order to generate themes, which proved to be advantageous in terms of its rigour and structure (Elliott, 2005).

The process firstly involved transcribing the transcripts, over 50,000 words in total, in order to become familiar with the data, which was undertaken by repeatedly reading the transcripts, so as to develop a more in depth understanding of the participants' responses (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.87-88). Each question was considered separately, and notes taken, prior to any attempt at coding the data (Wolcott, 2001). Careful transcription of the focus group discussions, listening over and over again to ensure that every word was transcribed, was an arduous, but necessary, task (Wolcott, 2001). I was reluctant to allow anyone else to do the transcriptions though, because I wanted to become immersed in the data (Dodd and Epstein, 2012). Participants were not involved in transcribing the data, but the findings were presented to them at regular intervals, as discussed in the Dissemination Strategies Chapter (pp.191-198), and transcripts were available at their request. Bird (2005) viewed this initial phase as being important on an interpretative level.

Secondly, the data from each question, from all ten focus groups, was then scrutinised in more detail, in order to collect information considered to be important and relevant (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.88-89). Any data that was irrelevant such as, discussions about issues unrelated to the questions, was removed, and any data that corresponded to a different question, 'cut and pasted'. Inductive coding occurred without any pre-conception of a particular coding system framework (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Initial codes, were generated to indicate certain possible trends, and any data which could be utilised as quotations to evidence and support the analysis, noted (Appendix 9) (Silverman, 2005).

The third phase of the analysis, '*searching for themes*', involved examining the coded data in greater depth, in order to identify possible themes, and any quotations which encapsulated these themes were matched accordingly (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.89-91). These were colour coded, to assist with identifying the different themes more efficiently when analysing the transcripts. Visual representation of the codes, themes and sub-themes were seen to be helpful in establishing relationships, and any significance between them. For the purposes of this research, the themes were data that was considered important, or had particular relevance to the overall research question. The themes were not generated as a result of their prevalence, just because the theme recurred regularly throughout the research, nor was the amount of data attributed to a certain theme, considered to be crucial (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Fourthly, the process of '*reviewing the themes*' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.91-92), included checking that the themes incorporated the coded data, putting a name to each of the themes, and producing 'thematic maps' as graphic representations of the themed data (Appendix 10).

Phase five of the analytical process involved further reviewing and refining the themed data in order to meet the primary aim of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.92-93). This phase finally produced four Super-ordinate Themes as follows:

- Super-ordinate Theme One - Definition of Emotional Resilience.

- Super-ordinate Theme Two - Necessity for Emotional Resilience in Social Work.
- Super-ordinate Theme Three - Significant Factors in the Development of Emotional Resilience.
- Super-ordinate Theme Four - Teaching, Learning and Assessing Emotional Resilience.

Each super-ordinate theme was then divided into its relevant main themes and sub-themes and depicted graphically (Figures 1-4, pp.86/96/108/11). A table of the thematic compositional structure of the findings was devised to provide a reference guide, in diagrammatic form, for sections 4.2- 4.12 of this chapter (see Table 2: Compositional Structure of Themes).

Thematic Level	Theme One	Theme Two	Theme Three	Theme Four
Super-ordinate Theme	Definition of ER	Necessity for ER in Social Work	Significant Factors in the Development of ER	Teaching Learning and Assessing ER
Main Theme	4.2(a) Controlling and Managing Emotions	4.4(a) Work Related Issues 4.4(b) Emotional Stability	4.6(a) Life Experience 4.6(b) Placements 4.6(c) Supervision 4.6(d) Organisational Demands	4.8(a) Teaching Emotional Resilience 4.10(b) Learning to be Emotional Resilient 4.12(c) Assessing Emotional Resilience
Sub-Theme	4.2a(i) Professionalism 4.2a(ii) Coping Skills	4.4a(i) Work Environment 4.4a(ii) Lack of Knowledge 4.4a(iii) Difficult Service Users 4.4b(i) Previous Life Experience 4.4b(ii) Recruitment and Selection 4.4b(iii) Stress and Burnout	4.6a(i) Tough Upbringing 4.6a(ii) Innate Ability 4.6b(i) Real-life Situations 4.6b(ii) Difficult Cases 4.6c(i) Effective Supervision 4.6c(ii) Ineffective Supervision 4.6d(i) Paperwork and Caseloads	4.8a(i) Life Experience 4.8a(ii) Curriculum 4.8a(iii) Placement 4.10b(i) Placement 4.10b(ii) Curriculum 4.12c(i) Definition 4.12c(ii) Measurement 4.12c(iia) Assessment Issues 4.12c(iib) Breaking Points 4.12c(iic) Performing Emotional Resilience 4.12c(iii) Placements 4.12c(iiia) Statutory Placements 4.12c(iiib) Reflective Supervision

(Table 2: Compositional Structure of Themes)

Finally, in the sixth phase of analysis these themes have been presented in this chapter as a well-argued, and analytical account, with relevant extracts from the transcripts (Appendix 11), with the purpose of addressing the main aim and objectives of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.93).

4.2 SUPER-ORDINATE THEME ONE

Definition of Emotional Resilience

Analysis of the participants' responses produced a super-ordinate theme relating to defining emotional resilience, a main theme entitled 'Controlling and Managing Emotions' and two sub-themes 'Professionalism' and 'Coping Skills' (Figure 1), all of which are presented in this section.
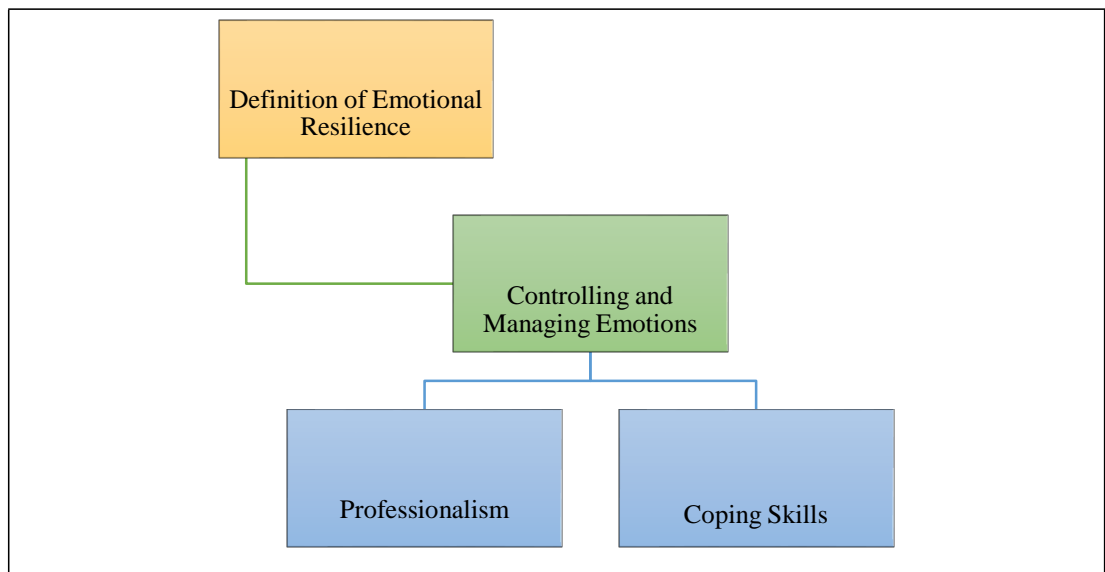
(Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Super-ordinate Theme One).

4.2(a) Controlling and Managing Emotions

The theme of controlling and managing emotions which includes sub-themes of professionalism and coping skills was an overarching theme for the participants.

4.2a(i) Professionalism

In defining emotional resilience, all of the participant groups associated emotional resilience in some way with professionalism.

ESW2 suggested that it was the role of the Social Worker to be emotionally resilient and assumed it to be a necessary requirement for performing the job in a professional manner.

> *It was expected as your professional role to be able to deal with difficult situations and circumstances and to manage the emotions that went with that* (ESW2) (Appendix 11, p.2).

SWS2(1) was pleased that emotional resilience was being recognised as a necessary trait and given recognition within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

> *I kind of see it as a good thing, as finally owning up to something that experienced Social Workers should have, but really couldn't put their finger on it before* (SWS2(1)) (Appendix 11, p.86).

These statements support the idea that being emotionally resilient has always been assumed to be part of the role of being a professional and that it is only since the introduction of the PCF that the term 'emotional resilience' has been used to identify what this professional quality actually is. It also indicates a willingness to accept the PCF as being supportive of good practice.

For TM1, emotional resilience was seen as an ability to maintain professionalism, particularly in relation to being able to cope with the competing emotional demands of the job and personal issues.

For me it's about the workers ability and managers ability to cope with the emotional demands of the job both in terms of the complex issues that we work with also with emotional resilience in terms of coping with competing personal demands and pressures (TM1) (Appendix 11, p.1).

This viewpoint was shared by several participants (L1, L2, NQSW1, ESW2 and C2), all of whom commented on the ability of Social Workers to maintain a professional stance by remaining in control whilst at the same time managing to demonstrate empathy. As NQSW1 stated

To do the job you have to have a certain degree of emotional resilience because being in a frontline social work job you have to deal with situations which are quite upsetting and there are situations where you have to have a degree of resilience in being able to step back and think about things without being caught up in the service users emotions and you need to be able to build that to be able to be a good support for them and sometimes you have to show empathy around them rather than actually breaking down and being emotional towards them (NQSW1) (Appendix 11, p.14-15).

This clearly identifies why emotional resilience is important but equally acknowledges the need for a balance between becoming over involved, and being too removed from the emotional aspects of the job, whist still demonstrating empathy.

Appropriate empathy was also seen as an indicator of resilience by C3, who, when asked to define emotional resilience, described it as the ability to detach oneself from a situation.

> *I see it as a form of detachment, you've got to have it with the person but also if you are a professional carer you have to take a step back and take a detached view of what you are doing and make that balance and I think emotional resilience is a case of getting a balance between the two. You've got to have a caring attitude but at the same time you've got to be detached, hold a professional view of the situation whatever it may be and very often in the caring situation you pick up that something, a few seconds and it will change a situation, you've got to be able to analyse quickly and maintain that balance and it is not always easy* (C3) (Appendix 11, p.6).

Being able to protect oneself from the emotional aspects of the job was also considered by SWS2(3), who presented the idea that emotional resilience was like an electric fence that provided a buffer between the impact of the work and managing to protect oneself emotionally, and described it as 'electric resilience'.

> *I think emotional resilience is like 'electric resilience', there's always that buffer that protects you from being harmed* (SWS2(3)) (Appendix 11, p.4).

This provides a useful analogy to explain what emotional resilience is and presents a visual image of what emotional resilience might look like.

Having the ability to protect oneself from the emotional aspects of the work and demonstrating appropriate empathy is therefore seen to be helpful for those undertaking a caring role. SWS1(3) warned however, that being too detached from the emotional aspects of the work might indicate a lack of empathy.

> *I think you need to teach a lot of professions about detachment………. I know they've got a job to do and you can let your emotions take over but there's such a big difference between not letting your emotions take over and being emotionally involved, and blatantly not caring at all* (SWS1(3)) (Appendix 11, p.64).

This section identifies the role of the emotionally resilient professional as being one of being able to manage difficult emotions whilst demonstrating appropriate empathy.

4.2a(ii) Coping Skills

Although participants were not asked a specific question in the focus group discussions about how Social Workers coped with the demands of the job, being asked to describe an emotionally resilient person generated responses from all of the participants. They commented, for instance, on resilience and its correlation to possessing certain coping skills which helped to protect Social Workers from stress or burnout. These included; the ability to 'bounce back' (C1, PE1, PE2) and keep going (SWS2(2), C1), self-awareness (TM2, TM3), being open and talking things through (NQSW3), having an optimistic (PE1) and stable personality (PE2) and having a cut- off point (C3, SWS2(1)).

C1 put forward the suggestion when defining emotional resilience that it incorporated the ability to 'bounce back'.

> *I think it's something to do with being able to bounce back and being able to cope with the feelings of needing to bounce back or accepting the feelings of when things go wrong or do not go quite the way you would expect, that you can actually have that inside that says' I am going to give it another go'* (C1) (Appendix 11, p.5).

SWS2(2) perceived emotional resilience to be the ability to 'keep going' no matter what difficulties were encountered.

> *It's the bit that makes me, me and it is able to withstand all the knocks and all the challenges. I may feel down and life may become harder but there's the bit that's me that isn't going to break, the bit that's able to withstand the storms, that's able to go through the challenges and is strong, that's just how I see it* (SWS2(2)) (Appendix 11, p.4).

Being willing to pick oneself up and keep going when things are challenging is therefore seen as indicative of someone who is emotionally resilient.

TM2 and TM3 identified self-awareness as being a necessary requisite in understanding and being able to deal with the more difficult aspects of the job as TM3 stated

> *The emotionally resilient ones are the ones who can actually recognise, 'Do you know what, that really affected me and I do need to talk about that and be able to kind of digest it and be able to move on'* (TM3) (Appendix 11, p.6-7).

NQSW3 stressed the importance of being open and honest with oneself about how stressful the job could be in order to cope, and this self- awareness was seen as being a core element of being emotionally resilient.

> *I think I would agree with that really, yes I think it's about how you deal with things as they happen, yes just being self- aware but also being open about it, being quite transparent because I think anyone who's in denial about it and the stresses and emotions, is setting themselves up for a fall. It's just having that maturity to realise that the job we are in does require on an emotional level, does require some kind of input from us, and that can be draining at times. I think it's just having that awareness that things, you know, do get tough and it is a strain sometimes but quite a lot of that is a resilient factor* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.9).

Resilience is therefore about recognising how the job can impact on Social Workers and the suggestion from TM3 is that talking about one's feelings can help the

person to cope. This does imply the necessity to be open and honest about how the job is affecting well-being.

For PE1 remaining optimistic was indicative of an emotionally resilient person.

I think it is also something to do with whether you are naturally an optimist or a pessimist because I think generally speaking people drop into one or the other. People have a glass full, glass empty vision of life. Emotionally resilient people are the former (PE1) (Appendix 11, p.27).

Whilst having a stable personality was viewed as a necessity by PE2.

Someone who is able to ride the waves in a profession that involves dealing with a lot of heightened emotion and a lot of pressure and has the ability to handle those without being destabilised (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.11).

This recognises the link between emotional resilience and certain skills and traits which enable Social Workers to remain in control in situations which are highly emotionally charged.

C3 proposed that there had to be a cut- off point in order for people to be able to cope, utilising personal space to do this. C3's perception therefore, of an emotionally resilient Social Worker, was someone who recognised that

Personal space is very important and at the end of the day you have to have a cut-off point in order to be able to continue caring and to continue being a functioning person (C3) (Appendix 11, p.12).

SWS2(1) concurred with the view that '*being able to say, 'no I can't do anymore'* was the best coping mechanism a Social Worker could employ to remain resilient.

This acknowledges that social work is a challenging job and in order to remain in the profession, emotional resilience is required. Possessing certain traits or coping mechanisms may increase the likelihood of this occurring.

Participants pointed out that there were certain aspects of the job that made it difficult for Social Workers to cope and that these related mainly to a lack of support services. This viewpoint was expressed by ESW4 who presented a personal picture of how, and why, Social Workers might not be described as being resilient. ESW4 stressed that it was not the direct work with service users that necessarily created difficulties for Social Workers, but rather the constraints placed upon the workers by the Organisation, in terms of there being a lack of services to support service users.

I mean for me it was never the work, it was never the, you know the direct work that caused problems for me. It was what you just described you know trying to get services, trying to get support, trying to get the system to work for the person and banging my head against a brick wall and that's why I left social work in the end because I got tired of banging my head against a brick wall and not being able to get, you know, things for people that were absolutely in need, you know, because the system says no (ESW4) (Appendix 11, p.10).

Resilience is not just required for face to face contact with service users it seems but is also necessary in order to be able to deal with the frustrations caused by bureaucracy.

C2, C5, SU1 and SU2 provided examples of how time constraints imposed by the Organisation could adversely affect working relationships. C2 felt that a lack of time had created problems in relation to the service offered to a relative.

> *I'm going back to the incident I spoke about previously, after the Social Worker had left, my father was distressed because he felt that they hadn't given enough time to his problem, because to him it was his whole life. It was paramount to him but she had no time for him and it was just really what we would call 'ticking a box'. So the results of that approach was he was very, very upset and it was one of the few times I've seen my father shed tears and he was dreadfully upset by it all and it also sets up problems for the carer because you have to sort out the mess left afterwards, that was about sitting down and listening to conversations to let him get it out of his system, but at the end of the day he still felt that Social Services, his expression was 'they're not worth tuppence'* (C2) (Appendix 11, p.89-90).

For SU1, emotional resilience was predominantly about managing to convey empathy and concern despite the time pressures.

> *Many of the callers are I feel being pushed for time and consequently the exchange between us is very limited, but within that limited time Social Workers have a remarkable ability to convey a sense of concern, of understanding and one feels that communication is going on* (SU1) (Appendix 11, p.91).

These examples indicate that the role of being a professional Social Worker is one which involves the ability to be able to communicate to the service user that there is time to listen, despite the fact that the reality of the job is such that time is pressurised. Managing time constraints might therefore be considered to be a skill of an emotionally resilient Social Worker.

4.3 SUMMARY - SUPER-ORDINATE THEME ONE
Definition of Emotional Resilience

Controlling and managing emotions emerged as a main theme with sub-themes of 'professionalism' and 'coping skills', thus confirming the significance of their relationship with emotional resilience, and emotional resilience being positioned within the 'professionalism' domain of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

The overall responses of the participants produced a definition of emotional resilience that related specifically to social work as follows:

Emotional resilience is the ability to practice in a professional manner by demonstrating appropriate empathy.
A Social Worker, who is emotionally resilient, possesses certain traits and skills. These traits include: having an optimistic, stable personality and being honest and aware of the impact of the stresses of the job, and coping skills such as: being able to 'bounce back', keep going, having a 'cut off point' and conveying empathy despite organisational demands on time.

4.4 SUPER-ORDINATE THEME TWO

Necessity for Emotional Resilience in Social Work

Super-ordinate Theme Two incorporated responses mainly from four of the focus group questions; Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q9 (Appendix 7). Overall, the main themes that emerged related mainly to work issues and emotional stability as well as several sub-themes (Figure 2).
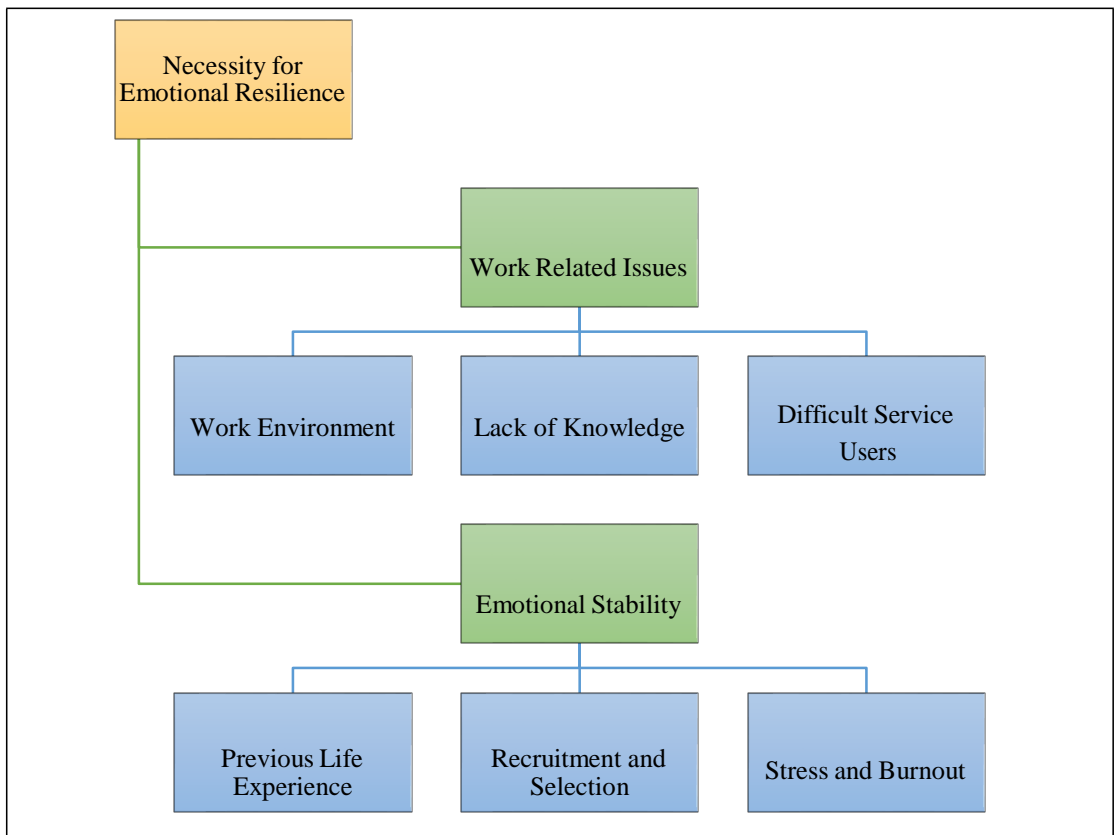
(Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Super-ordinate Theme Two)

4.4(a) Work Related Issues

Work related issues were commented upon mainly by participants who were studying and by those in practice.

4.4a(i) Work Environment

ESW1 pointed out that it was necessary to be emotionally resilient in order to work in an environment that was not supportive.

Where teams are stretched and understaffed and they're fighting amongst themselves and again and again you get battered in the same sort of way, I don't think that any of us necessarily has enough emotional resilience to cope with that sort of thing. So there's a structural issue here in the way teams are managed definitely and one of the biggest problems I think is the managerial culture in social work (ESW1) (Appendix 11, p.15).

It is clear that a stable, well managed working environment is important to support a resilient work force.

4.4a(ii) Lack of Knowledge

TM3 recalled from personal experience that students' emotional resilience could be affected by a lack of knowledge about what the social work job entailed prior to qualification and undertaking practice.

I know from personal experience of the job I had absolutely no idea of what I was walking into. From qualifying it's not the world that you get taught about at University, it isn't the world you walk into when you start fieldwork, so I suppose it's about trying to support students to have a more realistic idea of what the job actually entails before it starts (TM3) (Appendix 11, p.19).

This acknowledges the link between prior knowledge of the role of the Social Worker and emotional resilience and the need for appropriately recruiting to social work, a point which is explored in sub-theme 4.4b(ii), Recruitment and Selection.

4.4a(iii) Difficult Service Users

In response to being asked the profession specific question '*Can you think of examples from placement when it is necessary to be emotionally resilient?*' SWS1(2) was able to provide an example which demonstrated the necessity to be resilient in situations such as, those encountered when dealing with service users who were 'difficult'.

Sometimes it is the emotional response that you are getting from people which is sometimes aggressive, very emotional, very upset. I found that the most difficult situations that I had to deal with were screaming and shouting over the phone, saying things that were sort of upsetting to me, or people very, very emotionally upset trying to self-harm, things like that. I found I'm able to be detached from my own life but then you are suddenly seeing people really emotional. I found that was hard afterwards, to take it back home, because it was a very hard placement (SWS1(2)) (Appendix 11, p.85).

This clearly highlights some of the problems faced when working with service users in highly emotive situations and the impact this has on the workers.

4.4(b) Emotional Stability

4.4b(i) Previous Life Experience

The importance of previous life experience and its effect on emotional stability emerged strongly in relation to the necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient, and the majority of the participants commented that Social Workers needed to have worked through, or resolved any personal issues or previous life experiences, that had been traumatic. An example of this from practice was presented by ESW1, who explained that a student had struggled to cope with the training on placement because she had been assaulted by an individual with a learning disability in the past, and now felt that she could work in all areas of social work, except in the field of learning disability.

> *Well, one student in particular, sticks in my mind and she said, 'As we know, I can't deal with people who've got mental handicaps', that is learning disabilities. There was no way she was going to ever work with them or go and have a placement with them and it was a dilemma. She'd go anywhere else, deal with anything else, but her experience had been a really serious assault and attack, in a situation with a person with learning disabilities. So what do we do with that? You know, we said this is sufficient trauma for her not to be emotionally resilient to potential threats in a learning disability environment again. What do we do? I don't know really* (ESW1) (Appendix 11, p.20).

ESW1 felt that this student's transference of fear from this one particular traumatic episode in her life had not been worked through, and that without this resolution she could not practice effectively as a Social Worker. This demonstrates the need for students to be aware of the impact of personal or life circumstances on their ability to perform as Social Workers and requires recognition of the possibility that social work might not be a suitable career for them.

In contrast to the previous example, this recollection by SWS1(1) illustrates how resolution of personal issues prior to training can enable students to put things in perspective and be resilient.

> *I think for me on placement it was seeing people going through a similar situation that I had experienced quite some years ago, like I said, being able to deal with that. I knew that whatever happened to me was dealt with though, so it didn't really surface at all. I could empathise with that service user; it put my issues into perspective. I could put myself in her shoes, I could say, 'it's not about me, it's about her' and I felt strong enough to deal with the situation* (SWS1(1)) (Appendix 11, p.85).

This shows the importance of recognising the impact of issues on self and the ability to separate one's own feelings from service users' issues in order to remain resilient.

4.4b(ii) Recruitment and Selection

The notion of previous life experience and resolution of personal issues being factors that impacted on emotional resilience (ESW1 and SWS1(1), 4.4b(i), p.98), were reflected upon by ESW2 who struggled to determine the relative magnitude of either of these factors.

I think we look for something similar to emotional resilience already in our interviews, so to talk about the people coming on social work we ask the question, 'Has anything happened in your life that's affected you and made you alter the way you feel, think or behave?'......... I think on the one hand if they have come through it and they are applying for a social work course and they're demonstrating a reflectivity to be able to look back on that and say this is where we have learnt this or changed, we value that and say that's really good but somewhere for me and I can only speak for myself, not other's, knocking away in the background is part of this, has this, has this in some way weakened your resilience in some way. You know this because maybe along the line you'll identify someone else who's been in a similar situation. How are you going to manage that, is that going to kick in your emotions from that time and expose and mean that you're going to find it actually more difficult to help, even though you may think it's going to be a quality or are you going to be able to identify with and look positively and create something out of it and work on it, I don't know. It's an uncertainty isn't it? (ESW2) (Appendix 11, p.16).

TM2 urged the importance of recognising a prospective social work student's emotional resilience at the recruitment stages in order to head off potential difficulties and disruption once the social work training commenced, but admitted that knowing whether or not someone was emotionally resilient was not straightforward, especially at the recruitment and selection stage.

> *I think it's crucially important, I think there are difficulties in how to select and recruit to the profession but we are more than ever before expecting people to develop relationships in the workplace and I think people's capacity to relate to other people is absolutely the essential core to our work. You can do anything if you can relate to people in a differential kind of way and be able to reflect on it so if workers are going from working with little children to standing in a court of law and presenting a case and evidence, that's a big span and I think that workers have to be resilient to take a lot of stuff from the public but also to be able to process it, understand it and then take care of themselves when they are doing it because you can get very badly hurt in our work and I think if you are not aware of this , it will get you, somewhere, somehow. I think the challenge is, how on earth do you deal with this at interview and how do you recruit resilient workers?* (TM2) (Appendix 11, p.13).

There is recognition therefore, of the difficulties in the decision making process relating to recruiting people who have, or have not, encountered adversity in their lives, and supports the need for selecting appropriately into the profession, acknowledging the call for emotionally resilient staff.

PE3 suggested that emotional resilience might be assessed at the recruitment and selection stages via an interview question.

> *That's a really interesting point because it begs the question should there actually be a question at interview that given a scenario how would you cope with something? You may be able to test out whether people have got that innate ability* (PE3) (Appendix 11, p.27).

This quote implies that it is possible to assess the inherent nature of emotional resilience.

4.4b(iii) Stress and Burnout

The necessity for emotional resilience in social work was summed up by PE2 who stated

> *Yes for me it would belong to a group of qualities and skills that if you haven't got it then you just can't, you are not going to be able to survive, whereas there are certain skills and qualities that if you haven't got, you could work round them but you can't work around not having emotional resilience, you just won't survive as a Social Worker* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.18).

Several participants (L1, SWS2(1), C2), commented on the possible consequences for Social Workers who were not emotionally resilient. They pointed out that a lack of emotional resilience was detrimental to both the emotional and physical health of the worker, thus affecting their ability to practice effectively as a Social Worker. Several examples were provided by participants, illustrating the difficulties faced by Social Workers in dealing with the emotional demands of the job, whilst maintaining a professional stance. As L1 recalled

> *You do find many of the Social Workers going off work long term with sickness and stress and you know actually really struggling and finding it difficult with complete mental breakdowns. I mean there used to be two or three Service Managers who I knew, there were stories that they had just ended up wandering round the streets, completely lost it. Just completely lost it because of the stress and the emotional pressure of the job they did, where a child had died or something and it knocked them sideways* (L1) (Appendix 11, p.71).

Whilst on placement SWS2(1) had also witnessed a Social Worker experience ill-health due to stress, this being a good example of how not being able to discuss issues and be open about one's feelings (NQSW3, p.103), could lead to a lack of resilience.

> *There was a guy on my second placement who had been part of the team for over 10 years and in my time there he just put his file down one day on his desk, put his coat on and he left at 2.30 pm in the afternoon and everybody was 'my goodness, what's he doing, what's he doing, he never does this' and then he took off six weeks with stress and everybody was talking in the office that he had worked there for so long and they could not understand him. Because I was new, it was easy for me because his desk faced the wall, he did his own work, he didn't interact with the team, he didn't join in with the team stuff, he had his own caseload, he did it his way, he did his own thing and he went off. He became so focussed on the work and so introverted that when he kind of shut off all his networks, to be able to go, 'I don't know what I'm doing with this case can I talk to you about this' he would never do that* (SWS2(1)) (Appendix 11, p.72-73).

These practice examples evidence the stressful demands placed upon workers and the negative impact this can have on their physical and emotional health. They also highlight the necessity to be a 'team player', and ask for advice in order to cope with the demands of the job, points discussed by TM3 and NQSW3 (4.2a(ii), p.90).

C2 was concerned that a lack of emotional resilience could impact on a Social Worker's ability to do the job, and made the observation that Social Workers who were not emotionally resilient, coped, by leaving their job.

> *The very nature of the Social Workers job is traumatic because they are dealing with people at their lowest point when they need help and it can be the most wearing of things without emotional resilience, how do they cope? The short answer is they don't. The first thing that they do is to work in any profession that takes them away from all the trauma. They get out of the heat* (C2) (Appendix 11, p.74-75).

There is acknowledgement therefore of the stressful nature of the job, and the need for emotional resilience, in order to be able to continue practising.

The impact of Social Workers not being resilient and leaving their employment was also noted as being of concern by C5 and C3, who viewed consistent intervention

as a significant factor in relation to the care of their 'loved ones'. Consistent care was not commented upon by any other participant groups. C5 for example stated

I think consistency is important. What you don't want to find is that you have had a Social Worker for some time and they have had a breakdown and moved on and you are then left with inconsistent care, that's one reason why I think emotional resilience is important and also I think as a service user or carer you need to feel you are in safe hands, confident that someone's not going to lose it or not be able to cope with whatever you are throwing at them (C5) (Appendix 11, p.88).

This quote indicates that stability and consistency are indicators of a Social Worker's emotional resilience. The need for consistency is clear and there is acknowledgement that in order for this to happen, a strong and healthy workforce is required.

The necessity to be emotionally resilient was also seen to be requirement for other professions. The findings from Question 7 for instance, '*How relevant do you think emotional resilience is for other professions?* (Appendix 3), indicated that the relevancy of emotional resilience was not restricted to social work alone. Overall there was a general opinion from participants in each of the focus groups, that anyone working in a caring profession needed to be emotional resilient. This observation was summed up by SWS3(1), whose opinion represented the majority of the participants.

I think emotions are a sort of indicator of how you interact with other people. You are not going to be very emotional if you just sit in front of a desk doing paperwork, the profession that requires any form of interaction with people is most likely to have lots of emotion involved. People come with different demands, different needs and they are going to therefore have an effect on you because in any area you are going to come under stress as a worker (SWS3(1)) (Appendix 11, p.65).

Participants identified certain professionals that needed to be emotionally resilient which included, therapists, counsellors, politicians, doctors, teachers, police, nurses, paramedics, army personnel, emergency services and lawyers. Although there was agreement that all of these professionals had in common, the fact that they were involved in working with people, there was little mention of the nature of the work pertinent to the professions, which might have explained each of the jobs relevance to emotional resilience. In relation to social work as a profession, ESW2 did though ask the question.

Are we looking for a different kind of emotional resilience may be to that of the police or paramedics? (ESW2) (Appendix 11, p.67).

and expressed the belief that the difference between Social Workers and other professionals, was that they became far more emotionally involved with service users than other professionals, such as paramedics for example, who might only assist a service user in a crisis situation during a short period of time, and not really get to know the service user as a person.

You are dealing with longer term, more entrenched, maybe some more difficult emotions in getting to know the person (ESW2) (Appendix 11, p.68).

This acknowledges that the deeper, more meaningful relationships that Social Workers develop over a period of time with service users, heightens the emotions that Social Workers are trying to control and manage. The length of time spent with service users is therefore a significant factor in relation to emotional resilience.

4.5 SUMMARY – SUPER-ORDINATE THEME TWO

Necessity for Emotional Resilience in Social Work

It was evident from the findings that social work is a stressful profession and that the profession requires resilient Social Workers. The working environment was seen to have an undermining effect on emotional resilience if there was an unsupportive work culture and stress was created by working with 'difficult' service users.

The consequences of not being emotionally resilient seemed to affect not only the worker themselves, but also colleagues, the organisation, carers and service users. The main consequences for the Social Worker being, physical and emotional ill health necessitating time off work, ineffective and inconsistent practice and ultimately, having or choosing, to leave the profession.

Recruitment emerged as a main issue with recognition of the importance of a selection process that could identify candidates with unresolved personal issues. Emotional resilience and the ability to cope with the demands of social work, being seen to directly relate to having previously coped and dealt with personal trauma and difficulties.

There was acknowledgement also, of the link between emotional resilience and having prior knowledge of the role of the Social Worker, and the importance of ascertaining this at the recruitment stage.

4.6 SUPER-ORDINATE THEME THREE

Significant Factors in the Development of Emotional Resilience

Super-ordinate Theme Three incorporated responses mainly from two of the focus group questions, Q5 and Q8. Analysis of the participants' responses to these questions produced four main themes, life experience, placements, supervision and organisational demands as well as several sub-themes (Figure 3).
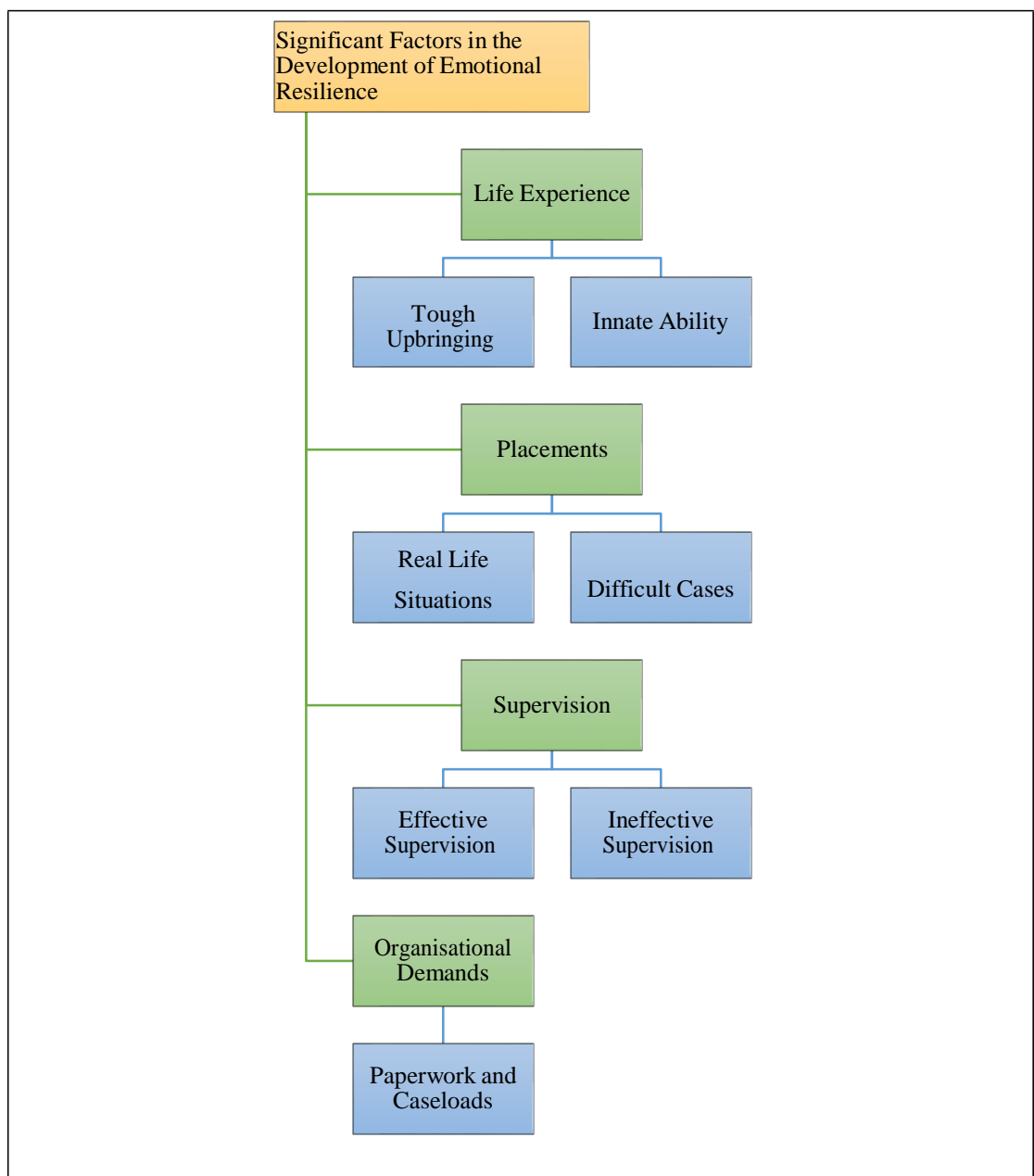
(Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Super-ordinate Theme Three).

4.6(a) Life Experience

Overall, although the participants presented many different views about how emotional resilience might develop, there was a majority response which highlighted a main emerging theme indicating that life experience played the greatest part in the development of emotional resilience.

4.6a(i) Tough Upbringing

Life experience gained from childhood was a theme that was discussed by several participants. ESW1 for example, expressed the view that emotional resilience developed as a result of being born into a tough environment.

It starts when you are born and might have some bearing on practice. I reckon if you are brought up in a fairly tough working class environment you get emotional resilience before you're ten (ESW1) (Appendix 11, p.24).

SU3 voiced similar thoughts.

I would think it is something to do with the background of the person as a child, have they had a traumatic background, have they lost a parent?, something like that, something that can be latent as regards it only needs another traumatic experience such as abuse that could certainly upset people and I can understand that, so I think that the starting point is very difficult to determine, where the resilient ability kicks in, history of the person I would think (SU3) (Appendix 11, p.28).

NQSW3 reflected on the possibility of a variety of difficult life experiences creating resilience, and the ability to practice as a Social Worker.

> *Where I think I got my resilience from in my teenage years was my own difficult life experiences which gave me a lovely array of issues that actually did put me in really good stead for becoming a Social Worker. I got a load of skills and experiences that I could draw on to help me empathise with all these children, young people and families that I had come to work with, so I think for me, it's clear that it's something to do with your own experiences in aiding your resilience* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.22).

The early challenges of life were viewed by these participants as a good grounding for emotional resilience.

For SU1 just the process of living, not necessarily one which involved adversity, was sufficient to provide adequate opportunities for developing resilience.

> *I would have thought just the process of living through life, doing a job, working alongside other people, that sort of thing; that this process goes on all the time* (SU1) (Appendix 11, p.48).

Thus confirming that everyday life experiences are sufficient in themselves to promote emotional resilience.

4.6a(ii) Innate Ability

Unlike SU1's view that emotional resilience developed through life experience, PE2 proposed that life experience on its own was not enough to enable someone to develop emotional resilience. PE2 suggested that if someone had the innate ability and awareness to be able to use these life experiences, and learn from them, then they had a distinct advantage over someone who had to learn how to cope in order to become resilient, calmness being highlighted as an example.

> *Ideally the people in the best situation are those who are resilient before they start their social work education because there are clearly some people for whom it is their innate makeup or through life experience that come into social work and they are emotionally resilient people. They have got a massive advantage. I always say when I am doing induction work with groups that if you happen to be a naturally calm person then you have won the lottery because there isn't anything that's going to be more important than that ability.*
> *I think if you have it naturally or through life experiences, it is so much easier because it can be learnt, but it is a lot more difficult to learn it as a skill set than if it's innately in you* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.26-27).

It is evident that life experience plays a part in the development of emotional resilience however, having an innate ability to be resilient is likely to enhance it.

4.6(b) Placements

4.6b(i) Real Life Situations

Several participants identified being on placement as a significant time for the opportunity to develop emotional resilience. SWS2(1) for example, stated

> *I think placements are a good opportunity to develop and because you have to learn how to help people, but on placement you have those real people and have that emotional impact* (SWS2(1)) (Appendix 11, p.25).

NQSW3 agreed that being introduced to working with real life cases and situations in practice had led to the development of emotional resilience, and provided knowledge about what do in the future.

> *I suppose there have been things that I have not dealt with either in my own life or at work and therefore I've learnt that I can cope and it's manageable and it's ok, so that it becomes a template for future cases* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.77).

These responses identify the importance of being able to check out skills in practice to ensure that workers are resilient enough to deal with difficult situations. This is also seen as a template for working with cases in the future

4.6b(ii) Difficult Cases

Being provided with particularly difficult and challenging work, in order to develop resilience, was identified as a sub-theme. As PE1 observed

> *I think as a Social Worker the more heart-breaking, complex cases that you deal with, helps you to build up resilience because you've got something to hark back to, 'well come on you've dealt with something like this before', you've maybe drawn strength from the last time you've had to do that particular task, so I think I know it's a trite thing to say but I think it does come with experience really* (PE1) (Appendix 11, p.35).

This view was supported by NQSW2, whose opinion was that introducing students to particularly difficult social work cases, was an effective way of enabling them to develop an awareness of the realities of the job.

> *I think you need to test it in the first year of practice. You've got to be exposed to the harder, the more difficult end of social work if possible in your training, not so that you are kind of left or dropped in it, that's definitely when you are going to be working, to see the difficult end of where you could be working in the future. It gives you the understanding and the awareness of where you could be when you've finished your three year training* (NQSW2) (Appendix 11, p.23).

There is overall recognition therefore, of the value of exposing students to the more difficult and challenging aspects of social work, in order for them to build up their emotional resilience.

4.6(c) Supervision

4.6c(i) Effective Supervision

TM1, TM2 and TM4 in particular, discussed effective supervision in the work place as being of prime importance in developing emotional resilience. They perceived emotional resilience to develop, through Social Workers being offered support and counselling throughout the duration of their working life. The importance of offering good supervision was recognised by TM1 who stated

> *I think that right at the early stages the right kind of supervision and support for workers and students is key* (TM1) (11, p.30).

For TM4, offering students and practising Social Workers the opportunity to be reflective in supervision was beneficial.

> *The key is reflection, supervision with reflective questions. I have recently done some reflective supervision as training with key questions slipped in like, 'How did that make you feel and why?, you know those kind of probing questions.....and the people are that are just doing it without thinking about it* (TM4) (Appendix 11, p.75).

This opinion was supported by TM2.

> *I think if workers are fortunate enough to find that culture, that setting that encourages reflection, reflective work starts very early on, they grow from it so that they can actually grow and feel stronger in themselves* (TM2) (Appendix 11, p.34).

It is clear that the importance of reflection is acknowledged through supervision in training and in practice.

4.6c(ii) Ineffective Supervision

Ineffective supervision on the other hand, was identified by NQSW1 as being focused mainly on the organisational aspects of the job, rather than on the wider features of professional development, including the emotional aspects.

> *Yes I think supervision is very procedural. I don't think we discuss emotions at all from my experience. Luckily, I'm quite an open person, so in the team I will discuss my emotions and obviously they are quite supportive and sometimes I do with my Manager as well, but supervision is mainly about what's happening with my cases, how I'm doing at work, we don't go into much detail about how I'm feeling about my cases, it's just about progression of them* (NQSW1) (Appendix 11, p.78-79).

NQSW3 agreed that supervision could be procedurally driven, and suggested that not being provided with the opportunities to discuss and develop awareness, could lead to a lack of resilience.

> *For me there's something in supervision for I think, supervision for me has to kind of be at a certain level, in- depth, in order to develop your resilience. I mean we're talking about raising awareness that needs to start happening on placements...... I think there has to be some sort of form, some type of clinical supervision where you're actually able to talk about the emotional impact of the work on you as an individual because often I can find it can be quite procedurally driven which is essential as well but especially in your first year you do need to have more of an effective discussion and definitely focus on emotions because it's often not talked about. It's often something that people seem fearful of talking about and it shouldn't be. It's really important to be talking about this openly with your Manager, so for me that's a barrier and I think it's certainly something that can hinder your resilience* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.78).

The importance of supervision that is focussed on the worker and their emotions, as opposed to being procedurally driven, is recognised.

The idea of Social Workers having the opportunity to discuss their feelings, and admit that they are struggling without the fear of repercussions, was according to TM2, key to developing resilience. As TM2 advised, it was important to

Keep a culture of discussion in the workplace but also critically in supervision….. so I think it's about having that dialogue and making it safe to talk about feelings as professional workers. It doesn't mean failure or weakness, it is a strength and a responsibility and a duty to talk about it (TM2) (Appendix 11, p.76).

This acknowledges the need for support to openly express thoughts and feelings in order to ensure that workers are safe and resilient.

4.6(d) Organisational Demands

4.6d(i) Paperwork and Caseloads

Organisational issues such as, paperwork and caseloads, were mentioned as factors which undermined Social Workers emotional resilience. Several participants (NQSW3, SWS3(2), PE1, TM1), commented on finding it difficult to do the practical work, as well as completing the required paperwork within set deadlines. NQSW3 for example, was concerned that the completion of statutory paperwork was detracting from the time that could be spent with service users, and stated

Yes it takes the heart out of social work and removes what actually made me want to do social work in the first place (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.66).

SWS3(2) agreed, whilst reflecting on placement experience, that the amount of allocated cases and pressure from the Organisation, had adversely affected emotional resilience.

> *It's like people are having a gun put to their head at the minute, it's horrible. It really feels like they are not being included in the planning or being given choices..... and I think that really causes massive amounts of stress* (SWS3(2)) (Appendix 11, p.69-70).

As SWS3(2) stated.

> *You know at the end of the day, we are humans. We can only do so much, so if we've got massive caseloads it definitely affects your emotional resilience* (SWS3(2)) (Appendix 11, p.69).

Likewise, in response to the profession specific question '*Have the emotional demands of the job changed?*', TM1 identified organisational demands having changed, thus putting pressure on staff and worryingly, social work becoming more about systems, rather than supporting service users.

> *I do think as well, that there is a role with the state as a government because you know you want the workers to be emotionally resilient, that's fine, but really they need to be able to work in a system that enables them to reflect. It feels a bit uncomfortable sometimes when they throw some things about emotional resilience into a course and are we trying to fix the person so they fit into the system, why don't we look at fixing the system? Because they are put into a lot of situations which are imposed upon them by regulation a huge amount of regulation which takes up 80% of the time on the computer* (TM1) (Appendix 11, p.37).

It is acknowledged therefore, that organisational processes can have a negative impact on workers resilience.

Encouragingly, whilst recognising the negative impact organisational processes could have on emotional resilience, SWS3(2) felt that working in a supportive team might help to counteract it.

> *I think having a good team around you and having a good manager makes such a difference* (SWS3(2)) (Appendix 11, p.69).

C5 stressed the importance of having good peer support.

> *The importance of peer support throughout, so I think some of the emotional resilience comes about from being able to share things with other people and realise that you're not always on your own. For some people it might be the church, for some people it might be going to the mosque, it might just be talking to peers at work , whatever it is, whatever the support network is I'd say that it is a way of gaining emotional resilience* (C5) (Appendix 11, p.29).

This acknowledges the importance of a supportive Team Manager and good peer support.

4.7 SUMMARY–SUPER-ORDINATE THEME THREE

Significant Factors in the Development of Emotional Resilience

Firstly, the factors identified as contributing to the development of emotional resilience were varied, but related principally to life experience, placements, supervision and organisational demands.

Overall, life experience, particularly a 'tough one' was seen as being a way to develop emotional resilience. Having an innate ability to be resilient was also considered to play an important part.

Placements were viewed as providing opportunities to develop resilience through working with difficult and challenging cases. Effective supervision whilst on placement, and in practice, was considered to be a significant factor in the development of emotional resilience. Reflective supervision was highlighted as a main contributory feature.

Influences undermining the development of emotional resilience were thought to be predominantly organisational ones, such as excessive amounts of paperwork, and high caseloads, although ineffective supervision was also viewed as having an impact. A supportive team culture which offered open discussion, reflection and good managerial and peer support was seen to help counteract these adverse factors.

4.8 SUPER-ORDINATE THEME FOUR

Teaching, Learning and Assessing Emotional Resilience

This section presents Super-ordinate Theme Four 'Teaching, Learning and Assessing Emotional Resilience' as illustrated in Figure 4.
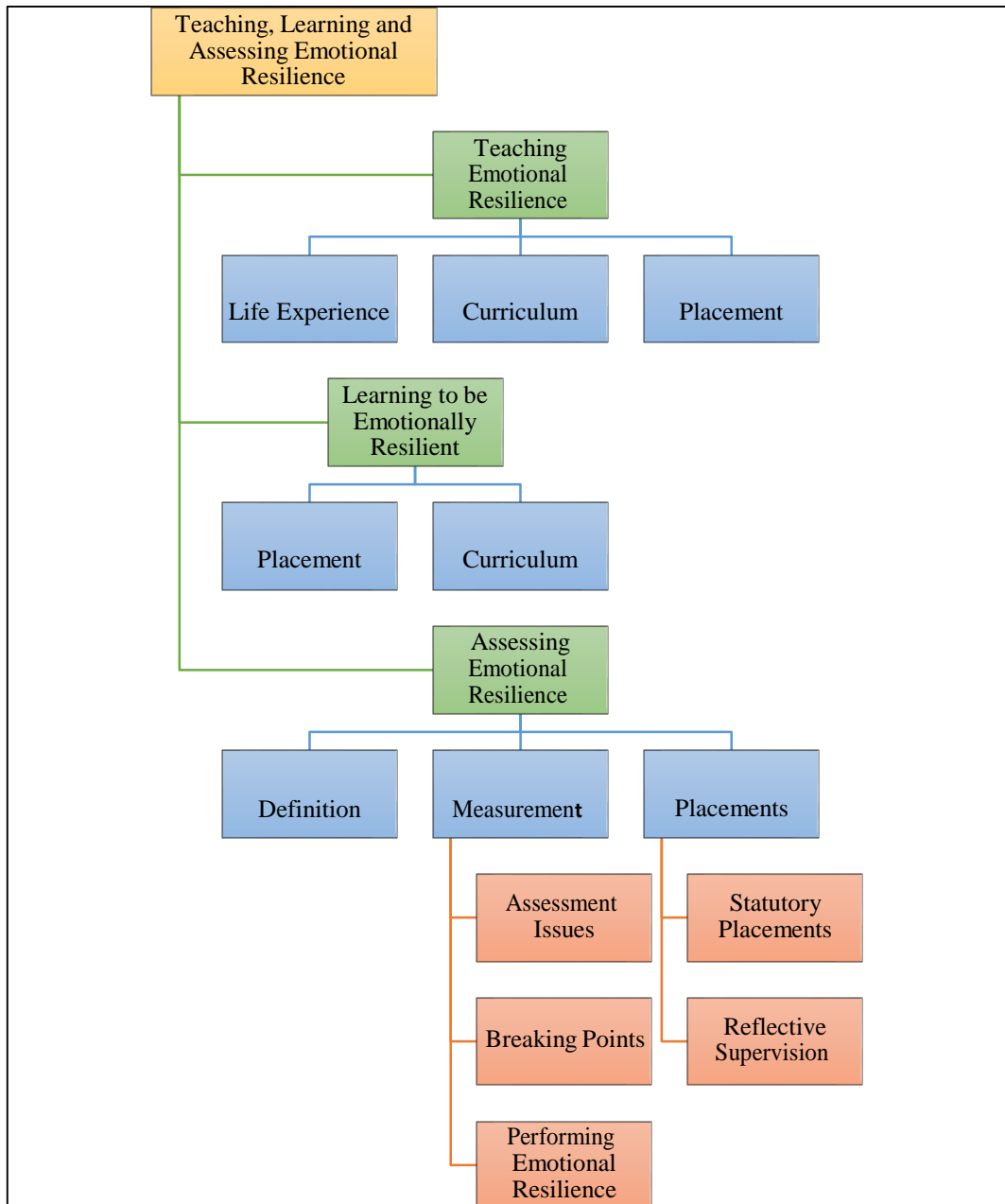
(Figure 4: Graphical Representation of Super-ordinate Theme Four)

The findings for Super-ordinate Theme Four were produced mainly from responses to Question 6, '*Can emotional resilience be taught, learnt and assessed and can you provide examples of how it might be taught, learnt and assessed?*' (Appendix 3). As a result of the large amount of data produced, for the purposes of discussing and analysing the data, the responses have been separated into three main themes: Teaching Emotional Resilience, Learning to be Emotionally Resilient and Assessing Emotional Resilience, and further sub-divided into a number of sub-themes.

4.8(a) Teaching Emotional Resilience

In relation to 'Teaching Emotional Resilience', three main themes emerged mainly from asking the participants Question 6(a), '*Can emotional resilience be taught and can you provide examples of how it might be taught?*' These included, life experience, curriculum and placement, as illustrated in Figure 4, (p.119).

4.8a(i) Life Experience

All of the participant groups commented on life experience and its relationship to teaching emotional resilience.

NQSW2 viewed emotional resilience as a concept that could not be taught, perceiving it instead, to be something that developed through life experience and social work practice, rather than through teaching. As NQSW2 pointed out

I don't think having a discussion about it in a seminar or in a classroom context or a lecture context is going to work because it might give people false impressions of their capabilities in that respect or false understanding of what it actually is.
I feel quite strongly really that it is a combination of your own experiences and also how that interacts with the very unique pressures of how you are doing social work really (NQSW2) (Appendix 11, p.31).

The view that life experience played a more significant role than teaching in developing emotional resilience was shared by SWS1(3).

At 30 I'm more emotional resilient than I was at 15 and that's just life experience and I think, I don't think it's necessarily something that can be taught, it's just something you learn through experience and like you say the tools. I think learning coping strategies and things are good but in terms of building it up it's just something that you'll get with experience I think (SWS1(3)) (Appendix 11, p.39).

However, L4 felt that emotional resilience was more likely to be an innate ability but that there were still strategies that could be taught and learnt, to enable Social Workers to manage their emotions.

Well I don't think it can be taught, I know I am not an emotionally resilient person. I know that from my experiences, my primary reactions to a lot of situations but I have learnt strategies that I have within a framework that I, as soon as something happens and I feel a response, a natural response coming on, I switch into another mode but I've had to learn to do that. So I think there's a framework that can be taught so these are the strategies, this is how flexible you need to be, these are the appropriate responses, these are the inappropriate responses but I don't think that's as robust as being able to do that as a default position (L4) (Appendix 11, p.42).

L1 agreed with the view that emotional resilience could be taught, and voiced concerns about taking a different stance to this.

Well, the worrying part for me is if we don't think it can be taught to a student then we might as well give up on everybody who's becoming a Social Worker. If we don't believe it can be developed or taught, then that means that when those students are then working with families they want to change and develop, are we then saying that we've said no, you've either got it or you haven't. If you haven't you're never, ever, going to change then (L1) (Appendix 11, p.41).

This supports the necessity for teaching theory in order for students to develop resilience.

The notion of time in relation to teaching emotional resilience was discussed by TM5 and L1, both of whom supported the idea that it could be taught and viewed the development of emotional resilience as an ongoing process. As TM5 commented

I think it's something that was spoken about earlier. It's not a single event, it's not that you go into a classroom and it's taught in a day, 'so off you go you are resilient now'. It is a process and it's about the support that students are given throughout their social work training, that we get them into a position where we get to where they have more realistic expectations but it wouldn't finish there, it's an ongoing process that will continue throughout your career (TM5) (Appendix 11, p.21).

L1 agreed with the indefinite period of time for teaching and development of emotional resilience.

It will be very difficult to say that a student has developed emotional resilience after three years because there is no end to its development (L1) (Appendix 11, p.46).

This acknowledges the lifelong process of gaining skills of emotional resilience.

Overall, there was a clear difference of opinion of how emotional resilience developed. TM1 suggested that it concerned a combination of different factors.

Do we teach people anti-discriminatory practice or do we develop it? Do we teach anti- racist practice or do we develop people? So for me it's the same sort of issue really do we teach people or do we develop it? I think you can teach some aspects you know some set techniques if you like but I think it's a matter of modelling, development and it takes time (TM1) (Appendix 11, p.36).

It is therefore likely that a blend of factors will be involved in the development of emotional resilience, those that are innate, some that are taught and then applied, and others that develop through life experience and experiential learning.

4.8a(ii) Curriculum

The academic curriculum was seen to be an important factor in determining whether or not emotional resilience was likely to develop.

The 'Preparation for Social Work Practice' module was identified by SWS2(4) as a taught module in the curriculum, that had enabled resilience to develop, because it involved the use of explicit case studies. SWS2(4) for instance stated

So far on this course we have done a lot of modules, a lot of lectures, a lot of practice, reading, a lot of it has been about quite negative stuff or related to the service user but a lot of modules like the 'Preparation for Practice' is hard and it's hard to sit through some of those lectures because they are quite hard hitting stories. Doing case studies in preparation for being a Social Worker I think has toughened me up a bit (SWS2(4)) (Appendix 11, p.40).

This view acknowledges the benefits of the 'Preparation for Social Work Practice' module as an effective teaching tool for enhancing students' emotional resilience.

'Attitudes and Values', was also identified by L2 as a module which taught students to be emotionally resilient, because its curriculum encouraged students to become more reflective and self- aware. As L2 explained

What we also do with them in first year which I think is a part of resilience is through the 'Attitudes and Values' module. We get people to look inward rather than outward and sometimes they don't like what they see. Or, there's resistance and a justification of how they are and very defensive about their own mechanisms until you know they have to be, you know looked at, and I think that's huge for anybody (L2) (Appendix 11, p.33).

SWS2(2) stressed that actually it was not just one particular module that enabled emotional resilience to develop but rather the whole course.

> *I think for me it's not down to a particular lecturer or topic, I think the entire course just kind of hammers you right from day one, it's like being hauled behind a speeding bus and you can't even grab your feet, that's what it's like. It takes over your entire life, it takes over your life, it takes over your thoughts, everything is under a microscope and looked at and I think that the need for emotional resilience is because, dare I say it, without you shouting at me, is that anyone on this course who does not have the strength to juggle and still find time for you and for your life and put your priorities in order, you are never going to manage in the profession. But the pressure we are under is nothing like the service users lives* (SWS2(2)) (Appendix 11, p.40).

SWS2(2) recognised the difficulties faced by service users, but also acknowledged the need for the Social Work Programme to be challenging, in order for students to be well prepared for the realities of the job.

PE2 commented that there were certain skills such as remaining calm, being relaxed and reflective, that could be taught in order for students to develop their resilience.

> *I think there are a series of skills that can be taught, that if you develop those skills you will become more emotionally resilient, for example, I think it is possible to teach people to be more calm and more relaxed than they are and people who develop those skills will become more resilient to some degree. I think it is possible to teach people the skills involved in reflecting both, after things have happened and whilst they are happening. If someone develops those skills they will also become more emotionally resilient, so the range of things that can be taught, the cumulative effect of those skills, is that the person will become more emotionally resilient than they were before.* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.43).

Role Plays were commented upon by participants as a teaching method which might enhance resilience. ESW4 maintained that role play in particular, was an effective method of teaching emotional resilience, because despite the fact that

students disliked role playing, afterwards, they commented that they benefited from taking part in it.

> *They hate role play, they hate it with a passion cos I've just had some feedback saying how much they hate it. You know and it's that again, it really you know, really annoyed me because I thought, you know what it's about, what does role play do? It actually means you've got to do it. It pushes you out of your comfort zone and it makes you take on other things, you know aspects about yourself and why do they hate that so much, I know that's off the subject but I think actually that the ones who do it actually gain a lot from it* (ESW4) (Appendix 11, p.23-24).

ESW3 was in agreement with ESW4 about the advantages of using role plays in teaching, and expressed the view that the reason for this was because it was a way of bringing the 'real world' into the safety of the classroom, thereby providing students with the opportunity to rehearse difficult interactions and situations, before employing them in practice.

> *I think you can teach it. I think the only way you can teach it, I think this is a really pragmatic way of doing it, is to give them role plays, you know that's the only way or give them real life experiences. I don't, I don't think you can actually teach them, you can enable them to have experiences which will develop their emotional resilience. I don't think I could sit someone down and tell them' right and today I'm going to teach you emotional resilience' and at the end of it be emotionally resilient* (ESW3) (Appendix 11, p.38).

These comments indicate that practising skills in the classroom, through the use of roleplays, helps to promote students' emotional resilience.

4.8a(iii) Placement

When asked the profession specific question '*Can you think of ways that you are teaching and assessing students that might develop emotional resilience?*' PE3 commented, that whilst students were on placement, talking to them about the journey they would undertake whilst studying on the Social Work Programme, and the tools they would need to equip them to cope, would be helpful

> *For me as a starting point now, having come from one side of the fence to the other practice to academia, it's about going out to placements and talking about how to deal with the pressures and stresses from Year 1. To get people to think about the journey they are going to start on and how difficult that journey might be and what tools they need to equip themselves with and to think about to handle those difficult situations and some students go into those with blocks and its helping them to work through those blocks* (PE3) (Appendix 11, p.80).

Another proposition offered by PE1 was to ask students to reflect upon a significant event, and the feelings that were engendered. Being asked to dissect those feelings, and learn from them, was considered to be beneficial.

> *I think I do it right at the very beginning certainly with students coming out on the first placements. I get them to go through that reflective stuff and for me that's one of the main things that if you can get them to do it right at the very beginning, that's not always possible but it tends to go with them all the way through then. One of the questions that I've got on my reflective sheet, the first question in fact, is asking them to comment on a significant event or anything that is asking them to choose. This is to get them to acknowledge the feelings they have that might come out of an interview with somebody at home and on the sheet they put angry, frustrated or happy or sad or whatever it was and the next question is what was it that made you feel like that. So it actually gets them to pick it to bits not just that they've got the feelings but why are they angry say, was it because you were angry with yourself because you did something stupid or was it because you were angry because you couldn't get the resources you wanted and therefore you were angry with the system. Were you angry with the service user, were you angry with another professional, so just to sort of unpick it* (PE1) (Appendix 11, p.80-81).

PE1 felt that placements offered students a 'light bulb' moment, which signified that they had made the link between theory, and practice thus evidencing their emotional resilience.

> *When you are working with students on placement they will have a real 'light bulb' moment and very often that's emotional resilience kicking in because up until then it can seem like really hard work for both of you. Then suddenly there will be a discussion about something or you might get them to do an exercise which suddenly produces a 'I see what you mean now' sort of response and maybe it's that you have both been trying to get to this emotional resilience point and maybe they haven't taken on board what it is you have said or maybe you haven't explained it very well, but then it comes to a point for some students when it's there and the light bulb comes on* (PE1) (Appendix 11, p.43).

This notion of a 'light bulb' moment provides an opportunity for students to evidence their emotional resilience, and acts as a useful assessment tool for educators and assessors.

Other participants, such as L2, also felt that placements offered students the best opportunity, to see at first hand, the reality of working as a Social Worker, and was a significant contributing factor in relation to the development of their resilience and self- awareness.

> *On a programme, on a social work programme, I think people change anyway a lot over that three year time. They don't feel like they do but if you ask their partners or people that know them, I think they do and it's a huge change. I think in the three year period and I think there are jumps forward where emotional resilience could develop, not always does, is during placements because I think students see things, hear things, become immersed in things even if they're not doing it themselves, that possibly might shock them, worry them, concern them or develop them, or see how other people work, work with that and think 'Am I able to do that?* (L2) (Appendix 11, p.32).

ESW4 too, felt that placements might offer an environment that could enhance resilience due to the challenges encountered.

They're challenging and from that potentially they can draw more, become more resilient because you know they've been on placement, placements you know exposes, doesn't it to work and dynamics and all that management systems from which in that kind of Nietzschean sense you know, they either survive and build and move you know or they don't (ESW4) (Appendix 11, p.17).

The role and benefits of placements in the development of emotional resilience is therefore clearly recognised.

4.9 SUMMARY – MAIN THEME FOUR

Teaching Emotional Resilience

Firstly, in relation to whether or not emotional resilience could be taught there was divided opinion. The majority of the participants (TM5, L2, SWS1(2), SWS2(2), SWS2(4), PE1, ESW3) felt that emotional resilience could be taught, curriculum and placement being viewed to be likely to underpin its development.

On the other hand (NQSW2, SWS1(3), C5) doubted the possibly of emotional resilience being taught, considering life experience and innate traits to be determining factors. Significantly, participants (TM5, SWS1(2), L1) proposed that emotional resilience was a concept that developed over a lifetime as an ongoing process, rather than something that could be taught in one module, or over a specified period of time.

Secondly, as part of the curriculum, teaching methods which were identified as being the most likely to be effective in the development of emotional resilience were the use of role play, explicit case studies, and taught modules whose main aim was to prepare students for practice, such as 'Preparation for Social Work Practice', and to develop self-awareness via the module 'Attitudes and Values'.

Teaching students certain skills which were viewed as being associated with emotional resilience, such as, being able to remain calm, relax and be reflective, were also considered to be beneficial.

Finally, placements were viewed as valuable teaching environments mainly because they were challenging, provided students with opportunities to reflect, and offered a first-hand experience of the job. 'Light bulb' moments were commented upon by PE1, as being evidence of teaching having been effective in the development of emotional resilience.

4.10(b) Learning to be Emotionally Resilient

In relation to 'Learning to be Emotionally Resilient', two sub-themes emerged mainly from asking the Question 6(b) '*Can emotional resilience be learnt and can you provide examples of how it might be learnt?*' As depicted in Figure 4, (p.118), these were placement and curriculum.

4.10b(i) Placement

Placement featured most prominently in the focus group discussions as a medium for learning to be emotional resilient. All of the participant groups commented in some way about placements being a contributory factor in the process of learning to be emotional resilient

SWS2(1) suggested, for example, that placements were helpful because they provided opportunities for students to learn how to be resilient, through working with service users.

I think placements are a good opportunity to develop and because you have to learn how to help people but on placement you have those real people and have that emotional impact (SWS2(1)) (Appendix 11, p.25).

According to ESW4 the learning process was helped by placing students in a position where they had to deal with real life situations, rather than those presented in the classroom.

> *I still think you know, exposing them, what they are exposed to on placement, will do as good a job as anything we can do here to help them learn and probably more so because they can't hide as much. They can't hide as much and they're forced into situations. If they're avoiding and hiding in an office and things like that it will be picked up you know, if they are not doing, you know, they're not engaging and things like that. So, whereas I think in the classroom they can sit and literally sit there, and they don't, they don't want to do role play or they take the mickey out of it you know, there's too many opportunities for most of them to hide* (ESW4) (Appendix 11, p.44).

This indicates that the real test of whether or not students can cope is how resilient they are on placement. The classroom is a safe environment and therefore not necessarily representative of the 'real world'.

For NQSW3, learning to be emotionally resilient involved a process of observing and working with others on placement, thereby having the opportunity to relate theory to practice. Gaining experience, and having a peer mentor and someone to shadow, in order to discuss experiences in University or on placement, was also seen as advantageous.

> *It is useful where there is shadowing or something like peer mentoring either within Uni or sort of practice I suppose, to see how other workers deal with things because I think you can understand the theory side of things and the concepts but then it is about actually applying it to practice and it's then I think you need to gain your own experience of being exposed to certain kinds of events and cases and things to actually show that you have learnt it. Then you can be helped by discussing things with other workers who are more experienced and resilient, that could certainly be a good opportunity in placements in terms of shadowing other workers and talking about these things* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.45-46).

This response supports the view that shadowing is an effective method for enabling students to 'safely' develop their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Social Worker.

L1 concurred with the idea that emotional resilience could be learnt through placement experience, but saw this as being part of a process of developing greater self- awareness.

The ability to become self-aware seems to be that pivot which then takes people onto either develop or thrust them into facilitating strategies for learning to maybe build emotional intelligence. That then backs up emotional resilience so they may never be as resilient, but they become aware of that, but if self-awareness isn't there? (L1) (Appendix 11, p.47).

C4 was in agreement that emotional resilience could be learnt whilst on placement and that this could occur through a variety of means such as, reflection and learning through adversity. As C4 commented

Reflection is one way to learn and bad experiences, learning through adversity and coming out the other side and still being in one piece is definitely a way (C4) (Appendix 11, p.49).

The importance of students being able to reflect and develop self-awareness and its links with learning to be emotionally resilient are therefore acknowledged.

SWS1(2) agreed that emotional resilience could be learnt, and stressed the importance of the role played by practice educators, who were in a position to help in this process, by enabling real life situations to be applied to the theoretical concepts learnt in the University.

I think it can be taught and learnt. I had a brilliant Practice Educator as well. It was good because it was real life examples that were a reality check. There was an opportunity to apply theory to situations you're dealing with on placement (SWS1(2)) (Appendix 11, p.46).

ESW1 suggested that practice educators were supportive in the students learning process, by enabling students to discuss their feelings, and by providing

opportunities to be reflective, in order for students to learn from the experiences encountered on placement.

> *I think that any area where people talk about their feelings and their judgements together and this is very much so on practice placements; we're talking from a Practice Educator point of view. In their journal I ask them to write events and then feelings and judgements, down one side and that's what we'll focus on in supervision, to see how they cope with situations they've never met before* (ESW1) (Appendix 11, p.45).

These comments highlight the importance of the role played by the practice educator in enabling the student to learn how to apply theory to practice, and by encouraging them to discuss their feelings, and be reflective, thus promoting emotional resilience.

PE3 recalled a student who had learnt whilst on placement that social work as a career was not for them.

> *What the student has learnt about themselves is 'I can't cope with the small pressures so how will I cope with the larger pressures. So, in terms of their emotional resilience and development, it has taken three years to realise that actually 'I have been trying to do this but I can't cope' and the self-awareness is that the student acknowledges that it's true even if they don't want it to be the case and it was the Practice Educator who had actually helped the student to get there by helping her to understand by assessing her* (PE3) (Appendix 11, p.60).

SU4 supported this perspective and agreed that placement experiences could be a learning opportunity both in terms of recognising strengths, but also possible stress levels, and unsuitability for social work.

> *I would expect that students will experience a placement and I think the Social Worker will understand when situations confront them whether in fact that a) the students are learning and b) it's having a detrimental effect so that they are becoming stressed which eventually could display unsuitability* (SU4) (Appendix 11, p.49).

This acknowledges the important role the Practice Educator can play as a catalyst in a process that enables students to recognise that they are not resilient enough to practise as a Social Worker.

4.10b(ii) Curriculum

Certain aspects of the social work curriculum were identified by SWS3(1) and SWS3(2) as assisting in learning to be resilient. SWS3(1) remarked

I have always liked lectures when the lecturer actually reads out the most gruesome case examples, for example, child protection ones. I had that recently, I liked that. I don't like the sweet, nice cases, I want the serious ones (SWS3(1)) (Appendix 11, p.87).

SWS3(2) recalled having undertaken a particular module that involved role playing a court scenario, and being put under pressure, which was stressful at the time, but produced feelings of resilience afterwards.

I think we are being put under quite a lot of pressure in lots of different ways, like the court scenario role play, which sticks in my mind. We were getting little snippets from the year ahead about how many had fainted and all that sort of thing and I think everyone was under a lot of pressure. I think knowing you had dealt with that, come out the other end and you're fine, develops your emotional resilience. You can say, 'I can do it, I found it extremely uncomfortable, like putting all your strengths and weaknesses on the table, yes it was really stressful but it made me resilient' (SWS3(2)) (Appendix 11, p.46).

Facing the more difficult and challenging situations in the classroom was therefore regarded as being a useful learning experience.

Being able to identify whether or not emotional resilience had been learnt was referred to by the lecturers. When asked the profession specific question '*How will you know that emotional resilience has been learnt?*' L2 stated

> *Changes in the way that students deal with complex issues and in their written work and see a development of thought, analysing things at a deeper level* (L2) (Appendix 11, p.79).

This acknowledges that evidence of the ability to analyse situations is an indication of resilience.

4.11 SUMMARY – MAIN THEME FOUR

Learning to be Emotionally Resilient

Firstly, in terms of how emotional resilience might be learnt, placement featured most prominently as a medium for this, being commented upon by all of the participant groups. A number of factors were seen to play an important role in linking the practice learning process with emotional resilience, which included:

- Gaining experience of working with service users.
- Shadowing
- Opportunities for role play
- Relating theory to practice.
- Having a supportive practice educator.
- Being provided with opportunities to be reflective in order to develop self-awareness.
- Discovering stress levels and unsuitability for social work.

Secondly, a challenging curriculum containing explicit case studies and opportunities for analysis was considered to play a significant role in learning to be, and promoting, emotionally resilience.

4.12(c) Assessing Emotional Resilience

In relation to 'Assessing Emotional Resilience', three sub-themes emerged, mainly from the responses to Question 6(c) '*Can emotional resilience be assessed and can you provide examples of how it might be assessed?*' These included: definition, measurement and placements: these sub-themes were further sub-divided as illustrated in Figure 4, (p.119).

Unlike the consensus that emotional resilience could be learnt, the response from the participants about whether or not emotional resilience could be assessed, or how it might be assessed, indicated that the participants were generally more undecided. All of the participant groups though, expressed an opinion in response to this question.

4.12c(i) Definition

Defining emotional resilience was viewed by all of the participants as being a core feature of assessing emotional resilience. It was also examined in depth as Super-ordinate Theme One (pp.85-93) thus highlighting the significance of this research, in determining a definition of emotional resilience within a social work context.

PE2 summed up the views of other participants, for example, SWS1(1) and PE1, when commenting that a definition of emotional resilience which related specifically to social work needed to be clarified.

I think for me it is just about making it more explicit because I think I have always emphasised the need for things that make up emotional resilience because I can see it being so fundamental to the things that make up the job (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.82).

This comment acknowledges the implicit nature of emotional resilience in social work.

For PE1 there was a necessity for the definition of emotional resilience to relate to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

> *I think it's about unpicking what emotional resilience is under the different headings of the Professional Capabilities Framework* (PE1) (Appendix 11, p.82).

There is recognition therefore, of the importance of having an understanding of the meaning of the term 'emotional resilience', which meets the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

4.12c(ii) Measurement

Measurement or assessment of emotional resilience was viewed by the majority of the participant groups, as being problematic (NQSW1, SWS2(1), SWS1(3), SWS2(5), SWS3(1), TM1, C1, SU3, PE2). These issues are explored in depth in this section.

4.12c(iia) Assessment Issues

PE2 commented on issues relating to the difficulties in assessing emotional resilience created by the complexity of the concept of emotional resilience.

> *I was just going to say I think it can be assessed, but to assess it skilfully is very challenging. I think something that might happen in certain circumstances is that it might be formally assessed and people might be assessed as being emotionally resilient but what they actually are is able to endure and cope, and that is not the same thing at all. You know being able to fight your way through, emotional resilience is more than that, it's a more complex concept and quality. I think it's important than if we get into the game of formally assessing it, that they don't think that, that's just what it is, emotional resilience is not just about coping with a caseload of forty cases* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.60).

SWS2(1) expressed the view that situations and circumstances in social work were so diverse, that people would react differently, due to a combination of factors.

> *It may be dangerous because you could easily reduce it to a formula that says you have to respond to an emotional situation this way, or you're proving to us that you don't have emotional resilience, and therefore you are not professional, and therefore not able to come up to the standard. I think for you and me, we might be just as strong, just as emotionally resilient but we would react completely differently to a situation, and like you said earlier, a situation would affect us differently because of our ages, our abilities, our character, our confidence, our life story (SWS2(1)) (Appendix 11, p.54-55).*

SWS1(3) advised that resilience was hard to assess, because it had to be gauged over a few days, rather than in relation to one particular episode or situation and depended upon honest self-reflection.

> *I think it's hard to assess because you can't assess it. People react at different times, you might be able to put on that professional front and do the job at the time but not be able to deal with it later on. You might have trouble dealing with it so I don't know how you would go about assessing it. Whether you are just completely honest and do it over a course of a few days and you say you have this sort of situation and you appear to be this and that and the other, how were you feeling at the time and then how did you feel when you got home and how did you feel a couple of days later and to have just that brutal honesty in that self-reflection (SWS1(3)) (Appendix 11, p.53).*

SU3 stated that because assessment was a subjective process, quantifying emotional resilience, via the use of a 0 -10 scale for example, was not likely to be helpful.

> *By saying,' assessed I'm thinking on a scale of 0-10 or something like that. Am I on a 6 or nearer 10? Again it's so subjective that how to measure it between any two people, I mean you can tell if somebody's agitated or somebody's cool but the person in between, it's so ethereal (SU3) (Appendix 11, p.61).*

C1 agreed that any attempts at rating were very difficult due to the range of variables involved.

> *The rating would be very difficult because there are so many variables and frequency with which somebody is subjected to stress* (C1) (Appendix 11, p.63).

The comments by these participants, acknowledge that the assessment of the skills, or levels of emotional resilience, presents challenges.

4.12c(iib) Breaking Points

Several participants voiced concerns about the high expectations of Social Workers capabilities in relation to being resilient. SWS2(4) was worried for example about students being asked to perform the impossible when being assessed.

> *If it were to be assessed as a student Social Worker, assessed as emotional resilience, I have a little bit of fear that it might turn into a social work 'supernanny' who is expected to be at a certain level, to be emotionally super human in order to go and deal with the world* (SWS2(4)) (Appendix 11, p.55).

Likewise, this was an issue for PE2 who felt that there should be recognition of Social Workers' limits.

> *We mustn't use the concept of emotional resilience as a requirement to stop us from saying in certain situations and at certain points, 'actually the expectations on people here are too much and this is beyond emotional resilience, we are abusing people'* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.84).

There is a general consideration of the assessment not being used to negatively judge a normal reaction to traumatic situations, and recognising that there are limits to expectations in relation to resilience.

Breaking points were also discussed by TM3, who concluded that knowing at what point someone's resilience might fail, was an unknown quantity.

> *I agree like you say there's no kind of scale or anything, clearly Social Workers have got to be emotionally resilient because if they are not able to recognise their own emotions and how they impact on the world, how on earth can we work with families and support them so that they can begin to be able to understand that, but it's a matter of to what degree you can do that because there's no way of measuring this person is fine, there's just no kind of scale with that so whilst it's crucial how do you measure that and how do you recognise when things are at boiling point* (TM3) (Appendix 11, p.13).

According to TM1, even the PCF was an inaccurate tool for assessing emotional resilience especially in relation to measuring when a Social Worker might have reached the point of not being able to cope.

> *One of criticisms of the PCF for me is, how do you measure emotional resilience? Where is the barometer reading? If I'm cooking jam I've got a thermometer that tells me when its reached boiling point but we haven't got that. The capabilities framework does not provide us with a thermostat to know when things are at boiling point so I don't know what they mean by it* (TM1) (Appendix 11, p.13).

This acknowledges the need for an accurate tool to assess emotional resilience.

4.12c(iic) Performing Emotional Resilience

A worrying aspect which related to possible flaws in the assessment process was the possibility of being able to perform emotional resilience. This was noted by SWS2(5) and SWS3(1) but none of the other participants. SWS2(5) disclosed the notion of being able to pretend to be emotionally resilient, or in other words, perform emotionally resilience.

> *I think it's a bit cheeky. I would go prepared that I was going to be assessed and pretend that I'm emotionally resilient at that point in time. Lots of people would do that* (SWS2(5)) (Appendix 11, p.56).

SWS3(1) agreed that emotional resilience could be performed, especially at the interview stage.

I think it can be very well hidden as well, I think it's the area where people can have a wrong result on an assessment, you know, emotional resilience getting into someone's emotions, for example, at an interview a person can think, I will give you what you want to hear or the answers or things like that, which I think you want me to act (SWS3(1)) (Appendix 11, p.57).

SWS3(1) did admit though, that performing emotional resilience over a period of time, might be difficult.

I still think it is something you can fake, so an assessment could be a challenge. I don't think you could sustain, 'I'm emotionally resilient but not really' (SWS3(1)) (Appendix 11, p.58).

This acknowledges the challenges involved in accurately assessing emotional resilience.

4.12c(iii) Placements

Emotional resilience being assessed whilst on placement was commented upon mainly by NQSW1, NQSW2 and NQSW3, although TM1 and PE2 also contributed to the debate.

Placement was considered to play a role in assessing emotional resilience but its significance was disagreed upon. The difficulties expressed by the participants in relation to assessing emotional resilience on placement were summed up by NQSW2.

> *I suppose what you are saying is that there is a kind of implication to that in that we might stream people on the basis of not meeting a set of requirements, it would be impossible because of the variations in placements, the supervisors and what actually happens in those placements* (NQSW2) (Appendix 11, p.52).

This acknowledges the complexities of assessing emotional resilience in a placement setting, due to the dependency on the views of different practice educators, the provision of a wide range of practice settings, and varied experiences.

4.12c(iiia) Statutory Placements

NQSW3 was of the view that in order to assess emotional resilience, a statutory placement was essential.

> *It is a must to have statutory placements for all students because I went through my training without having any and the placements were so easy that I don't feel it challenged anything in terms of my emotions or resilience. That was not good because it didn't challenge anything. I felt it was my own skills and my own resilience that were self- taught over my own past that brought the qualities to this job that I am doing now. It had nothing to do with my degree at all, so I think with my experience students could have had calm childhoods or whatever and they need to have that exposure and that can be kind of doing a statutory placement where you've got your mentor/assessor assessing you* (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.52).

NQSW2 also felt that students needed to have exposure to placements, and in particular, statutory ones, in order to be properly assessed as being resilient, and proposed that coping strategies could only be checked out in those types of settings.

> *You've also got to think of where you are not going to learn emotional resilience. You know recently, having been through the university training process, you are not going to learn in a seminar which is why I go back to something that was mentioned before. I feel really strongly that I was lucky that I was given two statutory placements. You kind of think though how things might have been entirely different if I'd had two voluntary placements, or no placements in statutory placements which is often the reality for some students, and where can we try to help students understand where they might have experiences, where they might foster emotional resilience in their own life?* (NQSW2) (Appendix 11, p.31).

For PE2, it was not the statutory nature of the placement that was necessary in order to assess emotional resilience, but rather the challenging nature of the placement that was important.

> *I think that some placements will make it easier than others to evidence, it might be controversial but I think some of the first placements for students, they can sail through them without being particularly challenged and they expect that that's what they are going to do and then they come across and I'll say statutory but it might be other kinds of placements in subsequent placements which are just more demanding, so I suppose the more demanding the placement the more of an issue it is going to be to evidence emotional resilience or lack of it. Certain placements will offer better opportunities to develop resilience than others. Placements are therefore not necessarily a reliable way of assessing resilience* (PE2) (Appendix 11, p.83-84).

TM1 reflected on the importance of statutory placements in providing students with the right kind of experience for developing resilience, but also considered practice educators to have some influence on its development and choice of employment.

> *I think it is probably a role for the practice educator to educate through placements however it is a limited role because when some students come to us they will say that statutory is different. If they have never had a statutory placement before they do struggle and you see it in the interview, how much you struggle if you don't know what you are walking into, so I think there is a role for placement organisations and practice educators in thinking what is this student journey? Where do they want to work at the end of it?* (TM1) (Appendix 11, p.50).

This acknowledges the challenging nature of the work undertaken on placement as a key feature, but the input from the practice educator is also recognised.

There is recognition overall, of the link between statutory placements and emotional resilience. The challenging nature of a placement, as opposed to that of the classroom environment, is considered to be important in terms of preparation for the real world of social work.

4.12c(iiib) Reflective Supervision

NQSW1 was of the opinion that it was not easy to assess emotional resilience on placement, but suggested that supervision could be utilised to discuss resilience.

Overall I think it's hard to assess because it is emotion, I think it can be talked about in supervision and evidenced in terms of some kind and you can speak about assessment in supervision, but I think in terms of assessment in placement, I don't know (NQSW1) (Appendix 11, p.51).

NQSW3 proposed that the opportunity, whilst on placement, to have supervision which provided opportunities for reflection, was particularly helpful in developing and assessing resilience.

You can bring reflective supervision in with students on placement can't you? and you can probe them more about how they are feeling and check out what emotions they had and how they dealt with it and you can kind of test their coping strategies and their thinking around that to see how healthy they are and I don't know what you would compare it to, to establish that (NQSW3) (Appendix 11, p.52).

The potential to use supervision, especially if it provides the opportunity to be reflective, to assess emotional resilience, is therefore a consideration.

4.13 SUMMARY – MAIN THEME FOUR
Assessing Emotional Resilience

Overall, participants commented that emotional resilience could and should be assessed, but recognition was given to the fact that it was a complex phenomenon to define and measure.

There was some obvious unease about firstly, too high an expectation being placed on Social Workers capabilities in relation to being emotionally resilient and secondly, difficulties in assessing and recognising Social Workers lack of resilience and 'breaking points'.

The possibility of being able to perform emotional resilience especially at the recruitment stage was voiced as a concern, but only by a couple of the participants.

Placements, especially those in the statutory sector, were regarded as playing a key role in the learning, teaching and assessment process, in relation to emotional resilience. This was because of their challenging nature, and wider opportunities for students to evidence their resilience. The use of reflective supervision was also viewed as being beneficial in the assessment process.

4.14 Overall Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the main findings of the research study in thematic form, utilising quotations from the participants, and commentary to highlight the most salient points. The most prominent findings to occur, and recur, across the four super-ordinate themes were those relating to the following issues:

- Defining and assessing emotional resilience –a definition that related specifically to social work practice was produced.

- Necessity for Social Workers to be emotionally resilient – recruitment and selection and stress and burnout were identified as major factors.

- Significant factors in the development of emotional resilience – these centred mainly on life experience, challenging curriculum, placements, supervision and organisational demands (paperwork and caseloads in particular).

- Teaching, learning, and assessing emotional resilience – a wide range of factors emerged, which included, role plays, explicit case studies, preparation for practice modules, reflection, breaking points, placements (statutory) and reflective supervision.

All of these areas are discussed and analysed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses principally on analysing and discussing the findings presented as super-ordinate themes in Chapter Four (pp.83-145).

5.2 Definition of Emotional Resilience

The definition that the findings produced (see Chapter Four, p.95), was an original contribution in this field of study, as it defined emotional resilience within a social work context, in a more specific manner than definitions previously discussed in the Literature Review (pp.31-34). It was encouraging to obtain this definition as the research findings acknowledged that emotional resilience was a phenomenon that was not easy to define (McMurray et al, 2008, Grant and Kinman, 2013a) (see Literature Review, pp.32-33). Participants PE2, SWS1(1) and PE1 (p.135) also recognised that a definition of emotional resilience in a social work context which could meet the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) was lacking.

An interesting finding that emerged, was that all the participants in my research study identified emotional resilience as being an intrinsic feature of what it meant to be a '*Professional Social Worker*' (pp.87-90), thus providing links with the professionalism domain of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Issues relating to the definition of emotional resilience were explored in more detail on (p.136) as defining emotional resilience was a main theme also associated with assessment.

The traits and skills identified by the participants were very similar to those found in the literature. They related mainly to the ability to cope and included optimism (Tugade and Frederickson, 2004, Collins, 2007, Cohn et al, 2009, Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010), empathy (Kinman and Grant, 2011), being able to 'bounce back'

(Tugade and Frederickson, 2004, Cohn et al, 2009, Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010), being open, honest and self-aware (de las Olas Palma-Garcia and Hombrados-Mendieta, 2014, Rajan-Rankin, 2014) and coping with adversity (Collins, 2007, Coffey and Morris, 2008, McGregor, 2010) (see Literature Review, pp.30-39).

However, a main skill that the participants associated with defining emotional resilience which was only briefly touched upon in the literature review (Rajan-Rankin 2014), but did stand out in my research findings, was that of Social Workers being able to demonstrate appropriate empathy (pp.88-90). Its prominence in the focus group discussions was unexpected. Being able to detach oneself from the emotional aspects of the work and still maintain an empathetic approach was considered in particular by C3, SWS2(3) and SWS1(3) (p.89) to be an indication of professionalism. The relationship between being able to demonstrate appropriate empathy, and emotional resilience, had not been fully appreciated prior to the research study being undertaken. However, the research findings indicated that it was significant, hence its inclusion and analysis in this chapter.

The literature suggested that it was Hochschild (1983), a central thinker in the field of emotion in the workplace, who first drew attention to the significance of emotions at work and in particular how those emotions were managed. Hochschild (1983) proposed that workers' job roles required them to be able to manage emotions in order to present an image of being in control, so that others could be helped to resolve their own issues. Although Hochschild's (1983) work did not focus specifically on the roles of a Social Worker, links could still be made to Social Workers needing to be capable of presenting a 'professional' face to the public by demonstrating professional empathy that often belied the feelings they were experiencing, in order to make sure that the emotions of service users were not displaced (Bolton, 2001). The social work curriculum therefore needs to equip students with the ability to recognise and handle this mismatch of what is being experienced emotionally, and the persona that has to be displayed as a professional, as discussed in section 4.2a(i) (pp.87-90). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p.93) have offered a possible solution by arguing that students can be taught how to present themselves, by focusing on behaviour rather than emotions, and utilising what they term '*display rules*'. These '*display rules*' dictate the emotions that

should be displayed and observed by others rather than what is really felt by the Social Worker.

The ability to remain professional by psychologically detaching from the work has been more recently studied by Sonnentag, Binnewies and Mojza (2010), researchers in the Department of Psychology at the University of Konstanz in Germany. Their research, which was not considered in the Literature Review due to the unexpected relevance of it in relation to emotional resilience, focused specifically on the relationship between job demands and well-being by utilising a survey method of a longitudinal nature. The participants comprised Social Workers, psychologists, health care workers and administrative staff who were working in a non-profit organisation, offering a service to people with special needs. The findings of the study showed that a lack of psychological detachment from work was linked to an increase in emotional exhaustion and burnout.

Whilst the results of this research provided useful evidence to support the relevance of being able to appropriately manage emotions, it has to be noted that the study did have several limitations which might have affected its validity. The study utilised self-reports for example, to measure psychological well-being which might have increased bias (Fowler, 2009) and the criteria that the researchers used to define high job demands only included time pressures. It did not include other factors such as working with complex and challenging service users and high caseloads (Community Care, 2010, 2012, McFadden et al, 2012, McGregor, 2012) (see Literature Review, pp.18-45). There was also a significant loss of participants, 877 were invited to take part in the survey, and after one year only 309 remained, the reasons for participants dropping out included, lack of response to the survey, and participants providing unusable data (Dodd and Epstein, 2012).

Despite these limitations, Sonnentag, Binnewies and Mojza's (2010) study still has relevance for my research, because it highlighted the necessity for Social Workers to be able to appropriately distance themselves from the emotional aspects of the work, in order to prevent burnout, maintain well-being and promote resilience. Whilst the findings of the studies examined in the Literature Review (McFadden et al, 2012, McFadden, 2013, Grant and Kinman, 2014) (pp.17-44) supported the fact

that the working environment was one which was stressful and necessitated Social Workers being resilient, these studies only focused on the causal effects of stress. Sonnetag, Binnewies and Mojza (2010) on the other hand, suggested a specific technique for promoting well-being and resilience which was to 'switch off' or psychologically detach when not at work.

More recently, a study by Grant (2013), involving 359 social work students, investigated what Grant (2013) termed as 'accurate empathy' in social work and how it could be developed or enhanced. The findings indicated that those students who were better able to manage or regulate their emotions were less likely to become over involved in their interactions with service users and less likely to be adversely affected emotionally. The study concluded that demonstrating accurate or professional empathy was closely associated with emotional resilience and emotional wellbeing. Moreover, Grant (2013) found, that being able to manage emotions and being self-aware were skills that could be taught and further developed through reflective activities. The findings from Grant's (2013) study were therefore informative in relation to highlighting specific skill areas that could assist in developing emotional resilience. These corroborated with findings from my research (PE2, p.123, L1 and C4 p.131) and those of Grant, Kinman and Alexander (2014), examined in the Literature Review (pp.50-51), which suggested that the social work curriculum could improve reflective abilities, and enhance emotional awareness.

From a medical perspective, Blair and Wasson (2015) have added to the body of knowledge relating to appropriate or professional empathy. In considering an example of '*breaking bad news empathically to patients*', they commented on the need for medical students to be taught to recognise, that there was no clear cut boundary between what was appropriate, and inappropriate empathy (Blair and Wasson, 2015, p.111). In responding empathically and appropriately to each patient, Blair and Wasson (2015) stressed the importance of students knowing the patient, and their history, and being able to take cues from the patients themselves. They pointed out, that the way they empathised would not be the same with every patient, for example, crying might be seen as unprofessional and inappropriate by some patients, but not others.

Acknowledgement was given by Blair and Wasson (2015), to the inevitability of the emotional stresses and demands of the medical profession, which were similar to those faced by Social Workers, as commented upon by TM1, SWS1(3), SWS2(1), SWS2(3), NQSW(1), ESW(2), C3 (pp.87-90), in my research. They recognised that the job was stressful, but in order to be 'professional', highlighted the importance of doctors being able to control and manage their emotions. This view concurs with that of O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009) and Rajan-Rankin (2014), who advised that there was a need for the social work curriculum to take into account the difficulties faced by social work students, in managing their emotions in a professional way (Literature Review, p.43-44). The necessity for medical students to develop strategies to deal with difficult emotions was identified by Blair and Wasson (2015), who suggested that techniques such as, personal reflection, debriefing and relaxation were helpful ways to cope with the daily stresses of the job. These were techniques that were similar to those identified by participants TM1, TM2 (pp.112) and NQSW3 (p.113) and discussed by Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2008, SWRB, 2010, Grant and Kinman, 2011, Grant, 2013 and Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014, as ways of coping and being resilient in social work in the Literature Review (pp.17-.51) and in the nursing profession by McAllister and McKinnon (2009) and Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough (2007) on pp.53-54. It was therefore interesting to note, that there were similarities across the caring professions, in relation to strategies that students could be taught, in order to develop their emotional resilience.

As presented in the Literature Review (pp.52-53), Chang (2009) proposed that teaching people to alter the way they perceived service users might also increase their ability to manage emotions, thus enabling them to feel more resilient. If this was the case, providing students with the opportunity to examine their attitudes and values within module teaching, as put forward by L2 (p.122), would give them an underpinning framework of knowledge from which to consider service users in a more empathetic manner. Having an informed understanding of service users' behaviour and situations would, according to Chang (2009), enable workers to manage their emotions more effectively, and thus be better prepared to deal with difficult emotional situations, which concurs with Blair and Wasson's (2015) view, that knowing the patient and their history, is associated with appropriate empathy.

The findings from my research study therefore acknowledged a link between demonstrating appropriate empathy and emotional resilience. Further research will be required though, to determine how students can be taught to manage their emotions in a professional manner, by demonstrating appropriate empathy, and how they can develop resilience, by utilising different coping strategies such as, reflection and relaxation.

5.3 Necessity for Emotional Resilience in Social Work

There was overall consensus regarding the necessity for emotional resilience in the social work profession (pp.96-106) and recognition by several participants L1, SWS2(1) and C2 (p.102-103) of the consequences of not being resilient which included physical and emotional ill-health necessitating time off work and ultimately in some cases having to leave the job. However, this was not unique to social work, other professionals in the caring services found their work stressful too (Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough, 2007, McAllister and McKinnon, 2009). What appeared to differentiate Social Workers from other professionals though, were two main factors, the predominantly high risk nature of their workload (Atkins, 2013), discussed in the Literature Review (p.18), and the findings from this research which suggested that the length of time spent with service users was a significant factor (ESW2, p.105). The necessity for emotional resilience and its association with the recruitment and selection process (pp.100-101), raised several significant issues and for this reason has been examined in its own right in the next section.

5.4 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection was a main sub-theme identified by participants in relation to the necessity for emotional resilience in social work (p.100), and being able to possibly perform emotional resilience during the interview process (pp.139-140).

It is important to consider the recruitment and selection of social work students, as the findings indicated that if the students were emotionally resilient prior to

151

commencing their training this existing trait could be built upon and developed throughout the course. The necessity for this was recognised by TCSW (2012d, p.1) who stated that prospective students at the point of entry to social work education should be able to '*demonstrate an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work*'. This understanding or awareness of resilience does not necessarily equate to being resilient though. As Barnett and Coate (2005) pointed out, having knowledge of a concept is very different to that of possessing a trait or being able to develop a practical skill. It might indeed be argued that students have to start somewhere in their chosen career and that it would be unfair to expect them, prior to their social work education and training, to have evidenced more than a basic awareness of resilience.

The findings of this research, which corroborated with those of Collins (2007) and Gibbons et al (2007) discussed in the Literature Review (p.45), stressed that recruitment was a crucial stage at which candidates could be determined as being resilient enough to survive the training and ultimately be able to cope with the demands of the job itself. It was recognised by TM2 (p.101) that knowing whether or not someone was emotionally resilient was not straightforward especially at the recruitment and selection stages and as ESW2 (p.100) warned, choosing the wrong candidate at the selection stage could lead to potential difficulties and disruption once the training had commenced.

As discussed in the Literature Review, McFadden et al (2012) (p.18) advised the introduction of personality tests at the recruitment and selection stage when interviewing prospective social work students, in order to enhance the chances of the 'right' candidate being selected for training. Their study of 162 child protection Social Workers in Northern Ireland examined factors relating to their resilience and likelihood of burnout. One area of the research highlighted the importance of identifying early on what it was that motivated people to want to become Social Workers and also to ascertain their understanding and expectations of the job, a proposition supported by TM3 (p.97). A high incongruence of job expectations and the actual reality of the job were found to be associated with burnout whilst a high congruence was linked to resilience. The findings of McFadden et al's (2012) study

concurred with the sentiments of Gibbons et al (2007), Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) and Reupert (2009) (see Literature Review, p.45), all of whom strongly advised that prospective students should be rigorously tested and assessed during the interview process. Likewise, Grant and Kinman (2012) explored in the Literature Review (pp.46-47), whilst focusing their research predominantly on exploring how students might enhance their resilience during social work training, also concluded that highly developed interviewing techniques were required at the early stages in order to identify students with qualities that suggested they might be resilient.

The PCF (TCSW, 2012d, p.1) (Appendix 1) requires students at the selection stages to '*demonstrate an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work*'. Asking a probing question such as, '*Can you share with us a major life event or experience which you found particularly challenging and tell us how you coped with it*', may provide some indication of resilience. Of course, whilst it is acknowledged that educators want and need to recruit high calibre students, the difficulties in doing so do not go unrecognised. Interviewing techniques, no matter how stringent they are, may not necessarily be the best way to uncover a student's natural ability to be emotionally resilient, and interview questions, however well designed, may not elicit this type of information (Alston and Bowles, 2003). The unreliability of depending upon the interview process to identify unsuitable candidates was highlighted by suggestions from SWS2(5) (p.139) and SWS3(1) (p.140), which indicated that emotional resilience could be performed. If this was the case, then consideration had to be given to how the most suitable candidates might be selected and most importantly, deliberation in relation to who the most suitable candidates might be.

Currently the social work interview process at the University of Derby comprises different components including a written exercise, group discussion and an individual interview, which meets the requirements of the TCSW (2011) for the selection of suitable candidates. The interview question which was identified by ESW2 (p.100), '*Has anything happened in your life that's affected you and made you alter the way you feel, think or behave?*' related to prior experience. In light of this study's findings, this particular question has been adapted to focus more

153

specifically on emotional resilience and now asks students ' *Can you tell us about a time in your life when you demonstrated your resilience in being able to cope with a challenging or difficult situation*?'(Appendix 2). It is hoped that by asking this question, that the responses will provide some indication of whether or not prospective students have worked through any personal issues or previous life experiences that have been traumatic, this being an indicator of the student's propensity to be resilient as highlighted by the findings of this research (pp.98-100) and those of Collins (2007), Collins (2008) and Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) explored in the Literature Review (p.45). Likewise, the written exercise could, for example, be based on a difficult case scenario as discussed by SWS2(4) (p.122), requiring responses from candidates that would indicate a tendency to be resilient or not. There are no absolute guarantees however, that these techniques would successfully identify the most resilient candidates.

Apart from confirming the importance and necessity of ensuring that prospective students are emotionally resilient prior to being offered a place on the Social Work Programme (4.4b(ii), p.100), no participants in the study other than PE3 (p.101), provided any concrete suggestions for how the selection of 'emotionally resilient' students might take place. On reflection, this might have been be due to the fact that the participants were not asked directly, in the focus group discussion, about the recruitment and selection process.

As discussed in the Literature Review (pp.36-38), Tugade and Frederickson (2004) and Cohn et al (2009) proposed that the process of determining suitable candidates could possibly be helped by taking into account some of the factors that were also identified in this study by participants PE1 and NQSW3 (pp.91-92), when defining 'emotional resilience'. They suggested taking note of significant indicators which included the capacity to be optimistic, open and adaptable especially when faced with negative and unpredictable experiences at work. Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein (2006) presented in the Literature Review (pp.35-36), concurred with the idea that inherent traits could be determining factors in relation to whether or not someone was emotionally resilient. This poses the question, 'How might these characteristics, which are not academic or knowledge based, realistically be identified during the interview process'? The interviewers would have to be able to

accurately recognise these traits and be equally skilful in providing candidates with the opportunity to reveal their inherent resilience: the feasibility of this is questionable.

5.5 Significant Factors in the Development of Emotional Resilience

Finally, significant factors in the development of emotional resilience ultimately appeared to relate to four main areas, life experience, placements, supervision and organisational demands. In the Findings Chapter (pp.83-145), in terms of life experience, factors such as having a tough upbringing and possessing 'calmness' as an innate ability were viewed as being relevant factors by ESW1, SU3, NQSW3, PE2 (pp.108-110), as was having the opportunity on placement to work with real-life, difficult cases NQSW3 and PE1 (pp.110-111). Supervision which allowed for reflective and open discussion was also seen as being beneficial by TM2 and TM4 (p.112), as was a reduced caseload, and working with a Team Manager and colleagues who offered good support SWS3(2) and C5 (pp.115-116). On the whole, none of these findings were surprising as they corroborated with those identified and discussed in the Literature Review.

Within the following section the main findings of the research in connection with Super-ordinate Theme Four are discussed and analysed in greater detail under three separate headings: Teaching Emotional Resilience, Learning to be Emotionally Resilient and Assessing Emotional Resilience.

Teaching Emotional Resilience

5.6 Introduction

In this section the responses of the participants in relation to the taught aspects of emotional resilience are discussed in detail. The responses were generated predominantly from the participants being asked the following two questions:

- Question 6a, (Appendix 3) '*Do you think that emotional resilience can be taught and can you provide examples of how it might be taught?*' and

- Question 5, (Appendix 3) '*When, where and how do you feel Social Workers might develop resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the job?*'

Within Super-ordinate Theme Four several different sub-themes emerged relating to the taught aspects of emotional resilience which included, Life Experience, Curriculum and Placement, all of which are discussed and analysed more fully in this section.

5.7(a) Life Experience

One of the main themes that emerged from the findings was that of 'Life Experience' and its significance in the development of emotional resilience (pp.108-110, pp.119-121). L1, L2, L4, TM1, TM5, SWS2(2), SWS2(4), PE2, ESW3 and ESW4 commented that emotional resilience could be taught (p.120-124). Some of the participants, predominantly Social Workers and Service Users, ESW1, SU1, SU3, NQSW3 (pp.108-109) and NQSW2, SWS1(3) (pp.119-120), felt differently, suggesting that it was not possible to teach emotional resilience in a classroom environment because it was experiences and events in a person's life that were pivotal to its development.

The type of life experience was significant and being exposed to difficult life circumstances and trauma was viewed by some of the participants as being helpful life experience in relation to becoming an emotionally resilient Social Worker (4.4b(i), pp.98-99, 4.6a(i), pp.108-109). These findings concurred with those of, Collins (2007) and Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008), explored in the Literature Review (p.45). Whether adverse or not, this research has highlighted the importance of life experience in relation to resilience. Whilst it is impossible to regulate the nature of the life experience of each student, it is possible to offer students social work training which challenges them from an academic and practice perspective (Field, Jasper and Littler, 2014). This may help them to develop their

resilience, although it has to be acknowledged that even this will be variable, due to the diverse nature of the training, particularly in relation to placement experience.

It is opportune within this part of the discussion, and in light of the research, that the findings of Department for Children, Schools and Families (2003) and Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum (2013) presented in the Literature Review (p.41) are revisited. The Literature Review focused its attention on emotional resilience within the field of education and the teaching of SEAL (p.41). The aforementioned studies highlighted the effectiveness of emotional resilience teaching being only useful in the short term, and indicated that the teaching of emotional resilience within the entire career span of a Social Worker, was likely to be unproductive. On the other hand, the studies were wholly relevant for the three years that the students are studying at the University, and therefore supported the notion of the structure of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) in relation to the teaching of emotional resilience being situated within a three year training period.

In contrast to the idea that emotional resilience only developed within a certain time frame, findings from my research study suggested that emotional resilience continued to develop over one's lifetime, as a result of life experience, and encountering 'real life' situations on placement and in employment. Similarities being noted therefore, between the attitudes expressed by participants TM5 and L1 (p.121), and those presented in the Literature Review by Blincow et al (2009) (p.42) and Werner (1971) (p.27), whose stance supported the view that emotional resilience could not be taught in a single event, nor over a specified period of time, but rather that it developed on an ongoing basis over one's lifetime. This sits comfortably to a certain extent with the philosophy of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), because the training framework was developed in a way that allowed for capabilities to be developed over the Social Worker's career. The implication therefore, was that there was a requirement for continued professional development, as outlined by the HCPC (2012b). However, having said that, there were still stages or timeframes within which a student or a qualified Social Worker was expected to have demonstrated a certain level, or particular type of capability. It is notable that once students qualify, the term 'emotional resilience' is no longer utilised within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d); this being replaced by the concepts of

157

promoting well-being, and ensuring others' wellbeing, during progression from the assessed year in employment through to management.

5.7(b) Curriculum

One area of social work training that is more standardised in terms of its time frame is the curriculum, a main theme of Super-ordinate Theme Four. Its relationship to the teaching of emotional resilience is discussed in more detail in this section. Not surprisingly, within the taught theme, curriculum was a topic that featured prominently in the focus groups discussions.

One of the profession specific questions required participants to identify aspects of the curriculum that might teach or enable students to develop emotional resilience '*Can you identify aspects of the social work curriculum that might teach or enable students to become emotionally resilient?*' (Appendix 8). The responses indicated that certain taught modules such as 'Preparation for Social Work Practice' and 'Attitudes and Values', were viewed as being advantageous, because of the applicability of the academic content to social work practice (p.122).

Within the focus group discussions, ideas were put forward by ESW3 and ESW4 that emotional resilience could be taught via the use of role play and through placement experience (p.124). This view corresponded with that of Crisp et al (2006), Chung (2010) and Wild (2011), discussed in the Literature Review (pp.48-49), who claimed that role play provided students with a clearer insight into service user's needs and enabled students to develop their confidence. They suggested that role plays could enhance students' emotional resilience, by enabling them to practice relating theory to real-life situations in the safety of the classroom. It is interesting to note that the use of role play and placement experience as teaching methods are practical and experiential rather than theoretical. They provide the opportunity to 'learn by doing' and are therefore perhaps helpful in acting as a substitute for students' lack of relevant life experience (Kolb, 1984).

In terms of 'doing' and students being able to demonstrate their capability in relation to emotional resilience in a practical rather than a theoretical sense, it is not until the last placement that students are required '*with support, to take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience*' (TCSW, 2012d). However, both the literature and the findings suggested that role plays were influential in the teaching of emotional resilience, so, when considering the most appropriate time for the implementation of role plays as a teaching method, it would seem to be advantageous to utilise them in the curriculum throughout the three years of study.

It was evident though, from analysing the substantial amount of data produced by the focus group discussions, that topics and issues relating to any of the themes could just as easily have been seen as essential curriculum content for practice. Choosing what should be taught in order to prepare students for direct practice and to assess their capability in terms of their ability to '*Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work*' (TCSW, 2012d, p.1) was therefore likely to be challenging.

To put this in context, by the end of the first year of academia, the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) are that, students will have an understanding of the concept of emotional resilience and its necessity within social work. Scrutiny of the research findings indicated that the field of knowledge required was extensive. When dissected in this way, what made the task seem even more daunting was the recognition that 'emotional resilience' was only one area of capability, out of twenty six, situated within the domain of 'professionalism' in the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) (Appendix 1).

This research has confirmed the relevance of emotional resilience as subject matter in relation to social work education, training and practice, and the findings have strengthened the fact that it rightly deserves its present standing in the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). However, what has not been established is how educators weigh the importance of each of the concepts within the domains of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Nowhere within the PCF documentation, nor the HCPC's, Standards of Education and Training (SET's) (2012c) and SOPs (2012d), is it identified that some aspects

of training are any more significant than others. Therefore, each University is likely to place a different emphasis on specific curriculum areas, resulting in students from different Universities being taught about certain aspects in more depth than others. TCSW (2012b) has responsibility for how the curriculum is devised and the training framework is standard to all social work programmes. How the curriculum is taught, what students need to learn, and how they are assessed, appears to be open to interpretation by each educational establishment, despite governance by the HCPC's, SET's (2012c), SOP's (2012d), PCF (TCSW, 2012d) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2008).

One of the SWTF's (2009a) main criticisms of present social work training and education was that the curriculum was too loosely defined, a concern also expressed by Doel, Deacon and Sawdon (2007), who highlighted the fact that there were significant variations in the social work curriculum. The introduction of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) does not seem to have resolved this issue: a view upheld by Sir Martin Narey (2014) whose independent report on the education of Social Workers working with children and families, for the Secretary of State for Education, showed concern about the lack of a single document with consensus on the content of training. Although Narey (2014, p.7) stated that the PCF as a training framework was a '*significant improvement on the HCPC's Standards of Proficiency*', he described the SOP's as being '*too general in nature and could be describing almost any profession and in many instances, non-professional occupation and very few are measurable*' (Narey, 2014, p.7). He commented that there were too many different documents being employed, which made it difficult for educators, and urged that a single training document, similar to that utilised for training newly qualified doctors entitled '*Educating Tomorrow's Doctors*' (General Medical Council, 2008) was introduced. So, although it was reassuring to note that Narey (2014) considered the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) to be an improvement on the HCPC's SOP's (2012d), there was the suggestion that a different type of training framework was required for the future education and training of Social Workers. If this were to be the case, it will be interesting to see if emotional resilience as a capability, features as significantly as it has done in the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

Reflecting on the findings in relation to 'who' might be the best people to teach emotional resilience it was interesting to note that none of the participants, other than those already working in these roles, identified any of the participants as being potential educators. Nor did any of the participants give any consideration to the possibility of a situation where students might be self-taught, in order to enhance their resilience, or to the possibility of service users and carers having a greater input into teaching and assessing students, something that was being encouraged by the TCSW (2012a). However, it was possible, that the question the participants were asked, '*Do you think that emotional resilience can be taught and can you provide examples of how it might be taught*'? (Appendix 3), did not lend itself to the likelihood of responses being given in relation to either of the aforementioned areas, so this is something that could be researched further.

In terms of the 'what' that needed to be taught, it seemed that there were elements of emotional resilience, like many of the social work curriculum areas, that required aspects of the teaching to be theoretical and academically based whilst others needed a more practical focus. The teaching framework proposed by Heron and Reason, (1997) discussed in the Literature Review on p.50, which encompasses four different areas of knowledge, that is experiential, presentational, propositional and practical, might be effective in teaching a concept such as emotional resilience. The experiential component could provide students with some 'face to face' experience such as, 'shadowing' so that they could gain knowledge of what it was like to be a Social Worker, shadowing being an aspect of training identified by NQSW3 (p.130). The presentational aspect would enable this knowledge to be transferred to documents, such as, practice reports or assignments, whilst the propositional could enhance the students' knowledge of emotional resilience via facts and theory. The practical side might involve a placement, and the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills already learnt, into practice.

The process by which students might be enabled to relate theory to practice, and how this could be orchestrated by the teaching team at the University, was something that was touched upon by the participants during the focus group discussions, especially in relation to 'light-bulb' moments (pp.125-126), and this is discussed in more detail in this chapter (pp.162-163). However, it was not a topic

addressed in any great detail, and in light of the recommendations of the Croisdale-Appleby Report (2014), is considered to be an area worthy of future research.

5.7(c) Placement

Despite doubts being cast upon the possibility of teaching students to be emotionally resilient by NQSW2 and SWS1(3) (pp.119-120), placement and the practice environment were seen as being the most appropriate environments in which to develop emotional resilience, due to students having the opportunity to observe and experience at first- hand what the job entailed (pp.124-127). Asking the profession specific question '*Can you think of ways that you are teaching and assessing students that might develop emotional resilience*?' (Appendix 8) was helpful in producing several different suggestions, mainly connected to reflective activities presented on (pp.123-125).

Teaching students to develop self-awareness through reflection was seen by many participants, particularly PE1 and PE3 (p.125), as being one of the main ways to promote resilience. These findings were similar to those of Boud and Garrick (1999), SWRB (2010), Field, Jasper and Littler (2014) and Grant, Kinman and Alexander (2014), examined in the Literature Review (pp.50-51), who all viewed reflection as being an essential factor in the development and promotion of resilience.

An aspect that was not explored within the Literature Review Chapter, but yet presented itself as a relevant factor within the focus group discussions, was that of '*light bulb moments*'. These were identified by PE1 (p.125), as being particularly significant because they signalled the students' ability to relate the teaching during placement, to the practice experience. In light of these findings it seemed imperative to consider how educators might assist students in being able to experience '*light bulb moments*'. This process was likely to be different for every student, which necessitated educators being skilful in being able to work at the student's pace, which in reality was not always possible. However, there were points during the training which were similar for all students, for example, at the end of the first placement, when they were required to '*show an awareness of own*

162

safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary'
(TCSW, 2012d, p.1). It was significant and timely therefore, that this capability
was being assessed at the end of a period of practice, because it suggested that this
type of awareness only developed after students had successfully married the
knowledge acquired in University, to experiences gained on placement. The
implication being, that '*light bulb moments*' were only likely to occur, when
students recognised that theory and practice had come together. Consequently this
process might be considered to be a useful indicator of capability in relation to
students being able to link theory with practice, and addresses the theory and
practice divide proposed by Clapton et al (2006), Croisdale-Appleby (2014) and
SWTF (2009a), in the Literature Review (p.50).

Personality was commented upon as being a contributory factor to developing
emotional resilience. PE2 (p.110), for example, suggested that being a '*naturally
calm*' person was akin to '*winning the lottery*' and described calmness as an innate
personality trait, associated with emotional resilience. Having an optimistic
personality and its links with emotional resilience was also proposed by PE1 (p.92).
Optimism was discussed in relation to recruiting and selecting resilient candidates
to the Social Work Degree Programme (p.154) and was supported by several
theorists (Tugade and Frederickson, 2004, Collins, 2007 and Cohn et al, 2009) (see
Literature Review, pp.36-38). It was noteworthy therefore, that the importance of
being able to identify students who have certain personality traits conducive to
being emotional resilient prior to social work training, was identified.

5.8 Summary

Analysis of the findings produced several main discussion points outlined in
Summary Box 1.

5.8 Summary Box 1 (Teaching Emotional Resilience)

1. Significant findings supported by literature

- Adversity in life helps to promote emotional resilience providing personal issues have been resolved prior to training and practice (pp.98-99), cited in the Literature Review (p.45).

- Emotional resilience develops over a lifetime rather than in a single episode or specified period of time (p.121), cited in the Literature Review (p.42).

- Taught modules such as 'Preparation for Social Work Practice' and 'Attitudes and Values' are helpful in relation to developing emotional resilience and self-awareness (p.122), cited in the Literature Review (pp.50-52).

- Role plays are an effective method of teaching emotional resilience due to their applicability to 'real life 'situations (pp.123-124), cited in the Literature Review (pp.48-49).

- Placements provide students with opportunities to develop emotional resilience through reflection (pp.125-126) and 'real world' experience and challenge (p.126) cited in the Literature Review (pp.50-51).

2. New findings which add to the body of knowledge

- Calmness as an innate personality trait is associated with emotional resilience (p.110).Teaching students to remain calm and relaxed will help to promote their emotional resilience (p.123).

- Confirmation of students successfully applying theory to practice is signalled by a 'light bulb' moment (p.125-126).

3. Findings which have arisen requiring further study and research

- Different teaching methods that engender emotional resilience.

- Assessing different relaxation techniques such as compassion focussed therapy.

Learning to be Emotionally Resilient

5.9 Introduction

In this section the responses of the participants in relation to the learnt aspects of emotional resilience are discussed in some detail. The responses were mainly generated from the participants being asked the following questions;

- Question 6b, (Appendix 3) '*Do you think that emotional resilience can be learnt and can you provide examples of how it might be learnt*?' and
- Question 5, (Appendix 3) '*When, where and how do you feel Social Workers might develop resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the job*?'

Overall, the results of this study indicated that there was consensus of opinion from all of the participants that emotional resilience could be learnt, but not necessarily learnt within an academic setting. As depicted in Figure 4, two significant themes emerged from the focus group findings, Placement and Curriculum.

5.9(a) Placement

Placement featured prominently in the focus group discussions and was commented upon by SWS1(2), SWS2(1), ESW4 and NQSW3 (pp.129-131), just as it did within the discussions relating to taught factors, as being a suitable environment for enabling students to learn to be resilient. The reasoning behind this appeared to centre on the fact that whilst on placement, students were given opportunities to observe and experience at first-hand what a Social Worker's job was really like; a view put forward by Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2011, p.57), adult learning theorists, who proposed that '*adults learn best when faced with 'real life' situations, difficulties and dilemmas*'. TCSW's Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) (2012d), PCF (2012d) and HCPC's SET's (2012c) and SOP's (2012d) mirror these sentiments, in that they recognise the benefit of placement experience whilst training; practice being seen as crucial to the process of students

learning, and the development of professional capability (Williams and Rutter, 2013). The ideal situation therefore, is for practice and academia to complement each other, and for students to experience placement alongside academic learning, so that they have the opportunity to relate theory to practice, in a timely and efficient manner, possibly in the vein of an 'apprenticeship' style of learning (Fuller and Unwin, 2009). There are no plans though to introduce such a system at the University of Derby, which is regrettable, bearing in mind Clapton et al's (2006) recent review of social work education, which found the gap between theory and practice was increasing and therefore, worryingly, the transfer of learning was less likely (see Literature Review, p.50).

Universities have the option to decide how, when, and where, the 170 days on placement sits within the social work curriculum (HCPC, 2012c). Currently, the timing of the placements at the University of Derby is governed by regional placement agreements, which ensure that Derby students and those students from neighbouring Universities are not all out on placement at the same time. Derby students do not engage in practice learning until Year Two, in effect a third of the way into their training and are not on placement whilst undertaking academic modules (other than a dissertation). The difficulty therefore, is that whilst students may perform well at classroom based activities, a true indication of their overall suitability to become a social work practitioner will not necessarily become apparent, until they have experienced the opportunity to go on placement in Year Two, a point made by PE3 and SU4 (p.132), thus the timing of placements is less than ideal. Placements were also perceived to be advantageous by L1 (p.131) in providing students with an opportunity to recognise and develop their self - awareness in relation to either their suitability or in some cases unsuitability to practice as a Social Worker.

This is beneficial, as findings from research undertaken by Chung (2010), which were outlined in the Literature Review (p.44), suggested that even prior to placement, students might experience difficulties during their education in coping with stress. This was possibly a useful, early predictor of a student's lack of resilience in the job. The importance therefore of students being able to perform effectively, both academically and in a practical sense, really needs to be identified

as early as possible, and so the positioning of placements could be a crucial determinant in early detection, or indication of a student's capabilities, or lack of them. However, it would appear that the practicalities of arranging and providing placements, perhaps outweighs the necessity for practice experience and academic learning to run simultaneously. It is acknowledged therefore, that although this is not an ideal situation, it is something that is not in the educator's control, and is necessary because of the increased scarcity of placements (McGregor, 2011).

The findings of my research study, established one of the main determinants of students being more likely to learn to become emotionally resilient, to be the input from practice educators (pp.131-133). They were seen as being pivotal in this learning process because of their ability to relate theoretical concepts to practice situations. This concurred with the views of Barnett and Coate (2005, p.4), researchers in Higher Education curriculum, who illustrated in their '*knowing, acting and* being' framework, that it was only through placement experience, and with the guidance and support from a competent practice educator that students learnt to be professionally capable.

Not only were practice educators seen to perform an essential job in assisting students with applying knowledge, values and skills to practice, but they were also highly valued in relation to helping students feel a sense of self awareness and confidence, as pointed out by L1 (p.131), self- awareness being regarded as a key factor in learning to be emotionally resilient. Within the Literature Review (p.51), it was noted that Field, Jasper and Littler (2014) were of the opinion, that Social Workers developed their emotional resilience through having the opportunity to receive supervision that encouraged reflection and analysis. These factors they saw as being significant in giving Social Workers the confidence to deal with the more stressful demands of the job.

It was only right that students should be evidencing their ability to apply the knowledge gained from training in the University to practice, but hopefully it was recognised that within a continuing professional development framework, and with support through tutorials and supervision that there was still a necessity to reflect upon and analyse theory and practice in order to progress and work effectively

(Thompson and Thompson, 2008). Within the findings it was observed that L2 (p.134) recognised the importance of this process when observing that a sign of a student having learnt to be emotionally resilient, was the point at which they possessed the ability to deal with complex situations and became more critically analytical in their written work. Providing students with the opportunity to be reflective, critically analytical and to be able to relate theory to practice was therefore seen as a main contributory factor to students developing their emotional resilience.

5.9(b) Curriculum

The curriculum was viewed as a medium for enabling students to learn how to be emotionally resilient and certain aspects of the social work curriculum were highlighted which might assist in the learning process. A method of facilitating learning, which was emphasised in particular by ESW4, ESW3 (p.124) and SWS3(2) (p.133) was that of role-playing. These participants pointed out the benefits of being able to taking part in role plays which, although very stressful at the time, after the event seemed to produce feelings of emotional resilience. The benefit that students received from role playing was also accounted for in the Literature Review, by Crisp et al (2006), Chung (2010) and Wild (2011) (pp.48-49), who identified role plays and situational reconstructions as vehicles for providing students with a skill base for tackling difficult situations. It appeared that having the opportunity to practice and rehearse in advance, whilst in the safety of the classroom where errors could be made, was a way of helping to instil confidence and resilience when entering practice.

Boud and Garrick (1999) and Reupert (2009), considered in the Literature Review on (p.50), both pointed out though that students were only likely to benefit from this type of learning experience if they were provided with the opportunity after the event, to reflect upon what they had experienced in order to make links with practice. This coincided with findings in the Literature Review (pp.43-44) of O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni (2009), whose study of undergraduate social work students at a London University, identified critical reflection as being crucial for improving and practising effectively, and with Grant, Kinman and Alexander

(2014), Howe (2015) and Ruch (2015), discussed in the Literature Review (pp.50-51), who viewed reflection, and in particular self-reflection, as being a way of enhancing emotional resilience. This supports the view, also identified by C4 and ESW1 (pp.132-133) that reflection plays an important role in the development of emotional resilience.

Another method of learning resilience identified by the participants was that of educators presenting students with cases that were especially complex or explicit. As SWS3(1) (p.133) remembered, undertaking '*gruesome*' case studies in lectures was helpful in developing resilience. This is worthy of further consideration because it is not a technique that was identified within the Literature Review. Akin to that of role plays which some students find challenging and uncomfortable, explicit case scenarios might produce a similar effect. Ultimately they might help students become more resilient, because they feel less daunted about what they might encounter in practice, having already, as they see it, faced the worst scenario in the classroom. Not going out on placement then, until Year 2, as discussed on p.168, may be a positive thing, as it gives students time to prepare to deal with 'real life situations' before entering practice.

When asked the question, '*How emotional resilience might be learnt*?' (Appendix 3), participants provided responses pertaining mainly to formal opportunities for learning such as, placements and to the curriculum. However, little consideration was given by them, to the possibility of there being more informal learning opportunities, which might prove beneficial to the process of developing resilience. For example, Eraut (1994), a leading researcher into how professionals learn in work place settings, stressed the importance of informal learning, as being a part of professional development, an opinion shared by Ingram (2015), and pointed out that 80% of learning actually occurred through informal learning as opposed to formal learning. He ascertained that often the social significance of learning from others was not always recognised, being seen instead as 'part *of a person's general capability rather than something that has been learned*' (Eraut, 2004, p.249).

More recently, the possibility of informal learning strategies being associated with the development of resilience was examined by Carson, King and Papatraianou

(2011), academics from the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy, at the University of South Australia. Their interest related to exploring factors which enabled Social Workers to stay in the job and be resilient enough to do this. They agreed with Eraut (2004) and Ingram (2015) that informal learning was significant, and suggested that an exchange of knowledge and support from work colleagues was beneficial in terms of managing the stressful demands of the job. Although informative, the outcome of their discussion was based mainly on conjecture rather than research findings, which has highlighted the need for further research in this area.

Overall though, one of the implications of this stance, is that it could easily be applied to the informal learning experience of a social work student on placement. Spending time with, and working alongside, an experienced Social Worker, practice educator, work colleagues or other professionals, and gaining knowledge on placement for example, via shadowing, building relationships, and supervision, may well play a significant role in students' development of emotional resilience as evidenced by Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough (2007), McAllister and McKinnon (2009) and Grant, Kinman and Alexander (2014) in the Literature Review (pp.51-54). SWS3(2) and C5 (pp.115-116), drew attention to the importance of social support from peers, an area that was highlighted in several studies analysed in the Literature Review (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein (2006), Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008), Kinman and Grant (2011), McFadden et al (2012) (pp.18-36). Consequently, it was possible that in relation to a concept such as emotional resilience, students might learn more about it on an informal basis, rather than in a more formal way, exploring this area of research is therefore worthy of further consideration.

Knowing whether or not emotional resilience had been learnt was a matter addressed by L2 (p.134). When asked the profession specific question '*How will you know that emotional resilience has been learnt*? (Appendix 8), L2 commented that there would be noticeable changes in students' ability to deal with complex issues and analytical skills. This '*development of thought*' and '*analysing things at a deeper level*' identified by L2 (p.134), does not seem to have been fully captured by the capability requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Initially, students have

only to evidence their ability to *'Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work'* (PCF, TCSW, 2012d) in order to demonstrate their readiness for direct practice, in other words, to be able to evidence their knowledge of emotional resilience through surface (Atherton, 2011), or propositional learning (Mitchell, De Houwer and Lovibond, 2009). There is an expectation though, by the end of the first placement, that students have learnt to make connections between theory and practice and to build upon this scaffold of knowledge with the intention of evidencing their ability to *'Show awareness of own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary'* (PCF, TCSW, 2012d).

However, this expectation appears to require students to demonstrate this area of capability on a superficial level. A delay in going out on placement until Year 2 may be helpful then as it allows students the opportunity to develop skills and for it to become apparent to educators if students are not ready for practice. Although students have to show an awareness of emotional resilience, there is no mention of it being achieved through the development of a deeper awareness, on the contrary, there is a sense of students providing proof of being able to 'do' this by means of showing and seeking advice rather than through, reflection, research and analysis. This notion is reinforced by the requisite at the end of the last placement of students being able to, *'With support, take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience'* (PCF, TCSW, 2012d). This has highlighted a gap in the capability requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) which educators need to be aware of in order to ensure that students are able to demonstrate their capability in relation to the theoretical aspects of promoting health and wellbeing, as well as evidencing them in a more practical manner.

5.10 Summary

Analysis of the main findings produced several main discussion points outlined in Summary Box 2.

5.10 Summary Box 2 (*Learning to be Emotionally Resilient*)

1. Significant findings supported by literature

- Placements and Practice Educators play an essential part in the process of learning to be emotionally resilient by enabling students to:

  - Relate theory to practice (pp.131-132) cited in the Literature Review (p.50).
  - Have shadowing opportunities (p.130) cited in the Literature Review (pp.43-53).
  - Develop reflective and analytical skills (pp.131-132) cited in the Literature Review (pp.50-54).

- A challenging curriculum is advantageous in developing emotional resilience. Role plays are particularly helpful in promoting emotional resilience (p.133) cited in the Literature Review (pp.48-49).

2. New findings which add to the body of knowledge

- Utilising explicit case studies in teaching enables students to learn to be emotional resilient (p.133).

- There is a gap in the PCF in relation to students evidencing their capability of promoting health and well-being theoretically as well as in a practical sense (pp.133-134).

3. Findings which have arisen requiring further study and research.

- Different learning approaches that foster emotional resilience in particular informal versus formal learning opportunities.

- Effectiveness of different styles of supervision.

Assessing Emotional Resilience

5.11 Introduction

In this section the responses of the participants in relation to the assessed aspects of emotional resilience are discussed in some detail. As in the previous 'Taught' and 'Learnt' sections the responses were generated mainly by certain focus group questions, in this case:

- Question 6c (Appendix 3) '*Do you think that emotional resilience can be assessed and can you provide examples of how it might be assessed*? and
- Profession Specific Questions (Appendix 8).

  1. '*How will you know that emotional resilience has been learnt and how will it be tested and assessed*?'
  2. '*Can you identify aspects of what you are teaching and in the way that you are assessing students that would relate to emotional resilience*?'

These particular questions were asked in order to generate responses corresponding to the capabilities that students, whilst studying on the BA (Hons) Applied Social Work Degree, have to be assessed on, from entry level to the end of the last placement (PCF, TCSW, 2012d). These capabilities should be borne in mind as being central to the discussion in this section and they are as follows;

- On Entry – '*Demonstrates an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work*'
- Readiness for Direct Practice – '*Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work*'
- End of First Placement – '*Show awareness of own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary*'
- End of Last Placement – '*With support take steps to manage and promote own safety, health and well-being and emotional resilience*'

Unlike the consensus engendered in relation to emotional resilience being a concept which could be learnt, the responses from participants about whether or not emotional resilience could be assessed, and how it might be assessed, produced a more indecisive and mixed response. All of the participants stated that emotional resilience could be assessed, however, the majority expressed reservations about the feasibility of assessing it. Each of the participant groups expressed an opinion in response to this question, but due to the nature of the profession specific questions, a more detailed response in connection to assessment was received from some of the participants, which at times, formed a larger part of the discussion. These responses are examined and discussed in greater depth in this section.

5.11(a) Definition

All of the participants voiced their concerns about trying to assess emotional resilience especially without firstly having a clear definition of what it actually was and how it related specifically to social work (pp.135-136).

Overall participants perceived assessing emotional resilience to be problematic to define due to a range of factors identified in the Findings Chapter (pp.86-145) as follows:

- The implicit nature of the term.
- The complexity of emotional resilience as a concept.
- The diversity of the students.
- The subjectivity involved in formulating a definition.

One of the main difficulties identified by C1 (p.138) was that a standardised definition might be constructed by educators and assessors that did not recognise the many variants and ever-changing nature of resilience as a concept. Nor might it have the flexibility required in social work to recognise that Social Workers respond and work in varied situations with a wide range of circumstances and issues. Doel, Deacon and Sawdon (2007), in the Literature Review (pp.42-43), argued that there was too much variation in how the curriculum was defined, and

delivered, and wanted it to be more standardised to prevent inconsistencies. The complexity of the term, 'emotional resilience' was also highlighted by PE2 and SWS2(1) (pp.136-137) who pointed out that students were likely to be very diverse in terms of their personal, psychological and social make up and there was a danger of some students being labelled as being not emotionally resilient when in fact the definition might be incorrect. This data therefore, fully supported McMurray et al's (2008, p.304) view, presented in the Literature Review (p.32), that emotional resilience '*can mean different things to different people, in different contexts*'.

For these reasons, one of the main aims of this research was to determine a definition of emotional resilience that related specifically to social work, in order to meet the requirements of assessing students' emotional resilience as a capability within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). Prior to undertaking this research there was recognition that locating a definition of emotional resilience would not be straightforward, mainly because of the unfamiliarity of the term within the field of social work. However, what had not been fully appreciated was the multi-dimensional nature of it as discussed by McMurray et al (2008) and Grant and Kinman (2013b) in the Literature Review (pp.32-33). Whilst it was recognised that a definition produced by the participants would be constructed and subjective, it was felt that it would be reliable due to the triangulation of the sample groups Bryman (2011) and would bear resemblance to the definitions in the Literature Review (pp.32-34).

Consequently, findings in relation to defining emotional resilience could be utilised to assist in the education and training of the social work students at the University of Derby, especially in connection with students demonstrating their readiness for direct practice, by evidencing their capability to '*Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work*' (TCSW, 2012d). Within this theme, PE1 and PE2 (p.135) expressed an opinion about the necessity to define emotional resilience as well as highlighting the requirement for the definition to relate directly to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). The PCF presents emotional resilience as a recognised term yet a definition of it as a capability, was not evident in TCSW'S literature or website (TCSW, 2012d). As the studies in this research indicated, Grant and Kinman (2012) (pp.46-47) and McMurray et al, (2008) (pp.32-33) found that social

work educators and practitioners were not necessarily familiar with the concept of emotional resilience and its applicability to social work The participants in my study though, were all able to describe what they thought the term 'emotional resilience' meant, although their responses were many and varied, indicating and confirming views on its complexity (Grant and Kinman, 2013b and McMurray et al, 2008) (see Literature Review, pp.32-34).

Whilst training, students are assessed in relation to capabilities associated with '*showing awareness of own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience and seeking advice as necessary*' at the end of the first placement and '*with support taking steps to manage and promote own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience*' at the end of the last placement (TCSW, 2012d, p.2). There may well be problems in assessing students' emotional resilience because of the subjective rather than objective nature of 'emotional resilience'. It has to be acknowledged therefore, that one person's interpretation of what emotional resilience means, will not necessarily be the same as other peoples, but having a definition that relates specifically to social work may help.

The appearance of emotional resilience as a concept within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), drew attention to the fact that it required defining and explaining in order for students to be trained in a suitably informed and appropriate manner (Currer, 2009). It was concerning to consider that the various education and training establishments, unless provided with a standard definition could well interpret its meaning and definition differently (Kinman and Grant, 2014). The lack of a widely acknowledged definition of emotional resilience, could therefore cause confusion amongst the profession, hence the need for a recognised working definition, in order to assist with the assessment of students' capabilities in this area (Mann, 2010).

Whilst there was an obvious requirement for a clear definition of emotional resilience in order to assess it, this was not peculiar to this particular capability, many of the terms utilised within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) were open to interpretation. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) (2005) argued that having a particular framework often restricted and dampened creativity, so they

were welcoming of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) which they perceived to be a tool which offered flexibility and adaptability. Crisp et al (2006) (see Literature Review, pp.48-49), felt differently and regarded the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), as a useful, nationally recognised training framework, which reduced inconsistency and omissions. They deemed it to be advantageous because it identified core knowledge, value and skill requirements for educating, and assessing prospective students to advanced practitioners at a strategic level on a continuum basis. The findings from this research outlined on (pp.135-136), conflicted with the opinions of Crisp et al (2006), due to the fact that the TCSW(2012d) only provided limited information in relation to defining emotional resilience, and its meaning needed to be made more explicit.

5.11(b) Measurement

The majority of the participants commented on this theme in relation to difficulties pertaining to assessment. Several key messages emerged from the research findings which were outlined in the Findings Chapter (pp.136-143) and these related to the:

- Difficulty in being able to assess emotional resilience, because of its subjective nature, and lack of any measurement tool that was able to quantify it (pp.136-138).
- Recognition of Social Workers' 'breaking points' (pp.138-139) and
- Possibility of being able to perform emotional resilience (pp.139-140).

5.11b(i) Assessment Issues

Because of the subjective nature of emotional resilience and the necessity to assess students, SWS2(1), SWS1(3), SU3, TM3 and TM1 (pp.137-139) were keen to discover a tool that could measure or quantify emotional resilience hence the suggestion of the use of a scale. The tool created by the SWRB (2010) to measure emotional resilience is the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), with the intention of it acting as a capability benchmark, against which Social Workers at all stages of their careers are assessed. However, as discussed in this chapter (pp.177-179), because

capabilities such as emotional resilience have not been clearly defined, they are open to interpretation by academics, practice educators and practitioners and correct measurement may be questionable.

The data from the discussions highlighted concerns about the feasibility and validity of measurement, because of the complexity of emotional resilience, and the wide range of variables involved. C1 (p.138) for example, highlighted the difficulties in being able to assess or measure resilience because of the changeability of its nature and TM3 (p.139) took the uncertainty about measuring emotional resilience one step further, by considering how stress levels might be measured, especially when they reached crisis point, thus signalling a lack of resilience.

5.11b(ii) Breaking Points

Determining when a student was lacking emotional resilience, and assessing students' ability to utilise strategies to avoid stress and burnout, experienced by being overburdened by the emotional demands of the job, was presented in the Findings Chapter (pp.138-139). As discussed in the Literature Review (pp.14-19), Siebert (2006), Morris (2009), Smith (2010), McGregor (2012), HSE (2013), McFadden et al (2012) and McFadden (2013), viewed occupational stress as an increasingly worrying phenomenon within the Social Work profession, due to the rising number of Social Workers feeling stressed at work, a concern which was reported upon more recently by Schraer (2015a, p.1), when he stated that '*Social Workers were too stressed to do their job*'. However, some Social Workers appeared to be better at dealing with the demands and stressful nature of the job as indicated by Collins, Coffey and Morris (2008) in the Literature Review (p19). There was limited research to provide explanations for why this should be the case. Further research is therefore required to establish this.

Findings from Grant and Kinman's study (2012), examined in the Literature Review (pp.46-47) explored stress resilience in trainee Social Workers, and revealed resilience as being an essential quality for Social Workers which enabled them to cope with a stressful working environment. Their conclusions identified

resilience as a primary factor in helping them to avoid 'burnout'. Other factors such as supportive colleagues, effective supervision, and a manageable work environment in relation to caseloads, services and time constraints, were also seen to play an important role.

SWS2(4) (p.138) was particularly concerned that academics when assessing emotional resilience prior to practice, might have exceptionally high expectations of them, and that students might be placed under a greater amount of stress because of this. It has to be said that these high expectations might not just be those of academics. The Organisation too, was likely to place tough demands on students whilst in placement and when qualified as noted by Croisdale-Appleby (2014) in the Literature Review (p.16). The public expectation of Social Workers was also very exacting, with failure to protect children in particular, receiving adverse press attention (Batty, 2009) (Literature Review, p.12), and more recently David Cameron, the Prime Minister announcing a possible prison sentence of up to five years if Social Workers fail to protect children from sexual abuse (Stevenson, 2015). It would be very worrying to imagine that anyone could expect Social Workers to be 'superhuman' as stated by SWS2(4) (p.138), however, the reality is that the Government is expecting Social Workers to be '*resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of the work*' (SWTF, 2009a, p.32). There is an implication, although not quantified, that students therefore need to be well equipped to cope with the demands of a stressful and challenging job as evidenced by Morris (2009) in the Literature Review (p.15) and be able to look after themselves and recognise their own limits (McFadden, 2013) (Literature Review, p.18). It should also be recognised that whilst emotional resilience is being able to deal with challenging case work situations, for example child protection, it can also mean being able to deal with other types of stress such as pressure from the media.

5.11b(iii) Performing Emotional Resilience

Whilst, the notion of saying that you are emotionally resilient, but not acting in a manner that is emotionally resilient, in other words performing emotional resilience was not identified within the literature, from an ethical stance, participant responses in relation to this proved to be a worrying aspect when analysing the findings.

179

SWS3(1) (p.140) described emotional resilience as being '*something you can fake*' and although there was only one other participant, SWS2(5) (p.139) who agreed with this, it was significant enough to warrant further exploration. The participants' responses tended to suggest that emotional resilience was a manufactured concept which could be learnt, rather than one which was inherent, which is concerning for those who are assessing, and making decisions, in relation to whether or not students really are emotionally resilient. By the end of the first placement, the main requirement for students is to evidence their awareness of emotional resilience in what appears to be an academic, rather than a practical sense. However the use of the word 'showing' (TCSW, 2012d, p.2), does mean that students have to provide practice based evidence of having demonstrated emotional resilience, and managed and promoted their emotional resilience, by the end of the last placement. The likelihood of performing emotional resilience explored is therefore, hopefully lessened.

Initially, the findings from my research study in relation to the concept of performing emotional resilience, seemed worrying, and somewhat dishonest, flying in the face of the core values of social work (HCPC, 2012d). However, it led to further exploration of the issue and reviewing literature such as, (Froggart, 1998, Smith and Kleinman, 1989, Urdang, 2010) which had not been examined before. This produced a realisation that a requirement of Social Workers, was for them to possess the ability to be flexible, and be adept at changing and managing emotions to suit the context, nature of the situation, and service users involved. Urdang (2010), an Associate Professor of Social Work in the USA, discussed in a paper entitled '*Awareness of Self: A Critical Tool*', the notion of social work students needing to be self-aware, in terms of recognising how the emotional impact of the job could adversely affect their own well-being. She stressed the importance of students being able to demonstrate empathy in a professional manner, by not getting too involved in service users' emotional issues. Urdang (2010) pointed out that students found this difficult to do, because they associated being emotional with being unprofessional, a finding supported by Rajan-Rankin (2014) (Literature Review, pp.38-39), and as a result needed to locate techniques that might disguise their emotions. Presenting a positive front for instance, when working with a

service user whilst dealing with complex and sensitive personal issues, was regarded as being professional and not dishonest.

It was interesting to note that findings from an earlier study by Froggart (1998), involving hospice nurses, indicated that being able to switch emotions on and off, was a technique which was helpful when dealing with the emotional aspects of the job, because it helped to create some distance between the worker and the service user. SWS1(3) (p.89) pointed out though, that Social Workers to a certain extent needed to be emotionally involved with service users, in order to demonstrate their empathy and concern, detaching too much from the emotional aspects of the work might indicate a lack of thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Instead of using the expression 'performing', it seems more appropriate therefore, to consider 'performing' as the containment or management of emotions, which was identified as a main theme by the participants in relation to defining what emotional resilience meant (Super-ordinate Theme One, pp.86-95). Smith and Kleinman (1989) found in their ethnographic study of medical students, that they were being taught to manage their emotions, by focusing on the scientific aspects of patient's conditions, and concentrating on the patient's bodies and bodily processes rather than any social, psychological or emotional aspects, an emotional management strategy they termed as '*affective neutrality*'. It is unlikely however, that this technique would be of assistance to social work education, as Social Workers have to be trained to assess service users in a holistic manner, thereby taking into account all of their needs, from a physical, social and emotional point of view, rather than simply focusing on one or two aspects of their disposition. Assessing the biological or physiological aspects of someone's condition, because of the perceptible quality of their nature, could be viewed as being less emotionally challenging, than that of assessing emotions, which are far less tangible, and open to interpretation.

The effectiveness of techniques such as, 'switching on and off one's emotions' and 'affective neutrality' (Smith and Kleinman, 1989), either in the short or longer term is debateable, and further research needs to be undertaken, before the association between methods of disassociating emotions and resilience can be determined. Most importantly educators have to bear in mind how the idea of performing emotions, stands in relation to students being taught interventions and techniques

such as those employed by Rogers (1970), whose humanistic approach has as its core element the concept of 'genuineness' when working with service users.

Further investigation would need to be undertaken to ascertain whether or not the traits and qualities associated with emotional resilience as defined by the participants such as self-awareness, TM3 (p.91), optimism, PE1 (p.92) and openness NQSW3 (p.91), in reality could be performed as SWS2(5) and SWS3(1) (pp.139-140) indicated. In addition, determining the incongruity between what students are saying about their resilience, and the manner in which they are presenting themselves, is an area that warrants further research.

Overall, the findings from both the literature and the focus group discussions were interesting, and worthy of further consideration and research, because they implied that once people were working in an emotionally demanding environment, they developed resilience, and learnt to employ effective coping strategies. If this is the case, it may not be until students are on placement, or even in employment, that they begin to develop effective resilience strategies. Gaining further knowledge of how emotional resilience develops, and the range and effectiveness of different techniques to manage emotions, is therefore advantageous to students, educators and practitioners alike (Carvana et al, 2011).

5.11(c) Placements

5.11c(i) Statutory Placements

The view was expressed by NQSW3 (p.141), that placements in statutory organisations, (those that provide Local Authority intervention and services), were a necessary requirement for students to be able to evidence their capabilities, in relation to coping and resilience. This association between statutory placements and emotional resilience was an unexpected one, which explains why there is literature introduced in this section which was not considered in the Literature Review. According to Nixon and Muir (2006) the main reason for statutory placements being linked with developing resilience, was that they provided opportunities for

students to undertake statutory social work tasks, which involved legal intervention. Nixon and Muir (2006) pointed out though, that whilst there was no doubt that students needed to feel adequately prepared for practice, statutory tasks could be undertaken in a wide range of settings which were not necessarily statutory, but instead, were within the private voluntary and charitable sector.

The training framework stipulates that students should be provided with two placements, one of 70 or 80 days duration, the other of 90 or 100 days, but neither of them have to be statutory placements, providing they offer learning and assessment opportunities for students to evidence their capabilities in line with the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). However, Bellinger (2010) suggested, that statutory placements were more likely to provide opportunities for students to observe and shadow qualified and experienced Social Workers. As risk and safeguarding awareness has become a key feature of the social work profession, students placed in statutory settings have a far greater chance of becoming involved in more complex situations with service users. Bellinger (2010) argued therefore, that cases of this nature, were going to require greater emotional resilience, and students might, for that reason, be concerned about the lack of opportunities to develop resilience, in certain types of placement. A stance supported, in particular by NQSW3, NQSW2, PE2 and TM1 (pp.141-142).

Scholar et al (2012), social work educators in the field of practice education, undertook a study of social work students in 'non-traditional' placements that is, those placements which were in the non-statutory, private, voluntary and charitable sector, in order to evaluate their learning experiences. The main reason for undertaking this research, was their concern about assumptions being made, without any evidence from research, that statutory placements were somehow 'better' than 'non-traditional' ones. They found some evidence albeit fragmented, to suggest that 'non-traditional' placements did in fact provide certain additional benefits, for example, in relation to increased opportunities to be creative in meeting service users' needs, and being able to obtain a more holistic picture of service users' needs. Scholar et al (2012) were unable though, to obtain any research findings relating to how Social Workers progressed throughout their career, having experienced a certain type of placement. It has to be acknowledged

that all placements have the potential to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop their emotional resilience, however, the type of cases experienced, may be unpredictable. The reality is though, as finding placements has become an ever increasingly difficult task, due to closure of organisations, budget cuts, and increased workloads (Clapton, 2012), in an attempt to provide a placement of some kind, non-statutory organisations are being utilised. As Carson, King and Papatraianou (2011) commented, this is concerning due to the unpredictability of the level of skills students develop prior to qualification, and the impact this might have on their employability. Comparing the effectiveness of 'non-traditional', with statutory placements, in preparing social work students to be emotionally resilient, is therefore an area that would benefit from further research.

In this section there has been some debate about statutory versus 'non- traditional' placements, and the potential for either of them to offer an environment that might facilitate the development and assessment of emotional resilience. However, there has been no deliberation thus far, about the comparison between assessing students' emotional resilience in the classroom, and on placement. So, although assessing emotional resilience on placement seems more feasible, this may not necessarily be the case. If one examines the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), at the start of a student's training there is a necessity for subject knowledge and underpinning theories relating to emotional resilience, to be learnt and assessed, by the end of the first placement which is in Year Two of the Social Work Degree. According to Gilbert (2011), reporting for The Guardian regarding teacher training, Universities are the best environment for students to initially develop this type of knowledge. As the training continues, with the addition of practice learning this knowledge and awareness is able to expand (BASW, 2013). Although both Gilbert (2011), and BASW (2013), perceived the classroom to be the best environment in which to teach and learn emotional resilience, it may not be the most appropriate place to assess students' resilience (Knight, 2002). As the students training continues, there is a requirement by the TCSW (2012d), that by the end of the last placement, students are able to demonstrate, and provide examples of resilience, rather than simply being able to describe what emotional resilience is. In actuality this is not necessarily the case, as the students' education and training progresses, a

combination of both academic and practice based assessment is most likely to be appropriate (Knight, 2002).

There is no doubt, that a wide range of information obtained from both classroom based education and practice learning opportunities, has to be conveyed to students by university tutors, practice educators and service users, all of whom are involved in some way in the assessment process (Braye and Preston-Shoot, 2010). NQSW2 (p.143) was particularly concerned about the part played by practice educators, due to the possible variance in their expertise, motivation and up to date knowledge. The participant was possibly right to highlight this as an issue, because although a common approach is encouraged in relation to the provision of practice learning opportunities, the variables are so diverse, it has to be accepted that no two placements or practice educators are likely to be the same. The University does though try to counteract this, as far as is feasibly possible, by standardising the academic element of practice education in line with the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) through teaching and guidance sessions, run at the University for practice educators. The reality is though, whilst the University makes every effort to provide students with placements which are demanding, in order for students to develop traits and skills such as emotional resilience, this cannot always be guaranteed because of the dependency on availability of placements which are in short supply (Clapton, 2012).

5.11c(ii) Reflective Supervision

Supervision, whilst on placement was a main theme discussed in some detail by participants in connection with Super-ordinate Theme Three- Significant Factors in the Development of Emotional Resilience (pp.107-117). There were contrasting opinions expressed by participants in relation to the effectiveness of supervision in the development and assessment of emotional resilience. NQSW3 (p.143) expressed the view that having opportunities to be reflective in supervision, was a useful way of assessing students' emotional resilience, a view shared by several theorists discussed in the Literature Review (Jackson, Firtko and Edenborough, 2007, McAllister and McKinnon, 2009, Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010, SWRB, 2010, Field, Jasper and Littler, 2014, Grant, Kinman and Alexander, 2014) (pp.30-

54). On the other hand, NQSW1 (p.143) was not convinced that supervision was the best environment for reflecting on and assessing emotions, as it could not be assumed or taken for granted, that supervision and practice educators would all provide a supportive, informative, and effective learning environment (Morrison and Wonnacott, 2010).

The Final Report of the SWTF (2009a) stated that supervision should play an integral role in social work practice, and Lord Laming (2009, p.32) commented that '*regular, high quality, organised, supervision is critical'.* However, because of an over-emphasis on organisational processes, Lord Laming (2009, p.32) advised that ineffective supervision was likely to result in '*severe emotional and psychological stresses'* for staff. Supervision was therefore recognised as an essential component of social work practice, but in reality was not helpful if it did not meet the required standards (TCSW, 2012c). As Morrison and Wonnacott (2010) pointed out, staff may be receiving supervision, but that does not necessarily mean that it is effective supervision. Carpenter et al (2012) supported this view, and stressed that the emotional aspects of the job could place heavy demands on Social Workers which necessitated the need for reflective supervision in order to promote workers' health and well-being.

Since undertaking my research, both Howe (2015) and Ruch (2015), speaking at a recent Conference at the University of East Anglia entitled '*Reason and Emotion in Social Work'*, stressed the importance of reflective supervision in enabling students and Social Workers to deal with the complexity of emotions, experienced both by themselves, and by service users. According to Howe (2015), being able to manage one's own emotions was directly linked to empathy and resilience. Having the opportunity in supervision to discuss emotions was therefore considered to be beneficial in promoting emotional resilience and well-being (Ruch, 2015), a view supported by NQSW3 (p.143).

There have been positive moves forward in relation to the quality of supervision, due to the requirement since 2013, that practice educators meet the TCSW's (2012c) Practice Educator's Professional Standards for Social Work (PEPS). This means that practice educators have to undertake a two stage qualification in order

to supervise a social work student, which hopefully goes some way to regulating the placement experience. In addition, '*from October 2015 all practice educators of social work students must be registered with the HCPC*' (TCSW, 2012c, p.1). This requirement for practice educators to be registered with the HCPC (TCSW, 2012c), is encouraging in terms of regulating the input from practice educators. NQSW1 and NQSW3 (p.113) pointed out though that supervision was not necessarily consistent, and whilst some newly qualified Social Workers and students received supervision which offered time for reflection others perhaps experienced a more process driven agenda. My research identified the need for students to be given supervision that offered opportunities for reflection in order to develop emotional resilience (TM4, TM2 and NQSW3) (p.112 and p.143) thus evidencing the PCF requirement by the end of the first placement that they were able to '*show an awareness of own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary* (TCSW, 2012d) and by the end of the last placement, to evidence that they could, '*with support, take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, well-being and emotional resilience*' (TCSW, 2012d). Evidence has therefore been produced by this research, which has highlighted the need for practice educators to be offered training in relation to emotional resilience, which is standardised, and specific to the social work profession, in order to facilitate an effective, and consistent level of supervision for students. Supervision which is reflective in nature has also been identified as significant, due to its association with the development of emotional resilience, and the promotion of emotional well-being.

5.12 Summary

Analysis of the main findings produced several main discussion points which are outlined in Summary Box 3.

5.12 Summary Box 3 (Assessing Emotional Resilience)

1. Significant findings supported by literature

- In order to assess emotional resilience there needs to be a common understanding of emotional resilience that relates to social work practice and the PCF (pp.135-136) cited in the Literature Review (pp.32-34).

- Assessing emotional resilience is difficult due to its complex and subjective nature (pp.136-138) cited in the Literature Review (pp.32-34).

- It is essential to be able to recognise when Social Workers are at 'breaking point' (pp.138-139) cited in the Literature Review (pp.14-19).

- The opportunity to have reflective supervision on placement is beneficial in the assessment process (p.143) cited in the Literature Review (pp.50-54) and is associated with emotional resilience and well-being.

2. New findings which add to the body of knowledge

- The possibility that emotional resilience is a concept that can be performed (pp.139-140).

- Statutory placements are important arenas for assessment (pp.141-143).

- The need for practice educators to receive emotional resilience training in order to provide a consistent and effective level of supervision (pp.142-143).

3. Findings which have arisen requiring further study and research

- Reliable methods for measuring and assessing emotional resilience.

- Assessing students at the recruitment and selection stage.

- Factors that enable emotional resilience to develop.

- Explanations for why some Social Workers are better at dealing with stress than other Social Workers.

- The benefits of statutory as opposed to non-statutory placements and those offered by different service providers.

- Investigating if it is possible to perform emotional resilience

5.13 Overall Summary of Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presented an informative discussion and analysis of the main research findings which, when summarised, fell into three separate categories: those findings that were supported by the literature, new findings which added to the existing body of knowledge and those requiring further research.

In meeting the main aim and objectives of the research, the study produced significant findings that made an original contribution to an understanding of emotional resilience in relation to social work practice as follows:

- A meaningful definition of emotional resilience which related specifically to social work, from the perspectives of those involved in social work education, training and practice, was established.

- Information about certain skills and traits such as optimism, stability, honesty and empathy, as indicators of emotional resilience, were obtained. This material will assist with the recruitment and selection of suitable candidates to the social work programme with a forewarning that it might be possible to 'perform' being emotionally resilient.

- Aspects of the teaching, learning and assessment process were highlighted which are particularly informative for teaching staff and practice educators, such as, the importance of teaching students to be capable of demonstrating appropriate empathy in a professional manner, remaining calm and being aware of 'light bulb' moments, all of which have direct implications for practice.

The research also produced findings that indicated that further study was required in certain areas. These related predominately to researching different approaches and methods for learning, teaching, and assessing emotional resilience. The information gained thus far, will be utilised to enhance these processes, and continuing to expand knowledge in these areas will be advantageous.

CHAPTER SIX

DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter considers different forms of dissemination and publication of research, produced by the knowledge gained from undertaking the research element of the Doctorate of Education at the University of Derby.

6.2 Dissemination of the Research

In the early stages of the research process, thoughts and ideas about the proposed research, were discussed informally with team members, and put forward as agenda items to be discussed further at Team, Department and Faculty Meetings. This sharing of knowledge and ideas, with a wide range of colleagues in related fields, provided the opportunity to test out interest in the research, and obtain valuable feedback (Scott et al, 2004), this experience being supported by Cha, Kuo and Marsh (2006), who discovered that informal discussions were most helpful in the dissemination process. The results from their survey of Social Workers via the journal 'Social Work' in 2003, found that when asked which source of disseminated knowledge was most helpful for practice, the majority of the respondents chose discussion of material with colleagues, in favour of articles and books by social work researchers.

The Education and Health Services Service User and Carer Forum, which meets three times a year at the University, enlists the participation of service users and carers, in order to discuss ways of having an input into the learning, teaching and assessment curriculum, across different professional programmes. Presentation of the research at this forum, from initial discussions in 2011, until its completion in 2015, proved to be extremely beneficial. The service users and carers as representatives of those receiving health and social care services, because of their interest in ensuring social work students were trained appropriately, became

involved in the pilot study, and participated in the focus group discussions. At their request they were provided with feedback throughout the research, and given the opportunity to comment on the findings. Their interest and contribution was both informative and enlightening.

The research was also showcased at three conferences hosted by the University of Derby, the first, entitled '*Emotional resilience and Professionalism*', was held on 13th December 2011, this was attended by lecturers, practice educators, service users and carers and students from the subject area (Green, 2011a). The second conference, entitled '*Perspectives on Professionalism*', held on 28th June 2012, was delivered to an audience that included, other doctoral students and University Lecturers (Green, 2012a). These conferences provided the opportunity for others to develop an awareness of the research area, and for constructive feedback to be received.

Externally, an abstract for an International Conference entitled '*Challenging Social Responsibilities for Child abuse and Neglect*', at the University of Tampere in Finland was submitted and accepted in 2011 (International Society for Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect, 2011). I delivered a presentation at this conference on 20th September 2011 which produced fruitful discussion, an opportunity to network, and an invitation to submit an abstract for a Conference at Thomas Moore University College in Kempen, Belgium (Green, 2011b). This abstract was also accepted, despite the research still only being work in progress, and the research was presented at the conference on 28th February 2013 (Green, 2013). It would appear that presenting research that was only part complete could be effective, as according to Harmsworth and Turpin (2000), it can stimulate interest and encourage people to be involved in a process which they want to follow in order to discover the outcome, findings and recommendations. This proved to be the case for one Belgian student, who, following the Conference, became so interested in the research that she requested a student exchange, and spent several months studying on the Social Work Degree programme at the University of Derby that year.

At the request of Committee Members, the research was also disseminated at a BASW lunchtime research seminar and evening seminar, both held on 15th March 2012 (Green, 2012b). The audiences were made up of a range of professionals with health, social care and education backgrounds, and students who wanted to hear about the research, because of its currency and practice focus (Lecroy, 2010). The discussions and feedback that followed were really helpful in determining the worth of the research, in terms of its relevance to practice (BASW, 2012, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000).

On 14th May 2015, I delivered two sessions in relation to defining, and developing emotional resilience, to a range of employees comprising, managers, Residential Care Home staff, qualified and unqualified Social Workers from Derby City Council Adult Care Services. Feedback was extremely positive, and the participants requested further training in relation to understanding about, and utilising tools such as, compassion focussed therapy and mindfulness (Gilbert, 2013, Wood, 2015), to develop emotional resilience. Interestingly, very few of the participants had any knowledge of emotional resilience prior to this training. The intention is for follow up training sessions to be offered, relating to appropriate empathy, reflective supervision, compassion-focused therapy, mindfulness and conflict management and resolution.

An agency based in Derby which was set up to help protect young people from sexual exploitation, requested a session on emotional resilience for parents of young people who had, or were being, sexually exploited. They knew about my research via a student social worker, who, having been taught by me, felt that it would be beneficial for those using the agency's services, to know about resilience. Six parents took part in the session, and feedback suggested that they found it helpful and inspiring.

Whilst delivering these external sessions I have relied predominantly on powerpoint presentations, with relevant images and activities which provide opportunities for reflection, some small group work and feedback. I opted for this form of delivery because the sessions were quite brief. It is acknowledged that these sessions require further development in order to make them more interactive.

It became evident whilst teaching both internally and externally, that there was a lack of awareness about emotional resilience as a concept. This has helped me to create training sessions, which provide a theoretical base for defining and understanding emotional resilience, as well as giving time for discussion about contributory factors, and tools that can help to enhance emotional resilience. The following are examples of how I have taught the subject of emotional resilience as lecture material in the University.

A 'flipped classroom' technique (Aberysekera and Dawson, 2015) has been used, which has enabled students to develop knowledge prior to attending the teaching session. Firstly, students have been asked to watch a short film clip and to consider putting themselves in the shoes of the person in the film. Students have then made notes on these reflections. They have been given reading in relation to emotional resilience in order to develop their theoretical knowledge. Students have brought their notes to the taught session and split up into small groups, in order to discuss their reflections about the film clip, and to share their understanding of the theory of emotional resilience. Feedback has been delivered to the larger group, and students have returned to the small group to discuss different options for handling the situation in the film clip, and have then been asked to re-enact the new scenario as a role play. In future sessions, students will be required to film the role play prior to the next teaching session, and be prepared to discuss what they changed, why and how it has made them feel, for reflective and self-awareness purposes. The films will be shown, with commentary from the students, to the whole student cohort, and possibly be utilised as a formative or summative assessment.

Sessions have been planned in this way to take account of some of the key findings from my research in order to generate feelings of appropriate empathy (pp.88-89), develop an understanding of emotional resilience (pp.87-90) and its developmental factors, to be reflective (p.143) and by considering different options, to develop the skills to be emotionally resilient. The 'active' learning involved through role play (pp.123-124) and filming was intended to enhance motivation and to enable students to relate theoretical knowledge to practice situations (pp.48-49 and 170-171).

As Module Leader for a Year 3 module entitled, '*Counselling Perspectives*', I have been able to further develop students' knowledge of emotional resilience, and in particular, appropriate empathy, by developing and teaching a session based on the principles of humanistic theory and Rogers (1970) person centred counselling approach. The core values of Roger's approach lend themselves to the development of appropriate empathy (pp.147-151). Students were taught the following: active listening, physical interaction, being mindful, being non-judgemental, skills involved in offering empathic support and guidance, recognising individuality and treating people as being important. Experiential teaching and learning methods were used to relate theory to practice, via case studies, listening to other peoples' stories, metaphors and role plays.

6.3 Future Dissemination Strategies

Future plans for disseminating my research include the following:

- Working in partnership with the University of Derby's On-Line Learning Department (UDOL), in order to develop a Continuing Professional Development module entitled, '*Emotional Resilience in the Caring Professions'.* This will utilise a pedagogical approach, underpinned by activity theory, and experiential learning. In line with findings from my research study, students understanding of emotional resilience, will be tested via case studies which are explicit, and based on real life situations.

- Presenting at an Interprofessional Conference on 19th November 2015. This will provide an opportunity to disseminate my research findings in relation to main themes such as, definition of emotional resilience, developmental factors, appropriate empathy and reflection. The attendees will comprise 460 students studying in the College of Health and Social Care, at the University of Derby, on a range of professional programmes in nursing, occupational therapy, radiography, creative expressive therapies, health and social care, youth and community work and social work. The Conference will provide the opportunity for others to develop an awareness of the research area, and for constructive feedback to be received.

- Presenting a Lead Lecture at the Consortium of Institutes of Higher Education in Health and Rehabilitation in Europe (COHEHRE) conference on 12th April 2016. Attendees will include teaching staff and students from a wide range of health and social care disciplines from different European countries. The conference will provide opportunities to share ideas and initiative collaborative research.

- Delivering a teaching session at the University of Derby to first year occupational therapy students, on 29th April 2016, in order to provide information, and the opportunity for active learning regarding strategies to enhance emotional resilience, via the use of reflective frameworks in supervision.

Throughout the research process, serious consideration has also been given to writing a journal article. Having been fortunate enough to attend a creative writing workshop, the overriding message from listening to other people's tales about their attempts to get articles published, is that the most difficult aspect of writing, is actually getting started (Bender and Windsor, 2010).

Collaborative working was suggested as being a confidence building exercise (Rowley and Slack, 2000). This proved to be the case as discussions with colleagues about their research journey were fruitful however, as Mulholland and Healy (2007) indicate, finding colleagues who happen to share a similar research interest and who feel able to commit the time to contribute, can be very difficult. The workshop was a useful forum for being able to network, however, once it had finished it became very difficult to maintain contact.

These discussions have inspired me to submit a journal article to The British Journal of Social Work (BJSW) when the award has been successfully completed (Calabrese and Roberts, 2004). The BJSW, which has been utilised to evidence this study, publishes a wide variety of articles relevant to all aspects of social work eight times a year. Much of the readership is within the UK but it also has international readership, and the journal is governed by a code of practice that outlines the expectations of editors, reviewers and authors (Brice and Bligh, 2005).

BJSW has been positioned in first place in two separate rankings of social work journals in an Australian rankings exercise and by American academics using Google Scholar. As Sellers et al (2006) point out, this has established BJSW as a prime journal for both British and overseas social work academics seeking to get their work published.

One of the main reasons for choosing a high quality journal such as BJSW is that the journal is much more likely to attract greater readership and ultimately have more of an impact on practice (Hodge and Lacasse 2011). It is also likely to influence the decision of whether or not it is used to educate others (Hawkins, Shapiro and Fagan, 2010, Wandersman et al, 2008). However, Sellers et al (2006) draw attention to the fact that journals can be based on reputation, but this does not necessarily reflect the actual quality of the journal, they feel that the best measure of quality can be identified by the number of citations and the number of publications (Dahlberg, 2006).

A journal with wide readership would therefore maximise the dissemination of my research (Klinger, Scanlon and Pressley, 2005). There have been many articles published recently in BJSW which have considered the complex nature of the job and the stresses and demands placed on Social Workers especially in light of recent child abuse and child death enquiries (Tham and Meagher, 2009, Burns, 2011, Kinman and Grant, 2011, Smith, 2013, Kinman and Grant, 2014, Grant, Kinman and Baker, 2015). A considerable amount of literature has been published on child protection, but there has been very little mention of the impact of emotional resilience, and the implications of the new PCF (TCSW, 2012d) on training and practice to protect children. It is important therefore that this gap in knowledge and research is addressed and given due attention.

As it will not be possible to report the findings from the study twice, it might also be feasible to consider writing an article which focuses more on the practical implications of the research for the journal entitled 'Community Care' (Hall, 2003, Williams, 2005,). The readers of this journal are mainly social care practitioners, so any research that lends itself to influencing practice in social work is likely to be

seriously considered, especially if it is topical (Heron and Murray, 2004, Hawkins, Shapiro and Fagan, 2010, Community Care, 2010, 2012,).

6.4 Summary

This Chapter has investigated the possible ways of disseminating my research and has evidenced how, both locally and internationally, the process of dissemination has already started. Positive feedback and enthusiasm about the research has strengthened the desire, and necessity, for continued and additional dissemination.

Key to the outcomes of the research is that the investigative nature of the research is enlightening (Remenyi and Price, 2001). It is hoped therefore that the findings from this research will help to shape the learning, teaching and assessment of social work students, that it will equip them to evidence the capabilities identified in the PCF (TCSW, 2012c), and that once qualified, they feel empowered to cope with the more stressful demands of social work.

Another prime intention of disseminating the research findings is to share the acquired knowledge, in order to better inform social work educators and practitioners, and other professionals in the caring services, about emotional resilience, and to assist them in meeting the education and training requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

Most importantly though, undertaking this research will be a personal achievement, and successful dissemination of its findings will indicate that a significant and original contribution has been made to social work education, training and professional social work practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, the primary aim, objectives and reasons for undertaking the research are recalled. The original contributions of the doctoral study are highlighted, as are the main findings, and finally, implications for social work theory, education and practice and recommended directions for future research are summarised.

In drawing the study to a conclusion it is essential firstly, to recall the primary aim of the research which was to:

Identify what emotional resilience is in the context of social work education, training and practice in order to meet the requirements of the 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (TCSW, 2012d)

and secondly, to re-state the main research objectives which were to:

- Determine a definition of emotional resilience that relates to social work practice from the perspective of those involved in social work education, training and practice.
- Examine the necessity for emotional resilience in the social work profession.
- Consider significant factors relevant to the development of emotional resilience in order to help Social Workers cope with the emotional demands of the job and
- Explore how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed to meet the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d).

Before examining how this research has achieved what it set out to do, it is also important to revisit the main reasons, which are outlined in the next section, for undertaking this particular area of research.

7.2 Reasons for Undertaking the Research

The main reasons for undertaking this research were as follows:

- The personal interest the subject of emotional resilience held for me having just completed a Master in Education, in researching the relationship between emotional intelligence, and social work education and training.

- A succession of child deaths in the UK in the last decade or so had raised questions about the quality of social work education and training

- The research was deemed necessary following a Government directive to improve the standards of future social work education and training which had identified emotional resilience as a necessary requisite to be a Social Worker (Laming, 2009, SWTF, 2009a).

- Emotional resilience was a newly introduced term to social work education and training (SWTF, 2009a) within the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), and therefore required defining within a social work context.

- Social work educators needed to advance their knowledge of emotional resilience, in order to develop a social work curriculum in line with the capability requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d), with the intention of equipping students with the right tools to become emotionally resilient practitioners.

- The social work profession was struggling to recruit and maintain practitioners, a higher than average rate of sickness and stress amongst Social Workers, being seen to correlate to a lack of emotional resilience

(Morris, 2009). Recruiting and selecting suitable candidates for social work training, that is, those with emotional resilience and retaining them in employment once qualified, had become a priority (SWTF, 2009a, TCSW, 2011).

7.3 Original Contributions

This research sought to add to a body of knowledge relating to emotional resilience and its links with social work practice, which did not already exist. This study produced several key findings which contributed to this understanding in an original, enlightening and educative manner. These findings were as follows:

- Emotional resilience was a newly introduced term to social work education and training (SWTF, 2009a), and required defining within a social work context. This research study identified a concise definition of emotional resilience which related specifically to the social work profession (p.95).

- The Government recognised emotional resilience as being a necessary requisite to be a Social Worker (SWTF, 2009a). The length of time Social Workers spent working and developing relationships with service users was singled out as being different to other professionals who might only intervene over a short period of time. Emotional resilience was deemed to be more necessary for Social Workers because of this time factor (p.105).

- The findings from this research indicated that students could manage their emotions in a professional manner if they were taught how to demonstrate appropriate empathy (p.89) and to remain calm (p.110 and p.123). This research therefore identified particular traits and skills that social work students and practitioners needed to develop in order to promote and maintain emotional resilience.

- In terms of the social work curriculum, the findings that were original related firstly, to the use of explicit case studies as a teaching tool which enabled students to learn how to be emotionally resilient (p.122) and secondly, to 'light bulb moments' which signalled that students had made a connection between theory and practice and vice versa (pp.125-126).

- This research produced findings that indicated that there was a possibility that emotional resilience could be performed (pp.139-140). This was of particular concern at the recruitment and selection stage and was an area of research that required further investigation.

- Statutory placements, due to their challenging nature were seen to play a key role in students being able to develop and evidence emotional resilience (pp.141-143). Although placements were presented in the literature as an essential element in relation to promoting resilience, it had to be noted, that it was the statutory nature of the placements in particular, that was highlighted by the participants. Researching the effectiveness of statutory, as opposed to placements in the private, voluntary and charitable sector, was therefore highlighted.

- The findings indicated that there was a gap in the PCF in relation to students evidencing their capability of promoting health and wellbeing, in a manner that incorporated, both practice, and theoretical aspects, of reflection, research and analysis (pp.131-132).

- There was evidence of a need for practice educators to receive training in emotional resilience which was standardised and relevant to the social work profession in order to provide students with supervision which was consistent and informative (pp.141-142).

Overall, these findings demonstrated that prior to undertaking this research there were gaps in knowledge relating to emotional resilience in the context of social

work practice which have now been located, and that in some areas that there is still a need for further research see (section 7.6 - Recommendations for Future Research, pp.207-208).

7.4 Theoretical Implications

Contribution to existing theory has already been considered within this concluding chapter, in the sections relating to original contributions, and implications for practice, however, there are other areas which are presented in this section, which enhance certain areas of existing knowledge.

7.4(a) Defining Emotional Resilience

Existing literature exposed the lack of a definition that related specifically to social work, from the perspectives of those involved in social work education, training and practice. This research produced findings that expanded upon this body of knowledge (pp.87-95). Although emotional resilience has been defined by theorists in different ways, and the complexity of it emphasised in the Literature Review (pp.32-34), on reflection, it is Ungar's (2006) definition of emotional resilience that has been most noteworthy, and particularly relevant to social work (p.29). Whilst emotional resilience has been defined by theorists and researchers as a trait, a process involving risk and protective factors, and a combination of these, Ungar's (2006) definition has progressed this understanding of emotional resilience further, by situating resilience within a social and ecological framework. His definition perceived people to have some mastery over their world, in recognising and utilising their own inherent traits and personal resources as well as external support, in combination with a supportive environment. This has been helpful in developing an understanding of emotional resilience within a social work context.

According to the research findings (pp.87-95) and the literature (pp.26-28), certain traits and coping strategies, which incorporate both personal and external resources, have been associated with developing and promoting emotional resilience. As Ungar (2006) has identified though (Literature Review, p.29), the work

environment also needs to be one which promotes well-being and resilience and in the current climate of work place pressures in social work, this appears to be difficult. Having a definition such as Ungar's (2006) which recognises that the environment can enhance or undermine resilience, strengthens the argument for students and practitioners to consider developing resilience promoting strategies in order to cope (section 7.4(b), p.203).

It is important that this newly discovered information about emotional resilience is disseminated to educators and practitioners, so that they are able to competently educate and assess students in this field of study. I have therefore commenced emotional resilience training sessions with Team Managers, Social Workers and social care staff from the local City Council, as discussed in the Dissemination Strategies chapter (p.192). I do recognise though that there is still a significant amount of work to do, to ensure that teaching staff and practice educators are conversant with the definition of emotional resilience, in relation to social work practice, and its application to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). My intention therefore, is to offer training for teaching staff at Department Meetings, and for practice educators at recall and briefing sessions. I also plan to develop, an emotional resilience module which will be taught at undergraduate and postgraduate level study.

7.4(b) Stress

In this research, stress was a key finding associated with emotional resilience. Overall, it was acknowledged that Social Workers were involved in working with highly emotionally charged situations, and the knowledge obtained about stress, and its impact on emotional resilience, was consistent with that presented in the literature review. As indicated in the Literature Review (pp.18-19), and in the findings from this research (pp.101-103), occupational stress has emerged as a worrying phenomenon for Social Workers. Emotional resilience was seen as an essential quality in being able to cope with a stressful working environment (see Literature Review (p.14 and pp.53-54), as were traits such as, having positive emotions and being optimistic (pp.36-37). Good support from colleagues, and effective supervision (pp.18-19), were also found to be associated with emotional

resilience and the ability to cope in stressful situations. In light of these findings, consideration has been given to teaching students to utilise different ways of dealing with stress for example, by remaining calm and relaxed (p.110 and p.123), looking after themselves, by having a 'cut off point', and being able to say 'no', (p.92), recognising their own limits and breaking points (pp.138-139) and most importantly, engaging in reflective supervision (p.143). This has implications for practice (section 7.5, pp.204-205), particularly in relation to recruitment and selection, and developing a social work curriculum which enhances students' ability to cope with stress.

7.4(c) Supportive Relationships

The research highlighted the significance that others have in relation to developing and promoting emotional resilience. Having secure attachments in childhood for example, was noted in the literature as being a protective factor for children and young people's well-being in the long term (pp.27-31). Likewise, in adulthood, supportive relationships with colleagues, team managers and practice educators in one's working life, was seen to promote resilience (pp.35-47). This was supported by findings from my research (pp.115-116), which suggested that there was an association between secure attachment relationships, and emotional resilience, so knowing how to build and nurture these relationships, is something that needs to be encouraged and investigated further.

7.5 Practice Implications

The findings of the research, and theoretical arguments, indicated that there was a need for practice review in a number of areas as follows:

7.5(a) Recruitment and Selection

In light of the findings from this research the recruitment and selection process was changed in order to eliminate unsuitable social work candidates as early as possible, especially those who might be 'performing' as discussed on (pp.139-140)

or those who have unresolved personal issues (p.99). For the recruiters, one of the main aims now is to select candidates who have an optimistic and stable personality (p.92), who demonstrate an awareness of the stressful demands of the job (pp.102-103), and who are able to evidence resilience in difficult situations (p.92).

At the social work interview there was a question that required candidates to demonstrate their awareness of the role and responsibilities of a Social Worker by asking *'What do you think Social Workers do and why do you want to become one?'* (Q1, Appendix 2), which met the requirements of the PCF (TCSW, 2012d) for the candidate to '*Demonstrate an initial understanding of the role of the Social Worker'*. A new question has since been introduced, *'Can you tell us about a time in your life when you have demonstrated your resilience in being able to cope with a challenging or difficult situation?'* (Q2, Appendix 2), which requires candidates to provide an example of a time in their lives when they have demonstrated their resilience in coping with emotionally difficult circumstances. This checks out whether or not they have managed to resolve personal issues before being offered a place on the course, and addresses TCSW's (2012d, p.1) requirements at entry level of *'Demonstrating an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work'*. Evaluation of this recently revised recruitment and selection process will take place at the end of the academic year in July 2016, with an emphasis on tracking retention rates, and successful progression of selected candidates. Having the right tools to measure and assess the students' emotional resilience, in particular optimism and stability, during the interview process will also be required which is an area that requires further research.

7.5(b) Social Work Curriculum

Following this research the social work curriculum was redesigned to include teaching about emotional resilience within the Year One module 'Preparation for Social Work Practice'. This module now incorporates lectures and activities that inform students about what emotional resilience is in a social work context, its necessity in practice, factors influential to its development and application to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). The intention is that if students are taught about emotional

resilience, this will enable them to '*Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work'*, thus evidencing their readiness for practice.

I am in the process of devising materials in relation to teaching students about how to demonstrate appropriate empathy, a concept which emerged from the findings as a necessary skill (pp.88-90) and one which requires further investigation.

Consideration is also being given to how to respond to the findings that recommended that emotional resilience was learnt on an ongoing basis, and taught throughout the duration of the Programme, rather than in a single episode (p.121). Presently, discussions are being held with the teaching team to ascertain how, and where, materials and activities can be included in the curriculum, to enhance students' resilience.

It is acknowledged that reliable classroom and practice based assessment methods are required throughout the delivery of the Programme to examine the emotional resilience levels of students, thus taking into account, the research findings which suggest that students might be able to perform emotional resilience (pp.139-140). This is an area that requires further exploration.

7.5(c) Teaching Methods

Role plays (pp.123-124 and p.133) and explicit case studies (p.122) are being utilised in the delivery of teaching material, in line with the research findings which highlighted their effectiveness in the learning process, in promoting emotional resilience. It is envisaged that this change will promote students' resilience, empathy and self-awareness and provide them with opportunities to practice and hone their professional skills. Although I acknowledge that employing such teaching methods cannot take into account all that might happen in practice, from an assessment point of view this research has evidenced, that using role plays and explicit case studies can provide insight into how a student is performing, and indicate learning needs that can be practised, and improved upon, in the relative safety of the classroom. Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of role plays and

explicit case studies on the development of students' emotional resilience is an area worthy of further research.

Exploring 'light bulb' moments (pp.125-126) which according to the findings of the research might indicate that students have successfully related theory to practice is an area that also requires further exploration and research. Whilst the curriculum already includes theory and activities that encourage students to relate academic concepts to practice, it is not so obvious how and when 'light bulb' moments occur. I consider this to be an area that would benefit from further research.

7.5(d) Placements

The research highlighted the importance of providing students with good quality placements, particularly those of a statutory nature, which offered students a wide range of emotionally challenging encounters, in order to develop their resilience (pp.140-143). These testing environments were also viewed as being beneficial in providing students with the opportunity to develop their self-awareness, in terms of their suitability or unsuitability for social work practice.

It is timely therefore, that towards the end of this research study a reconfiguration process at the University of Derby culminated in the amalgamation of social work with nursing and other allied health programmes to form the College of Health and Social Care. In terms of placement provision, this is encouraging, because it now means that students are offered placements in a wider, hopefully more challenging, range of statutory settings across both the social care and health sector.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has provided a thorough and in-depth investigation of emotional resilience in a social work context and its links to the PCF (TCSW, 2012d). It is evident though, that there is still a need for additional research to allow for further investigation of the subject in several areas:

- Developing and evaluating effective methods for recruiting and selecting candidates who demonstrate emotional resilience, focussing in particular on personality traits of optimism and stability.

- Determining reliable methods for measuring and assessing emotional resilience, and identifying when someone is 'performing' emotional resilience.

- Investigating further, factors that promote the development of emotional resilience.

- Researching how to teach someone the skills of appropriate or professional empathy, and remaining calm.

- Exploring different social work teaching, learning and supervisory approaches and methods, in order to evaluate their effectiveness in delivering emotionally resilient students and practitioners.

- Researching the benefits of statutory, as opposed to non-statutory placements, and the effectiveness of different service providers, for example, health, as well as social care, in promoting emotional resilience.

- Examining the benefits of introducing techniques such as, compassion focused therapy and mentalisation, into the social work curriculum.

7.7 Summary

From a personal point of view, this research has been enlightening and advantageous in many different ways. From the outset, it has been my intention for the research to benefit others, and on reflection, I am confident that this has been the case.

As a researcher, I have been afforded the opportunity to gather a wealth of information, both historic and current, in an area that I was unfamiliar with. I also had the wherewithal to pass this information on to others, and to obtain material for future research.

As an educator, the research findings provided me with a range of new ideas and tools for recruiting the best and most resilient students, and for preparing them for the realities of a rewarding, but emotionally stressful and demanding profession. Colleagues at work have informed me that they too, have benefited from this research by having someone in their team with expertise in relation to the intricacies and developments of the new social work training framework.

My links with the local City Council have provided employees in the field of social work and social care with emotional resilience training which is current and evidence based which means that ultimately, users of social work services will be helped by having input from practitioners who are emotionally resilient.

I am in no doubt now, having undertaken this research, that emotional resilience is a necessary capability for practising as a Social Worker. This research has confirmed the significance of emotional resilience as a factor in relation to being able to do the job effectively and being able to cope with the stresses of the job.

What the future holds in relation to social work education and training is difficult to predict at present. What is certain though, as this research has indicated, since the introduction of the PCF by TCSW in 2012, the effectiveness of social work education and training has remained in the spotlight, A planned review of the PCF was shelved due to the closure of TCSW in August 2015, which has fuelled debate about the future of the PCF as the overarching professional standards framework (Schraer, 2015b). BASW have now taken over responsibility for the PCF, so how significantly emotional resilience will feature in the PCF, if it remains, or in any new training framework, is yet unknown. I will make an educated guess though, that in light of the recommendations of the Croisdale-Appleby Review (2014) and the difficulties faced by Social Workers in dealing with the stressful demands of the

job (Schraer, 2015a), that emotional resilience will continue to play a significant

role, in any proposed reframing of the social work curriculum, and future training of Social Workers.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1:

The Professional Capabilities Framework
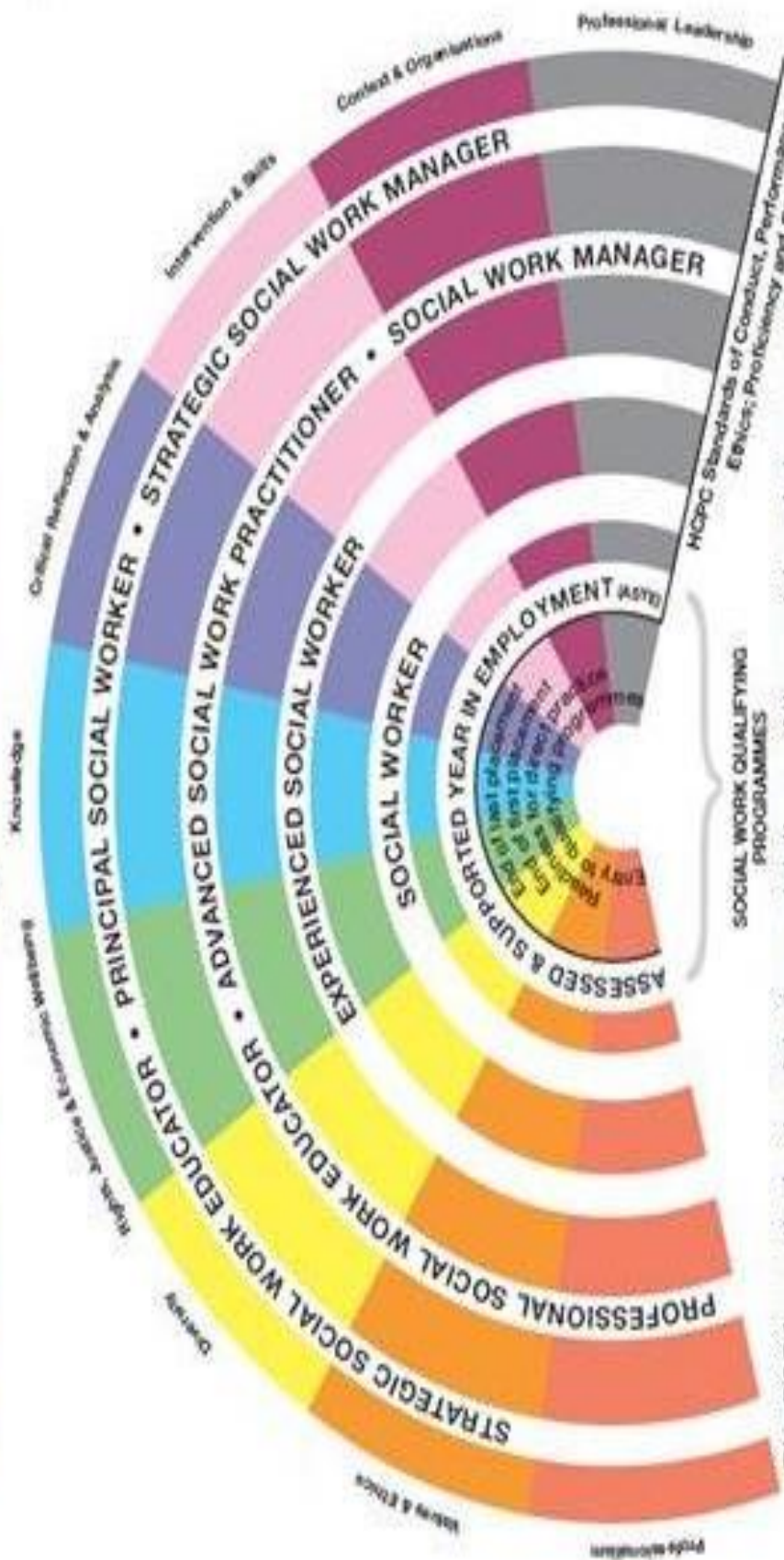
The PCF forms the basis of design and delivery of the social work degree, and informs CPD throughout a social workers career.

Appendix 2:

Social Work Interview Questions

1.   **What do you think Social Workers do, and why do you want to become one?**

2.   **Can you tell us about a time in your life when you demonstrated your resilience in being able to cope with a challenging or difficult situation?**

3.   **What do you understand by difference and diversity in society and why is this important for social work?**

4.   **Within the last 12 months can you identify an issue in the media that has implications for social work practice? What is your view on this?**

5.   **Can you give an example of how you have used critical advice and guidance to help improve your work?**

6.   **How do you plan to manage the challenge and demands of academic study on a Degree course?**

Appendix 3:

1. What is your understanding of the term 'emotional resilience' in relation to social work practice?

2. How would you describe someone who is 'emotionally resilient'?

3. The Professional Capabilities Framework (Social Work Reform Board, 2010) identifies emotional resilience as a 'capability 'for working as a Social Worker.
   How necessary do you think emotional resilience is for working in social work? Can you provide examples from practice or placement of when you think this might be the case?

4. Why do you think that social work students have to evidence that they are capable of being emotionally resilient?

5. a) When do you feel social workers might develop resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the job?
   b) Where do you feel this resilience might develop?
   c) How do you feel emotional resilience develops?

6. a) Do you think that emotional resilience can be taught?
      Can you provide examples of how it might be taught?
   b) Do you think that emotional resilience can be learnt?
      Can you provide examples of how it might be learnt?
   c) Do you think that emotional resilience can be assessed?
      Can you provide examples of how it might be assessed?

7. How relevant do you think emotional resilience is for other professions?
   Who are these professionals, where do they work and who do they work with?
   Why is it relevant for these professions?

8. What factors do you think might prevent or undermine Social Workers' ability to be emotionally resilient?

9. What do you think are the consequences for Social Workers who are not emotionally resilient?

Appendix 4:

<u>INFORMATION SHEET</u>

<u>Title</u>

Social Workers need to be "resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of the work" (Social Work Task Force, 2009, p32). Are we training students to be emotionally resilient? – An ethnographic study of the concept of emotional resilience in relation to preparing social work students for the challenges of social work.

Dear Participant,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate without it affecting your relationship with the Social Work Department, the teaching staff or the University of Derby.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To determine a definition of 'emotional resilience' that relates to social work practice.
2. To identify the characteristics of someone who is 'emotional resilient'.
3. To analyse the concept of emotional resilience as a 'capability'.
4. To examine the importance of emotional resilience as a necessary capability for social work.
5. To explore what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession.
6. To consider how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed in any future social work curriculum in order to meet the training requirements of the proposed 'Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers' (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).
7. To investigate the relevance of emotional resilience for professions other than social work.
8 To establish factors that might undermine social workers ability to be emotionally resilient.
9. To clarify what the consequences might be for those social workers who are not emotionally resilient.

How will the research be conducted?

The procedure will be an ethnographic study involving focus groups. Data collection will involve documents which relate to both university and practice based teaching, focus groups (audio tape, transcripts). Individuals involved in the data collection will include social work team managers,

experienced social workers, newly qualified social workers, social work lecturers, practice educators, service users, carers and student social workers.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study prior to participating or during the time that you are participating. I will be more than happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way.

What will happen to the data?

Material obtained from the audio tape will be transcribed and deleted once the doctoral study/research is completed. The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office. The data will be entered on a computer which is password protected. All data will be destroyed six months following the completion of the study.

What are the benefits in taking part in the research?

The expected benefits associated with your participation are that the information obtained will:

1. Help to meet the Government driven directives in relation to social work training, with a particular focus on emotional resilience, as proposed by the Social Work Reform Board (2010) and the Munro Report, (2011).
2. Provide the social work teaching team with research findings that will assist in the developmental stages of reviewing and revising the social work curriculum and training in relation to emotional resilience and
3. Train student social workers to feel well equipped to be confident and effective in situations which test their emotional resilience.

What are the possible risks in taking part?

I cannot foresee any risks in this research however participating in the focus groups will take up some of your time.

How will the results be disseminated?

The results will be presented as a doctorate dissertation and possibly as a seminar paper, journal article or discussed at team meetings. It is also possible that the results may be included in teaching material. If the research is submitted for publication a byline will indicate the participation of all concerned.

Why have you been chosen to take part?

Your knowledge, views and experience in the field of social work practice will be essential to this study.

Do you have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without having to give an explanation.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact me either by telephone on 01332-594004 or by e-mail at p.green1@derby.ac.uk

Many thanks

Pauline Green

Appendix 5:

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION PRACTICE (Ed.D.) PROGRAMME

LEARNING PROPOSAL FOR WORK BASED PROJECT (INDEPENDENT RESEARCH)

<u>**Notes:**</u>
1. **This Contract must be discussed and agreed with your supervisor / programme leader.**
2. **It should be completed following completion of any required taught components of your programme of study.**
3. **It must be agreed, signed and dated by yourself and your supervisor / programme leader before formal commencement of the work based project (Independent Study).**
4. **Your work based project will not be eligible for examination and assessment unless all of the above points are satisfied.**

1. <u>Description of proposed Independent Study</u>

Working title

Social Workers need to be "resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of the work" (Social Work Task Force, 2009, p32). Are we training students to be emotionally resilient? – An ethnographic study of the concept of emotional resilience in relation to preparing social work students for the challenges of child protection work.

Scope

The research will involve an ethnographic study exploring what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession. Nine focus groups will discuss the concept of emotional resilience, its relevance to social work practice, social work teaching and assessment methods and practice opportunities that promote the development of resilience.

The focus groups will be held between November 2011 and May 2012. There will be six to eight people in each group and all of the members will be chosen because of their experience and knowledge in relation to emotional resilience (Fowler, 2009).The groups will compose of social work managers, experienced social workers, newly qualified social workers, social work lecturers, practice educators, service users and students from all three year groups on the BA Applied Social Work Degree. The focus groups will be of one hour duration. All of the above participants are already working in partnership with the University in order to develop, participate in and assess social work training.

Documents such as Module Handbooks and teaching plans will also be examined in order to develop knowledge of the social work programmes teaching content, assessment methods and learning outcomes in relation to emotional resilience.

Aims

The purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To determine a definition of 'emotional resilience' that relates to social work practice.

2. To examine whether or not emotional resilience is a necessary requisite for children and family social work

3. To analyse the concept of emotional resilience as a 'capability', as presented within Recommendation 11 in Chapter 3 of the Munro Report, (2011).

4. To explore what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession

5. To consider how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed in future social work curriculum in order to meet the training requirements of the proposed 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).

Justification (professional and personal):

As O'Connor et al, (2009) point out, the teaching of social and emotional competence should be an essential part of the social work curriculum. They suggest that in order to prepare students for a profession that is both stressful and complex the curriculum should incorporate teaching which has a particular focus on the awareness of self and which also encourages the development of emotional maturity (Morrison, 2007).

This view is supported by the Social Work Reform Board, (2010) who have been assigned the task of creating a new set of standards for the profession known as the 'Professional Capabilities Framework'. One of the nine proposed capabilities entitled 'professionalism' requires social workers to demonstrate knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to use of self and emotional resilience. It will therefore be a requirement for educators to ensure that student social workers are trained in these areas.

The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, (2011), which builds on the work of the Social Work Task Force and the Social Work Reform Board has analysed current social work practice and presented recommendations for improved training and practice. One of the issues identified for example, is that of a high turnover amongst social workers and some of the factors suggested to develop resilience are as follows; the importance of a team leader who provides effective support and supervision, team cohesion and workers being provided with the opportunity to debrief following stressful situations (Department of Education, 2011).

This particular research will assist the social work team at this University in planning, developing and delivering a curriculum that meets the new training requirements as it will help to increase awareness of what emotional resilience actually is, set out to determine whether or not it is being taught, how it's being taught and how it might be included in the new curriculum.

The social work team therefore view this research as being timely and essential. Initial discussions have highlighted an uncertainty about the inclusion of emotional resilience in the present curriculum and many questions have been raised about how it might be included in future curriculum content and delivery.

From a personal point of view, I find it deeply concerning that recent statistics and research indicate that social workers are struggling to meet the demands of the job as evidenced by high rates of illness and stress related conditions as well as retention and recruitment issues (Morris, 2009).

From my own experience I know that social work can be a difficult and complex job, but it can also be extremely rewarding and worthwhile. It is therefore imperative it would seem to prepare students who are able to cope with the demands of the profession both for their own health and well- being and for service users they work with, who deserve to receive intervention from practitioners who are well equipped to be 'tough enough' to do the job.

2. <u>Supervision arrangements (if known)</u>

Student

Pauline Green

Student Number

100030423

Email

p.green1@derby.ac.uk

Supervisor

Helen Stoneley

Mileposts of Progress

Main mileposts will include;

1. Approval of research and ethics proposals

1. Meeting with supervisor at regular intervals.

2. Preparing Chapters at regular intervals throughout the research process.

3 Preparing and undertaking research as outlined in following section.

3. <u>Outline Plan of work</u>

Work schedule dates so far

December 2010 – Social Work Team Meeting – discussed proposed topic for research.

January 2011 – EHS service user and carer's forum – discussed possibility of research – several people interested and would like to participate.

March 2011 – Attendance at Conference "Learning for Social Work Practice: from student to early practitioner" – Skills for Care.

April 2011 – Further discussions with Social Work team.

Sept 2011 – Oct 2011 – Literature review

Nov 2011 Pilot Study – Focus Group

End of Nov 2011- Commence Focus Groups – start to develop themes

October 2011- January 2012 – Review documentary evidence from module handbooks, lecture notes, articles etc. Collect data - to be informed by data that emerges and start to refine themes.

Dec 2011 – Research Methodology

December 2011 – Disseminate research at Social Work Away Day

January 2012 – Focus Groups

February 2012 – Use NVivo to manage data, store notes/thoughts and develop categories and themes.

March 2012 – Focus Groups

April 2012- Dissemination of research at British Association of Social Workers seminar.

May 2012 – Focus Groups

June 2012 – Analyse findings and results

August 2012 Conclusions and recommendations

Sept 2012 – Dissemination of research via conference paper for Skills for Care.

Objectives

1. To meet the Government driven directives in relation to social work training, with a particular focus on emotional resilience, as proposed by the Social Work Reform Board, (2010) and Munro Report, (2011).

2. To provide the social work teaching team with research findings that will assist in the developmental stages of reviewing and revising the social work curriculum and training in relation to emotional resilience.

3. To train student social workers to feel well equipped to be confident and effective in situations which test their emotional resilience.

4. To disseminate the findings of this research so that other Higher Education Institutions and social work practice educators can use the results to examine and develop their own curriculum and practice.

Indicative literature review

Chung, I.W (2010) 'Students Emotions as an organising principle in the Social Work curriculum', **Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 30**,(1) pp75-89.

Coffey, M., Dugdill, L. & Tattersall, A. (2004) Stress in Social Services: Mental Well-being, Constraints and Job Satisfaction, **British Journal of Social Work**, **34**, pp 735-746.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011) Research Methods in Education (7th Ed) Oxen: Routledge

Collins, S. (2007) Statutory Social Workers: Stress, Job Satisfaction, Coping, Social Support and Individual Differences, **British Journal of Social Work**, **38** (6), pp 1173-1193.

Department for Education, (2011) The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report – A Child-centred system London: The Stationery Office

Fowler, F. J. (2009) Survey Research Methods (4th Ed) Thousand Oaks, C A: Sage.

Grant, L & Kinman, G. (2009) **How to facilitate and support social work students to become reflective practitioners**. Higher Education Academy **Social Work and Social Policy Subject Centre 11th U.K Joint Social Work** Education Conference with the 3rd U.K Social Work Research Conference. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire.
Morris, N. (2009) 'Shocking' sickness rates in social work. The Independent. Available from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news. (Accessed on: 10th February 2010)

Morrison, T. (2007) Emotional intelligence, emotion and social work, context, characteristics, complications and contribution **British Journal of Social Work 37** (2) pp.245-263.

O'Connor, L., Cecil, B and Boudinoni, M. (2009) Preparing for practice – an evaluation of an undergraduate social work preparation for practice module. **Social Work Education 28** (4) pp.436-454.

Social Work Task Force. (2009) Building a safe, confident future – The final report of the social work task force. Available from: http:// dcsf.gov.uk/publications (Accessed on: 1st December 2009)

Social Work Task Force. (2010) <u>Building a safe, confident future: One Year on.</u> Available from <u>www.skillsforcare.org.uk</u> (Accessed on: 11th March 2011)

Van Heugten, K. (2011) <u>Social Work Under Pressure – How to Overcome Stress, Fatigue and Burnout in the Working Place</u> London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Wilson, G and Kelly, B. (2010) Evaluating the effectiveness of Social Work Education: Preparing Students for Practice Learning. **British Journal of Social Work. 40** pp. 2431-2449.
Indicative methodology

As this research is for the most part concerned with people, their behaviour, social interaction and organisations it seems most appropriate to undertake qualitative research in this particular case. The research would not be conducive to experiments within controlled environments or testing of a pre-determined hypothesis (Cassell and Symon, 1995).The research philosophy will be a phenomenological one as the research will entail subjective interpretations of what is being said in focus groups. The epistemological principles on which this is based then is that the knowledge gained will be socially constructed, inductive and subjective rather than being scientifically tested, deductive and objective (Bryman and Bell, 2008). The ontological assumption therefore is that what is being researched will be subject to interpretation by the researcher. As the research is qualitative in design it will be essential to consider how validity, reliability and bias will be addressed. The research design will have to be seen to be robust and rigorous and this will involve careful and thorough planning, data collection, analysis and presentation. It will be of sound worth and value as a result of the deeper understanding and knowledge that should develop through researching this topic in some depth.

The research strategy will be an ethnographic study which takes as its subject emotional resilience and social work training. The main advantage for using this particular strategy is that enables an intensive exploration of the subject content and incorporates history and background relating to social work teaching, policy and practice to provide context. There may be some disadvantages however and these relate specifically to bias as I am a Social Worker and Social Work Lecturer and therefore enter the research with some possible pre-conceived ideas about the subject area. It will be important therefore that I announce any personal views and feelings prior to undertaking the research.

Provisional Content of the Study

Section 1 – Introduction

The introduction will include a rationale for the research and why this particular issue is being explored at this particular time. It will also identify the main contents of the study and the aims and objectives.

Section 2 – Context of the research (literature review), ending with statement of key professional purposes to be met by the work based project (Independent Study)

The review of the literature should identify any gaps in knowledge and because it will be inductive in its approach it will hopefully provide a greater understanding of emotional resilience in social work training and any themes which emerge can then be analysed.

The main key professional purpose to be met will be to consider how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed in future curriculum in order to meet the training requirements of the proposed 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).

Section 3 – Rationale of Methodology (indicate principal components and procedures to be deployed)

Ethnography was chosen because it enables more detail to be obtained than might be possible through using a survey approach. It also provides the opportunity to obtain data from multiple methods, in this case from focus groups, documentary evidence and possibly in depth interviews if required.

Procedures will be as follows:

1 Prepare focus groups – invite participants, plan issues to be explored which might involve asking the group how they would define emotional resilience, to enquire about the importance of this in practice and to ask them if they can give examples of how it is being taught at the University.

Prepare consent forms and arrange rooms and audio equipment.

Consider interviewing techniques.

2 Implement focus group as pilot study - learn from any issues arising and make adaptations as required.

3 Plan and implement procedures for focus group and utilise findings to develop themes.

4 Review documentation such as module handbook, lecture notes etc.

5 Use NVivo as data management system. It will store audio interviews from focus groups.

6 Analyse the data by utilising an inductive data analysis approach which will produce a set of themes and categories.

7 Interpretive inquiry will also be used as much of what is being audio taped will require interpretation.

Overall there are some concerns about undertaking this research which will have to be addressed. One of the main ones is that of trying to remain objective when I am so closely involved with the

research through being employed at the University. My concern about maintaining a non-biased stance and the impact on validity has led to the consideration of the involvement of participants in the observation of video material and its analysis and development of themes. The research has to be located within the University setting because it relates to the training of student social workers. In terms of generalisability, the research is only generalisable within the context of social work training. The same process could be undertaken at other Universities to discover how their students are being trained to be emotionally resilient.

Section 4 – Relate preceding sections to any previous research on the topic.

To consider in particular research that has been undertaken by Grant and Kinman, (2009), O'Connor, Cecil and Boudinoni, (2009) and Wilson and Kelly, (2010) in order to make comparisons and note differences.

Section 5 – Ethics of project (refer to appropriate Guidelines for the professional field/community relevant to the project)

Please see ethics approval form which outlines in detail any ethical issues relating to this study. The three areas that will be taken into consideration are as follows;

1 Informed consent

2 Privacy and confidentiality

3 Protection from harm

The participants should take part in the research because they want to rather than feeling that they have been coerced into it. They also require sufficient information to ensure that they are able to make an informed choice about whether or not to take part and should also be aware of any possible consequences as a result of taking or not taking part. In relation to this particular research it is hoped that the participants will see the benefits of being involved in order to ensure that the BA Hons Applied Social Work Degree is meeting the necessary training requirements for the profession.

My involvement as a lecturer may present a power differential that may lead to the students feeling that they have to take part and they may feel that they have to conform (Asch, 1955, Milgram, 1974 cited in Gross, 2009). A participant information sheet and consent form will be produced to address the above.

In terms of anonymity the identity of the participants in the focus groups can be maintained.

In relation to protection from harm I have had to consider whether the students learning might be affected by my research. I have come to the conclusion that ultimately the outcome of the research

should be of benefit to the students and service users and that it should enhance students learning, performance and ability to do the job.

Section 6 – Report findings from each component of the project enquiry methodology (identify these main areas for report)

Main areas will include:

1. Detailed plan of questions for focus group discussion will produce audio taped material, transcribed data and field notes from focus groups.
2. Documentary evidence which will include module handbook, lecture material, activities, exercises etc.
Themes from transcripts will be presented in a semi-structured format noting emergent (inductive) themes. These will be presented in tabulated form to include references to particular quotes. The presentation of the findings will be structured by key themes, issues and then questions that arise from the themes. These interpretations could be cross checked by involving some participants in listening to some of the audio taped material.

Section 7 - Findings (above) should be critically discussed. At this stage, indicate how you intend to inform that critical discussion, and how you anticipate its structure.

Summaries with reference to transcripts will be presented. There may also be a matrix type of analysis based on cross tabulation of the results in order to further reduce and analyse the data. The findings will be analysed further with a summary of the main conclusions to include what was discovered and the immediate implications for those involved. In relation to this research it will be important to state that the results are not generalisable but that the results are particular to this ethnographic study.

Section 8 – Evidence of professional and/or scholarly impact of the project (dissemination proposals)

Evidence of impact will be any proposed changes in practice and development of knowledge for example a change in the academic and practice education curriculum (Norton, 2009, p.195).
The recruitment and selection process might also change in light of the findings. Any changes that

are made should be empowering to others, offer a more effective service and meet the training requirements of the professional body.

The dissemination of the research will involve distribution of the knowledge and findings and will include "research findings, messages from research, implications for policy and practice, methodologies employed and so on" (Becker and Bryman, 2004, p.361).

Dissemination will be to both internal sources such as team meetings and research seminars within the University and to external sources such as National and International conferences and seminars.

Section 9 - Critical conclusion (anticipated main points of significance arising from the proposed project)

The conclusion will reflect on the outcomes, provide a basis for further discussion and consider further research areas.

The main points of significance are likely to be:

1. The complexities of defining emotional resilience.

2. Discovering whether or not the module curriculum and practice opportunities provide opportunities for students to develop their emotional resilience.

3 A discussion about the different methods of teaching and assessing emotional resilience and their strengths and limitations.

4 The possibility and mechanics of inclusion of emotional resilience in the teaching, learning and assessment of student social workers.

5 Identification of factors that can develop emotional resilience

6 Conclusions about how the curriculum will meet the requirements of the professional training framework.

7 Consideration of how materials may be developed to meet the professional training requirements.

4. <u>Provisional work schedule</u>

See section 3 – outline of work

5. <u>How learning objectives will be met:</u>

1. Made a significant and original contribution to professional practice in the discipline or field of enquiry.

a) By meeting the Government driven directives in relation to social work training with a particular focus on emotional resilience (Social Work Reform Board, 2010, Munro Report,

2011).

b) By providing the social work teaching team with research findings that will assist in the developmental stages of reviewing and revising the social work curriculum and training in relation to emotional resilience.

c) By obtaining results from research that other Higher Education Institutions and social work practice educators can use to examine and develop their own curriculum and practice.

2. **Command and confidence in the application of discipline-related research methods and in discussion of methodological issues.**
   This will be evidenced by undertaking the research as outlined in the research proposal and by completing section 3 of the independent study.

3. **Deep and developing understanding of the ethical and/or professional considerations in the context of the discipline or field of enquiry.**
   This will be achieved by obtaining ethical approval for this research from the University of Derby and by putting these processes into practice.

4. **Highly developed personal skills in the presentation and discussion of data, ideas and applications of professional practice.**
   This will be evidenced throughout the independent study process, by presenting the information in an informative and analytical manner and by using supervision in a professional way. Effective dissemination of findings will demonstrate a desire to inform and assist colleagues, other academics and professionals.
   .

5. **Accomplished in the organisation and management of independent studies in the form of a professional work based project.**
   This will be demonstrated by an ability to keep to a time scale / work schedule agreed by the Supervisor and by presenting the research in an organised and well-structured fashion.

6. **Ability to reflect and articulate critically on your experience of professional practice.**

This will be evidenced by presenting a literature review that is current, informative and analytical. It will also be evidenced throughout the independent study, in supervision sessions and during the dissemination process.

The rules and regulations of the University of Derby have been read and fully understood:
http://www.derby.ac.uk/qed/3Rs/

Signed (participant): Pauline Green

Date: 24th August 2010

Signed (programme leader):

Date

Appendix 6:

Request for Ethical Approval for Individual Study / Programme of Research by University Staff		

Please complete this form and return it to the Chair of your subject area/subject cluster Ethics Committee, via email or post. Your proposal will be screened and a decision on ethical clearance will be made. Once approval has been given, you will be eligible to commence data collection.

1. Your Name:	Pauline Green	*2. School, Subject Area/ Research centre/group (if internal applicant)* **Ed Doc Student – PX3AA**
3. Contact Info	*Email:* p.green1@derby.ac.uk *Tel No.* 01332 594004 *Address:* Britannia Mill **Mackworth Road Derby DE22 3BL**	
4. Position:	Senior Lecturer	
5. Title or topic area of proposed study		
Social Workers need to be "resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of the work" (Social Work Task Force, 2009, p32). Are we training students to be emotionally resilient? – An ethnographic study of the concept of emotional resilience in relation to preparing social work students for the challenges of child protection work.		
6. What is the aim and objectives of your study?		
The aims are **1. To determine a definition of 'emotional resilience' that relates to social work practice.** **2. To examine whether or not emotional resilience is a necessary requisite for children and family social work** **3. To analyse the concept of emotional resilience as a 'capability', as presented within Recommendation 11 in Chapter 3 of the Munro Report, (2011).** **4. To explore what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession** **5. To consider how emotional resilience might be taught, learnt and assessed in future social work curriculum in order to meet the training requirements of the proposed 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).**		

The objectives include the following;

1. To meet the Government driven directives in relation to social work training, with a particular focus on emotional resilience, as proposed by the Social Work Reform Board,(2010) and Munro Report, (2011).

2. To provide the social work teaching team with research findings that will assist in the developmental stages of reviewing and revising the social work curriculum and training in relation to emotional resilience.

3. To train student social workers to feel well equipped to be confident and effective in situations which test their emotional resilience.

4. To disseminate the findings of this research so that other Higher Education Institutions and social work practice educators can use the results to examine and develop their own curriculum and practice.

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7. Brief review of relevant literature and rationale for study (attach on a separate sheet references of approximately 6 key publications, it is not necessary to attach copies of the publications)

As O'Connor et al, (2009) point out, the teaching of social and emotional competence should be an essential part of the social work curriculum. They suggest that in order to prepare students for a profession that is both stressful and complex the curriculum should incorporate teaching which has a particular focus on the awareness of self and which also encourages the development of emotional maturity (Morrison, 2007).

This view is supported by the Social Work Reform Board, (2010) who have been assigned the task of creating a new set of standards for the profession known as the 'Professional Capabilities Framework'. One of the nine proposed capabilities entitled 'professionalism' requires social workers to demonstrate knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to use of self and emotional resilience. It will therefore be a requirement for educators to ensure that student social workers are trained in these areas.

The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, (2011), which builds on the work of the Social Work Task Force and the Social Work Reform Board has analysed current social work practice and presented recommendations for improved training and practice. One of the issues identified for example, is that of a high turnover amongst social workers and some of the factors suggested to develop resilience are as follows; the importance of a team leader who provides effective support and supervision, team cohesion and workers being provided with the opportunity to debrief following stressful situations (Department of Education, 2011).

This particular research will assist the social work team at this University in planning, developing and delivering a curriculum that meets these requirements as it will help to increase awareness of what emotional resilience actually is, set out to determine whether or not it is being taught, how it's being taught and how it might be included in the new curriculum.

The social work team therefore view this research as being timely and essential. Initial

discussions have highlighted an uncertainty about the inclusion of emotional resilience in the present curriculum and many questions have been raised about how it might be included in future curriculum content and delivery.

From a personal point of view, I find it deeply concerning that recent statistics and research indicate that social workers are struggling to meet the demands of the job as evidenced by high rates of illness and stress related conditions as well as retention and recruitment issues (Morris, 2009). From my own experience I know that social work can be a difficult and complex job, but it can also be extremely rewarding and worthwhile. It is therefore imperative it would seem to prepare students who are able to cope with the demands of the profession both for their own health and well being and for service users they work with, who deserve to receive intervention from practitioners who are well equipped to be 'tough enough' to do the job.

8. Outline of study design and methods

The research will involve an ethnographic study exploring what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession. Ethnography was chosen because it enables more detail to be obtained than might be possible through using a survey approach. It also provides the opportunity to obtain data from multiple methods, in this case from focus groups and documentary evidence.

As this research is for the most part concerned with people, their behaviour, social interaction and organisations it seems most appropriate to undertake qualitative research in this particular case. The research would not be conducive to experiments within controlled environments or testing of a pre-determined hypothesis (Cassell and Symon,1995).The research philosophy will be a phenomenological one as the research will entail subjective interpretations of what is being said in focus groups. The epistemological principles on which this is based then is that the knowledge gained will be socially constructed, inductive and subjective rather than being scientifically tested, deductive and objective (Bryman and Bell, 2008). The ontological assumption therefore is that what is being researched will be subject to interpretation by the researcher. As the research is qualitative in design it will be essential to consider how validity, reliability and bias will be addressed. The research design will have to be seen to be robust and rigorous and this will involve careful and thorough planning, data collection, analysis and presentation. It will be of sound worth and value as a result of the deeper understanding and knowledge that should develop through researching this topic in some depth.

The research strategy will be an ethnographic study which takes as its subject emotional resilience and social work training. The main advantage for using this particular strategy is that enables an intensive exploration of the subject content and incorporates history and background relating to social work teaching, policy and practice to provide context. There may be some disadvantages however and these relate specifically to bias as I am a Social Worker and Social

Work Lecturer and therefore enter the research with some possible pre-conceived ideas about the subject area. It will be important therefore that I announce any personal views and feelings prior to undertaking the research.

Procedures will be as follows;

1 Prepare focus groups – invite participants, plan issues to be explored which might involve asking the group how they would define emotional resilience, to enquire about the importance of this in practice and to ask them if they can give examples of how it is being taught at the University. Prepare consent forms and arrange rooms and audio equipment. Consider interviewing techniques.

2 Implement focus group as pilot study - learn from any issues arising and make adaptations as required.

3 Plan and implement procedures for focus group and utilise findings to develop themes.

4 Review documentation such as module handbook, lecture notes etc.

5 Use NVivo as data management system. It will store audio interviews from focus groups.

6 Analyse the data by utilising an inductive data analysis approach which will produce a set of themes and categories.

7 Interpretive inquiry will also be used as much of what is being audio taped will require interpretation.

Overall there are some concerns about undertaking this research which will have to be addressed. One of the main ones is that of trying to remain objective when I am so closely involved with the research through being employed at the University. My concern about maintaining a non-biased stance and the impact on validity has led to the consideration of the involvement of participants in the observation of video material and its analysis and development of themes. The research has to be located within the University setting because it relates to the training of student social workers. In terms of generalisability, the research is only generalisable within the context of social work training. The same process could be undertaken at other Universities to discover how their students are being trained to be emotionally resilient.

9. Research Ethics
PROPOSALS INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS MUST ADDRESS QUESTIONS 9 - 13.

Does the proposed study entail ethical considerations   Yes / No   (please circle as appropriate)

If 'No' provide a statement below to support this position.
If 'Yes' move on to Question 10.

10. Ethical Considerations Please indicate how you intend to address each of the following in your study. Points a - i relate particularly to projects involving human participants. Guidance to completing this section of the form is provided at the end of the document.

a.   Consent –

All participants will be given an information sheet and will be required to sign a consent form prior to taking part (Please see forms attached). The information provided does state that they can withdraw at any time and how confidentiality of the data will be maintained.

b.   Deception-

No participants data will be included in the study where they have indicated that they do not wish to take part. The research will be fully explained so there is no need for the research to be covert or deceptive. The results and findings will also be made available to any participant who requests access to this information.

c.   Debriefing -

It is hoped that results will be disseminated internally at team meetings, research seminars and during lectures and externally at seminars and conferences. A separate meeting will take place to inform and present the findings to participants.

d.   Withdrawal from the investigation

Participants can withdraw at anytime up to the end of the study. This will be explained to participants prior to the research taking place. Participants will be able to withdraw their data whilst the data is being collected however they will not be able to withdraw after the data has been analysed and disseminated.

e.   Protection of participants

The participants are not at risk of physical, psychological or emotional harm greater than encountered in ordinary life so none is required.

f.   Observational Research

This research will not involve observations.

g.   Confidentiality

All material will be presented confidentially only using the students professional programme as identifying information. Participants will not be identified in the transcripts. The information sheet provides information on what the research is for etc.

h.   Giving advice

Advice will not be given by the researcher. As I am a member of staff as well as a

269

researcher it will be necessary if required to refer the participants to suitably qualified and appropriate professionals.

i. Research undertaken in public places [complete if applicable]

N/A

j. Data protection

All information will be kept in a locked cabinet and where stored on a computer will be suitably anonymous and password protected

k. Animal Rights [complete if applicable]

N/A

l. Environmental protection [complete if applicable]

N/A

11. Sample: Please provide a detailed description of the study sample, covering selection, number, age, and if appropriate, inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The research will involve an ethnographic study exploring what factors are significant in developing resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the profession. Nine focus groups will discuss the concept of emotional resilience, its relevance to social work practice, social work teaching and assessment methods and practice opportunities that promote the development of resilience.

The focus groups will be held between November 2011 and May 2012. There will be six to eight people in each group and all of the members will be chosen because of their experience and knowledge in relation to emotional resilience (Fowler, 2009).The groups will compose of social work managers, experienced social workers, newly qualified social workers, social work lecturers, practice educators, service users and students from all three year groups on the BA Applied Social Work Degree. The focus groups will be of one hour duration. All of the above participants are already working in partnership with the University in order to develop, participate in and assess social work training.

Documents such as Module Handbooks and teaching plans will also be examined in order to develop knowledge of the social work programmes teaching content, assessment methods and learning outcomes in relation to emotional resilience.

There will be no exclusion criteria in operation.

12. Are payments or rewards/incentives going to be made to the participants? If so, please give details below.

None

13. What study materials will you use? (Please give full details here of validated scales, bespoke questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group schedules etc and attach all materials to the application).

There will be a focus group interview schedule (see attached). Each schedule will relate to the specific experience of the focus group members so for example the students will have an interview question which relates specifically to them, whilst the remainder of the questions will be the same for each focus group.

14. What resources will you require? (e.g. psychometric scales, equipment, such as video camera, specialised software, access to specialist facilities, such as microbiological containment laboratories).

MP3 Player and NVivo software package.

The literature review will contain the following source material:

Chung, I.W (2010) 'Students Emotions as an organising principle in the Social Work curriculum', Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 30,(1) pp75-89.

Coffey, M., Dugdill, L. & Tattersall, A. (2004) Stress in Social Services: Mental Well-being, Constraints and Job Satisfaction, British Journal of Social Work, 34, pp 735-746.

Collins, S. (2007) Statutory Social Workers: Stress, Job Satisfaction, Coping, Social Support and Individual Differences, British Journal of Social Work, (6), pp 1173-1193.

Department for Education, (2011) The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report – A Child-centred system London: The Stationery Office.

Grant, L & Kinman, G. (2009) How to facilitate and support social work students to become reflective practitioners. Higher Education Academy Social Work and Social Policy Subject Centre 11th U.K Joint Social Work Education Conference with the 3rd U.K Social Work Research Conference. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire.

Morris, N. (2009) 'Shocking' sickness rates in social work. The Independent. Available from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news. (Accessed on: 10th February 2010)

Morrison, T. (2007) Emotional intelligence, emotion and social work, context, characteristics, complications and contribution British Journal of Social Work 37 (2) pp.245-263.

O'Connor, L., Cecil, B and Boudinoni, M. (2009) Preparing for practice – an evaluation of an undergraduate social work preparation for practice module. Social Work Education 28 (4) pp.436-454.

Social Work Task Force. (2009) Building a safe, confident future – The final report of the social work task force. Available from: http:// dcsf.gov.uk/publications (Accessed on: 1st December 2009)

Social Work Task Force. (2010) Building a safe, confident future: One Year on. Available from www.skillsforcare.org.uk (Accessed on: 11th March 2011)

Van Heugten, K. (2011) Social Work Under Pressure – How to Overcome Stress, Fatigue and Burnout in the Working Place London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Wilson, G and Kelly, B. (2010) Evaluating the effectiveness of Social Work Education: Preparing Students for Practice Learning. British Journal of Social Work 40 pp. 2431-2449.

**15. Have / Do you intend to request ethical approval from any other body/organisation ?   Yes /
No   (please circle as appropriate)**

If 'Yes' – please give details below.

16. The information supplied is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I clearly understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to act at all times in accordance with University of Derby Code of Practice on Research Ethics
http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/ethics/policy-document

Date of submission…23rd August 2011…………………………..

Signature of applicant……Pauline Green………………………………………

For Committee Use   Reference Number (Subject area initials/year/ID number)…………………

Date received……………… Date approved ……………. Signed………………………

Comments

PLEASE SUBMIT ALONG WITH THIS APPLICATION THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION WHERE APPROPRIATE (please tick to indicate the material that has been included or provide information as to why it is not available):

Focus Group/Observation schedules   x

Covering letters/Information sheets   x

Briefing and debriefing material☐ **E-mails will be forwarded to possible participants to invite them to take part in the focus group discussions. Briefing will be undertaken prior to the focus group discussions and an information sheet will be provided.**

Consent forms for participants   x

Appendix 7:

CONSENT FORM

Social Workers need to be "resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of the work" (Social Work Task Force, 2009, p32). Are we training students to be emotionally resilient? – An ethnographic study of the concept of emotional resilience in relation to preparing social work students for the challenges of social work.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.   Yes / No.

2. I understand that my participation in the focus group discussion is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.   Yes / No.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.   Yes / No.

Name of Participant..

Signature...

Date...

Name of Researcher..

Signature...

Date...

Appendix 8:

Profession Specific Questions

Service Users and Carers
As a service user / carer can you recognise a Social Worker who is emotionally resilient and how important is it to you that they are emotionally resilient? What is it about the Social Worker or the service they have offered that makes you think that they are emotionally resilient?
Do you know when a Social Worker is lacking emotional resilience? Can you think of any examples of when you have noticed that a Social Worker is not resilient?

Lecturers
As a social work lecturer can you identify aspects of the social work curriculum that might teach or enable students to become emotionally resilient? How will you know that emotional resilience has been learnt and how could it be tested and assessed?

Practice Educators
As a practice educator can you identify aspects of what you are teaching and in the way that you are assessing students that relate to emotional resilience? What sort of practice opportunities do you feel will be most appropriate to evidence this capability?
How will you change your assessment and teaching methods in order to be able to enable students to evidence their ability to be emotionally resilient?

Students
As a student can you identify aspects of the social work curriculum that might teach or enable you to become emotionally resilient? Do you feel that your emotional resilience is changing as you progress through the course?

Team Managers
As a team manager can you identify aspects of your job that enable you to be emotional resilient? How do you identify workers who are emotionally resilient and those who are not? How do you address those issues for any staff that appear to be struggling? Do you think the emotional demands of the job have changed over the years?

Newly Qualified
Can you identify areas of practice that might have developed your emotional resilience? Can I ask what factors might hinder your ability to be resilient?

Experienced Social Workers
How important is it to be emotionally resilient when you start practising as a Social Worker? What areas of practice does it most affect? What factors hinder your ability to be emotionally resilient?

Appendix 9:

Coded Transcript

<mark style="background-color: cyan">**Trait/Skill**</mark>
<mark style="background-color: yellow">**Organisation/Profession**</mark>
<mark style="background-color: magenta">**Self-Awareness**</mark>
<mark style="background-color: lime">**Controlling/ManagingEmotions/Coping**</mark>

Transcript – Social Work Team Managers

Q 1 What is your understanding of the term emotional resilience?

<mark style="background-color: lime">1 For me it's about the workers ability and managers ability to cope with the emotional demands of the job both in terms of the complex issues that we work with also</mark> <mark style="background-color: yellow">with emotional resilience in terms of coping with competing demands and pressures.</mark>

<mark style="background-color: magenta">2 I think also its about having a worker who has the understanding that they can be affected by the dynamics in working with the families and the jobs that we do so its about self, awareness of self and how their practitioners issues or mood might be affecting their assessment</mark> and how the aggression or the stress is going to compromise their capacity to make appropriate assessments <mark style="background-color: yellow">so think it's about an understanding</mark> that they are not just a blank sheet and a person that is just there to do a job that they are part of a system.

3 I would agree it's very much a two way thing, <mark style="background-color: magenta">it's about understanding how to do the job that we are doing and how it impacts on you and also how your emotions and your own feelings impact on the job that you do as well</mark> so yes very much a two way thing.

4 I think sometimes it's quite a shock though until you are actually doing the job, they don't know that do they so for some people it's quite a shock when they are half way down and they are doing the job, they have to really stop and think about that.

2 <mark style="background-color: yellow">I suppose that's an issue for training and selection and how people are supervised and if you are supervised with a task list there isn't a lot of room for 'well lets put that aside and how is this impacting on you' you know what sort of things are you bringing personally that are affecting your practice so I think if there is a culture in supervision actually that has an assessed part of it that has 'oh dear you're failing let's have a look at what's the matter with you'</mark> it would be very much about in <mark style="background-color: lime">supervision 'we are going to look at you too and tell me how you are coping with it' because the most dangerous thing of all is where workers bottle it all up and carry on just doing two families then collapse in a heap and have a real sense of failure.</mark>

Transcript – Newly Qualified Social Workers

(Q.1) What is your understanding of the term emotional resilience?

1 Mine is the ability to control your emotions whilst out in practice and in the workplace

2 I agree with an understanding of how you are reacting to what is happening in the workplace and when you're out on visits or what the job requires and recognising the emotional state you are in and through recognising that being able to manage and control all the stress that arises from the negative emotions that you have to deal with and just being aware of how you feel because if you are not aware then you will just get overwhelmed.

1 So it can be like knowing your weaknesses as well as your strengths so that you don't get bogged down by stress, you need to know when to speak to your manager if you are feeling under pressure so if it has affected you emotionally that you know when to talk about it.

3 Yes I was just going to add to that about, for me there's a little bit about thresholds, what has already been talked about that the higher the emotional resilience you have the higher the thresholds might be in the work setting so you might be more kind of resilient against cases or certain topics, it's getting to know your limit and what certain cases are you know based on I don't know your own experiences things like that and what we were saying about self-awareness knowing what your triggers are knowing what you know and of what certain things are likely to push your buttons and just knowing that you are not always going to have the things might surprise you so it's about having that support and speaking to your colleagues and managers.

TRANSCRIPT – EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

Q.1) Right ok I'm not going to be contributing in any way other than maybe to move you along but also to ask a set of questions. The first one is just to ask you initially about what your understanding of the term emotional resilience is in relation to social work practice?

1) Well mine is about being involved in difficult and challenging situations with service users or carers or even with colleagues and having having gone through that experience and being aware of own feelings I would have said being able to come to terms with it and rationalise situations and talk it through with other people until this until the discomfort is resolved. Something like that.

2) Rationalising it out sounds right as a, to me I was thinking it was thinking in terms of your own strategies abilities to manage the emotions your dealing with and actually maintain some boundary between yourself and what is happening for someone else that's what I was thinking of and a strategy to manage the impact of the emotions that leak over into, towards you really and how you manage to get away and have strategies which enable you to cope I was thinking I never used to take much work home at all when I was a social worker if possible. Didn't discuss it much at home kept it in one area and so the other, when I was at home and dealing with family and kids I wasn't there to let it impact. I might occasionally share particularly difficult situation but not much really I'd try and use colleagues for that who knew and were there and felt were understanding of my emotions of that time and try and keep that separate and I think worked for me and whether that's emotional resilience I don't know having strategies in place to deal with that.

1) I was thinking about it and I struggled with terminology like empathy and emotional distance and emotional detachment and objectivity. There were lots of words that came into my head when I was considering emotional resilience.

3) I mean one of the things that struck me was about allowing to be emotional cos I think that

278

part of our culture in social work is that we, we're expected to be emotionally resilient without actually saying it. So it's not a, it wasn't something we were encouraged to talk about as practitioners. So that, just the sort of for example going out on your own for a visit knowing that you're going into a really violent difficult situation but you know there was never any encouragement about talking about it before you went out or even when you got back about you know how that made us feel really and I think we inadvertently as practitioners build up that emotional resilience but perhaps didn't identify it as that, certainly when I was in practice anyway.

2) Sounds right bit like your profession, it was expected as your professional role to be able to deal with those kinds of circumstances to go into them. To manage them. To come out of them to be able still to see things objectively and

1) And also become aware of personal boundaries. I remember one of the problems that I had as a social worker was feeling sympathetic to people who were very very poor and there were occasions when I lent em a fiver and I shouldn't have done that and I had to develop a philosophy to cope with this because I knew dam well I wasn't going to get it back. So it was if I can't afford to give it don't lend it. So occasionally, I actually did end up making a gift to somebody who was really really desperate with a couple of little scruffy kids and no money and husband out of work and so on an I don't think I was ever emotionally resilient to some things. I think I just always remained in sympathy with them and I guess that's individual really and different things affect us don't they?

4) Yea, they do.

**Appendix 10:
Thematic Mind Map**

Transcript of Quotations

Participants	Highlight
Practitioners	Blue
Students	Yellow
Educators	Green
Service Users	Pink

Q 1 What is your understanding of the term 'emotional resilience' in relation to social work practice?

TEAM MANAGERS

1 For me it's about the workers ability and managers ability to cope with the emotional demands of the job both in terms of the complex issues that we work with also with emotional resilience in terms of coping with competing personal demands and pressures.

2 I think also its about having a worker who has the understanding that they can be affected by the dynamics in working with the families and the jobs that we do so it's about self, awareness of self and how their practitioners issues or mood might be affecting their assessment and how the aggression or the stress is going to compromise their capacity to make appropriate assessments so think it's about an understanding that they are not just a blank sheet and a person that is just there to do a job that they are part of a system.

3 I would agree it's very much a two way thing, it's about understanding how to do the job that we are doing and how it impacts on you and also how your emotions and your own feelings impact on the job that you do as well so yes very much a two way thing.

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

2 Rationalising it out sounds right as a, to me I was thinking it was thinking in terms of your own strategies abilities to manage the emotions your dealing with and actually maintain some boundary between yourself and what is happening for someone else that's what I was thinking of and a strategy to manage the impact of the emotions that leak over into, towards you really and how you manage to get away and have strategies which enable you to cope I was thinking I never used to take much work home at all when I was a Social Worker if possible. Didn't discuss it much at home kept it in one area and so the other, when I was at home and dealing with family and kids I wasn't there to let it impact. I might occasionally share particularly difficult situation but not much really I'd try and use colleagues for that who knew and were there and felt were understanding of my emotions of that time and try and keep that separate and I think worked for me and whether that's emotional resilience I don't know having strategies in place to deal with that.

1 I was thinking about it and I struggled with terminology like empathy and emotional distance and emotional detachment and objectivity. There were lots of words that came into my head when I was considering emotional resilience.

3 I mean one of the things that struck me was about allowing to be emotional cos I think that part of our culture in social work is that we, we're expected to be emotionally resilient without actually saying it. So it's not a, it wasn't something we were encouraged to talk about as practitioners. So that, just the sort of for example going out on your own for a visit knowing that you're going into a really violent difficult situation but you know there was never any encouragement about talking about it before you went out or even when you got back about you know how that made us feel really and I think we inadvertently as practitioners build up that emotional resilience but perhaps didn't identify it as that, certainly when I was in practice anyway.

2 Sounds right but like your profession; <mark>it was expected as your professional role to be able to deal with difficult situations and circumstances and to manage the emotions that went with that.</mark> To come out of them to be able still to see things objectively.

1 and also become aware of personal boundaries. I remember one of the problems that I had as a Social Worker was feeling sympathetic to people who were very, very poor and there were occasions when I lent them a fiver and I shouldn't have done that and I had to develop a philosophy to cope with this because I knew dam well I wasn't going to get it back. So it was if I can't afford to give it

don't lend it. So occasionally, I actually did end up making a gift to somebody who was really, really desperate with a couple of little scruffy kids and no money and husband out of work and so on an I don't think I was ever emotionally resilient to some things. I think I just always remained in sympathy with them and I guess that's individual really and different things affect us don't they?

_____

4 Yes and I think for what I've mentioned that very word 'reflection' yes that was to be able to stop yourself and say ' Look before I start making any judgements or assessing or putting anything formal down on paper, that whole process of reflection took a little bit of the emotion out of it.

YEAR 2 STUDENTS

1 My understanding is being able to cope with and deal with events that could probably come a lot at a time not one at a time that keep coming, still standing strong and still coping and afterwards emotional resilience may not be as strong as it was during the crisis.

2 For me it's like the emotional strength that's inside you that no matter what there's something inside you that protects you and who you are. Do you know what I mean?

3 I agree with you

4 What do you mean by protection? What are you protecting?

2 It's the bit that makes me able to withstand all the knocks and all the challenges. I may feel down and life may become harder but there's the bit that's me that isn't going to break, the bit that's able to withstand the storms that's able to go through the challenges and is strong that's just how I see it.

3 I agree with you. Its having that strength when things are horrendous to you and you go back to work the next day and I think emotional resilience is like 'electric resilience' there's always that buffer that protects you from being harmed.

4 Are we on about being thick skinned then?

2 I don't think so it means that it just kind of bounces off you to see resilience as bullet proof or as never being but I think it's able to work through the hurt, that's strength, that's how I see it, it is being able to say that might have sucked, that might have been really awful but it's not going to destroy me and you keep on going whereas thick skinned I see as being more, it just bounces off you, you don't even think about it. I think to be resilient you have to be the hurt so like say if you said something that really hurt me it might have hurt me but I need to gather my strength and would actually think okay what did she mean by that. For her in what she said was I doing that? May be I need to change; maybe I just need to forget it. As I said may be I need to do something about it, it's not going to destroy how I see me or who I am.

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LECTURERS

1 Well I think that Social Workers do a very emotive job. We deal with people's emotions very stressful situations, very dire situations. For me that emotional resilience is the ability to not let that overwhelm you. To be able to take that step back and to be able to see it for what it is rather that let it affect you.

2 And also to be I think in touch with people's emotions when they are in crisis. To be able to understand that and empathise with that but not as ….said to be drawn in to the crisis but to stand on the outside of it and look at it with some sort of calm rather than allowing it to overwhelm you.

3 so it's like tuning in without switching off. Is that what you're saying?

1 yes, oh that's very well put. Put that down …. That's good. Yes I think that's what it is.
_____

2 I would go along with that, its remaining detached enough to stay focussed and protect yourself if there is a situation where that demands your emotional input.

3 Yes I would say it's an ability to train your composure and peace of mind in very trying situations but when you are faced with the unexpected and you can actually still look at it detached and be able to assess your situation in a composed manner.

4

1 Very good

4 Well mines very unusual although it appertains to the background that 1 quoted but I was listening to a CD of Frank Sinatra and he reminded me about Websters Dictionary, which is American as you know and I thought that's it and I'll look at the definitions of the three words. So emotionally, the meaning of that is having the capacity for, the second one is the act or power from resilience, of springing back and the third one is the type of study which perhaps does not have the same importance and that is, was of or pertaining to, descriptive of races and peoples and may even be a branch, I'm sure that's not right but the dictionary point of view of anthropology.

CARERS

1 I think it's something to do with being able to bounce back and being able to cope with the feelings of needing to bounce back or accepting the feelings of when things go wrong or do not go quite the way you would expect that you actually have that inside that says 'I am going to give it another go'

2 Its being confronted with a situation that you are not comfortable with and being able to cope with it and act appropriately without getting emotionally involved is how I see it.

3 I see it as a form of detachment, you've got to have it with the person but also if you are a professional carer you have to step back and take a detached view of what you are doing and make that balance and I think emotional resilience is a case of getting a balance between the two you've got to share being that caring attitude but at the same time you've got to be detached, hold a professional view of the situation whatever it may be and very often in the caring situation you pick up that something, a few seconds and it will change a situation, you've got to be able to analyse quickly and maintain that balance and it is not always easy.

4 For me it's a very difficult question to understand and emotionally you are born with those kind of emotions and we if we are human we can't get rid of them. I understand it seems to be to get into a situation but not to get involved too emotionally with a patient or a client and to keep a balance of it and not think about it afterwards.

5 I agree with a lot of that and I would like to add that it's about looking inwardly personally, so not letting your own emotions take over and probably about energy levels as well so sort of whatever you are confronted with doesn't make your energy levels plummet so that kind of ability to bounce back.

Q.2 How would you describe someone who is emotionally resilient?

TEAM MANAGERS

3 I think it is someone who is able to recognise their emotions and actually be able to discuss situations and recognise how what they are doing is impacting on how they are feeling emotionally I think we have all probably been in situations when we meet people and say yes I'm fine, I'm fine say bottoming things up but actually are the emotionally resilient ones are the ones who can actually recognise 'Do you know what that really affected me and I do need to talk about that and be able to kind of digest it and be able to be able to move on'.

2 Yes I think that is something that you would look for, somebody who has an understanding of the fact that it's a part of the professional task to bring your own feeling to I don't think counselling for staff that's quite different this is about a curiosity about why am I feeling like this when I visit this family why do I come away feeling like this that's telling something about the kind of dynamics that apply so curiosity and an enquiring kind of mind, an ability to talk about and not be too guarded, not to keep at bay, don't ask me something about myself so be open, curious, willing to reflect I think that's reflective.

1 I think this is about respect as well people willing to keep things in perspective and when working with a family keeping the children as central all the time and not how do you put it not blow things out of all proportion and putting things in a proper context. When you start to lose emotional resilience that perspective starts to get lost a bit. As a manager you sort of think what's that about you know why is this family situation being blown out of all proportion and out of perspective compared to what it actually is?

2 Can I just add one point I would want them to be empathetic, demonstrating empathy and that's about keeping the child at the centre.

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

2 I think that's quite difficult because I would describe them as being quite self- aware and mindful of their own emotions but I think that's only because of what works in practice but I can only describe what it's like for me and others who perhaps wouldn't describe themselves as perhaps working in that way but who think that they do and yet are certainly perfectly capable of dealing with lots of stress at work and it has a detrimental effect on work or perhaps life outside work so it's difficult , I suppose.

1 It is hard to describe even though they might portray themselves as being emotionally resilient they might not always be you know they might go home and just share with their partner about the stresses at work and they might portray that they are at work or be emotionally resilient when they get home they might take things to heart and might not be able to cope outside the workplace or they might show their weaknesses , it's very hard to describe like if I was to describe them now I would say they are both self- aware and may be strong in their opinion but they can go into situations and be able to manage them successfully and not be actually displaying any emotion which is actually which could be sometimes negative and sometimes you have to feel emotions in situations to provide positive support.

Q.2 How would you describe someone who is emotionally resilient?

TEAM MANAGERS

3 I think it is someone who is able to recognise their emotions and actually be able to discuss situations and recognise how what they are doing is impacting on how they are feeling emotionally I think we have all probably been in situations when we meet people and say yes I'm fine, I'm fine say bottoming things up but actually are the emotionally resilient ones are the ones who can actually recognise 'Do you know what that really affected me and I do need to talk about that and be able to kind of digest it and be able to be able to move on'.

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that's reflective.

3 I think I would agree with that really yes I think it's about how you deal with things as they happen yes just being self-aware but also being open about it being quite transparent because I think anyone who's in denial about it and the stresses and emotions is setting themselves up for a fall, it's just having that maturity to realise that the job we are in does require on an emotional level does require some kind of input from us and that can be draining at times. I think it's just having that awareness that things you know do get tough and it is a strain sometimes but quite a lot of that is a resilient factor.

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active intervention and so on and that would really , really get me involved you know and I considered that to be appropriate considering that it was an area of oppression.
So I don't know whether emotional resilience came into that but certainly it put me firmly on the side of that person, to be along-side them and fight with them you know and be their ally anything really that was a bit and beyond social work professional conduct or expectation.

2 But I assume you understood you knew what you were doing you were making a conscious decision to do it cos I think is 4's point about emotional intelligence isn't it? I don't know there's seems to be a difference between resilience and intelligence. For emotionally intelligence you can understand what's driving you maybe to have a particular, you know understanding empathy with concern for a particular group or individuals and intelligence you can recognise that that's what's emotionally driven, contain that and manage that in a very positive way. That's what struck me as emotional intelligence.

1 But I still felt the sort of pain or the issues or the anger about a client's situation there and also I experienced situations where I couldn't do anything to help somebody who clearly needed help and one situation I remember was of a ten year old girl who had mother, step father, the rest of the family were the natural children of the father. This girl spent up to seven hours a day locked in her bedroom because she was being punished by isolation by the step father because of he said her behaviour and so on and at the time there was no recognition of emotional abuse or anything like that you know the legislation clearly didn't sort it out, give any powers or authority to deal with them and help her out and that stayed with me till today I mean I don't think I've got much emotional resilience to situations like that because I continued to have like reservoirs of anger when I thought

about it, went over it again.

4 But I think you know for me I'm sort of separating the actual ability to enter into engage with a family and an individual in an empathetic responsive way to help. That's why we came into the work, that's what draws us in, in the first place. We wouldn't be doing this work if we didn't care or if we didn't want to help. So we're always going to be responding in a sense emotionally to what we see and what's going on. Where I see the issue of kind of resilience really becomes difficult for us is managing the pressures of the job. I mean for me it was never the work, it was never the, you know the direct work that caused problems for me. It was what you just described you know, trying to get services, trying to get support, trying to get the system to work for the person and banging my head against that brick wall that seems as though, that's why I left social work in the end because I got tired of banging my head against a brick wall and not being able to get you know things for people that were absolutely in need you know because the system says no and I think you need a, you do need a level of, you think about the newly qualified Social Worker going in with all those same values and responses that we had and meeting the current sort of demands of social work the level of emotional resilience now needs to be I think higher than even when we were in practice because the demands and the expectations are I think higher.

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awareness, and knowing, being aware of how you're dealing with things and what you're doing with that information I suppose is a key thing for me.

2 And somebody I think as well that can understand emotions that they haven't necessarily experienced themselves because a lot of the situations that Social Workers go into, you would never have experienced
yourself. Sometimes you have but not always and to understand how that is affecting that person even though you may have no experience of it but to understand it.

2 It tends to link into empathy doesn't it? People who understand the difference between sympathy and empathy. And it's that taking someone's journey but not taking it in their shoes, or taking it in their shoes but leaving your own socks on. Basically you know, you're able to take their steps but you're still outside. That's not your journey it's somebody else's and what might seem to you trivial, per say but you've got somebody very distressed about it is not to minimise their trials but to be able to tap into that and understand how important it is even though you you're not personally it's about

9

that personal professional isn't it? I think well this isn't such a big deal. We can easily you know sort this out but not that impacting on the service user or the person you're working with who things it's huge in their lives.

1 when you talk about some of the things Social Workers do and some of the things Social Workers have to inform people of. You know, sometimes say with children's services it can be incredibly stressful to be going in telling somebody that you may have to remove their children. Now that's going to invoke a reaction in them and actually if you've got somebody whose cross, very angry and going through those huge emotions, to actually remain calm, open, honest, supportive still empathetic in the situation where you're actually presenting someone with something really huge to have to deal with.

PRACTICE EDUCATORS

2 Are you asking what are the features of someone who is emotionally resilient? Someone who is able to ride the waves in a profession that involves dealing with a lot of heightened emotion and a lot of pressure and has the ability to handle those without being destabilised.

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4 It also depends on if it's a family member who you have seen alive who you have seen alive and kicking and when he has gone to a dementia state and you know what his/her needs are and you are emotionally involved but if I had to go to one and another, to different clients it can be quite different from the first one.

2 Emotional resilience because people can appear cold hearted and unfeeling they really don't care but yet underneath that might not be the case so it's difficult to describe really.

5 I would say that it is about the relationship that you have with that person and the relationship you have with them but it's also about your own private space or back with yourself, just in my experience that's when things can crumble and go to pieces, it is not necessary. You can keep up a front when you're in your caring role but not when you are at home again. I would describe someone who is emotionally resilient as someone who has processed things for themselves in their own life and in terms of their own self development. It can engender a kind of resilience that you can draw upon in

times when they get tough which is probably easier with experience and the older you become.

3 I cared for four people over a period of 27 years. Each of those people are different but when you have to remove yourself from that situation you have to look back over those years, looking after a child, a middle aged man and a very elderly man and a very disabled woman, the experience you gain I could cope with a situation coming up now far better than I could have done in my 20's or so because I've got my life experience to pull on as well as being a carer and I think that's where a lot of my emotional resilience has developed. I've had to deal with a lot of horrible things and if I hadn't been able to keep that detachment I wouldn't have been able to cope with it but I have tried to understand what that person's going through. Personal space is very important and at the end of the day you have to have a cut off point in order to be able to continue caring and to continue being a functioning person.

Q.3) The Professional Capabilities Framework (Social Work Reform Board, 2010) identifies emotional resilience as being a necessary capability for working as a Social Worker. How necessary do you think emotional resilience is for working in social work? Can you provide any examples from practice or placement of when you think this might be the case?

TEAM MANAGERS

1 One of the criticisms of the Professional Capabilities Framework is that how do you measure emotional resilience? Where is the barometer reading? If I'm cooking jam I've got a thermometer that tells me when its reached boiling point but we haven't got that. The capabilities framework does not provide us with a thermostat to know when things are at boiling point so I don't know what they mean by it.

2 I think it's crucially important I think there are difficulties in how to select and recruit to the profession but we are more than ever before expecting people to develop relationships in the workplace and I think people's capacity to relate to other people is absolutely the essential core to our work. You can do anything if you can relate to people in a differential kind of way and be able to

reflect on it so if are workers are going from working with little children to standing in a court of law and presenting a case and evidence, anything that's a big span and I think that workers have to be resilient to take a lot of the stuff from the public but also be able to process it, understand it and then take care of themselves when they are doing it because you can get very badly hurt in our work and I think if you are not aware of this it will get you, somewhere, somehow. I think the challenge is how on earth do you deal with this at interview and how do you recruit resilient workers.

3 I agree like you say there's no kind of scale or anything, clearly Social Workers have got to be emotionally resilient because if they are not able to recognise their own emotions and how they impact on the world how on earth can we work with families and support them so that they can begin to be able to understand that but it's a matter of to what degree you can do that because there's no way of measuring this person is fine, there's just no kind of scale with that so whilst it's crucial how do you measure that and how do you recognise when things are at boiling point.

4 I think that's when a good manager gets to know their staff and you can work on that really. I mean I've had one a member of staff that I noticed was reaching boiling point but you've got to talk about it and raise it in supervision and I have moved her on , she's a very good Social Worker but in the beginning there was a lot of work. You know she interviewed very well, you wouldn't have known in her interview and then you have to pick up yourself because if you haven't got it yourself then, some people haven't have they in an interview situation you've got to know where to pick out those things because you've got set questions and people can answer those questions in the right way but then it's about their personality, that individual as a person. You've got to get to know the person. At interviews you can be nervous you can be something very different can't you from being in an interview to actually getting in there and doing the job.

2 Yes I think it's crucial emotional resilience I think there's the potential for people to be quite oppressive especially members of the public because they think you are there to do something.

4 Yes that's exactly what this member of staff was; she knew she was there to do something you know.

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

2 I think well yes you've got to have it in one capacity or another I'm not sure that every worker out

there would think about it in the same terms in a capabilities framework really but I think that there are a lot of practitioners who practice in a very different way to the way I practice and I think there are very different ways of working in the work that I do that doesn't make them any less emotionally resilient anyway I think in the work that we're doing in order to keep going you know sometimes 5 or 10 years is enough in the role and it takes an incredible amount of resilience. I suppose there's the flip side really where there's practitioners who manage it the other way and they shut down and only operate procedurally in their practice but I don't think , I think people do tend to go the other way if they last in the profession which is to be emotionally resilient.

1 To do the job you have to have a certain degree of emotional resilience because being in a frontline social work job you have to deal with situations which are quite upsetting and are situations where you have to have a degree of resilience in being able to step back and think about things without being caught up in the service users emotions and you need to be able to build that to be able to be a good support for them and sometimes you have to show empathy around them rather than actually breaking down and be emotional towards them.

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EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

1 I think it's probably very necessary as long as people understand what it is.

3 Yea, I think you're right I mean I think we've already sort of said that we,

1 But I had to look in the dictionary to be absolutely clear,

3 Right ok.

1 And I said to 2 I'm going to look it up and it said ability to bounce back after difficult situations and experiences after being compressed. Being able to recover. Now that just led me on from what 3 said to think now if a situation occurs once and it's emotionally very testing, you come back talk in supervision talk with colleagues you know you've learnt from their experience what they think, you begin to resolve and sort out the situation fine. But as if 4, like 4 said, if you're in a situation where the professional world around you is not supportive. Where teams are stretched and understaffed and they're fighting amongst themselves and again and again you get battered in the same sort of way I don't think that any of us necessarily has enough emotional resilience to cope with that sort of

13

thing so there's a structural issue here in the way teams are managed definitely and one of the big problems I think is the managerial culture in social work. So you've got the practitioners, you've got the managers and I've seen it happen that managers come together like a little clique with a wall round them when something goes wrong. That child's died, so where's the Social Worker in all this. I mean we only have to look at London don't we to see what's happened with the problems that have come up and who's blaming whom. So there's a real problem there, one that you can't teach because,

2 I think we look for something similar to emotional resilience already in our interviews so to talk about the people coming on social work we ask the question, Has anything happened in your life that's affected you and made you think, alter the way you feel, think or behave? Often the people for me, the people who are the strong ones, score strongly in that are people who can reflect on something which has been emotionally challenging for them, means that they've seen things in a different way, well they've adjusted their thinking and their responses in a different way to actually move on and make something positive out of it. I suppose that to me is looking at this idea of someone whose emotions are resilient and often we do get people don't we who've experienced themselves involvement with social services or some personal tragedy or illness and its interesting cos I think we have a dilemma there. I think on one hand if they have come through it and they are applying for a social work course and they're demonstrating a reflectivity to be able to look back on that and say this is where we have learnt this or changed. We value that and say that's really good but somewhere for me and I can only speak for myself not other's, knocking away in the background is part of this, has this, has this in some way weakened your resilience in some way. You know this because maybe along the line you'll identify someone else who's been in a similar situation. How are you going to manage that, is that going to kick in your emotions from that time and expose and mean that you're going to find it actually more difficult to help even though you may think it's going to be a quality. Or, are you going to be able to identify with but look positively and create something out of it and work on it I don't know. It's an uncertainty isn't it?

1 We wouldn't know unless we conducted longitudinal studies to see what the outcomes and consequences were would we?

2 Of course of course.

4 No because we we're about potential.

2 yea and I think we look for that.

4 We're not about actual, we can't know in the end till you know some distant point and that's in a sense not, we're not there to see it. We see potential and we think you know we take a risk in the sense that we think this this person has got the capacity, the capability to you know to do the job with the you know the right etc exposure to trainee and so on experiences. But, I mean I kind of agree with what you said about you know can you know you can't really teach it you know. You see potential and you think you can build on that but I don't know that you actually can give somebody, make somebody capable of being emotionally resilient. I mean well I'm saying we can't but you know we expose them don't we to things like well we expose them to certain types of activities that stretch those experiences you know stretch them don't they they're uncomfortable. They're challenging and from that potentially they can draw more, become more resilient because you know they've been, even placements you know exposes, doesn't it to work and dynamics and all that management systems from which in that kind of Nietzschean sense you know, they either survive and build and move you know or they don't.

3 I think going back to what 1 was saying initially about what the definition of emotional resilience is a really, really important discussion to have because where's the threshold with emotional resilience? You know, when are you emotionally resilient and when aren't you emotionally resilient and does emotional resilience mean that you can't challenge situations because I think that's how it's been viewed in some arenas where if a student or a practitioner is coming back and saying you know this really needs to be challenged. This situation we need more resources. This family deserves a, b and c and we're challenging the systems is that then perceived by management as you not being emotionally resilient you know. We've, what they're saying is that we've you've done the training you've got the qualification you need to go out there and do the social work practice and what the social work practice is, I need to be able to tick a box at the end of the month to say that you've done your visiting but anything else above and beyond that if its challenging the system then it then becomes this debate that about whether the member of staff is emotionally resilient.

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resilience you are able to see it hopefully in people who are experiencing situation for example someone who has just lost a life partner having to move into residential care or a child or young

person having to move from their family and still somehow having to be able to cope with that and I think if you haven't got that resilience yourself you are going to find that very hard to be able to work with other people.

3 I think it's an essential practice tool you are going into difficult environments as you have just described and it's not getting, letting that overwhelm you , you have to deal with it in a professional manner so you have to be, it might be something that upsets you but you have to have the resilience to work through it, it is their right to be upset so I think it is great that they have brought it in and it has been missed for a long time and a lot of students I think students need to be trained on what it means and how they deal with it and I think it's something that has been taken for granted that if you are a professional you are actually resilient and actually no you are not and its having that issue with yourself where you say there will be an impact with certain things, with me it used to be taking very young babies into care but it was something professional that I had to do but you hang onto that and recognise that at times you have to step back and take a second to think about the situation before stepping back into it.

2 Yes for me it would belong to a group of qualities and skills that if you haven't got it then you just can't, you are not going to be able to survive whereas there are certain skills and qualities that if you haven't got you could work round them but you can't work around not having emotional resilience you just won't survive as a Social Worker.

I can think of an example where a student was taking things that the practice educator was saying incredibly personally and becoming quite ill as a result of it really and it was clear that the practice educator wasn't saying that they were failing but just pointing out things that the student had to work on and develop and it was also clear that at a personal level the practice educator and student didn't particularly like each other because the student was taking it so personally they were making life incredibly difficult for themselves and one of the things that struck me is that if the student was qualified and in practice they would be dealing with that kind of thing all the time that there might be professionals that didn't particularly like them but you still had to get on and do your job and that you would come across situations where people might not agree with what you have done and how you have done it and you are going to have to be able to fight your corner without collapsing under it really. It just struck me as a strong example of somebody who did really lack emotional resilience.

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Q.4 Why do you think that social work students have to evidence that they are capable of being emotionally resilient?

TEAM MANAGERS

1 It's the recognition isn't it that it's an area of high demands, high stress you know people are going to have a lot on their plate to cope with.

3 Yes because it's very difficult to actually to know that until you have chosen a career in it so it's like until you actually start doing the job you don't realise what the demands are let's face it is a way of trying to highlight to students that actually this is going to be a really difficult job it's going to be a very demanding job you need before you start it to have kind of skills in place of how you are going to manage that which is something that hasn't always happened previously. I know from personal experience of starting the job I had absolutely no idea of what I was walking into. From qualifying it's not the world that you get taught about at University, it isn't the world you walk into, when you start fieldwork so I suppose it's about trying to support students to have a more realistic idea of what the job actually entails before it starts.

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1 If we're emotionally resilient does that mean then we're pretty strong individuals and we can get out there and we can face anything. Ok we can shed the odd little tear, we can sympathise a little bit and we can empathise a lot and we come back and we say well that was their problem wasn't it, it wasn't mine, you know you can put it one side. We know it from some students, well one student in particular sticks in my mind and she said as we know, I can't deal with people who've got mental handicaps i.e. learning disabilities, there was no way she was going to ever work with them, or go and have a placement with them and it was a dilemma. She'd go anywhere else; deal with anything else but her experience had been a really serious assault and attack, in a situation with a person with learning disabilities. So what do we do with that? You know, we said this is sufficient trauma for her not to be emotionally resilient to potential threats in a learning disability environment again. What do we do? I don't know really.

4 I mean isn't it back to 2's point about recovery. You know, we all face life experiences things that have been you know, trauma in one way one way or another. For me she hadn't worked thorough

that, she hadn't processed that. She was still, she was stuck somewhere where she had not been able to,

1 Agree

4 recover to the stage where she was able to say that was that, that was then, that was that person and it wasn't, you know it wasn't, it's not now and I'm not the same person and so on and yet kind of emotional intelligence as well to an extent to help her to,

1 I agree with that but we also know don't we that female victims of sexual attack and rape sometimes, cannot come to terms with it for what some years. But does that mean they're emotional victims in every sphere of everything.

3 No but it might mean that they're not ready to do social work practice because there not, they would put people at risk because of their emotional resilience.

4 You see that's what we would be saying isn't it, that questioning whether they're ready to come and do that sort of work?

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SERVICE USERS

1 I suppose it's all the more important if the Social Worker visiting me comes at a time when I am upset or under stress or if something has happened for example one of my grandchildren is involved in a road accident or something like that that would be an occasion to exercise that ability.

2 Yes to my mind they would be no use to me if they couldn't remain emotionally resilient, it would be of no use if they were over involved or not able to cope themselves.

3 Yes they can sympathise but remain detached. There is a degree of understanding your condition

but still in a cool professional way but not in a cold way such that you retain your confidence in them.

1 Yes

4 I think that the emotional resilience when it is present is a control whereby over involvement is prevented so you could describe it as being an essential in the emotional connection that we expect, over involvement leads to mistakes.

Q5 (a) When do you feel Social Workers might develop resilience in order to cope with the emotional demands of the job?

TEAM MANAGERS

5 I think it's something that was spoken about earlier it's not a single event it's not that you go into a classroom and its taught in a day, 'so off you go you are resilient now' it is a process and it's about the support that students are given throughout their social work training that we get them into a position where we get to where they have more realistic expectations but it wouldn't finish there it's an ongoing process that will continue throughout your career.

4 Some of it is about your personality as well, life experience as well because you can get some very young students coming through who have really got no life experience and they have lived in a very protected world , still lived at home with their parents and not really experienced anything outside that is about their characteristics isn't it? I think that's really hard to teach somebody emotional resilience because some of it's about experience.

2 I think it can be done with the right candidates, I think I have had two experiences of students who really should never, never have been on a course, should never have been on placement and actually its final year students that we have, they have got through all of that and they make you realise that they have come on a placement like ours to sort out their own issues and I mean deep and meaningful issues, you know we have had to terminate placements or advise them to do something else and get help. But I think it's crucially whether you're allowed to have access onto the gateway of the training course I think you can do an awful lot with students to start the journey of student placements but you if you get the wrong ones into the jobs you are stuck. I think from a professional point of view we want the best if you've got an awareness of the privilege that people have of going

19

into people's homes and lives and making life changing decisions why wouldn't we want the best but we've got an awful lot of people who really shouldn't be in social work. It got too easy to get in.

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 I mean for me, something takes me back to the reasons why you want to become a Social Worker and I know personally for me my resilience what I think I got my resilience from is from my teenage years, so my own life experience gave me a whole lovely array of issues that actually did put me in really good stead for becoming a Social Worker. I got a load of skills and experience that I could draw on to help me empathise with all of these children , young people and families that I then came to work with so I think for me it's clear that it's something to do with your own experiences in aiding your resilience and what sort of qualities can you draw from that to a social work application and maybe I think everyone must have some kind of experience in their life that they can draw some resilience from its about helping them become aware of what possibly they can tap into and if they don't feel they have got anything from that, that it's got to be within their first year of practice that they develop it but at that late stage it's a risk that they might never develop it or they may...

2 I just think its yes examining your personal history and finding that, it's just that you find it in your personal history and that might imply that the older you are the more experience you've got but actually it's how you use what you have rather than some people who get well into their life and look at what's happened to them whereas other people might only have to experience a couple of things that are quite difficult and what they learn from that they can then sort of extrapolate and adapt to the different situations they are facing. I think you need to test it in the first year of practice to be , you've got to be exposed to the harder the more difficult end of social work if possible in your training not so that you are kind of left or dropped in it that's definitely where you are going to be working, to see the really difficult end of where you could be working in the future and it just gives you the understanding and the awareness of where you could be when you've finished your three year training .

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 I think they continually develop and if they don't they don't survive.

1 I think, I really think students start to develop it whilst they're on placement. But what a number

have said, is that things like role play and case studies have helped them because they've reflected on that and thought ah, now this is what I have learnt here so I might go on to use that .

3 That's interesting coos they hate role play don't they?

4 They hate role play, they hate it with a passion coos I've just had some feedback saying how much they hate it again. You know and it's that again, it really you know really annoyed me because I thought you know what it is about, what does role play do? It actually means you've got to do it, it pushes you out of your comfort zone you know and it makes you take on other things, you know aspects about yourself and why do they hate that so much, you know I know that's off the subject but I think actually that the ones who do it actually gain a lot from it.

1 yea, I think so.

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4 And what they, what they, what they, what they interpret or think they are going to guess and what they think it's about and then the reality,

2 Well here's a here's a point then if you, if you, because that might be emotional intelligence then that they you know they're thinking and they're looking at it and they're saying this just, isn't it well I suppose, I'm not saying I'm emotional intelligent but I got out of mental health and change because I saw that a risk was too great for me to manage across a huge team and that's, and I knew emotionally I was going to hit the wall if someone as someone was likely to do at some point kill themselves in the team I was in not members of staff but one of the people we were responsible for cos with the systems weren't there to enable that support to be there as breaking down all round so got out. Whether that's emotional intelligence there but oh, I've lost my point.
I'm just wondering whether then if you've got, those are people maybe have emotional intelligence so maybe emotionally resilience is actually where you're not as maybe thinking emotionally as intelligent as and looking at things your just able to put up with and deal with a degree of emotions and just think it's my job and I need to get on with it.

4 Yea.

1 I think this point that 3 made about ==it starts when you're born might have some bearing on the practice and I reckon that if you're brought up in a fairly tough working class environment you get emotionally resilient before you're ten.== And you come through your teens and your even more emotionally resilient an you think Social Workers are a soft load of Wally's really in the way they are going about all this emotional stuff and one thing I remember particularly when I was doing my psychiatric nursing was, that on our ward a woman hanged herself on a piece of dressing gown cord in a wardrobe and I thought that's an interesting way to do it. Another nurse couldn't stay on the ward and it didn't, didn't mean anything to me that she'd hung herself you known. We used to give it rabbits and all the rest of it and you know ok.

2 I don't agree though cos that's maybe your experience.

1 I'm describing, I'm not saying.

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YEAR TWO STUDENTS

1 ==I think placements are a good opportunity to develop and because you have to learn how to help people but on placement you have those real people and have that emotional impact.== My first placement did not work out it, I was a little bit weak and put up and put up with it to the point where it is detrimental to my health and my future so I argued a point and I'm not sure that confidence is emotional resilience. But to know that I can walk into a room and know that and be ok the day after for me was a major step and people said to me the day after now your confidence had grown since Yes it has and my emotional resilience because what is the worst that can happen that is not that bad. I still have my kids to go to home to and I still have my home to go to I might just not get my degree at the same time as everyone else.

5 I think that it should start from the word go so that when you go into placement the process would have started then when you are faced with things you know how to deal with them emotionally.

4 But how are you going to learn sitting in a room how are you going to cope with a child coming to you saying I have been abused. You can't learn in a classroom there's got to be a way with that child and go through that process to be able to know how you cope with it in the future.

22

3 I'm interested to see if emotional resilience is with life experience because I may have it because I've had a crap past, oh dear that's why I might have it, that's why

You might only have emotional resilience in relation to the crap past you had you might not have emotional resilience at other times.

I am not really shocked too much so I am interested to see I think with life experience you put up age before experience.

4 I think if you look at the words emotional resilience we are thinking a lot about ourselves as Social Workers within being ok long term and being able to do our job but I think it's possibly a two way job.

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PRACTICE EDUCATORS

1 I would hope that by the time you become a Social Worker you have already developed it you are not getting into the job without it.

3 I think it is a developmental thing it is something that grows with us and if you have that base of knowledge and understanding unless you are coming into the profession as an unqualified worker which is slightly different to a qualified worker if people have got through a course you would expect them to have been able to cope with the demands of the course so when they go into practice at least the base knowledge is there and that knowledge grows of how emotional resilience grows and how you cope but I think for me the impression of a Social Worker is that you have a resilience and an ability to work with all aspects. Students will say things like well I don't think I will be able to work with someone with a learning disability but how do they know that when they go into a family there won't be someone who has a learning disability. To have those multi skills which I see is the start of having that understanding of how you cope with something you might not want to be involved in.

2 To me ideally the people in the best situation are those who are resilient before they start their social work education because there are clearly some people for whom it is their innate makeup or through life experience they have come into social work education and they are emotionally resilient people. They have got a massive advantage. I always say when I am doing induction work with groups that if you happen to be a naturally calm person then you have won the lottery because there isn't anything that's going to be more important than that ability. I think if you have it naturally or through

2 An example last week with my own daughter where she got in a situation with her fiancées family and its really hooked her emotionally and I was talking to her about the situation and she said I absolutely understand what you are saying about the situation and I absolutely agree with that you are saying but it's really difficult for me to stay away from it because intellectually she understood all the components of it and what the emotional resilience response should be but it's not actually in her and that is massively more difficult for her to take the fact that intellectually she understands it but to translate that into making it work in her life is going to take a lot whereas other people would listen and say yes I get that, that fits in with who I am and I think if you do have to learn it, it's possible but massively more difficult and I think in terms of looking at selection processes that given the work that you are in a market situation to choose between that the people who are clearly emotionally resilient at selection are exactly the people you want because it is so difficult to learn it if you haven't got it.

3 I think that is right and that is why I see it as a development as opposed to its something you can add on to but if you haven't got it as a core you can be trained to be reflective but at the start you can't be reflective we know people who can't be taught to be reflective without the tools.

2 If they come in knowing no theory at all that's much less of a problem than someone who has got no emotional intelligence and resilience because learning theories that's just a task to achieve its much easier to do than take on the qualities to be emotionally resilient.

1 And if you've got someone who hasn't got it in your opinion you are almost trying to change someone's personality.

2 Yes exactly

1 And you might ask the question should I even try.

SERVICE USERS

1 How long does it take them to qualify?

4 How long, three

3 I would think it is something to do with the background of the person as a child, have they had a traumatic background, have they lost a parent something like that, something that can lie latent as regards it only needs another traumatic experience such as abuse that could certainly upset people and I can understand that so I think that the starting point is very difficult to determine where the resilient ability kicks in, history of the person I would think.

1 Oh yes, so much depends on the parental example first of all, you know if a student is fortunate enough to have lively parents and she has seen the interaction between mother and father and indeed the same with grandparents that sort of emotional atmosphere that that sort of person has evolved and matured that is a very significant factor.

4 Not an easy one again

1 No indeed you can talk around this all afternoon.

CARERS

5 Quite a bit you are born with and your own childhood can make a big difference to your emotional resilience and I think part of it then as you grow into adulthood is self- development and being able to look at yourself and work out what's going on with you in an open and honest way which sometimes might involve accessing counselling yourself, things might have made you more emotional resilient and may be part of it is life experience and experience on the job so I would say it's a combination of a lot of things, different places where you would gain emotional resilience.

1 Yes, I was thinking along similar lines that it develops through life, the crucial bit for me comes when you're actually taking responsibility for the job because that's when the real emotion of getting

things right or wrong to a satisfactory achievement on that really matters and that's when emotional resilience becomes something that's got to be tackled because otherwise you fail in the job itself.

2 If we are saying that emotional resilience is something that can be taught if you wish

1 Learned

2 Yes It must then be through part of the education process because if you are a person that wears your heart on your sleeve for instance, emotions instantly, if there are tricks and ways of dealing with that in the day to day work role then it's so important to cover that in the education process and beyond that supervision.

5 The importance of peer support throughout so I think some of the emotional resilience comes about from being able to share things with other people and realise that you're not always on your own. For some people it might be the church, for some people it might be going to the mosque, it might just be talking to peers at work, whatever it is, whatever the support network is, I'd say that it is a way of gaining emotional resilience.

3 But you get through having a supervision session because they can bring their experience to guide you.

(Q.5b) Where do you think this resilience might develop?

TEAM MANAGERS

1 I think we have touched on it in some ways, I think that right at the early stages the right kind of supervision and support for workers and students is key. I feel that supervision for a worker who is really able to express and go through some of the issues that they will face and use that as a building block, you know 'how did it feel, what was it like, what is it like for the child?' and so on and so forth and trying to move away from the images of procedural tick box exercises because that won't develop anybody.

4 It's a difficult one though really because when you are having a student from a course, because thinking about the one I worked with you know , not criticising her because you want her but she has not had anything in her life , you know she went on a course at eighteen, never experienced a bereavement, anything in her life, it's been quite a charmed life, she has not wanted for anything, she's actually making a very good Social Worker so how would you, she's one who had not got any emotional intelligence when she came to me so how would you filter that out because you can't have that every level.

2 No you can't have everybody with every life experience, I think if you can get people in who are safe and have got a compassionate personality, I think personality really does mater you know the personal, I have had people here working who have had multi degrees and qualifications and you think 'wow' but they can't really relate to people and if you can't relate to people you are not going to get very far and if you have got managers who are going on courses the work should be going on all the time in placements, at work because I remember my first placement , I had a practice teacher who was brilliant, he used to examine every letter and say 'why did you write that word why did you write that, how do you think they will feel when they read this?' so it was starting at that point, reflect, reflect, reflect on what you are doing

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 I mean going into the personal history of what we have been talking about I suppose that must be what's been going on in your own home setting or at school, college or university even for some people and in life. You can get into difficult situations anywhere really you can get into difficult situations so I think just generally where you are in your life.

2 Where you've also got to think of where you are not going to learn emotional resilience you know recently having been through the university training process you are not going to learn in a seminar which is why I go back to something that was mentioned before, I feel really strongly that I was lucky that I was given two statutory placements , you kind of think through how things might have been entirely different if I'd had two voluntary placements , or no placements in statutory placements which is often the reality for some students and where can we try to help students understand where they might have experiences where they might foster emotional resilience in their own life. I don't think having a discussion about it in a seminar or in a classroom context or a lecture context is going to work because it might give people false impressions of their capabilities in that respect or false

understanding of what it actually is. I feel quite strongly really that it is a combination of your own experiences and also how that interacts with the very unique pressures of how you are doing social work really.

3 Yes I've just got to say this point on the end of yours really that I find it really fascinating that in another similar profession such as the counsellor or psychotherapist role that you have to go through a set amount of time of mandatory therapy to explore their own emotional resilience and experiences because obviously they are dealing with crisis , people coming to them in crisis and that's not really too different from what we're doing and you know I think that could be covered in the training for example in the first year of university about your emotional resilience, having some sessions you know that might give some people a heads up on what they should be expecting.

1 It can't really be taught or in a lecture, seminar or textbook I think it's basically life experiences and what happens to you in your own life and if you come from a home environment and it's about transitions in your own life that build up emotional resilience and like everyone is different in their own way they all go through different changes and some have more difficulties than others and some have a much calmer childhood and then again everyone is different and has a different resilience anyway, different level of resilience depending upon their lifestyles.

LECTURERS

2 On a programme, on a social work programme I think people change anyway a lot over that 3 year time. They don't feel like they do but if you ask their partners or the people that know them, I think they do and it's a huge change I think in the 3 year period and I think those jumps forward where emotional resilience could develop not always does, is during placements because I think they see things, hear things, become immersed in things even if they're not doing it themselves that possibly might shock them, worry them, concern them or develop them, or see how other people work, work with that and think 'Am I able to do that?' That worker handled that really well. Could I ever be at that point where I could do that or would I just panic or try and resist it or try and make it all ok instead of confronting or whatever the situation might be. I think there must be huge pockets where the placement happens where that must happen to some students.

3 I see it also after those placements in terms of the group getting together and more or less that kind of group process that they are all going through in terms of you know feeding off each other and

experiences and talking things through and whatever and also and I mean obviously that comes back into the classroom as well so there's all that kind of you know get together business. So it's an individual thing in some respects but it's also the group process as well.

1 First year for me always is quite pivotal having taught the first year had tutor groups and there's always this complete melt down. After a few months of working together it all starts very lovey, lovey, lovey then groups seem to fall apart. I tend to get most of my criers in the first year as well.

3 + **2** mentioning 'Storming'

1 As part of also learning about yourself awareness of who you are and can you fit in and can you cope with it. But it's also

2 What we also do with them in first year which I think is part of resilience is through the 'Attitudes and Values' module we get people to look inward rather than outward and sometimes they don't like what they see. Or there's a resistance and a justification of how they are and very defensive of their own mechanisms until you know they have to be you know looked at and I think that's huge for anybody.

1 But they've done a lot of that already in their first year I think we start them off on achievement, sort of impacts some more on that isn't there they see it and its this constant building so I think there is that knowledge bit that you were saying about, as well as the practice bit and I think we try and develop it and we do develop it through the assessments. Through giving them deadlines and in the third year especially, I think its been acknowledged this time this year for the first time by students and they actually said to me I know your trying to prepare us for the stresses and all of the stress that could be coming up ahead of us and we know this would be nothing in what the real life's like but its still…..

YEAR ONE STUDENTS

1 I think here and placement, you know while you are on the programme and while you are on placement.

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certainly in some areas there can be a culture of talking about things like that saying that something like that has affected you that it is seen as a weakness so it's about creating a culture in your own team and modelling through practice for the workers.

2 I think if workers are fortunate to find that culture that setting that encourages reflection reflective work starts very early on they grow from it so they can actually grow and feel stronger within themselves because they have had a good experience so for example somebody is talking about a case and breaks down in a team meeting how you are responded to makes all the difference whether they will feel safe enough to come next time and say well I am struggling now or I just want to tell you that was the most awful thing I ever did so I think it is about the culture so much.

4 It is, it is actually some who haven't got it wouldn't tell you that they haven't got it and are not coping because they think they are and I'm doing really well and I'm coping so really you have got to get over that barrier and I think it is about what you both just said on the modelling because you could just give up on someone I had a manager who said about this member of staff she's not up to the job you really need to get her to and I would have done if I'd had to but she had got the potential and so you have to have that commitment to work through it because I felt I had to find it in supervision. I know it comes down to different managers and where you are.

3 Its very variable, I mean I have worked in various different settings in Derby and n Australia when I was over there and there really are some teams where there is a culture of we don't talk about it you know you've got experienced workers in those teams and newly qualified they are just mirroring what the experienced workers are doing and are we just creating another culture another generation of workers who haven't had that positive experience.

1 I must say I have often reflected upon how the role of gender plays a part in it all because as a male working in social work which is predominantly female I think for a lot of males they do try and come over as macho in some circumstances without actually acknowledging it, they will go on a visit to a family and that was really scary, being in a household on your own having people shouting at you, it's scary, it's not very nice and sometimes then at times my experience is that men are not awfully good at saying that . I think we need to do a lot of work in that area to say that actually it's ok to say it's scary; it's ok to say that it has upset you.

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PRACTICE EDUCATORS

<mark>**1** I think as a Social Worker the more heart breaking, complex cases that you deal with helps you to build up resilience because you've got something to hark back to 'well come on you've dealt with something like this before' and you've may be draw strength from the last time that you've had to do that particular task so I think I know it's a trite thing to say but I think it does come with experience really.</mark>

3 I would agree with that because I think it is that experience and that recognition that you can be emotionally resilient and at times you can also be emotional because sometimes you can become quite emotional but if it dies it does not mean that you can't be emotionally resilient. For me it's about the journey it takes to cope and the more resilient you are the quicker you deal with something that's emotionally difficult. I think that is something that you can help people learn about themselves, we need people coming into the training who have emotional resilience and understand that they have got it themselves.

<mark>**2** Experiences by themselves don't make you emotionally resilient.</mark>

1 No it's how you deal with them isn't it and if you always crumble at the first hurdle then you have to question whether you are emotionally resilient. Whereas if the first time you crumble a bit you manage to pick yourself up and deal with it and you think the next time a similar thing comes along you say to yourself I can deal with this and you build up a way of dealing with it, would you not agree?

2 I do it's just that I think that there is more to it than that I think it's more than having an experience but it's also more than coping with an experience it's about being able to recognise the patterns that are in it then do something to alter the pattern in the future it's a bit like the fact that somebody goes through the breakdown in a marriage or a divorce does not necessarily make them any wiser the next time round in fact divorce statistics the second time around would indicate that that's the case that it is about the ability to spot what was in the earlier experience that you did or didn't deal with badly and that's that would be what using experience to develop emotional resilience is about.

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1 No, but every Social Worker must be able to otherwise there's no point being a Social Worker is there?

2 I'm going back to how being shown how to deal with it might help

1 How do you show them? Do you take them in class and berate them, humiliate them, make them emotionally inadequate and then say 'right then you should be able to deal with that'.

(Q.6a) Do you think that emotional resilience can be taught? Can you provide examples of how it might be taught?

TEAM MANAGERS

3 I think it can be modelled as we have just said and probed in terms of asking the right questions and things but again it comes down to personality and how you know that member of staff to how you can work with them to encourage them to bring it out if they are completely resistant to it it's about how you work with them to change that.

1 Do we teach people anti-discriminatory practice or do we develop it? Do we teach anti- racist practice or do we develop people? So for me it's the same sort of issue really do we teach people or do we develop it? I think you can teach some aspects you know some set techniques if you like but I think it's a matter of modelling, development and it takes time.

2 I think I would go a bit further in my views, you know the question Are Social Workers born or made? I think you have to have the basics there in order to develop it and the personality traits, is the person a kind person , are they emotionally able to contain their emotions and also able to be emotionally. So I don't think it's about going on a course to be emotionally resilient because that will go straight over the head of the macho people some of the women are more macho than the men.

3 I mean if it was as easy as oh we'll send everyone on a course, but it's not as straightforward as that.

2 It makes me think that what we need is a willingness to commit to examination of their own emotional makeup not in a sort psychoanalytical sense but in a way that you know you are a part of a

system when going into a family, are you prepared at looking at your role and how these people behave.

1 I do think as well that there is a role with the state as a government because you know you want the workers to be emotionally resilient that's fine but really they need to be able to work in a system that enables them to reflect. It feels a bit uncomfortable sometimes when they throw some things about emotional resilience into a course and are we trying to fix the person so they fit into the system, why don't we look at fixing the system? Because they are put into a lot of situations which are imposed upon them by regulation a huge amount of regulation which takes up 80% of the time on the computer.

2 Yes the Government are saying we think you should do a grade A job but the resources are somewhere at G so how do we cope with that then.

1 The course is about wanting to turn out macho people in a way.

2 Yes quick get them through, throughput, don't feel it just close it, get the numbers down.

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 I think you can teach it, I think the only way you can teach it, I think this is a really pragmatic way of doing it is to give them role plays you know that's the only way or give them real life experiences. I don't, I don't think you can actually teach them you can enable them to have experiences which will develop their emotional resilience I don't think. I couldn't sit someone down and tell them 'right and today I'm going to teach you emotional resilience' and at the end of it be emotionally resilient.

1 I mean I guess if we started talking about teaching each other emotional resilience, we'd all be highly suspicious of how much we'd got and er

3 Yea and how do you measure it?

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ask somebody what traumas have you been through you can say what could make you feel differently it could be questioned in that sense to allow them to kind of develop their understanding of what emotional resilience actually is and entails to be able to think yes if I was to go into that situation again I wouldn't have actually thought that way, does that make sense?

YEAR ONE STUDENTS

4 I think there are two aspects to this, there are taught and show. Yes, so sometimes, as someone said to me once, 'show me how to spray a car' he says 'I can show you but I can't teach you'. What does that mean he said 'I can show you whether it comes out good, or whether you can actually do it, is a different story'. Yes, but that doesn't mean I'm not suggesting that some people will. I think it's all about being shown different ways and different methods or emotional strategies of dealing with things and really that's going to be personal to each individual.

1 You need to build up your own personal supply of tools to deal with things.

4 It's about being more personal to the individual.

1 Yes, but not everybody would go with the counselling for their personal reflection and keeping their diaries, you know.

2 Yes, just going to the gym, or exercising after work.

3 Yes, I did that when getting divorced but I'm not sure that is something that can be taught from scratch. Like I was saying before you've got to have some sort of inner strength in you and I've that sort of bit of emotional resilience anyway, but I certainly think it can be built on and you know I mean just look at life in general. At 30 I'm more emotional resilience that I was at 15 and that's just life experience and I think I don't think it's necessarily something that can be taught, it's just something you learn through experience and like you say the tools, I think learning coping strategies and things are good but in terms of building it up it's just something that you'll get with experience I think.

YEAR TWO STUDENTS

4 Attitudes and values module because that made us sit and think about things that we hold close. That aren't seen as politically correct but they are still that person's identity so you had to reflect on

who you were and who you could still be professionally. I know I have some issues relating to drug abuse so for me attitudes and values I had to go into that place and think about why am I like that and it made me aware that I had those problems so it made me more resilient if I had to work with people with those problems.

Are you emotionally resilient or are you just more emotionally tuned because I don't think anyone can actually teach it to you?

1 Learn emotional resilience but learn ways of coping with it which I know would be stressful for me. It has caused me a lot of internal conflict but because I am aware of it I am in place that kind of at the end of the day and think that's done and I can forget about it.

4 I don't think it's a taught thing but in the process of being taught things resilience happens it's like a 'happens' thing rather than a specific thing.
So far on this course we have done a lot of modules, a lot of lectures, a lot of practice, reading, a lot of it has been about quite negative stuff or related to the service user but a lot of the modules like the' Preparation for Practice'. It is hard and it's hard to sit through some of those lectures because they are quite hard hitting stories doing case studies in preparation for being a Social Worker, I think that has toughened me up a bit. It's separated the Social Worker and at home, toughened me up in areas that I can deal with more constructively but it's softened me up at the same time because I think I have more empathy with more hands on people, so I think in that way it's allowed me to and developed my emotional resilience. So it's not as though we have had an emotional resilience lecture or training programme but it has been tough, quite a tough course and doing all this.

3 But I think it, thinking that Social Workers are going to I think it's quite a tough thing. People are going to want to be emotional resilient because it's seen as being needed. I'm not sure that's a good thing to be putting across because some people may never have it and they might start to doubt themselves their potential as existing Social Workers.

5 As much as I agree with…. I would want to believe that the importance of being able to communicate and express themselves and then they will be able to be emotionally resilient and then be able to sort things that way.

2 I think for me it's not down to a particular lecturer or topic I think the entire course just kind of hammers you right from day one, it's like being hauled behind a speeding bus and you can't even grab your feet that's what it's like, it takes over your entire life, it takes over your life, it takes over your

thoughts everything is under a microscope and looked at and I think that the need for emotional resilience is because dare I say it without you shouting at me is that anyone on this course who does not have the strength to juggle and still find time for you and for your life and put your priorities in order you are never going to manage in the profession. But the pressure we are under is nothing like the service users lives.

3 So are we saying here, that emotional resilience is here to stay.

2 I don't think that emotional resilience is detachable it's about who you are, it's about your ability to manage the pressures, the calls on your time, on your attention, you know like you said you'll still be there and you'll still take that phone call. In a nutshell that is emotional resilience to me because you wouldn't hesitate in taking every phone call, that's you putting everybody's needs first.
Emotional resilience comes when you say I can't do that.

4 It's funny what everyone has said today I don't think there's anything on this course about us as people it's always been about the service user and anti-oppressive practice. I know I get it, but about us I believe that there has not been anything about us as professionals, how to be professional, how to dress, how to come into Uni and other things, so I think as social work students this should, emotional resilience should have been taught in year one before placements.

5 I expected it to be part of preparation for practice and it wasn't.

2 In Preparation for Practice we only really talked about the service user, what we might say and see but it did not ever address how we were going to learn about us.
All we ever get fed back is, you can't be this or you can't be that, but never what we should be like.
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3 So it's kind of a theoretical perspective on it in effect?

2 Yes, but it's about, it's about the students seeing that in younger people rather than developing that in the students themselves

1 Well the worrying part for me is if we don't think it can be taught to a student, then we might as well give up on everybody who's becoming a Social Worker. If we don't believe it can be developed or taught then that means that when those students are then working with families they want to change

and develop are we then saying that, we've said no, you've either got it or you haven't. If you haven't, you're never ever going to change then.

2 Saying you can't be taught. Now I think the seed, I think the seed process; I think there needs to be something there that then can be facilitated or grown...

1 So it can be taught

4 Well I don't think it can be taught, I know I am not an emotionally resilient person. I know that from my experiences, my primary reactions to a lot of situations but I have learnt strategies that I have within a framework that I, as soon as something happens and I feel a response, a natural response coming on, I switch into another mode but I've had to learn to do that. So I think there's a framework that can be taught so these are the strategies, this is how flexible you need to be, these are the appropriate responses, these are the inappropriate responses but I don't think that's as robust as being able to do that as a default position.

PRACTICE EDUCATORS

1 I think that's very difficult I think to some degree you can teach it by using case studies or case scenarios and ask a student how they might deal with a situation in a particular setting or how they might have dealt with it but I think in lots of ways you may be building on what a student has already got it is quite hard to teach it.

3 The SAS would say yes you can because they will train troops to endure immense emotional stress but I am not sure that an SAS soldier fits into the same category as an Social Worker although sometimes it feels like it. I mean I am more of the opinion that you can help people develop tools and have an understanding as opposed to the direct teaching. You can teach them to understand what it is and help them evaluate what levels they are at and where it fits but I think it is a bit like reflective practice because for somebody who is not reflective it's very hard to teach them how to be reflective you can go through tool kits and something like that but at the end of the day they still have to have that little something but I am not totally sure what it is, it is something that says' oh yes' and I think sometimes with something like emotional resilience that it's about 'yes I do that' so maybe there is teaching that happens that helps peoples understanding that they have emotional resilience and some of the teaching is about understanding and you can teach about pressures and environments

37

where your emotions will be tested.

2 I think there are a series of skills that can be taught that if you develop those skills you will become more emotionally resilient for example I think it is possible to teach people to be more calm and more relaxed than they are and people who develop those skills will become more resilient to some degree. I think it is possible to teach people the skills involved in reflecting both after things are happened and whilst they are happening. If someone develops those skills they will also become more emotionally resilient so the range of things that can be taught, the cumulative effect of those skills is that the person will become more emotionally resilient than they were before.

3 I would agree with that.

1 Can I just add something to that I think sometimes you know when you are working with students out on placement they will have a real light bulb moment and very often that's the emotional resilience kicking in because up until then it can seem like really hard work for both of you and then suddenly there will be a discussion about something or you might get them to do an exercise which suddenly 'I see what you mean now' sort of response and may be its that you have both been trying to get to this emotional resilience point and may be they haven't taken on board what it is you have said or may be you haven't explained it very well but then it comes to a point for some students when its there and the light bulb comes on.

3 Is that emotional resilience?

1 May be it is, may be it is. I don't know, but it's also something about sticking with it even as a student when you are struggling to get your head around or working with a particular case that you have found particularly difficult, 'stickability' I know it's not a real word but that's what it is isn't it to some degree?

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gone on and done a masters in it, it would have been alright and she would have made a really good one but it wasn't what she wanted so would she?

2 You know picking up your point I think modelling and development is the way forward but I think

it's not whether you are young or old or you've been in it five minutes or a few years it's your willingness and professional expertise and keeping your practice because that's what we are talking about 'the art and craft of social work' Its keeping it safe and professionally on track and realising that without the right kind of support you might drift off and go down the macho route and then you get back to the kitchen style of social work which doesn't do anybody any good but I do think that some aspects can be learnt some aspects of empathy can be developed but you need to have somebody with enough, it's a bit like attachment theory really if you haven't got the basics and nobody to attach you are in the middle of nowhere. If you haven't got the basic strength in your ego personality I think you will struggle with it because you won't see what is going on around you because you haven't got that but the discipline can be learnt, the clinical supervision that we have at the and the facilitator is one example of an approach and I'm sure you've got courses where people are asking what do you feel, what do you observe, could you look at this in a different way so I suppose you've got ways but I am still a bit reluctant to think that it can all be taught.

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

4 I still think you know exposing them, what they are exposed to on placement will do as good a job as anything we can do here to help them to learn and probably more so because they can't hide as much. They can't hide as much and their forced into situations. If they're avoiding and hiding in the office and things like that it will be picked up you know. If they are not doing you know, they're not engaging and things like that so whereas I think in the classroom they can sit and literally sit there and they don't, they don't want to do role play or they take the Mickey out of it you know and there's too many opportunities for most them to hide.

3 I think it depends what you meant by learnt really cos you can learn by experiences but you might not learn by experiences depending on what sort of person you are. You know and that's about, about being reflective but that's certainly something that we would encourage in students and maybe it's something that we might want to consider in the new curriculum when we look at that about whether we include that in some of the report writing that they do. I mean I'm sure we will if it were up to me,

2 include what?

3 Some recognition of emotional resilience and how they recognise that and whether they feel that

they've learnt anything from their experiences in developing that.

1 I think any area where people talk about their feelings and their judgements together and this is very much so on practice placements, we're talking from a practice educator point of view, in their journal I ask them to do events and then feelings and judgements down this side and that's what we'll focus on in supervision to see how they cope with situations they've never met before. When they come across situations say with people who have dementia and carers who are very ill and things like that, because a lot of this reflects on their own experience sometimes with relatives and things and how are you coping with that. I believe that's a learning opportunity and experience because they will find helping other people to develop coping strategies also is something they will learn for themselves. It's like you learn when you teach don't you?

4 You do.

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

1 I think its learnt because I think it's a skill and being able to learn your own feelings, you learn how to manage them and through your experiences and if you don't learn it you might react in certain ways, you might go into situations I think you can learn it to a certain extent.

3 It is useful where shadowing or something like peer mentoring might within Uni or sort of practice I suppose to see how other workers deal with things because I think you can understand the theory side of things and the concepts but then it is about actually applying it to practice and its then I think you need to gain your own experience of being exposed to certain kind of events and case and things to actually show that you have learnt it and then you can and then be helped by discussing things with other workers who are more experienced and resilient, that could certainly be a good opportunity in placements in terms of shadowing other workers and talking about those things.

YEAR ONE STUDENTS

2 I think it can be taught and learnt. I had a brilliant Practice Educator as well. It was good because it was that real life examples that were a reality check. There was an opportunity to apply theory to situations you're dealing with on placement. Yes, one-to-one is probably the best way, but there is under acknowledgement of it maybe.

YEAR 3 STUDENTS

2 I think we are being put under quite a lot of pressure, in lots of different ways like the court scenario role play which sticks in my mind, we were getting little snippets from the year ahead about how many had fainted and all that sort of thing and I think everyone was under a lot of pressure. I think knowing you have dealt with that and come out the other end and you're fine develops your emotional resilience. You can say 'I can do it', I found it extremely uncomfortable like putting all your strengths and weaknesses on the table, but yes it was really stressful but it made me resilient.

LECTURERS

1 What's the difference between learning and being taught? It will be very difficult to say that a student has developed emotional resilience after three years because there is no end to its development.

3 Huge

4 I think it can be learnt and it can be taught to a certain extent but it's never as robust as if you have it as this default position. Never because for example I was with a student who was very, I would say emotionally un-resilient who got really, really, really angry about a situation on placement and was talking to me about it and they got so angry that I had to remind them of how inappropriate it would be to show this anger and what did they need to go and do so that they could see the situation more objectively, and they stopped and they said yes you're right can I meet you again in half an hour. So you know there was a reminder there and they were able to then go off, and calm down and come back and be more objective. Well it calmed them down, on reflection after a few minutes. So they knew their response wasn't the right one but they had to have a nudge.

1 But that goes back to awareness and then thinking about …….. first student that she's had on placement who is very un-resilient and un-intelligent emotionally and who with the best will in the world you could talk to, but he wouldn't understand for a second what you were going on about because their only awareness is how they feel and their agenda, they cannot develop or move or be taught. So your student, although you said isn't resilient has got the capacity, the ability to become self -aware seems to be that pivot which then takes people on to either develop or thrust them into facilitating strategies for learning to may be build emotional intelligence that then backs up the

41

emotional resilience so they may never be as resilient but they become aware of that but if self - awareness isn't there?

2 And I think it's a two- fold process of self -awareness and the ability to reflect. Combined essentially.

3 For me it's a bit about that divide between constructivism, how you construct things internally, if you like and that social constructivism. So it's about what goes on around you as well. I mean there will always be examples of people that need to move further perhaps and some people may not be able to move but given the right environment they are going to move somewhere which is what 1 was saying, in effect isn't it. So it's about getting that sort of social environment right. That support or whatever you like to call it, which is learning. It's not about teaching them something. It's not about changing their inner construct in the same way; it's about that kind of social learning process, whatever that is.

4 I think you're coming from a place of being emotional resilience because coming from a place of that not being my default position, I would say that wouldn't matter to me as the social environment that I was in I would always have to stop and think, and when you think within that office, behind that closed door something's happened that's made me really angry or really upset and instantly I would respond emotionally and have to calm down and think, no, I need to go from this position.

3 But doesn't it help though in terms of you being in that situation with the right people. So you know, if you were with the wrong people that would be far worse and your reaction would probably be as you say, it's a bit like that student you said that was flying off the handle, but given the right situation which was you were around in effect, they were able to take a step back, reflect and go a different route. So that's what I'm saying really in that you know, behind those closed doors in that office you've got that kind of mechanism if you like and that helps.

4 Yes you have but I also think I'm now at a point where I can nudge myself and I think our responsibility for those people that haven't got that is to say, look at the moment there's this safety net here for you that is a professional one that will keep you away from malpractice If you like or inappropriate practice but you've got to learn to nudge yourself.

SERVICE USERS

1 I would have thought just the process of living through life, doing a job, working alongside other

42

2 I would say that you need to develop it, its life, work balance isn't it where you need to be to offload some of your feelings through peer support or whatever and there are two recognised techniques that you could employ, off- loading would be the main one, being able to share with other people what you might be experiencing.

3 Yes I should think you can going on from what 1 said about scouts and things, I'm trying to think about those two men who go out in the wild on the TV and so forth into rough country and that kind of thing, Grylls isn't it?
2 Bear Grylls, yes.

3 He has more nerves of steel than I have. From that point of view and I would think is it nature or nurture? Again where you start from what's happened in childhood and the nature that you're given from your genes that nurture how life works out and you are in charge of your life.

4 I would expect that students will experience a placement and I think the Social Worker will understand when situations confront them whether in fact that a) the students are learning and b) its having a detrimental effect so that they are becoming stressed which eventually could display unsuitability.

CARERS

 All I would have said yes

4 Reflection is one to learn and bad experiences, learning through adversity and coming out the other side and still being in one piece is definitely a way.

2 But often I think that a mentor or a confidante, support of some kind can be much more effective in helping that process.

5 Yes and I think there are different ways of drawing it out if you like. I think self- reflection is one and some people might meditate and that might be a way and other people might get results more readily from going to a counsellor or that sort of thing.

3 Peer group discussions and people having discussions as well, sharing experiences.

5 But I think a large part of it is certainly something that you have to learn.

(Q.6c) Do you think that emotional resilience can be assessed and can you provide examples of how it might be assessed?

TEAM MANAGERS

1 I think it's if you think about this room with these three in the room you have got three very different people al with different strengths, different needs you know they are three completely different people placed in terms of emotional resilience, they are all resilient and tough I would say but all at different places and so am I, it's a journey.

3 How would you know if you were there, what is there? Where are we aiming for, it's just impossible to say?

1 I think it's more philosophy than art and science, it's very difficult to say.

2 I think what we really want to say is that safe creative practice in people and also best quality practice that we can muster will have good days and bad days and days when we will say we want to leave the profession but actually I think things like excellent supervision, I think observation of practice, feedback, and I think peer supervision can be very useful because it takes away the top down I think role playing can have a place, you know role playing to see if empathy remains, but how you get there before you have them in post I have no idea and back at the University stage of interviews how do you know who has got it you know and you will have people who are absolutely with you, understanding, asking curious questions and you know they have got something and then there's those playing with mobile phones on the back row and you think if you don't get that that offends me as a teacher how are you going to work with the public.

1 I think it is probably a role for the practice educator to educate through placements however it is a limited role because when some students come to us they will say that statutory is different, they have never had a statutory placement before they do struggle and you see it in the interview how much you struggle if you don't know what you are walking into so I think there is a role for placement

44

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 Well in the same way that we assess everything my guess would be, in their writings.

1 Well I think you could encourage them to do self- assessment on it. You know don't you when you feel differently about a situation, when you've coped with it. I know I do anyway, I don't know if you do. Do you know when you become emotionally resilient to something?

1 I don't know if I do really.

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4 And police officers throwing up when they've seen violent crime scenes and things like that.

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

2 I suppose you could do something along the lines of, this would probably have to be in supervision, you know you are dealing with a particular case and you are dealing with an issue that you found particularly difficult and you recognise that you really struggled to come out of that visit and in retrospective you haven't made the right decision during that visit and it led to an outcome you weren't wanting and after you have done a piece of work and if later a similar piece of work happens or it wanted similar things doing to it and you were able to manage yourself differently you could may be evidence what to do differently I don't know I am just thinking aloud really.

1 Overall I think it's hard to assess because it is an emotion I think it can be talked about in supervision and evidenced in terms of some kind and you can speak about cases in supervision but I think in terms of assessment in placement I don't know.

45

3 I think it's a tricky one really because I think it really is delicate ground when we're talking about I suppose personal issues could come in to it you know and I think if it was to start mainly on the degree they would really have to do some work around how they communicated to students and set a really well thought out pilot to get that to work I mean the 'fit for practice' stuff was quite useful in terms of testing, I don't think emotional resilience was the term that was used but they were basically testing out whether you had the gall to actually work in placements and looking at the ability to work in statutory settings and also it is a must to have statutory placements for all students because I went through my training without having any and the placements were so easy that I don't feel it challenged anything in terms of my emotions or resilience and that was good because it didn't challenge anything but I felt it was own skills and my own resilience that were self- taught over my own past that brought the qualities to this job that I am doing now it had nothing to do with my degree at all so I think with my experience students could have had calm childhoods or whatever and they need to have that exposure and that can be kind of doing a statutory placement where you've got your mentor/assessor assessing you in because you can bring reflective supervision in with students on placement can't you and you can probe them more about how they are feeling and check out what emotions they had and how they dealt with it and you can kind of test their coping strategies and their thinking around that to see how healthy they are and I don't know what you would compare it to establish that.

2 I suppose what you are saying is that there is a kind if implication to that in that we might stream people on the basis of not meeting a set of requirements, it would be impossible because of the variation in placements, the practice educators and what actually happens in those placements. That's why I think this is the case in all portfolios and placement case stuff you have to give a pass/ fail and the idea of perhaps grading on a continuum maybe that's very difficult but at the same time if you are grading emotional resilience on a pass/ fail basis I would have thought you are going to get some real problems around borderline cases and how did you really assess them as good or were they really able to cope, it would be really hard.

1 Yes everyone has a different level of resilience so someone who is in a situation of struggling and you put someone else in that same situation in terms of measuring it I think that would be hard but like I say assessing it you can't really it's not really a tick box sort of situation you can't really put everyone is going to have a certain level of emotional resilience you can't really put experience as well with us being newly qualified some of us might not be as resilient as some of our managers but given time it can be developed and progressed anyway.

YEAR ONE STUDENTS

1 I suppose you've got to know what it is before you can measure it and is it that everyone has the same understanding of it.

3 Yes, because I mean you could assess the situation but with the observations they're watching you deal with a service user for half an hour let's say and during that half an hour you're very calm and empowering and dealing with the service user really, really well but what the observer doesn't know is when you get home you are in hysterics and you can't get your head around what went off and I think it's hard to assess because you can't assess, people react at different times you might be able to put on that professional front and do the job at the time but not be able to deal with it later on; you might have trouble dealing with it so I don't know how you would go about assessing it. Whether you are just completely honest and do it over a course of a few days and you say you have this sort of situation and you appear to be this and that and the other how were you feeling at the time and then how did you feel when you got home and how did you feel a couple of days later and to have just that brutal honesty in that self-reflection.

1 But you bottle up anything like that, that would definitely break down any resistance you did have so I think you'd have to find a way of thinking about it or so I think it's…

2 I'm just thinking how you would assess it, with some change psychological test and see how you cope. I don't know how you would assess it.

4 By some sort of spectrum, green light red light, I don't know.

2 How are you feeling today, number 1-10?

4 I don't know, I think the only way, because there would be varying levels, different things, and different moods, different, there are too many variants on a daily basis.

3 Yes, if something's happening at home you might be less emotionally resilient to something that happens at work that day and vice versa if you've had a really bad bay at work and something little happens that bothered you yesterday you might be like the end of the world because you've already had all that strength zapped out of you.

2 Maybe it's like that emotional tagging, understanding emotions and reactions so maybe you could assess EI which would give an idea of ER so maybe that might be strategies to deal with things.

4 It's more an assessment of how it's actually dealt with, how you deal with your emotions, ok this is the situation, a, b,, talk about it, think about it, reflect on it with a friend 50-50 go to the gym whatever route you take I think that's more about systems.

3 So you have two different situations and you see the people and afterwards one of them is in tears and the other is not, would you automatically assume that the one who is not crying is the one that's more ER because the one that is crying because I read this quote in a book it's a really good outlet crying to get rid of that stress so somebody who is able to get that stress out of their system is more ER than someone who is going to hang on to it for days, weeks, hours.

YEAR 2 STUDENTS

3 It can be a form of torture.

3 I think by speaking to people even by doing assessments you'll be able to put it up if you have some knowledge of it and I think with students you know, you could ask students how they've dealt with something, possibly measuring it that way.

1 It may be dangerous because you could easily reduce it to a formula that says you have to respond to an emotional situation this way or you're proving to us that you don't have emotional resilience and therefore you are not professional and therefore not able to come up to the standard, I think for you and me we might be just as strong, just as emotionally resilient but we would react completely differently to a situation and like you said earlier a situation would affect us differently because of our ages, our abilities, our character, our confidence, our life story.

3 I think it could be assessed if it were a service user, it's just about solution focussed therapy and that's just popped up in assessment, you don't just go and do an emotional resilience assessment but 100% if it's going that way and it looks as though it is, part of it will be incorporated into the assessment.

4 If it were to be assessed as a student Social Worker, assessed as emotional resilience, I have a little

3 Don't you think it's like that now?

4 No I think it's quite fair, I think as soon as you start testing someone's emotional resilience it's as good as testing someone's personality.

3 You can have your own personality and be professional. Ok you speak to someone then who has got emotional resilience and say I'm sick of being academically tested, I'm sick of these role plays. I might get B's but test me on my emotional resilience; it's not such a bad thing.

1 It would come across like that but you can't get away from it no matter how hard you try and practice, it would be an opportunity to shine for those people who are not particularly academic, it might have been the only A I was likely to get, I haven't got one yet.

1 For me I've had to learn that there's the course and then there's you've got to get through the course, its survival but I don't think that emotional resilience can be another tick box, yes they've got that, it's like saying you know it's when they used to have an age limit to get on this course.
You used to have to be 24, something like that to join and there are some 21yr olds in our group that are going to make fantastic Social Workers because they are learning as they are growing and like us they are coming in with their baggage. Well they might have baggage but I think they've got core values, just cutting someone off because of their age is not a good enough reason and cutting someone off because of their lack of emotional resilience isn't good enough.

3 I don't think we're thinking of cutting them off. I know when I went for my interview I was assessed for everything, this and that and I felt that I had to sell my soul so if emotional resilience was in it as well, I would have wondered what they were going on about , it would have been a challenge to be honest.

4 My worry is that they assess it, there is something not quite right with you and suddenly you're out, that would scare me if they were going to assess it then they've got to give the opportunity to develop it and build it. How are you going to find out if someone can cope, by walking into a room and seeing a woman battered and bruised, their husbands just done it and then if you walk into that room and you burst into tears then is a lecturer going to take you to one side and say well you're not

really coping I think maybe you should change to occupational therapy or something. What's wrong with not coping?

5 I think it's a bit cheeky; I would go prepared that I was going to be assessed and pretend that I'm emotionally resilient at that point in time. Lots of people would do that.

3 Can you pretend to be emotionally resilient, we all seem to be coming across that we want to be emotionally resilient and do you know we might even pretend to be because we want it but surely it's great to have, I'm genuinely being honest. Yes it is good to have. Yes because if you haven't you are going to struggle and sometimes people who haven't got emotional resilience do their job and then when its 5.30pm go to the pub or whatever.

1 Yes I think it's your character.

4 So let's start testing your character.

3 It's a good job we are all friends It's tense in here, very tense.

YEAR 3 STUDENTS

3 You would have to see how they were when they came on to the course and see how they get on.

1 Emotions, I don't know how you are going to assess them, I know I am being assessed emotionally compared to when I first came on the course. Probably it could be assessed on placement, more than in class, just feedback on how you have dealt with the stress and everything. In a lecture room I don't know how you do it.

2 But I don't think that, some people are just predisposed to being emotionally resilient, some people aren't.

3 I think your environment though when you are growing up can make you more resilient, may be.

2 But how you would assess that, presumably when you interview to come on the course, people who interview you can recognise that in a way, I don't know.

1 I think it can be very well hidden as well, I think it's the area where people can have a wrong result on an assessment, you know, emotional resilience getting into someone's emotions for example at an interview a person can think I will give you what you want to hear or the answers or things like that which I think you want me to act.

2 I think you are sort of saying you can fake emotions.

Yes (All)

2 You think you can?

Yes (All)

3 One of the only ways you could assess it is like to say in a situation you have a very good cry and come back very strong.

2 You should go off and cry and come back and deal with the situation.

1 I still think it is something you can fake so an assessment could be a challenge. I don't think you could sustain 'I'm emotionally resilient but not really'

3 So would you assess it over the whole course because that would be very difficult as well, assess their resilience for the whole 3 years to see if they trip up.

1 Emotional resilience it is going to be assessed on every course.

2 You should be emotionally resilient for any course at this level because it is hard.

LECTURERS

2 I think it can because I think if its right the kind of arguments that 3 and 4 have been saying about nudging and self -awareness, you can assess self- awareness and you can assess whether somebody is going to lunge into being angry and frustrated about something and you then goes, you know what, I need to step back a bit and that's about seeing somebody who in first year may have flown of the

handle and got really upset about something. In second year might take a step back. Might still get angry but might take a step back so there is some sort of change that we must be able to see.

1 Certainly in social work because there's a framework that implicitly suggests that if you're talking about someone being accountable, and talking about being a professional, showing up on time, managing timelines, working within policies and procedures, so there's an awareness isn't there? Behaving them appropriately, you know that is professionalism.

4 Yes, I think we can measure it through professionalism, assessing though professionalism.

2 And that's the area isn't it?

3 I'm not so sure because I think sometimes it's like if you go back to Attitudes and values, you know people actually do adapt those based on where they are. So it's actually quite difficult to get to the actual bottom of somebody's attitudes and values because they react differently in the right situation. So I think sometimes you know when somebody's on placement its yes you know now whatever mind your P's and Q's if you like and then you get, you know sort of it doesn't necessarily reflect what's going off

4 But I think that's, isn't that what we are looking for aren't we, I mean if our personal and professional values were completely in line you know, we would all sail through life wouldn't we probably and its that's absolute sort of clash between personal and professional values, sometimes it keeps us on our toes as professionals and we are talking about a professional context here aren't we here? So actually if we are wanting somebody to behave as a professional, I would assess community and youth workers on placement through their level of professionalism demonstrated in different situations and some of that would be through a self -evaluation that they would write and they would discuss with a supervisor and some of that would be on-going through the placement file.

3 I mean I think that's all we can do. I mean in the end, that's all you can do isn't it really.

2 And we more so now more than ever are requesting students as part of the assessment to write reflective pieces on what their feeling so it's they're thoughts and how've they've reached that place.

1 It can be quite like that layer of onion you know so you know there's sort of the practical I can do and I can show you I can do but do you know what all the other layers are? How far can you go back

to demonstrate that process?

PRACTICE EDUCATORS

3 We have talked about how people can learn the skills, there are skills that can be taught and learnt that will help you develop your emotional resilience. I think assessing we assess now although it is masked in other terminology because I think practice educators do assess how people work in different settings, in different situations and under different pressures and I think about working under pressure, we recently had a student who had got a very small caseload far smaller than one would expect for a final year student and actually was finding it very pressured and her ability to cope with that was very limited. The practice educator was actually assessing the students emotional resilience to actually deal with what was helping someone to understand that actually the work you've got is for a practitioner is very low and in the last stages of placement and what the student has learnt about themselves is that 'I can't cope with the small pressures so how will I cope with larger pressures' so their emotional resilience and development has taken three years to realise that actually 'I have been trying to do this but I can't cope' and the self -awareness is that the student acknowledges that it's true even if they don't want it to be the case and it was that practice educator who had actually helped the student to get there by helping her to understand by assessing her.

2 I was just going to say I think it can be assessed to assess it skilfully is very challenging, I think something that might happen in certain circumstances is that it might be formally assessed and people might be assessed as being emotionally resilient but what they actually are is able to endure and cope and that is not the same thing at all you know being able to fight your way through, emotional resilience is more than that it's a more complex concept and quality I think it's important that if we get into the game of formally assessing it that they don't think that that's just what it is, emotional resilience is not just about coping with a caseload of forty cases.

1 And can you assess it thoroughly and sufficiently if you haven't got it yourself.

2 No I don't see how you can

1 No I don't see how you can but I guess that may be there are practice assessors out there who are trying to assess it but who can't see in themselves what it is.

3 Its interesting are practice educators going to ask how emotionally resilient do you feel the student

was on the other side of the coin as part of the teaching is not about how emotionally resilient the student is, is what are you assessing?

2 Probably as much as anything that can be assessed, there might be a lot of situations where the assessor might be less resilient than the person they are assessing because you could have had all the theory and all the years of experience in the world it does not necessarily make you emotionally intelligent or an emotionally resilient person. Experiences by themselves do not make you emotionally resilient.

SERVICE USERS

4 Supposing something upsets me I think 'well I'm not having this, I'm going to bugger off'. Actual personal behaviour could well be observed by whoever is the observer.

2 So that we would be reacting to events.

4 Yes

2 Yes, yes

3 But saying assessed I'm thinking on a scale of 0-10 or something like that. Am I on a 6 or nearer 10? Again it's so subjective that how to measure it between any two people, I mean you can tell if somebody's agitated or somebody's cool but the person in between it's so ethereal.

1 I find myself wondering if one could find a recording of self- typical popular series where on this particular occasion a, b and c were together and a was seriously upset by something that b had to say and to play through that little episode I can't think of the name of these popular series, let's say The Archers and play it through and invite the student to comment.

4 You know something don't you; he's never forgotten his acting experience.

1 That's right.

3 You are trying to put an objective perspective on a subjective thing.

2 So much depends on what the particular stress is. Thinking about going back to thinking about Bear Grylls. Is he still the Chief scout?

1 He was at one time

2 He was at one time, yes but I think he has been under attack since then, again where do you draw the line. I mean you can't always say that emotional resilience is a once and for all achievement because it's forever coming under attack from various sources. You may well have control of a particular situation, but something else could completely floor you, you don't know, it might be quite a different stress.

3 I'm thinking of a friend I know, a GP she had a still born child that caused post natal depression. I mean a very intelligent person in normal circumstances very much the gregarious one but something that is as personal as that particular thing to that woman had very adverse effects.

2 Yes because that a double whammy because there's the post natal blues but in that situation you haven't even got the child to show for it if you like so that is a double whammy.

CARERS

5 I guess in a work experience or setting, I'm thinking of a Social Worker now, if they are in a situation that is challenging, that somebody who is experienced alongside them might be able to assess how they cope with the situation and it needs some unravelling at the other end to see if they have coped with that and whether it's still affecting them a week later, what happened then, if they were assaulted or something in a work situation how is that?

3 It depends on who's doing the assessing and what criteria they are using as well. As carers we would assess the Social Worker as well with our own criteria whereas in the college you are doing a role play and assessing a student whereas the Government would probably do an assessment according to their criteria.

2 Yes I think it can be assessed but you've got to find out

1 The rating would be very difficult because there are so many variables and frequency with which

2 And the persons personality.

4 And when you know you are being assessed you're under stress anyway so that has to be taken into account also. We all live in situations we cannot assess theoretically, situations where we can assess but I know it can be assessed because I have seen something, doctors when they are God, to dissect or looking to and when they go there for the first time it's a trauma.

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homophobic, whatever, she doesn't know, but how can you challenge that and make it clear that you don't agree but yes she's not equipped to deal with that and that's just a basic job.

4 No, I know actually where you're coming from because there were certain attitudes on placement little but homophobic, racist, just little silly words like I won't go into it actually but for me, I found a real struggle to challenge it, I could identify the oppression actually finding a way to challenging was, I realise is my biggest areas of development. I identified that on my reflection, how do I do that, calmly, do you know what I mean? It 'sounds like something that can be relevant to all professions.

3 I think you need to teach a lot of professionals about detachment, involved with patients emotionally and I don't think it's in some cases from experience it's gone from not just caring at all, it's like you're taught not to care and it's about saying to them care for people and you can care and you know not just care for people but also care in how you feel without getting emotionally involved. I think there's such a fine line and I think especially when hospital staff they don't see them as a person like such-and-such she's got a broken arm or whatever I mean I went to visit my nana and there was an old lady, she wasn't in a bed, she was sat in a chair and a nurse came over and picked up something from the end of the bed and faffed about with that for 10 minutes and not once in that 10 minutes she was around that bed did she say hello, how are you, even acknowledge her existence and it drove me insane and I know they've got a job to do and you can let your emotions take over but there's such a big difference between not letting your emotions take over and being emotionally involved and blatantly not caring at all.

2 I know that's how professions are evolving as well they don't have time, they don't have any time to actually hold a relationship with people.

56

3 But how long does it take to say 'how are you?'

2 But they may be overworked at that moment, that's the only moment of calm while they are visiting on that board, and someone isn't asking for something, isn't sort of at them almost it's the only way to can cope with it, is to switch off and that's the same for Social Workers as you can imagine.

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We are talking about the caring professions, police, fire, ambulance, health all of those, anyone who works with people. Care Assistants in a residential home who work with people with dementia, they are going to need it.

YEAR 3 STUDENTS

3 Health and Social Care, anything that requires work with people, if I'm going to sit in front of my laptop, probably not, the resilience I need is different, I need to interact with people.

2 Like the police and rescue services would need it, they would need to be resilient as well, that sort of thing.

3 Basically they are going to be experiencing similar kinds of emotions. I guess they might be sad, experiencing fear, anger etc.

1 I think emotions are a sort of indication of how you interact with other people, you are not going to very emotional if you just sit in front of a desk doing paperwork, the profession that requires any form of interaction with people is most likely to have lots of emotions involved, people come with different demands, different needs and they are going to therefore have an effect on you

LECTURERS

4 C, can I say her second name, C works for a sort of Ousted type, oh I don't know what it's called, that goes in to and Ofsteds G.P's and I was talking to her and she said emotional resilience and growing and the need to grow emotional resilience in the professional lives of G.P's is becoming more and more necessary because of the different situations they are been put in and the level of responsibility they have been given.

2 Does it not cover every profession because I'm thinking that if I come into contact with any other professional in whatever NHS, health workers, school teachers or whatever I would want them to be emotionally resilient and able to manage that

4 Absolutely

It's a really hard thing to do its hard then to make your arguments to Panels and Managers about what you think should happen and decide to do a rigorous assessment and argue a case on its merits and they've got the ability to just turn around and say they've not got that placement and you know you haven't got any basis for it it's just classic big monolithic organisations like Local Authorities that's the way they are structured and they function to create practice issues to being emotionally resilient. I suppose a large part of being emotionally resilient is when you have a level of control of your practice that is how you do your job and if you are losing satisfaction because its being constantly taken away from you then you are going to lose all those things that actually made you resilient in the first place.

3 Yes it takes the heart out of social work and removes what actually made you want to do social work in the first place. The Degree didn't tell me anything about that bureaucracy until the third year and actually it really made me question whether I really wanted to do the job or not because obviously you've got to have preparation on that side of things as well as what you might encounter when you are doing the job, you might then learn that this is an organisation, this is how some organisations work. I find those feelings harder to manage than the feelings I come across on visits, I find that side harder.

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 Well I think we've already discussed some of it already in terms of resources and that's a classic sort of,

1 Being isolated in practice. Having a manager who couldn't care less, who's never there.

3 Having the system that doesn't support front line staff.

1 Having team arguments and people at each other's throats which dominate the whole of the team culture.

3 And other professionals as well you know, joined up thought process
2 Uncertainty, lack of knowledge, skills.

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kind of follow, follow in with that rather than sort of not be doing it as you said we're the only ones that don't seem to you know assess emotional resilience at the point of entry.

1 We don't really study and analyse character and competence very much do we, we just guess around all of that

4 We guess around it, so were bound to make mistakes.

1 So I think there's some really positive possibilities that we could be following in both assessment and training.

3 I mean a lot of posts now you have to have psychometric testing, particularly in management you have to take, and there's psychometric tests on line actually on, on the university,

2 Having access to university systems is another matter though isn't it?

4 Some sort of tool thought that we can,

1 or tools?

4 You know that we can use as a method of some sort of an assessment of,

2 Are we looking for a different kind of emotional resilience maybe to that of the police or paramedics as well?

1 Some common sense approach to what we think makes people tough to start with because we're talking about people that are barely,

3 Take a reconnaissance rule with 1.

1 You know you think of Duke of Edinburgh awards.

4 But actually you say that as a joke almost but again I think that kind of team building exercise can be brilliant for,

1 Paint balling?

3 That hurts.

2 But I was just thinking that we cos we as Social Workers we tend to have not always its not an exclusive thing but there's a bit more length of time involvement with an individual we ask we ask we're expected as Social Workers to get to know the person, to understand the person to hear about their lives it's a little bit different to, you know the persons had a heart attack and you've got to revive them, get them in an ambulance, send them off to hospital and manage that situation and then they're there, their someone else's patient. Or the police officers got to arrest and get them into the cells and then write out a report but then there's somebody else you know and I just wonder whether there's a slightly different tenant to a longer term emotional where you get to know and understand the individual a little bit more coz we ask for that knowledge and empathy to enter in and rather than dis-emotionally dealing with the crisis. ==You are dealing with longer term, more entrenched may be some more difficult emotions getting to know the person.== Soon as you get to know the person, then that changes your relationship doesn't it and how you manage the emotions that are surrounding it and that's a slightly different kettle of fish isn't it really?

4 Yea

YEAR 1 STUDENTS

(Q.8) Can I ask you what factors might prevent or undermine Social Workers' ability to be emotionally resilient?

3 I think time, the whole idea of having supervision and the one-to-one stuff so it's true, time is a big thing because you haven't got time to sit back and think about it.

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2 I think having a good team around you and having a good manager, it makes such a difference, it's amazing, there was only about six of us on placement we felt completely included and part of the team, fantastic manager, she was brilliant, she was lovely. Everybody did the absolute best they could and they are doing really, really well. I met up with them a couple of weeks ago, they were presented with an award for the work they have done and it was fantastic, working with young, disadvantaged young people, they did really well.

1 The people that come with the job are very important to be honest, the job can give you a weekend off, it gives you a chance to relax and recuperate, you have better income, go on holiday and come back, these rewards and if you have support there are quite a few things you can do.

2 In this current climate of austerity it's like we need so many people we are only two people doing six peoples job then somebody goes off sick so they say 'can you do extra and you now all the pressure and workload increases and you know at the end of the day we are all human we can only do so much so if we've got massive caseloads it definitely affects your emotional resilience.

3 I get the impression that the stress in childcare might be higher.

1 When I rang back to placement because I am in touch with quite a few people, three people had left and they did not leave to work with the council they went to work for an agency. Still the same work but there must be something there

2 It's the certain policies it's like when management have got this 'top down approach' and it's like what's going on what we know is going on in social services at the minute you know it's like people are having a gun put to their head at the minute, it's horrible, it really they are not being included in the planning or given choices or anything like that things that we know are important that people and learn that we are going to work in it hasn't been applied to them and it doesn't seem fair at all, do you know what I mean? You are going to be in that team and you are going to work over there, this is going to be your manager, go and do it type of thing and I think that really causes massive amounts of

61

1 You don't feel like you belong or valued

2 No, No and the uncertainty that lots of people are experiencing now you know will they have a job at all or when will I be working its very stressful.

LECTURERS

2 I think the one that … mentioned earlier and that is a lack of self -awareness. I think that's quite significant and the inability to reflect on the impact that you have on others around you.

4 The reflectiveness

2 Reflectiveness.

4 Reflectivity?

2 Yes.

3 Can it change dependent on types? So I mean If you've got a problem with, I mean I think we've mentioned this before, if there's something going off for you that's difficult, does that cause more of a problem in terms of resilience I guess if you're not coping with things in life or whatever

1 It must be hard but there are different influences aren't there external influences I mean needy impoverished can be incredibly damaging to people in terms of how stressed they get in their jobs and how it effects who they are you know deep down there were reports about social work on panorama and everybody's being very low and your resilience tends to then wane a little bit

4 Would that not affect the people that have a framework that they have to step into to become resilient more than people that actually have that natural default resilience.

1 Potentially I suppose it's a bit further to go isn't it

4 Yea because there's that's step that that person has to step into the frame work has to take

3 But that framework is probably professionalism, some of that frame work is probably about the professionalism and if that's challenged

4 Absolutely

1 And we talked earlier before you came 4 about good Social Workers aren't always emotionally resilient

You do find many of the Social Workers going off work long term with sickness and stresses and you know actually really struggling and finding it difficult with complete mental breakdowns. I mean there used to be two or three Service Managers who I knew, there were stories that they had just ended up wandering round the streets, completely lost it. Just completely lost it because of the stress and the emotional pressure of the job they did where a child had died or something and it knocked them sideways. So I don't think all Social Workers have great emotional resilience but I don't think it stops them from being good Social Workers or caring.

4 But it prevents them looking after themselves I think, doesn't it and that's, If you're not able to look after yourself and protect yourself which is one of the things that resilience does then you're more likely to crash down in the face of bad media press, an awful situation, having to work through an awful situation, not getting on with colleagues, cuts happening.

3 Its worse in child protection.
2 Is it.

3 That's what I read.

2 Compared to like physiotherapy, OT that kind of comparable professionals.

3 I think it's stress and your mental health in general, I don't know I did in college but something like £7 billion one lost a year due to people being off work due to stress, there's been other mental health issue, sickness, depression so I think it's having that effect of your own mental health and then having that knock-on effect on your home life and the fact that you've spent 3 years in university and 6 months in your job it's what you do you do for the best, it's like you've worked so hard for this, having the resilience to be able to cope with the job has got a bit of an effect on everything else as well.

YEAR 2 STUDENTS

3 Burnout

4 Burnout

5 Straight away I thought burnout

2 A lot of time off work

5 Breakdowns

1 ==There was a guy on my second placement who had been part of the team for over 10 years and in my time there he just put his file down one day on his desk, put his coat on and he left at 2.30pm in the afternoon and everybody was 'my goodness, what's he doing, what's he doing he never does this and he then took off 6 weeks with stress and everybody was talking in the office that he had worked here for so long and they could not understand him, they couldn't see where he was coming from, because I was new it was easy for me because his desk faced the wall, he did his own work, he didn't interact with the team, he didn't join in with the team stuff, he had his own caseload, he did it his way, he did his own thing and he went off. He became so focussed on the work and so introverted that when he kind of shut off all his networks to be able to go 'I don't know what I'm doing with this case can I talk to you about this', he would never do that== so they all saw that as a strength whereas I saw that as possibly a weakness, he came back to work and two weeks in you could see he wasn't ready you could tell in his face he wasn't ready and one of the other workers thinking he was being helpful was making truly inappropriate jokes by saying, he said, 'does anybody want a cup of tea and she said 'don't do that we don't want you doing too much you're only new back. I thought oh my gosh how inappropriate is that but I think it came out of they just didn't know how to handle him because he's been so insular the whole time and so I'm not blaming him you know, it's an amazing job he's had to do and that he recognised that he needed time off and I wonder if being that insular leads to 'I just can't do it anymore'.

3 I'm more concerned about the question you have asked about the people it's up to have it being a Social Worker and if you don't have it and the impact on those who don't have it actually if I'm honest with you 'god I've got to have it now', how am I going to get that and they might feel a bit inadequate

but then again I don't know like all of you lot remember Acts 1989.

E I think another worry is if people do know…. And they carry on working and they become just like a robot and they become some integral part in some big historical cases, they have said, the Social Worker had that much work on that they didn't see this was happening, they didn't question that so that's a major problem if you have been pushed to the limit you are going to get messed up, people are going to get hurt.

3 Are you kind of saying that if you have more emotional resilience it will give you more scope to go like enough is enough? I've got 20 cases sorry but these have …in a way if emotional resilience isn't just going to be in place then it could jeopardise more service users. Service users are at greater risk because the Social Worker hasn't got the emotional resilience to say 'stop'

1 And twenty cases might be your limit but this is my limit and it doesn't make me any less and you more.

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2 Long term sickness, illness yes that would have an impact on other service users as well.

3 Someone who has had a nervous breakdown, basically their nerves are shattered.

2 Yes, yes.

CARERS

2 Burnout

3 Ill-health, mental trauma

2 I think we would lose that person as a Social Worker for their own sake as much as the person they are caring for.

5 Social Workers on average stay in the profession for 8 years, there must be a reason for that and I imagine a part of that is because of lack of support, lack of finances. You know all sorts of different things and burnout.

3 There could be pressure from their own families because you know you can't switch off just because it's 5 o'clock and switch the computer off and walk away, you can't do that now and if you're not sleeping well and your partners at the side of you and you'll be keeping him awake all night. Sleep is so important. Are you going to turn nasty with your own children, are you going to affect your own children.

2 The very nature of the Social Workers job is traumatic because they are dealing with people at their lowest point when they need help and it can be the most wearing of things without emotional resilience, how do they cope? The short answer is they don't. The first thing that they would do is to work in any profession that takes them away from all the trauma. They get out of the heat.

5 There should be sabbaticals so they get regular breaks not just once for 6 months but every so often and recharge their batteries. You know just to sort of have a break, only having four weeks holiday a year or whatever it is it's a heck of a thing.

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4 you still have to do things like you've got to go to court at times but I feel its about getting to know them see where they are coming from and the key is reflection, supervision with reflective questions, I have recently done some reflective supervision as training with key questions to slip in like 'how did that make you feel and why' you know those kind of probing questions. Some people can really open up to that and really explore their own emotions and how things have had an impact and you will get other people who will give you one word answers like 'well I was fine with it' you know and it is by having those kind of discussions that you can start to identify the people that can actually really understand and interpret the emotions that we are going through in that situation and the people that are just doing without thinking about it.

5 Sometimes it's about timing as well because if you can't do some kind of reflective work with a worker you fairly quickly get a block and they don't want to talk about it, you have to give it time to go back to that situation when they are a little more ready to talk about it and you can ask those reflective questions and get something from and I think particularly when we are dealing with a difficult situation which we sometimes do in our work, you know you might have a particularly awful thing that's happened on a case that might mean someone just wants to come in and talk about it and yet others just close down, I think by pushing them too some you are going to get nothing out of them but by waiting until they are ready to talk about it its better.

4 Its about getting them to put themselves in that position because 'how would you feel if I was

saying this to you', what I have just said and use examples, 'how would you feel if I walked into your house' I sometimes give them experiences of my own so I think it's a must with staff.

1 It's a bit of a journey as well from when a worker starts right the way through their career for me it's not something that ends there , you can't say they are struggling with this family today it's about an event, it's about their understanding of their relationship with the people they are working with as J says to get to a place where they are doing things with the family also having the emotional competence if you like to know when to behave empathetically or when to stand back and not get involved that's development and time and it takes a long while to get to that place and when you've really got to know them as people.

5 For me that's the key when you've got to know your staff and you know how best to move forward with them.

Q Profession specific How do you address those issues for any staff that appear to be struggling?

2 I think you have to name them you know the work you have to have the culture set by the manager of you know an expectation of using all the areas that we all talk about you know you might ask a curious question you know 'you don't seem to be feeling too good' or 'you seem to be having a lot of feelings about that family can we just talk about them' because I think if you allow workers to take the macho role, 'oh nothing is going to touch me' it will touch them including the sensitivities of the assessment , they won't be receiving so I think we've got to keep that culture of discussion in the workplace but also critically in supervision and there are some excellent managers that are very tuned in and there are some managers who don't know what we are talking about so if you end up with one of those people with the best will in the world the culture will be one of tick lists and ticking boxes' go on tell me when you have done it, so I think its about having that dialogue and making it safe to talk about feelings as professional workers it doesn't mean failure or weakness, it is strength and a responsibility and a duty to talk about it.

1 And I think as a manager we model behaviours on ourselves so I think as managers if we are not able to identify a time when we are struggling with things, we don't have all the answers, we do deal with things, then I think its ok to say so.

Q Profession Specific Do You think that the emotional demands of the job have

1 I would break that down, there's the emotional demand in terms of working with the families and the difficulties that they are experiencing and there are the other demands which I think are organisational demands which for me the organisational challenges have changed and I think put a lot of pressure on workers.

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(Q Profession Specific) Can you identify areas of practice that might have developed your emotional resilience?

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

3 I think for me and this just personally, I think the range of case that I've had and different topics and I suppose could be labelled 'hot topics' I suppose have been things that I have not dealt with either in my own life or at work and therefore I've learnt that kind of going into that I can cope and its manageable and its ok so that it becomes a template for all future cases, so you know if you take child sexual abuse for example something I had no experience with in placement, it wasn't until my first year that I then had my first sexual abuse case and it was from that that I first developed my sort of template of then being able to deal with that in and that kind of expanded my sort of experience in what could be quite an emotive topic for but I was able to manage that really well and contain that in supervision so I was able to.

1 I think similar to that as well the difference in cases and the difference in social work is being able to cope in different situations and it has taught me that I am able to manage emotions in different situations and build on that and manage the cases that are coming in throughout my career really and be able to progress and build from that.

2 I agree it's just breaking in new cases really and because of the setting we are working in, in statutory child protection basically you very quickly develop experiences of , you need to start developing as quickly as possible in a practitioners career but then I recognise that not everybody is going to want or wind up in this kind of role, to begin with I suppose that's a kind of interesting point really that if the way that you work out how resilient you are or if the intent is to experience a big

range of cases and issues fairly quickly, you kind of think, oh maybe go into a different or may be a charitable sector where you gain a user group that would have a very different effect on you, a very different kind of development to the one that were all having.

(Q 8) Can I ask what factors might hinder your ability to be resilient?

3 For me there's something in supervision for me I think, supervision for me has to kind of be a certain level in depth in order to develop your resilience I mean were talking about raising awareness that needs to start happening on placements you know when you are actually doing your placements to then being quite robust when you are in particularly first year because you know if you're not able to talk about this experience and knowledge of another person may be more experience you are kind of really basing your awareness on what only you think and that in itself can be quite closed kind of thought system that may not be accurate you know so if in terms of practice if I think there has to be some sort of form some type of clinical supervision where you're actually able to talk about the emotional impact of the work on you as an individual because often I find it can be quite procedural driven which is essential as well but especially in your first year you do need to have more of an effective discussion and definitely focussing on emotions because its often not talked about its often something that people seem fearful of talking about and it shouldn't be its really important to be talking about this openly with your manager, so for me that's been a barrier and I think it's certainly something that can hinder your resilience.

2 You often get the proformas we use for supervision, the first question is how are you doing but basically there is a limitation to that and I panic, you are thinking how is this going in terms of your newly qualified situation you know you've done this in terms of this bit of training, how many hours do you need for your portfolio and cases and stuff like that.

1 Yes I think that supervision is very procedural I don't think we discuss emotions at all from my experience luckily I'm quite an open person so in the team I will discuss my emotions and obviously they are quite supportive and sometimes I do with my manager as well but supervision is mainly just about what's happening with my cases how I'm doing at work we don't go into much detail about how I'm feeling about my cases it's just about progression of them. I think another factor could be what's going on outside of work within your own life because obviously what goes on outside and work are very different and sometimes I find it useful to share both within the teams who know what happening outside so if I am a bit under pressure I am able to share that within the team and they are

supportive around that so I think sometimes what's going on outside you do need to speak about not just what goes on in the workplace but what goes on outside as well.

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(Q Profession Specific) How are you going to know then that emotional resilience has been learnt? How do you know it's been learnt?

LECTURERS

2 Responses. Responses from the student to different things, well hopefully we're going back to placement again because there are three. We should be seeing some changes in the way that students deal with complex issues and in their written work and see a development of thought, analysing things at a deeper level.

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4 But we're the people that say yes you can have that qualification, so that is a gate keeping role isn't it

1 But we won't be though will we because when the new structure comes in that 3 year degree then in their final year will be that and will be assessed in practice as being Social Workers

2 I think it's almost both because I think the driving thing is right because if you can you know change gear, reverse round a corner and you know do a three point turn or whatever they call it now, turn the car around the other way using reverse and first gears, if you can do that you can pass but then you could get drivers who've all just passed the driving test and some would be intuitive drivers, careful drivers, cautious drivers but some would be mad. So all we can say is they're are all at the point at which they can turn that car around, we think and then from there they have to then either develop that intuitively and continue that or not. Some will just stay fairly bad drivers.

(Q-Profession specific) As a Practice Educator can you think of the ways you are teaching and the way you are assessing students that relates to emotional

resilience?

PRACTICE EDUCATORS

3 For me as a starting point now having come from one side of the fence to the other practice to academic it's about going out to placements and talking about how to deal with the pressures and stresses from year 1 to get people to think about the journey they are going to start on and how difficult that journey might be and what tools they need to equip themselves with and think about to handle those difficult situations and some students go into those with blocks and its helping them to work through those blocks.

2 One of the things that would strike me would be one of the things is the ability to make a judgement and make an assessment of the situation and that in order to make competent judgements and competent assessments of the situation you are going to have to have a degree of emotional resilience because if you don't its quite likely that the judgement or assessment is going to be flawed.

1 I think I do it right at the very beginning certainly with students coming out on the first placements is to get them to go through that reflective stuff and for me that's one of the main things that if you can get them to do it right at the very beginning that not always but it tends to go with them all the way through then and one of the questions that I've got on my reflective sheet, the first question in fact is asking them to comment on a significant event or anything that is asking them to choose, is to get them to acknowledge the feelings they have that might come out of an interview with somebody at home and on the sheet they put angry, frustrated or happy or sad or whatever it was and the next question is what was it that made you feel like that so it actually gets them to pick it to bits not just that they've got the feelings but why are they angry say, was it because you were angry with yourself because you did something stupid or was it because you were angry because you couldn't get the resources you wanted and therefore you were angry with the system, were you angry with the service user were you angry with another professional so just to sort of unpick it.

2 Its quite interesting that one of the things that strikes me and I come up against it time and time again is that student reports on placement tend to talk a lot about the things that they are not so good at and the things that they have had to develop and the not so good reports tend to tell you

how brilliant the student has been , it takes a significant amount of emotional resilience to say yes I didn't get that quite right and I could improve on that and it takes a certain amount of resilience to say on placement I'm really struggling with this and this and this and it was only through talking about certain situations that I could see that I moved it's a more emotionally resilient approach to learning.

3 I think that is slowly adding to the list that we are building up and I think that's reflection and things like that being able to reflect on yourself and to reflect on things that were good as well as things that were not so good. Is an emotionally resilient person the one who can recognise the good things that come out of something as well as seeing the learning needs? I would suggest they are.

1 Well yes if you can't recognise your own strengths and your own good practice how can you recognise the things, the strengths that a service user has got if you are going in looking at difficulties without seeing the rest of it, you are doing them any favours are you? I think this links to the students value base as well and I think that has also got to be part of emotional resilience , one of the other things that I get students to do, to think about these things particularly if they haven't worked with a particular service group before, right at the beginning of the placement or on the pre placement visit is to get them to bring just a couple of paragraphs with them to say how they feel about the placement and about this particular service user group, say they are going in to working with people with mental ill health well how do they see working with ill health and sometimes they are fine, they are this they are that, oh older people they don't know what they are doing or they are disabled or they are teenagers , they are all wild, they are all hoodies, or all carrying knives you know very stereotypical sort of views that they may well come with and then I get them at the end if they haven't been looking at it in between to go back to that and ask have your views changed and if so how and if not why not, so they are building on where they were at the beginning hopefully.

(Q- Profession specific) How will you change your assessment and teaching methods in order to be able to enable students to evidence their ability to be emotionally resilient?

3 I think for me it's going to be actually using the title and link what they are learning about themselves to what emotion people can do but it's not a heading that has ever been used in the occupational standards or in any of the requirements now it in a sense gives us a licence to be doing what we should have been doing for years and saying this is about being emotionally intelligent this is

how we can do it so that's one thing.

<mark>2 I think for me it is just about making it more explicit because I think I have always emphasised the need for the things that make up emotional resilience because I see it as being so fundamental to the things that make up the job.</mark>

<mark>1 I think it's about unpicking what emotional resilience is under the different headings of the Professional Capabilities Framework</mark> if you like, to the units and elements that we used to have always had this is just the same thing, and it is just linking it to the new headings I think. I think the thing that you have to constantly have in your mind is that social work has changed and continues to change and I think it is something about being able to deal with change as well and I think it's being able to cope with it. Some students come into social work not as many as they used to with a starry idea that they are just going to be able to help people and they forget about the bureaucracy if they are going to work in a statutory agency and I think it is something about helping them to deal with lack of supervision or lack of support and things like that as well and you might not get the kind of support that you need and it's about working out your own strategies for that and work out who you are going to go to for advice and discuss your feelings particularly on a Friday teatime when you have just come back from perhaps moving a child from home and into a residential setting, something like that to back and just talk about how it was and that, you know I feel really angry about that or I'm sad or whatever.

3 That's really important because you what we have been saying about change that it is something we have been considering all the time the last year or so we have been in a time of great change and transition than ever before and it is about us bringing in change as a subject more because they are going to be in a change culture which is based on political demand and finance and actually you are working in a difficult area and equally you are trying to achieve but also being part of those transitions and having to deal with those transitions in a position and that is something about your practice. You can be a team which you think is solid and without any consultation they can say to you we are moving you out to that team over there and there is no choice about it anymore, there is no comeback , you can go to the union rep but actually you haven't got any power any more. It's that isolation that you can have in certain settings that students need to develop the skills to cope with.

(Q- Profession specific) What sort of practice opportunities will be most appropriate to evidence emotional resilience as a capability?

1 Surely you have got to be able to evidence it in everything you do I don't think you could just show it in one aspect it's got to be something that runs through everything you do and I think that's just as important with the agency as it is with the service users you are working with.

2 My initial reaction to that question was every single placement, I think that some placements will make it easier than others to evidence it might be controversial but I think some of the first placements for students, they can sail through them without being particularly challenged and they expect that that's what they are going to do and then they come across and I'll say statutory but it might be other kinds of placement in subsequent placements which are just more demanding so I suppose the more demanding the placement the more of an issue it is going to be to evidence emotional resilience or lack of it. Certain placements will offer better opportunities to develop resilience than others. Placements are therefore not necessarily a reliable way of assessing resilience.

3 It can go the other way because I suppose the idea is that as you go through three placements that emotional resilience develops over three years but sometimes it doesn't because if someone does a placement that is a bit of an easy ride the good student will think ok I'll run with this because its ok so really they are not directly challenged until they actually hit against something and suddenly they have to evidence something that they wanted to develop over a period and it doesn't happen, because I would like to think it is in every setting but equally its right that it is on a different level and it depends on the individual themselves and sometimes it doesn't hit their second or final placement and suddenly reality hits and you think……

2 You haven't actually asked this but it suddenly struck me that one of the dangers that people generally recognise is that emotional resilience is required in social work is that the environment that we have in the social work world at the moment that could actually be used as an excuse for unreasonable pressures on workers you know we have all seen job adverts where its 'you must be able to work in a stressful environment' and you know that if you have been around long enough that that is coded language for utter chaos that you are going to be working in , you are going to have to hack it and one of the current dangers is that it's the working world in just about any public service is getting more and more pressured and it's a bit like the frog in the water that's being slowly boiled that its happening gradually and insidiously that it actually thinks 'I have to get out of this water because it is too ridiculously hot and unreasonable' and we mustn't use the concept of emotional resilience as a requirement to stop us from saying in certain situations and at certain points actually the expectations on people here are too much and this is beyond emotional resilience we are abusing people.

1 Just to go back to the point you made about the placement may be seen as an easy ride I don't know that I entirely agree with that because what one students easy ride is, is another students total nightmare you know you could have the same setting and two completely different students one rises to the top without any seemingly difficulty at all and showing wonderful emotional resilience and the other one struggles like mad because they have been put into a situation they just hate and can't deal with that particular setting or that particular service user group and if they can't bubble to the top can you say that they show lees emotional resilience than the other one. It's not always a level playing field is it?

2 There are some placements where objectively the sample of placements would say yes these are the expectations for you to get through are going to be objectively less I would stake a lot on saying that is true.

(Q-Profession specific) Can I ask you if you can think of any examples from placement when you felt that it was necessary to be emotionally resilient? YEAR 1 STUDENTS

2 Sometimes it is the emotional response that you are getting from people which is sometimes aggressive, very emotional, very upset, I found that the most difficult situations that I had to deal with were screaming and shouting over the phone saying things that were sort of upsetting to me, or people very, very emotionally upset trying to self-harm things like that. I found I'm able to be detached from my own life but then you are suddenly seeing people really emotional I found that was hard afterwards to take it back home because it was a very hard placement.

1 I think for me on placement it was seeing people going through a similar situation that I had experienced quite some years ago, like I said being able to deal with that. I knew that whatever happened to me was dealt with though, so it didn't really surface at all. I could empathise with that service user; it put my issues into perspective. I could put myself in her shoes, I could say it's not about me it's about her and I felt strong enough to deal with the situation.

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4 I think it's similar to when I first joined the gym and you are just normal and then you do that first workout and that's like you build up emotional resilience and then you go on to heavier weights and you build up the weights but if you don't use it you go back to being flabby and lazy again and that's how I think my progression through Uni has been. I feel stronger having worked out, core weights,

resilience has moved and then if another crisis comes along, it will be like doing another work out and more and more so you don't have to come to Uni with a lot of emotional resilience that you have the ability to develop more emotional resilience otherwise we are excluding certain groups, certain age groups because mature students have had the experience to develop it. It's strange that we're all….. All mature students sitting here in this focus group.

4 I think it's a little bit dangerous to be honest with you the whole 'you must have' this ever so personal thing about you to be a professional. Something doesn't ring right here at all. If you haven't got this particular thing about you, or your personality or whatever, we can't teach it to you.

1 I kind of see it as a good thing as finally owning up to something that experienced Social Workers should have but really didn't really put their finger on it. It's a strange profession, you work completely solely, it's your name that's on the case files, your responsibility, you are professionals responsible for all those people's lives and decisions you make and yet you are part of a team so you are responsible and able to manage your own work and your own emotions.

I'm not just talking about managing time wise but also about your emotions and the juggling of the greater needs and lesser needs and all these different dynamics and that is for me emotional resilience. It is that and it's about time that I think it was addressed.

4 I wish I hadn't got it. So you are basically saying there's a difference between the types of cases that you've got , how harrowing you find those cases, you're telling me there's a distinct difference between how it can upset. How it can upset you emotionally and how big your case load is. Statutory gone mad thing. The emotional part of it, the hurt that a service user may be feeling and to help that kind of thing, I think that's it.

not to be oppressive because you over care and you have to work hard empowering and deskilling people because you care so much and the course has really prepared us

for that so is emotional resilience in a Social Worker really that good. If I'm honest unless you learn how you've got it, know how to handle it and can't just go to somebody and say you've got emotional resilience.

5 But that would not bring you out as a person and I think there is more of a pretence than anything because people are just trying when they are trying to be emotionally resilient.

(Q- Profession specific) Can you identify the aspects of the social work curriculum that might teach or enable you to become emotionally resilient?

YEAR 3 STUDENTS

1 I have always liked lectures when the lecturer actually reads out the most gruesome case examples for example child protection ones, I had that recently, I liked that. I don't like these sweet, nice cases I want the serious ones.

2 Yes I agree with that, that helps me to cope and I would probably not be shocked going into practice.

3 You do hear some shocking things you know the child abuse cases that we heard, yes awful

2 I do think the theories that we learn when we are here, the theories of grief and loss for example I think for me personally I have sort of applied it to my own life if you like and it's a way of understanding yourself and what's happening with relationships in your own life and it quite interesting to have these conversations with other students because it's almost as if they are scared, knowing those theories oh yes.

1 Its absolutely true, my son used to drive me up the wall, seriously I used to get very stressed and now no I'm not stressed at all because I understand why he's behaving the way he's behaving if I react in the way I used to react I was making the situation worse.

(Q Profession specific) How important is it to you that they are resilient?

5 I think consistency is important. What you don't want to find is that you have had a Social Worker for some time and they have had a breakdown and moved on and you are then left with inconsistent care, that's one reason why I think emotional resilience is important and also I think as a service user or carer you are in safe hands, confident that someone's not going to lose it or not be able to cope with whatever you are throwing at them.

2 Yes I agree with that.

3 I think it is also very much a support thing because I found looking after my mother because it was 24/7. In that situation I got a lot of support from the person who came in to help but I was also made to feel comfortable because the people who were coming in helped me , not only were they consistent in their attitude towards the outcome but also were the same people coming regularly. My mother would look forward to these people coming laughing and joking and it was a thing that was helping to make their job and I think that helped with my emotional resilience to keep going so you've got to have that support from people who are emotionally resilient because you don't want somebody who is coming in who is very quiet one day and comes in and starts bossing you about you need to know there is some consistency with the type of people and the actual people coming though.

Q Profession specific Can you think of any examples of when a Social Worker has demonstrated to you that they are resilient?

3 I think that consistency is very important for the carers as well as the cared for.

1 When we are talking about a specific instance I think for me a Social Worker lost a long term loosely expressed client someone she had been involved with and that person eventually committed suicide and the Social Worker was deeply affected by that and very saddened and carried on with her work and that's emotional resilience bouncing back from perhaps the ultimate loss that can occur to a Social Worker that is losing a client.

2 Especially with it being a long while, yes.

1 So that was an example of emotional resilience.

3 Talking about the family structure its very much a fragmented one, being in the same region, well my son lives in Switzerland, I can't rely on him for any help or anything, families are so fragmented but with your people part of your culture is to look after your own as much as possible, a lot of English culture, the British culture is not that, oh the state can look after you.

2 When the Social Worker which is what we are looking at, the Social Worker comes into a BME community members , to the home or sort of area of activity, isn't the expected activity of the Social Worker the same as we would expect.

4 That is what the expectation is, for those Social Workers training, information and those things are most important.

Q Profession Specific. How has a Social worker not being resilient affected the service you have received?

2 I'm going back to the incident I spoke about previously after the Social Worker had left my father was distressed because he felt that a) they hadn't given enough time to his problem because to him it was his whole life, it was paramount to him but she had no time for him and was just really what we would call ticking a box so the results of that approach was he was very very upset and it was one of the few times I've seen my father shed tears and he was dreadfully upset by it all and it also sets up problems for the carer because you have to sort out the mess left afterwards, that was about sitting down and listening to conversations to let him get it out of his system but at the end of the day he still felt that Social Services, his expression was 'they're not worth tuppence'.

3 Back to this cross cultural thing, it's important that the people who are doing the training look at the different cultural needs and the family set up and the expectations of different cultures if possible.

2 What is the link with emotional resilience?

3 The link there to me would be if I went into say a family and was trying to do something for them and they were not responding to me in the way I wanted it to go as according to professionalism I'm supposed to be coming along with, I'm going to be coming away from there saying, have I left them there unhappy are they achieving their goals, how are they best to achieve their goals, where am I going wrong in this cross cultural situation because if you are only taught in a certain way.

2 What's that got to do with your emotional resilience?

3 If I was the Social Worker that was coming away from there and wasn't satisfying the needs of the family it would upset me because then I wouldn't feel as if I was doing my job properly and then when I go onto my next client whether he be English or whoever I'd be thinking to myself, my background, am I doing the right thing there, what's happened to me in this last hour or so into a new situation.

2 You have to have that cut off, it's important for people whenever possible to work with the culture

you are used to because you take your own background with you wherever you go you take that's why I think it's important.

(Q – Profession specific. What is it about the Social Worker or the service that they offer that indicates that they are emotionally resilient?

SERVICE USERS

1 Well I see this as being very personal to that particular carer, particular caller, I don't see it as something institutional that determines the amount of time that this Social Worker is allowed so many minutes for a call. Many of my callers are I feel being pushed for time and consequently the exchange between us is very limited but within that limited time some Social Workers have a remarkable ability to convey a sense of concern, of understanding and one feels that communication is going on.

2 I would say that it's important that the Social Worker is non-judgemental and establishes that empathy at an early stage and then takes it from there and does not indicate that they are under any time pressure.

3 Yes I would go along with that, they are not rushing around, they are doing one job at a time and not trying to do three or four jobs at once, getting nowhere, they are focused on a particular aspect and then they do it.