Exploring the wider impact and effects of Bullying on young people aged 12- 18 years old

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Abstract

Bullying still continues to be a significant contemporary issue within society and is part of a much broader global public health problem. This research topic will seek to illustrate the current understanding of the wider impacts and effects of bullying and will better understand the impact that this has on young people's mental health. Additionally, this study will also seek to provide recommendations for future practice in supporting youth workers to best support the needs of young people aged 12-18 years old who experience bullying or involved in such behaviours.

This research study is a secondary piece of research consisting of a systematic literature review, which draws upon other literature and studies conducted by other researchers around the topic of bullying. An analysis and conclusions will then be formed from the findings within this piece of work to offer recommendations to support youth workers working with young people who have been affected by bullying. From research examining bullying in a wider context, young people's experiences of bullying, the mental health effects of bullying on young people and the role of youth work in relation to supporting those young people affected by bullying have been identified as significant topics of importance. These topics have been analysed in great detail in order to form a valid conclusion, in relation to the research question and also in providing recommendations for future practice.

Research suggests that young people's experiences of bullying greatly differs amongst social groups and that it is hard to place a clear definition between young people who experience bullying and those who choose to engage in bullying behaviours due to blurred boundaries. In

addition, this research also addresses the adverse mental and psychosocial effects of bullying on a young person's health with the most significant contributors being depression and anxiety amongst young people.

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Introduction

context and key issue

Bullying is a significant problem impacting the lives of individuals across all life stages and is considered by WHO (2010) to be part of a much broader public health issue as it has detrimental health, psychological, educational and social consequences. Whilst bullying impacts individuals across all lives stages it is most prevalent amongst school aged young people 12-18 years old. According to research Ditch The Label (2020) highlights the impact of bullying amongst young people with an increase of 25% year after year. For many young people the impact of bullying has seen rippling effects and long-term impact. Nazir (2018) examines the detrimental impact bullying has upon a young person's health and psychological well-being and the educational and social consequences for not only those young people experiencing bullying, but those who choose to engage in bullying behaviours, those who choose to engage in bullying behaviours due to experiencing bullying themselves and in addition young people who witness and are bystanders of these events. Such events have also been observed to have strong links to psychological health conditions such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and in some serious cases where young people feel they have been unable to cope suicide. Due to the context in which bullying takes place, the possibility it can happen anywhere and differing experiences of young people, in some situations means that it may be increasingly difficult to identify signs of bullying. Which leads to the question being asked how youth workers can best support the mental health needs of young people experiencing bullying and those carrying out such behaviours.

The following research project will outline and explore the wider impact and effects of bullying on young people aged 12-18 years old within the UK through exploring themes

around young people's experience of bullying, the mental health impact and effects of bullying and the relationship between youth work and supporting young people experiencing bullying. By defining such themes this will allow for formulation of recommendations for future practice and in providing a detailed analysis to support the research question formulated for the purposes of this project. Whilst there has been previous research exploring young people's experiences and the impact of bullying, none have specifically focussed upon the role of the youth worker in relation to supporting young people experiencing bullying. Furthermore, as bullying continues to be a significant issue within society and the changing notion of bullying during the COVID-19 pandemic drastically increasing online activity and the opportunity for increased rates of cyber-bullying; it is important that previous work is built upon and new concepts are explored in proposing a new perception in relation to bullying.

For the purposes of this review 'those who are experiencing bullying' will be used as a catchment phrase in reference to young people who experience bulling and those who choose to engage in such behaviours. This is due to blurred boundaries of young people who experience bullying, by definition a 'victim' of bullying and those who carry out such behaviours defined as 'perpetrators'. It is not so easy to distinguish these young people by definition, as often those who carry out such behaviours may have been exposed to and a victim of violence or bullying themselves in another context such as in the home environment. Baldry (2003) notes that exposure to interparental violence and bullying within the home environment is associated with bullying and victimization in school, in contrast to this these individuals who have been bullied are also twice as likely to go on to bully other individuals, as a defence mechanism for past or present trauma, as reported by (Ditch the Label 2020).

Identification of bullying may be challenging due to the complex nature of status amongst individuals and what is perceptible to the eye. Young people may be experiencing bullying but may also carry out such behaviours.

Motivation, aim's and objectives

The driver of motivation in undertaking this particular research project stemmed from my own diverse experiences of bullying as a young person and in observing how important key relationships with youth workers and mentors were in supporting me through my own adversities. Additionally, I have always had the desire to face the significantly prevalent public health issue of bullying, still current in today's society and contribute to informing a response to not only supporting individuals who have experienced bullying but those who choose to engage in such behaviours, which I note to be a gap in current provision.

Furthermore, as a youth worker in practice my motivation in undertaking research around this topic is to aid and support youth work practitioners, in developing interventions and services that will continue to support young people both experiencing and engaging in such behaviours. The recommendations formulated within this research will be significantly useful in further enhancing knowledge, supporting me in my own practice and delivery; as well as being a useful tool to share amongst other practitioners in the Coventry Youth Partnership to continue to aid an informed response to bullying.

This research project will seek to illustrate the current understanding of the effects of bullying through the exploration of young people's experiences and understand the impact of bullying in relation to the mental health of young people. Overall, the aim of the research is to better understand the impact of bullying and provide a firm foundation to how youth practitioners are able to best support the needs of young people 12- 18 years old experiencing

bullying and those engaging in these types of behaviours. Objectives within this piece of research include:

- To critically review literature around bullying, the wider impact and effects comparing data in relation to the research question

- To source appropriate data using the relevant research methods

- To formulate recommendations based on literature on how best to support the needs of young people 12-18 years old experiencing bullying.

 The research collated by collecting a variety of different pre-existing secondary sources also seeks to provide an analysis and critically appraise literature related to the impact and effects of bullying in producing a synthesis of current findings and in providing recommendations for future practice.

Contents of project

Prior to the formulation of this research project a systematic inquiry was completed on current research, this was to explore current and prevalent themes around the topic of bullying and in order to help frame the three main body chapters. The first chapter explores bullying from a much broader perspective touching on the diverse experiences of young people and the relationship of power and stigma in understanding bullying. With the second chapter focussing specifically on the mental health impact of bullying through the lens of protective and risk factors. The last chapter explores the relationship between the role of the youth worker in supporting the needs of young people, which provides a basis to provide recommendations for future practice and will be supported by a discussion and conclusion of research.

Research Approach

Research in its broader context has been defined as a systematic, detailed study of a subject into sources and materials, in order to discover innovative information or reach a new understanding (Cambridge English Dictionary 2021). The research conducted within this project is a systematic method of collecting and synthetizing pre-existing data, utilising a literature-based research method. A literature-based review is a secondary source and academic paper that presents current knowledge, findings and theoretical contributions in relation to a specific topic. Aveyard (2010) highlights that literature reviews present the whole jigsaw to a specific topic, makes sense of it and provides an analysis of research by integrating findings and different perspectives from a variety of distinctive empirical findings. As compared to other research approaches a literature review has the power to address and answer a research question effectively (Webster et al 2001); as it draws upon systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically analysis relevant research, that considers key theme's addressed within existing literature. The themes studied within current research have created and shaped the basis for exploration within the main three chapters of this research.

Winchester et al (2018) notes that the purposes of a literature-based review are to evaluate and summarise knowledge around a specific topic. It has also been suggested by Snyder (2019) that a literature-based review is one of the most relevant ways of collecting and synthesizing pre-existing data, due to the speed at which research is presented.

 Wright et al (2007) defines a systematic literature review as a review of evidence of a formulated question that utilises systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically appraise primary research, that is relevant to the chosen research topic and extract and formulate an analysis of data from the studies within the review.

Gough et al (2017) outlines the benefits of a systematic literature review being a more rigorous review utilising systematic methods of selecting studies relevant, reducing bias and enhancing transparency of the methodology. However, limitations of this process are that often the process is more time-consuming than other review methods, as the transparency of methodology and the rigid systematic review procedures involved in collating research is extremely demanding and a significantly time-consuming process, as it requires specific searches and screening of data in determining reliability and relevance (Mallet 2012).

Khan et al (2003) draws upon the structure of a systematic review initially involving framing a question, which forms a query to addressing a problem, researchers will then address within the review. Extensive and implicit search methods should then be utilised in order to source multiple resources both electronically and printed and the search selection should be in reference to the research question. After formulating resources, sources and material, studies should be refined and assessed for quality by use of critical appraisal to form suitability of meta-analysis. Evidence will then be formulated and summarized by exploring different studies, differences and combining effects through meta-analysis, a conclusion will then interpret current findings and recommendations.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this review secondary data will be collected as part of a systematic research process. Glaser (1963) defines secondary data analysis as the study of a specific problem through analysing existing data designed for another purpose. Qualitative research methods will be utilised when collating literature and data in order to inform the research conducted. The methods will be best used to better inform understanding of the issue of

bullying due to the nature of the topic, focussing upon the subjective meaning of an individual's experience and also seek to provide a detailed analysis of research already available. Strauss et al (1998) draws upon the methodology of qualitative research meaning any form of research that produces findings that do not produce statistical data or any other form of quantification. Whilst I will not be collecting quantitative data through primary research, some information that I draw upon in relation to the research question may be gathered from quantitative studies. As it allows comparison in providing an analysis of the wider impact of bullying and the effects that this has on young people's mental health. It is important to draw upon sources which capture the experiences, feelings and vulnerabilities, in which young people have faced as a result of bullying. Whilst also taking into account the views and perceptions of young people and practitioners, these accounts have been sourced through secondary research such as peer reviewed articles, journals, books, websites, government guidance and legislation.

A benefit of secondary data is this method of research is already available and easily accessible through peer reviewed articles, Journals, books, websites, government guidance and legislation, it provides a wide variety of sources for the researcher and for the generation of new insights from previous analysis and does not require time in collating data (Johnston 2014).

In comparison however secondary data collection methods doesn't come without its limitations, one limitation is that it is hard to source secondary data that is reliable and valid as it may not be based in the same country or within a time period that the researcher may require (Hoffmann 2008).

Throughout this research process online research platforms such as Google scholar was utilised, along with Coventry University's online search catalogue Locate, which utilises Boolean operators in order to focus a search and gather information that is relevant to the topic. Additionally, the GOV.UK site was utilised for the purpose of collating information in line with policies, procedures and also in gaining statistical data concerning the prevalence of bullying amongst secondary school aged young people.

Inclusion and exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria required as part of this systematic research review sets the boundaries in which a systematic review is focussed, as it pre-specifies the criteria and relevance for including and excluding studies according to predefined characteristics. Robey et al (1998) notes that a research question is formulated before potential studies are evaluated, for relevance and acceptability in line with the purpose of the review.

The methodology behind inclusion and exclusion criteria is guided by the focus and objectives of the research, with the inclusion criteria in this study being the key feature in identifying the target population. In this case young people 12-18 years old who have experienced bullying through direct experience or engaging in such behaviours and will be utilised in order to formulate a response to the research question. The exclusion criteria set out within this research allows for the focus to be driven by studies related to experiences of bullying, the health impact and importance of youth work provision in supported the needs of these young people, allowing a specific focus to the research by removing any study that is ineligible based on these characteristics.

For the purposes of this research the key terms utilised to search online databases focussed upon key concept such as "Types of bullying", "impact of bullying", "experiences of

bullying", which allowed for relevant data to be collected and organised so that significant themes could be drawn out and utilised within the research.

Ethical considerations

It is important to consider the ethical implications in conducting research, however as the research being carried out for the purposes of this project is literature-based and secondary data, there are limited considerations that need to be took into account in reflection to other forms of research. This research project underwent a formal ethics application, and this was submitted to Coventry University for approval prior to research commencing. This was approved by Coventry University in April 2021 and statemented as low risk (see appendix A for evidence of ethical approval certificate).

An important ethical consideration to be made when conducting research Wager et al (2011) analysis is the transparency and acknowledgment of the work of others. Throughout this process Coventry University's Harvard referencing has been utilised in order to give full credit to the authors of these studies and publications that have been reviewed within the research project. Additional ethical considerations to highlight within this research is ensuring that a coherent, non-biased observation of research is drawn. Cook et al (1979) demonstrates the importance of epistemological positioning of the researcher in constructing validity in an application to conclude research. In contrast to this Dunkin (1996) reflects upon the significance of quality criteria in research being as imperative as epistemological positioning in the studies drawn, this provides a basis for ethical reflection on credible reasons for information to be applied to research that may be missing in previous studies.

Dissemination

The findings concluded within this research project will aid future practice by providing recommendations in supporting the needs of children and young people, experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours. The outcome of these findings will be utilised by the researcher in her own organisation Changing The Future, in informing a youth work related response to inclusive provision for all young people experiencing bullying regardless of position. Additionally, the research will be shared with the Coventry Youth Partnership and practitioners working with children and young people in Coventry and Warwickshire and lecturers at Coventry University, to support the mental health needs of young people and in future initiatives challenging bullying.

Chapter One- Young people's experiences of bullying

Bullying is a significant issue affecting the lives of many young people in schools and educational settings within the UK, according to Ditch the Label (2020) bullying has risen by 25% year after year for the last 8 years. With the prevalence of cyber-bullying significantly greater with1 in 5 young people experiencing online bullying behaviour in 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2020). Additionally, similarities were also shared by the Department for Education (2018) noting that between 2017-2018, 40% of young people in the UK in year 10 had experienced at least one form of bullying and Anti-Bullying Alliance (2017) found that 1 in 4 young people between 7-15 years old reported having been frequently bullied.

Bullying and harassment is a form of discrimination defined by unwanted behaviour whereby an individual feels intimidated, degraded and humiliated by the actions of others. Young people often experience bullying due to significant difference of particular characteristics, GOV.UK (2010) reports that the Equality Act (2010) legally protects individuals from discrimination in wider society. Which means that discrimination or unfair treatment based on certain characteristics, such as age, race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership is deemed unlawful. In order to understand bullying this chapter will explore a much broader perspective, capturing young people's experiences and current research findings by drawing upon the concept of power and stigma, and a number of different characteristics in relation to bullying such as gender, race and disability. Whilst this chapter will draw reference to a number of different protected characteristics, this topic is much broader than I can research due to time and word constraints.

What is bullying?

According to GOV.UK (2011) there is currently no legal definition of bullying that is universally shared and acknowledged. However, may be defined by a set of behaviours that are 'repetitive' and 'intended to hurt', inflicting intentional harm over time to physically, emotionally or psychologically hurt another individual or group (Department of Education 2020). Research conducted by Olweus (1993) offers a further definition in supporting identification of bullying by the suggestion of seeking to explore 'exposure', 'negative impact' and 'repetitiveness'. By doing this he suggests that a young person is experiencing bullying, when they are exposed to repeated negative behaviours over time by another young person or group of young people, further drawing upon the negative behaviours and intent to inflict injury and discomfort. Bullying may be identified in several forms with some more apparent than others, the intent to cause injury or harm is most easily recognised and identifiable amongst physical bullying, due to witnessing events or seeing evidence of injury (Bolton et al 2005). Occurring as a result of physical actions such as (kicking, punching, hitting, slapping, pushing) to gain power and control over the individual being targeted. There may also be noticeable characteristics that aid identification of physical bullying which will be explored later in the chapter, as often those who choose to engage in such behaviours are stronger, have a bigger physical appearance and may project aggression at a certain individual or group. Further forms of bullying may be harder to recognise as they may not always be visible to the eye or due to limited evidence, however intent to cause injury or harm is still present. Emotional bullying is defined by any form of bullying that inflicts damage on an individual's emotional wellbeing, examples include (spreading malicious rumours, ignoring and socially isolating, belittling or saying upsetting comments to an individual). Verbal bullying is as a result of slanderous statements or accusations that are indented to cause significant emotional stress on the individual experiencing it, (Tormenting,

taunting, teasing, harassment) are all illustrations of verbal bullying. Kowalski et al (2012) assesses the link between other types of bullying and cyber-bullying, combined with increased usage of devices, the internet and social media bullying has evidentially shifted from the school playground to the internet. NSPCC (2021) defines cyber-bullying as the intentional act of utilising the internet or other forms of digital technologies such as a phone to deliberately humiliate or upset another individual. Furthermore, NSPCC (2010) defines sexual bullying as behaviours that may be physical or non-physical and focussed upon an individual's gender or sexuality.

In exploring the wider impact and effects of bullying on young people within this study, a combination of GOV.UK (2011) and Olweus (1993) definitions of bullying have been utilised in order to formulate a working definition of bullying. 'Bullying is defined by a set of behaviours that are repetitive in nature happening over a period of time and expose an individual to negative behaviours intended to hurt and inflict intentional harm having a negative impact on an individual's physical and psychological health'.

A study by Mahri et al (2005) describes bullying as being one of the most common and serious forms of school violence taking place in schools, with 29% of UK secondary school headteachers receiving reports of physical and non-physical forms of bulling, amongst students suggesting a significant need for an expanded legal definition of bullying. Further studies by Ditch The Label (2020) highlighted that 1 in every 4 young people within the UK had experienced bullying within the last 12 months between 2019 and 2020, 77% of those young people reported that the experience had negatively impacted their mental health which will be investigated within chapter 2 of this study. Additionally, Birmingham within the West Midlands was also noted to be the highest ranked location within the UK, highlighting the

prevalence of bullying and the need for an expanded definition of bullying suggested to be an issue within the city and beyond.

Concept of bullying

Bullying can be explored through the concept of power, as bullying is said to occur when an individual is exposed to repeated intentional abuse, by an individual who has more power than the individual being victimised (Olweus 1999). Additional extensive definitions of bullying draw upon repeated aggressive behaviour, in which the individual engages in such behaviours for their own benefit, exploiting an imbalance of power to dominate Olweus (2013) and causing intentional harm to an individual experiencing these behaviours (Rigby et al 2011). Power is said to be a fundamental factor in determining bullying as compared to other types of interpersonal aggression, a study by Nelson et al (2019) highlighted that young people who experience bullying have noted an imbalance of power. This is due to the perception of superiority and the lack of capability to prevent further repeated acts of aggression contributing to increased risk of harm. Repeated acts of aggression have been associated with significant risk of harm to those experiencing bullying, the repetition of such behaviours occurs as a result of a power imbalanced relationship. GOV.UK (2017) studies the impact of individual pathways that respond to stress leading to poor health, educational and developmental outcomes, as well as serious consequences on an individual's mental health, such consequences will be explored and detailed further in chapter two.

Power is a factor of all social relations and is an everyday phenomenon that is embedded within society, however something of which differs greatly amongst different groups within society. According to Turner (2005) there are many definitions of power, but he suggests power may be defined by the ability to have influence over another individual by controlling

others, situations or events to make happen what an individual desires to happen. One theory of power developed by Foucault (1983) challenges the idea that power is wielded by individuals or groups by acts of domination or coercion that is pervasive. According to Foucault (1983) study power is often misunderstood and cannot be defined simply by one definition, instead the study focuses upon a complex set of forces and force relations that are as a result of many factors; existing in every part of society and force relations being factors in an individual's social interactions that push or constrain one to behave in a certain way an effect of difference, inequality or an imbalance of power existing within relationships. Similar perspectives are also drawn from Marx (1976) who seen power as coercion and an oppressing system in society, whereby one class or group oppresses another often held by a dominant class, individuals in power seek to sustain this relationship to remain in control of others. Intersectionality can be offered as a framework to distinguish and conceptualise an understanding of aspects of an individual's social and political identity that creates a line between discrimination and privilege. Runyan (2018) identifies that factors such as gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability and physical appearance are intersecting social identities that may empower or oppress an individual.

In utilising power as a concept to understand bullying this provides a basis to comprehend similarities of abuse of power and discrimination with gender inequality, race, disability and socio-economical disadvantages as a result of stigma within society. In one situation a young person may have more power over another individual because they are engaging in bullying behaviours, however in another situation this power may be removed as a result of another experience.

Experiences of Bullying

It has been highlighted that young people's experiences of bullying greatly differ across social groups, DCSF (2008) identifies possible risk factors of bullying being ethnicity and race, sexuality, religion, culture, disability and being identified as a young carer. For the purposes of this study, we will only draw upon three gender, disability and social class due to word constraints

Gender

The demeanour of male bullying often means they will be more likely to experience physical bullying by being hit or threatened, Rosen et al (2019) notes that this is due to boys tending to be more physically aggressive and more direct and open about carrying out such behaviours compared to females. Power can be manifested in a variety of ways and can be as a result of an individual being older, physically stronger or bigger as explained by Olweus (1993). In comparison research suggests that female bullying differs somewhat to male bullying, girls were more likely to experience less visible forms of bullying and were found to utilise passive-aggressive methods of bullying, such as verbal assaults, social isolation, spreading rumours or ostracizing. In addition to this, many young females also experience misogynistic bullying within the school setting, Long et al (2018) suggests that in 2018, 29% of 16–18-year-old girls reported that they had experienced unwanted sexual touching in school, whilst a further 59% of 13–21-year-old girls stated that they had encountered a form of sexual harassment in the last year. The research suggests that gender influences the experiences of bullying amongst females and males, as the evidence showed that males were more likely to experience physical bullying, whilst a significant number of young women had experienced sexual bullying.

Disability

Furthermore, Parsons et al (2016) reflects upon the increased risk of bullying amongst young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and Autism spectrum conditions. Those young people with a SEND diagnosis were twice as likely to be at risk of bullying, as compared to young people without special educational needs or disabilities. Furthermore, Hebron et al (2017) emphasis the increased likelihood of bullying of those who have been statemented, as they are more likely to experience bullying frequently compared to those without a statement of needs. Further evidence suggests that there is a much greater risk of bullying amongst young people who are on the autism spectrum, as it is thought this is due to the stigma attached to special educational needs and mental health conditions, in which individuals are often labelled and isolated within the school environment.

Social Class

According to Jansen et al (2012) some evidence demonstrates significant socioeconomical disparities amongst bullying and victimization, being young people from lower socioeconomic families are at greater risk of experiencing bullying either by an individual experiencing or choosing to carry out such behaviours. Evidence suggests that some socioeconomical disadvantages may be a risk factor for why an individual may be experiencing bullying or choosing to engage in bullying behaviours. This is often consequently due to other factors associated such as young people experiencing an adverse childhood experience or may be in the care system or a young carer. Three possible interpretations of such results have been suggested by Cree (2003), Farmer et al (2013) and Lloyd (2013) who have examined the prevalence of bullying in relation to socioeconomical factors, the results demonstrated a connection between young carers and bullying, whilst young people who live in care regularly experienced bullying.

In summary there is a large amount of evidence within this chapter highlighting the need for an extensive definition of bullying, due to the frequency and number of young people experiencing such events. Common themes within this research drew upon the concept of power and stigma and the characteristics that may present as resource utilised to engage in bullying behaviours, as those who engage in such behaviours position of power within society increases.

Chapter Two- Mental Health effects of bullying on young people

Bullying is said to have significant impact upon young people who experience bullying, those who choose to engage in such behaviours and young people who witness such events, leading to short term and long-term effects upon the mental, physical and emotional health of those involved. Rivara et al (2016) reports that these effects may influence academic performance, impact upon social relationships and increase the risk of mental health related disorders. This topic is greatly detailed and is much broader than the research I am conducting, for the purposes of this chapter I will be drawing upon the relevant research in understanding the mental health implications of bullying and how this effects an individual's psychological wellbeing. In acknowledging such research reference will be drawn to a number of different protective and risk factors that often overlap of those who experience bullying and those who engage in such behaviours. For the purposes of this chapter young people have been categorised into, those experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours in order frame the discussion, however often throughout this chapter there is a crossover, and they will overlap. In any situation micro and macro levels of understanding can be explored, in order to conceptualise and develop a deeper meaning Goffman's (1959) theory on power takes on a macro perspective in understanding bullying, being the potential or capacity of compromised resources to affect each other's behaviours.

Bullying as an Adverse Childhood Experience

Research by Edward et al (2018) suggests that experiencing bullying is noted to be categorised as an adverse childhood experience, whereby prolonged and repeated periods of abuse are inflicted upon a young person. This is due to the traumatic nature of such events and the lasting impact it may have on an individual, associated with significant distress

bullying has been said to considerably impact the mental, physical and emotional health of young people throughout school and often long-term effects of trauma continue to manifest into adulthood. WHO (2021) utilises a micro perspective in understanding the impact of bullying, by defining adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) as the most significantly, intensive and frequent sources of stress that young people may be subject to in early life. Boullier et al (2018) identifies these experiences including, but not subject to numerous forms of abuse, neglect, violence and household dysfunction (domestic abuse, alcohol, substance abuse) and peer or community violence. Research suggests that continuous and prolonged periods of stress, due to adverse childhood experiences are closely linked with toxic stress, where high levels of cumulative adversity is experienced during critical periods of early development. Bradshaw et al (2012) notes that young people who are experiencing bullying behaviour may change, this may be as a result of neurological development as research suggests that such experiences may alter the brain.

In a study of 160 high risk young people aged 16 + Bifulco et al (2014) established in 2014, that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in adolescent years is significantly greater at (44%). With (26%) of young people experiencing externalizing disorders such as substance abuse or dependency (20%), conduct disorders (12%) and (30%) of young people experiencing internalizing disorder such as depression (23%), anxiety (15%), a further (19%) of young people experiencing combined internal and external psychological conditions. Public Health England (2018) determines the link between adverse childhood experiences and bullying, as an ACE is a traumatic event which may have negative lasting effects on an individual. A young person who experiences bullying may experience mental and physical health implications, which may impact upon other aspects of their life and progress into adulthood highlighting the significant link between the two.

According to Marsh (2018) those young people who experience bullying as a result of being subject to and those young people who engage in such behaviours are noted to share many risk factors that are the same. This topic is complex and there are many different risk factors and protective factors that influence both the young person who is experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours. Due to the complexity and word constraints for the purpose of this chapter three shared risk factors will be explored parental factors, the covid-19 pandemic and mental health risk factors and one protective factor personal networks in understanding the mental health needs of those who experience bullying.

Risk Factors

Jansen et al (2011) longitudinal study examines the behaviours of school-aged children, social-economic status, family dynamics and parental mental health of bullying at 11 and 13 years old. Research suggests that behaviour and emotional problems, socio-economic status and family breakup is said to influence the involvement of young people in bullying at a later age. (Pepler et al 2003) reflects upon the relationship between young people who experience bullying, as a result of carrying out such behaviours and the increased risk of engaging in illegal activity, crime, violent or risky behaviours such as substance misuse.

It has been noted that focussing on risk groups in early life will support in the prevention of bullying, which will be explored in greater depth in chapter 3. Another risk factor of engaging in bullying behaviours may be as a result of the young person experiencing adverse childhood experiences at home. For example, this young person may be witnessing domestic abuse in the home or be experiencing bullying themselves. According to Bowers et al (1994) young people who experienced bullying, as a result of engaging in such behaviours have been reported to experience parents in unhealthy relationships and have problematic relationships with parents. Similarly, Zych et al (2021) studies the relationship between reduced social

activities with family and peers being an increased risk factor for experiencing bullying in males, increasing the risk of substance use, the research suggests that this may be as a result of inconsistent boundaries, discipline and a lack of affection within the family environment. Evidence by Olweus (2004) suggests that by distinguishing risk factors that increase the risk of bullying, such as adverse family dynamics and implementing controlling factors will support the reduction of bullying. Such will be explored in greater depth in chapter 3 recommendations will also be provided within the discussion and conclusion chapter of this study. According to Wolke (2015) research highlights that individuals engaging in bullying behaviours but are also experiencing an adverse childhood experience themselves, are at higher risk of significant mental health problems. As compared to those young people who experience bullying and who experience bullying by carrying out such behaviours. Research draws attention to data highlighting increased rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation amongst this group of young people, which is stated to be as a result of acknowledging the seriousness of their actions.

COVID-19 pandemic

In current climate the Covid-19 pandemic has become a potential risk factor for not only those who experience bullying but also those who choose to engage in such behaviours. Khan (2020) analysis that in a recent study in 2020, that there was a significant rise in young people experiencing cyber-bullying, toxic content and hate speech online which had increased by 70% and impacting the mental health of young people.

Research proposes that this is as a result of young people engaging in remote education and the lack of social activities available during the stay-at-home order implemented by the government; having increased leisure time and increased stress levels were also noted to be a contributing risk factor for those choosing to engage in such behaviours and those

experiencing bullying. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to cyber-bullying from research suggests the potential negative impact and psychosocial consequences that this may have on a young person if protective factors are not present within their life.

Mental health risk factors

Shetgiri et al (2015) clarifies the association between parental mental health and young people who engage in such behaviours, the study highlighted that having just one or both parents with mental ill health is a risk factor in engaging in such behaviours and associated with bullying. In contrast Anti-Bullying Alliance (2017) reflects that young people who experience bullying, account for 1 in 10 young people aged 5- 18 years old who have a diagnosed mental health issue. However, the relationship between bullying and mental health is increasingly complicated this is due to some young people experiencing bullying as a result of pre-existing mental health issues and other young people experiencing mental ill health and developing mental health conditions as a result of bullying. Furthermore, in an extensive study by Wolke (2015) he highlighted the many mental health consequences associated with engaging in bullying behaviour such as anxiety, borderline personality disorder, depression, self-harm and suicidal ideation. Similar reports also suggested that amongst individuals who have experienced bullying the most common mental health concerns included anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation and eating disorders.

Protective Factors

Factors that protect against power imbalance

Bronfenbrenner (1979) theory draws attention to the influence of environmental factors on a young person's development and the protective factors that surround who an individual interacts with. From the family perspective research demonstrates the significant relationship

between strong attachments with parents or a primary care giver, living with both parents, significant parental support and the reduced risk of engaging in bullying behaviours (Wang et al 2009) resulting in resilient outcomes for young people who have experienced trauma. Furthermore, Bowlby (1988) reflects that the attachments formed with parents or a primary care giver, build the fundamental foundations for a young person's social, emotional and cognitive development. Without the buffer of nurturing care givers and a safe stable environment this can lead to long term disruption's in brain development, difficulties with behaviour and learning, mental health issues and early engagement with risky behaviour. Bus et al (1999) examines the increased likelihood of internalizing disorders such as anxiety, depression and trauma-related disorders and external behaviours such as aggression amongst young people with insecure attachments being at greater risk, in contrast to those young people who have formed a secure attachment. From a school perspective Williams et al (2007) draws close attention to engagement and being connected within the school environment being a protective factor of bullying. This is due to if young people are engaging in school, they are not being isolated away from others and also being connected to a broader network such as teachers or peers that they could call upon if they needed help.

In summary this chapter highlights the need for bullying to be viewed through the lens of an adverse childhood experience and also draws upon the risk factors associated to the mental health needs of young people experiencing bullying. A common theme within this chapter was that often these risk factors overlap, which is as a result of the changing notion of roles and power explored within chapter 1.

Chapter Three- Informing a youth work perspective

In informing a youth work perspective of supporting interventions that meet the needs of young people who experience bullying, it is important to understand youth work practice, ethics of care in practice and current interventions. For the purposes of this chapter in informing recommendations for future practice I will explore the role of the youth worker in supporting young people, ethics of care in practice and current interventions utilised.

Current interventions

Current interventions that are in place to support young people experiencing bullying and reduce bullying and aggression are influenced by as Cross et al (2018) establishes addressing the space in which the young person is in such as the classroom curriculum or the national curriculum for youth work, school, organisational policies and procedures, the social and psychical environment in which a young person lives, pastoral care approaches and the relationship and links between school, home, community. Ttofi et al (2011) identified the importance of a whole school approach, addressing wider systematic factors, relationships with others, evidence-based methods and the need for evaluating all factors in providing bullying interventions to support young people. There is a link between bullying and wider systematic factors and such methods can be utilised in informing youth work, evidence-based interventions to support young people experiencing bullying. As smith et al (2003) notes that interventions working to support young people should exceed schools and target systematic factors that may influence a young person such as family, friends and the environment in which they live. Furthermore Arora (1994) Crosse et al (2011) argue that in order for more lasting effects to be achieved there is a significant need for a whole school approach, evidence-based practice and effective evaluations to ensure positive outcomes for young

people are achieved and in preventing bullying. Additionally, a study conducted by Smith et al (2004) highlighted that the focus of bullying interventions should be on the wider community of young people, then only those who experience or engage in such behaviours. One example of a successful intervention that may be utilised in demonstrating the effectiveness of reducing the rates of bullying is the Kiva intervention program (Salmivali 2010)., Axford et al (2020) examines the significance of the intervention and noted the most significant focus being changing the role of bystanders who witness events of bullying. Further studies by Cioppa et al (2015) additionally emphasised the importance of self-efficiency, growth of empathy and attitudes of young people in supporting the minimisation of bullying.

There is a significant link between current intervention methods and youth work, as current interventions drawn upon within this chapter align with values that underpin youth work. There is a strong emphasis on utilising a holistic approach when working with young people in current interventions, to reduce rates of bullying taking into account wider systematic factors and relationships with others., Reynolds et al (2009) affirms that a holistic approach to development is also a fundamental process utilised within the youth work sector in supporting the emotional well-being of young people and promoting resilience.

Defining youth work

Research by Alldred et al (2018) notes that there are various definitions to define
 youth work practice a model that endeavours to systematise and put into context a distinctive set of practices. Butters et al (1978) in an early study of youth work attempted to theorise British youth work traditions drawing reference to sociology of education and youth work taking the position of a countervailing force that minimises the reproduction of social inequality, that the educational system often amplifies. Additionally, further studies by Leigh

(1985) and Cooper (2012) distinguished several approaches 'character building', 'cultural adjustment', 'community development', 'institutional reform and 'radical paradigm' whereby social work perspectives informed approaches to youth work. Smith (2013) examines current youth work practice as a form of informal education that focuses on young people, emphasised by its unique approach of voluntary participation and relationship, commitment by association, informal and approachable nature acting with integrity and concern around the education and welfare of young people.

For the purposes of this chapter the working definition that I will use to apply meaning will be Smith's (2013) definition of youth work, whereby he explores youth work as being informal education focussed on supporting the needs of young people through a youth led approach, voluntary participation, partnership working, respect equality, inclusion, acting with integrity and empowering young people through involvement in decision making, such characteristics underpin the role of the youth workers in supporting young people experiencing bullying or engaging in such behaviours.

Role of the Youth worker

The youth work relationship with young people is unique and a specific type of relationship as whilst the framework of youth work isn't based upon counselling it utilises counselling skills. Rodgers (1957) person-centred approach provides a framework to supporting young people as it shares similarities in value base and the commitment in creating helping and meaningful relationships. The study stresses three core conditions empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard in ensuring young people feel safe and in achieving their full potential. According to McColgan et al (2017) successful relationships for practitioners working with young people are fundamental in supporting the work they deliver as it

supports the recovery of young people and notes the ability to focus upon four stages of development in building rapport, trusted meaningful relationships with young people, engagement, negotiation, enabling and endings. In utilising a relationship-based model in youth work practice it allows for young people to share their ideas, negotiate agreed expectations and setting boundaries in addressing confidentiality or consent, enabling change by empowering young people and valuing the end process by reflection and signposting to other services. Research by Martin (2003) examines the fundamental value of such relationships in youth work being central to the resilience of young people and is said to be a protective factor in identifying risk factors in young people's lives and in avoiding unsafe, risky and negative outcomes, such discussions have been reviewed in the previous chapters. Burt et al (2010) study shares similarities with the most significant resiliency factor being a young person's connectedness to others within their life, who model and reinforce positive pro-social behaviour that encapsulates communication, care and respect within society.

In essence this chapter highlighted the importance of youth work practice, and the role of the youth worker in providing interventions, to meet the needs of young people experiencing bullying, whilst also drawing upon effective interventions that may be utilised in order to form recommendations for future practice.

Discussion and Conclusion Chapter

The overall aim of this research project was to illustrate the current understanding of the impact and effects of bullying, to better understand the effect that this has upon children and young people's mental health. In doing this it also sought to provide an analysis of literature, in providing recommendations on how to best support the mental health needs of children and young people, experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours. Within this chapter recommendations will be drawn from common themes, and research in order to provide recommendations to support future practice and in aiding an informed response to reduce the prevalence of bullying. All three chapters presented within this research provide an insight into bullying and mental health and the wider impact and effects for those experiencing bullying and engaging in such behaviours. Despite the fact that all three chapters draw upon different concepts in relation to bullying, familiar links are shared throughout, and common themes are shared as to how individuals wield power, problematic relationships of power and ethics of care in practice.

For the purpose of this research project the age range specifically focussed on was 12-18 years old, as the prevalence of bullying is said to be much greater in secondary school aged young people. Research analysed within this study was also collated from a number of different studies, journal articles in the UK and other countries outside of the UK.

Research presented several key discoveries in understanding young people's experiences of bullying; the wider impact and effects on a young person's mental health and emotional wellbeing and the role of a youth worker practitioner in providing interventions to lower the prevalence of bullying. A significant finding within this research project was the position of

power, how individuals wield power and the relationship shared with caring practice. Nodding's (2003) ethics of care in practice is said to be a fundamental process when exploring relationships, which aligns to the values of youth work practice and can be utilised in understanding positions of power in caring relationships. Her approach analysis's the importance of caring practice being a universal human attribute and the roles within a caring relationship. Further work by Nodding's in 2013 analysis's the significance of caring practice as a universal human attribute and the role each participant plays in a caring relationship being the fundamental foundation to an individual's identity. The dynamic of such relationship is receptive and driven by the needs of and the responsibility to others rather then motivated by actions or principles. The dynamic of such relationships often consists of a minimum of two individuals, one that takes on the role of 'caring', the other the one being 'cared for'. Distinctive to the role of the caring individual is that they act in a position of power and their response is based upon the perceived need of the individual being cared for and actions are based upon this to enhance their wellbeing, showing a commitment to supporting the individual.

Similarities of positions of power and caring practice are shared with and a pivotal part in youth work practice, Sapin (2012) recognises the significance of negotiations of positions of power being based upon voluntary participation, in developing meaningful relationships with young people in youth work. Additionally, a young person's right to choose whether they would like to be involved in decisions made by youth workers, regarding issues that impact them by drawing upon and valuing young people's contributions encourages young people, to find their own solutions meaning that young people are central to the values that underpin youth work practice. In contrast to this it is important to note that professional boundaries need to be negotiated at the start of the working relationship with the young person, as in

order to develop meaningful, trusted relationships the role often compromises positions of power and could result in a power imbalance, discussed in depth in chapter 1 leading to a lack of authority for youth work professionals if boundaries are not negotiated.

A limitation of the study was due to the complex nature of the topic of bullying, at times there was a feeling of untidiness as there was numerous concepts that underpinned each theme. Due to word constraints, it was not possible to include all these concepts and something of which is acknowledged in the relevant chapters.

In providing recommendations for future practice to best support the mental health needs and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours; it is important to acknowledge the need for a collaborative whole organisation approach and early intervention support at a younger age, in reducing the prevalence of bullying. Morin (2017) notes that interventions related to preventing bullying should be implemented with children as young as 6 years old. By implementing an early intervention approach, it focuses upon preventing bullying from happening before it happens, as compared to current interventions that mostly focus upon working with the problem whilst it is happening. Furthermore, in order to develop meaningful interventions and preventative anti-bullying programmes, it is fundamental to understand power as a concept and power dynamics within relationships, to provide a framework to conceptualise young people's experiences and to provide an informed response. When working with young people who have experienced bullying or those who are engaging in such behaviours, it is also significantly important to utilise a holistic approach in support, something of which is already consistent and underpins youth work practice at present. In applying a holistic approach to support it allows for bullying to be viewed from, the perspective of an adverse childhood

experience and takes into account risk factors such as socioeconomical status or parental mental health, in understanding why individuals choose to engage in bullying behaviours. In providing further interventions to support practice, reference can be drawn from the KiVa program discussed in chapter 3 in relation to changing the role and attitudes of the bystander in relation to minimising bullying. Additionally, the Protective Behaviours Consortium (2017) demonstrates that the Protective Behaviours process, a practical approach to personal safety, can be utilised in order to develop anti-bullying interventions and focuses upon the ability to respond and the responsibility for ourselves and to others.

In conclusion it is significantly important to understand the prevalence of bullying amongst secondary school aged young people, within the UK and the wider impact and effects that this has on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Significant consideration should also be shown to protected characteristics that may put a young person at risk of experiencing bullying and wider systematic factors that may influence a young person to engage in bullying behaviours. Bullying is still a widespread contemporary issue impacting upon the lives of many young people, there is a need for further research in providing evidence-based interventions and an extensive legal definition to support the reduction of bullying within the UK.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Certificate of Ethical Approval

Coventry University

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant: Abbie-Leigh Fudge

Project Title: Exploring the wider impact and effects of bullying on young
                                          people aged 12-18 years old.

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical
Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Low Risk

Date of approval: 07 Apr 2021

Project Reference Number: P119281

Appendix B- Systematic Review Table

Sample of systematic review table produced for the purpose of this study

Title of publication	Produced by and year of publish	Key points	Specific focus to topic choice
The Subject and power	Focualt, M (1983/2003)	Power is wielded by individuals or groups by acts of domination or coercion that is pervasive. Individual's social interactions push or constrain one to behave in a certain way an effect of difference, inequality or an imbalance of power existing within relationships	A concept that can be used to understand bullying from the lens of power and how an imbalance of power impacts relationship dynamics.
Prevalence of bullying and victimization among children in early elementary school: Do family and school neighbourhood socioeconomic status matter?	Jansen,P,Verlinden,M, Berkel, A (2012)	Longitudinal study examing the behaviours of school-aged children and the impact of social-economic status, family dynamics and parental mental health of bullying at 11 and 13 years old.	An analysis of risk factors that may put a young person at increased risk of developing a mental health condition.

Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: A systematic and meta-analytic review.	Trofi,M,Farrinton, P (2011)	Importance of a whole school approach, addressing wider systematic factors, relationships with others, evidence-based methods and the need for evaluating all factors in providing bullying interventions to support young people. Link between bullying and wider systematic factors in providing bullying interventions.	Evaluation of effective interventions that support the needs of young people experiencing bullying and those engaging in such behaviours.
Caring: A feminine approach to ethics of moral education	Nodding,N (2003	Ethics of care in practice being a fundamental process. Importance of caring practice and understanding positions of power in caring relationships	How we do caring practice and ethically.