

University of Nottingham
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Can the Power Threat Meaning Framework be Adopted into Educational Psychology Practice?

Exploring Relevance and Challenge through a World Café Approach

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of

Doctor of Applied Educational Psychology

May 2025

Word Count: 40,320

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Abstract

The Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b, 2018a) offers an alternative conceptualisation of mental health or 'emotional/behavioural distress'. First proposed as a substitute for psychiatric diagnoses, it is suggested that the framework can be applied across various disciplines. However, existing literature highlights both advantages and challenges encountered during the initial adoption of the framework in applied psychological practices. Little is known about the PTMF's applicability to practice in Educational Psychology (EP) services.

Using a World Café methodology, this study aimed to explore Educational Psychologists' (EPs) views on the perceived relevance of the PTMF and potential challenges to applying it in EP practice. In line with the exploratory sequential design and the World Café principle of creating 'networks of conversations', two phases of research took place. In total, three EP services participated.

Each service engaged in a session introducing the PTMF and a World Café where participants discussed the PTMF's potential application to EP practice through iterative small group discussions. Aligned with the exploratory focus, the PTMF was suggested as relevant to EPs' reflective practice and explicit practices with children and young people, adults, school systems, and wider systems. Conceptual and practical challenges to translating the framework to EP practice were also identified.

The findings are examined alongside existing literature, highlighting the tensions EPs face regarding their role in therapeutic practices, interpreting meanings, and operating within complex power dynamics that shape their influence and scope of practice. Utilising

Rogers' (2003) 'diffusion of innovations' theory within a contextualist epistemological framework, the findings emphasise various elements EPs should weigh when implementing the PTMF in their contexts. Implications for EP practice are offered as reflective questions for EPs, guided by the PTMF and current research insights. The study's strengths and limitations, along with suggestions for future research, are also discussed.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to say thank you to all those who took part in the World Cafés. This research would not have been possible without your engagement, creativity and enthusiasm (for both EP practice and cake!)

To the DAEP Team at the University of Nottingham. I'm grateful to those who have supervised and supported me over the last three years; your guidance, reassurance, and positivity have helped me to navigate the highs and lows of this journey.

To my placement supervisor, Becky. Your thoughtfulness, insightful reflections, and just the right amount of "you've got this" energy have really carried me through the past couple of years. Thank you for believing in me!

To my proofreader, Andy. A massive thank you (and mild apologies). Thank you for enduring every misplaced comma and convoluted sentence. Your eye for detail and good humour were much needed!

To my family. Thank you for dragging me out on many long bike rides (somehow, they were the thing that kept me sane) and for cheering me on through the *many* years of studying! I'm endlessly grateful for your unwavering support, prayers, and love.

To my friends and wonderful church family. Thank you for getting me through with well-timed coffees and dinners, voice notes, and many (many) pep-talks. Thank you for reminding me there was life beyond the doctorate, and for your faithful prayers that held me up more than you know.

To my fellow Trainees. Thank you for the debriefs, laughter, relentless encouragement, and top-tier emotional containment. I couldn't have done it without you!

And finally, deepest thanks to God. His strength and grace have carried me through it all. Truly, all things are possible through Him – even finishing this thesis!

Glossary of Abbreviations

BPS	British Psychological Society
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CP	Clinical Psychology
CPs	Clinical Psychologists
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CYP	Children and Young People
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition
EBP	Evidence-Based Practice
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EMDR	Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing
EP	Educational Psychology
EPs	Educational Psychologists
EPS(s)	Educational Psychology Service(s)
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
LGBT(Q+)	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, (Queer/Questioning and others)
MAT(s)	Multi-Academy Trust(s)
MH	Mental Health
PBE	Practice-Based Evidence
PTMF	Power Threat Meaning Framework
RQ(1/2)	Research Question (One/Two)

RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SPG	Strategic Psychology Group
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEP(s)	Trainee Educational Psychologist(s)
WC	World Café

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF). The framework was developed and published in 2018 as an alternative conceptualisation of mental health (MH) or 'emotional/behavioural distress' (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018a, 2018b). The framework was presented as a versatile model to be used across a range of disciplines. This chapter will outline the framework, discuss the initial response towards it, and its potential applications to applied psychological practice, including Educational Psychology (EP). However, there is a dearth of research exploring its application to EP practice. The aims of the current research will be introduced.

1.1 The Power Threat Meaning Framework

The PTMF was developed as an alternative to psychiatric diagnostic criteria, such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). It aims to move away from Western medicalised narratives and provide an alternative meta-framework for conceptualising MH (Harper, 2022, 2023). The authors argue that prevailing narratives around MH tend to be rooted in Western biomedical psychiatry and interpret distress through the lens of individual pathology (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020). A 'medical model' approach suggests that objective biomarkers can define a diagnosis; however, research disagrees on clear-cut biomarkers, and a medicalised approach fails to account for beliefs, thoughts and feelings associated with psychiatric diagnoses. Instead, it reduces an individual's experiences to a list of

symptoms and pathologises normal responses to difficult life experiences (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Current tools, such as the DSM-5, present diagnoses as discrete entities. Yet, Johnstone and Boyle (2018b) argue these are constructed to fit a certain worldview, lacking scientific rigour, and ignore social and relational contexts where distress occurs and is maintained.

The development of the PTMF began following calls for shifts away from paradigms relying on medical approaches (Division of Clinical Psychology, 2013). The framework was co-created by around forty individuals, encompassing 'experts by experience' and professionals from different disciplines. The project group aimed to develop a multi-conceptual alternative to diagnosis that would work at a broader level and adopt a "multi-factorial and contextual approach" (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020, p.29). This resulted in a 414-page publication through the British Psychological Society (BPS) in 2018 (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Several co-authors have since published journal articles expanding on each element of the framework.

The framework draws on 14 different theoretical perspectives, namely: "cognitive approaches; radical behaviourism; interpretative and hermeneutic approaches; constructivism; social constructionism; critical realism; process philosophy; systemic approaches; spiritual perspectives; liberation and social justice approaches; New Social Movements like the psychiatric survivor movement; feminist perspectives; indigenous psychology; and narrative approaches" (Harper, 2022, p.70).

The framework seeks to shift away from the question "what is wrong with you?" and instead asks, "what happened to you?". It consists of four core questions:

- *"'What has happened to you?' (How is **power** operating in your life?)*
- *'How did it affect you?' (What kind of **threats** does this pose?)*
- *'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the **meaning** of these situations and experiences to you?)*
- *'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of **threat response** are you using?)"* (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b, p.190)

With two additional questions:

- *"'What are your strengths?' (What access to **power resources** do you have?)*
- *...and to integrate all the above: 'What is your **story**?'"* (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b, p.191)

The authors highlight that these questions overlap (e.g., when talking about power, threats tend to be implied). However, the questions provide a framework to explore individual and collective narratives around the meaning behind distress. The authors use the term 'distress and/or troubling behaviour' (often abbreviated to 'distress') to avoid medicalised and/or deficit-oriented language. This seeks to position MH "difficulties" more neutrally, rather than using terms such as "illness" or "disorder" (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020). This choice of language will be reflected throughout this thesis.

1.1.1 Power

The PTMF conceptualises power as central to understanding an individual's distress. The concept of power is often neglected in mainstream MH literature (Cromby, 2022). Drawing on Foucauldian principles of power, the PTMF posits that power pervades every social interaction and is exercised rather than possessed (Boyle, 2022; Foucault, 1982,

1988). Therefore, power impacts everybody, and both proximal and distal powers can be active simultaneously (Smail, 2001, 2005). However, each person has differing awareness of the powers around them. Within the PTMF, Smail's (2001) concept of 'power horizon' illustrates this. The 'power horizon' denotes that individuals have varying abilities to discern the distal powers which impact proximal events and/or actions. For example, distal powers like ideologies within government policies and laws could impact distress; however, with a limited 'power horizon', one may not identify this as a causal factor (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020). However, regardless of an individual's view of the 'power horizon', power remains central to how we create meaning (Boyle, 2022; Cromby, 2022). The PTMF holds that humans have agency, but power impacts this positively and negatively (Boyle, 2022). The PTMF aims to broaden individuals' power horizons to understand how 'what's happened to you' is shaped by power and impacts one's agency (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020).

The PTMF outlines seven 'forms' in which power operates (Figure 1). These are not discrete categories; rather, these forms of power can operate in closely interrelated ways and through varying means (e.g., via social structures, organisations, or physical environments) (Boyle, 2022). The PTMF's authors devote considerable time to discussing ideological power. This can be the most difficult to identify, yet it is pervasive. Dominant ideas and narratives from individuals, organisations, and society as a whole can often reinforce and shape the functioning of the other forms of power (Boyle, 2022; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). For example, ideological and cultural narratives about behaviour can drive schools' behaviour policies, teachers' behaviour management strategies, and have

an impact on the extent to which students have the power to express their own core needs, therefore possibly impacting all other types of power (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024).

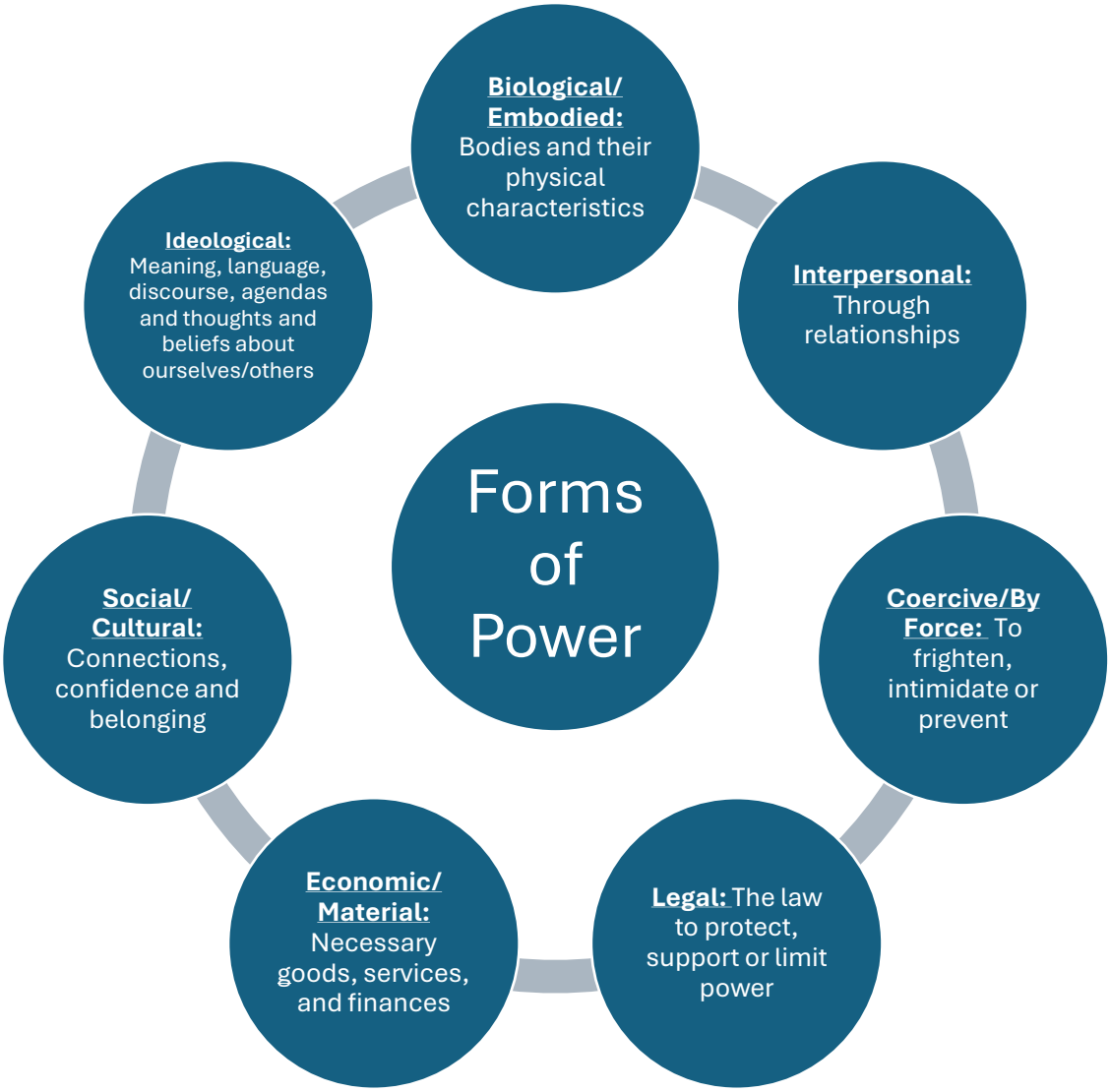

Figure 1: *Forms of power (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b)*

1.1.2 Threat

The way power impacts an individual is conceptualised as a threat. The PTMF's authors draw on a varied research base to define a human's core needs. The PTMF outlines 'core needs' as: to feel safe and valued; to experience and manage our emotions; to form relationships; to have some control over our lives; to meet basic physical and material

needs; to experience justice/fairness; to connect with the natural world; and to have hope, meaning and purpose (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b).

Varying circumstances can lead individuals to prioritise and meet these needs differently. A 'threat' prevents one's core needs from being met, and endangers emotional, physical, relational and/or social safety and survival (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Yet, power resources can make threats easier or harder to survive. Therefore, events can look the same but be experienced, and have differing impacts, for different people (e.g., two individuals could experience the same 'threat', but social support and comfortable housing could reduce the impact on core needs for one individual). Consequently, those with greater access to power resources tend to be more able to meet their core needs and less likely to encounter threatening circumstances. Furthermore, what reduces threats for one person could increase threats for others (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020). For example, stringent school behaviour policies could reduce the threat to staff safety but increase threats around staff-student relationships (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024).

1.1.3 Meaning

Meaning is "the thread that holds all other aspects of the PTMF together" (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020, p.72). In the PTMF, humans are inherently meaning-making creatures who try to make sense of the world and their experiences. Meanings are the lens by which individuals experience the world; they shape beliefs about oneself, others, and the environment (Cromby, 2022). This is built on ideas from seminal theorists such as Bowlby's (1988) internal working model and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of cognitive development.

Boyle and Johnstone (2020) highlight how conventional therapies typically centre on modifying meanings. For example, shifting guilt, fear, or mistrust that has developed from a difficult parent-child relationship. However, these therapies commonly emphasise individual and family levels, often neglecting the impact of ideological powers and cultural narratives. By contrast, the PTMF seeks to expand the understanding of meaning. Moving away from an epistemically unjust system which accepts and denies people's meanings through the imposition of specific diagnostic categories, the PTMF aims to accommodate and respect *all* meanings drawn by individuals (Cromby, 2022; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b).

1.1.4 Threat Response

The PTMF seeks to reframe "symptoms" of "disorders" as means of safety and survival (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). However, it also holds that power mediates an individual's response to threatening circumstances (Boyle, 2022). Ideological powers can determine "right" and "wrong" ways to respond to a threat, and, in many circumstances, power can block or restrict constructive ways of dealing with aversive situations. Moreover, western cultural narratives tend to impose meanings around self-blame or remove wider meaning by labelling threat responses (like withdrawing from relationships or self-harming) as "disorders" or "illnesses" (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020).

Threat responses can be conceptualised on a spectrum from automatic bodily reactions (e.g., flashbacks or fleeing from danger) to more deliberate strategies (e.g., restricting eating or avoiding relationships) (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). The PTMF differs from wider 'trauma-informed literature' in its acknowledgement of the influence of power on threat responses (Boyle, 2022).

1.1.5 Strengths and Narrative

The final two questions within the framework ask, “What are your strengths/What access to power resources do you have?” and “What is your story?”. These two elements build on the central themes of power, threat, and meaning to help understand oneself and ways to move forward (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020).

The PTMF adopts a broad definition of narrative (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Harper (2022) outlines several ways that ‘narrative’ is used slightly differently within the PTMF compared to traditional therapeutic uses. The PTMF seeks to draw out personal narratives (one’s own constructs) *and* cultural narratives (values and meanings expressed within culture), but it also draws on narrative principles as a meta-framework in an attempt to re-frame discourse around distress (Harper, 2022, 2023). Thus, the PTMF’s narrative element challenges deeply embedded cultural biases and seeks to amplify every individual's story and meaning (Darcy, 2022; Read & Harper, 2022).

1.1.6 General Patterns

As part of the alternative approach to psychiatric diagnoses, the authors developed several “general patterns” (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone, 2022). These are not intended to be checklists or a means of labelling. Instead, they are possible patterns of interactions between power, threat, and meaning. An example is outlined in Figure 2. Some experts by experience shared that discussing general patterns was helpful to feel less alone and consider powers that may have impacted them (Johnstone, 2022).

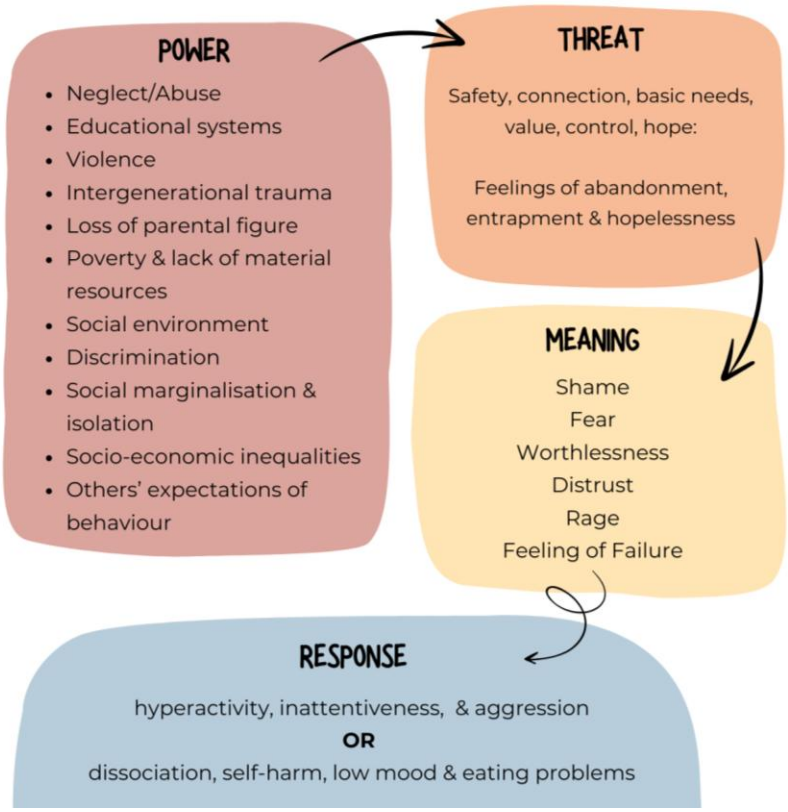

Figure 2: *Visual to show general pattern for surviving insecure attachments and adversities as a child/young person (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone, 2022)*

The general patterns from the PTMF authors emphasise MH and typical psychiatric diagnoses (Johnstone, 2022). However, recent research has started considering how general patterns could be developed for other areas. For instance, the development of a pattern for parents' lived experiences of transition points for their children with intellectual difficulties (Dudley-Hicks et al., 2024). Linked research also suggested that the process of developing the general pattern was helpful for the parents in understanding their own story and feeling validated, and for professionals to understand parents' lived experiences better (James et al., 2024).

1.2 Initial Responses to the PTMF

As expected, the PTMF was greeted with a mixed response (Johnstone et al., 2019). Whilst proponents of the medical model argue against the PTMF, others have welcomed an alternative. Critiques argue that the PTMF encourages an 'ableist' mindset and replacing labels with narratives disempowers individuals and could stand to disadvantage those with significant MH needs (Morgan, 2023; Rashed, 2023). However, Johnstone and colleagues argue that the PTMF does not stand to replace labels; rather, it proposes an alternative perspective that deviates from a Westernised deficit-focused model (Johnstone et al., 2019; Johnstone & Kopua, 2019).

Since its publication in 2018, the model has grown in popularity and application in some fields (Gallagher et al., 2024a; Harper & Cromby, 2022). From the onset, the authors proposed the model as an alternative conceptualisation of psychiatric diagnoses, but one that they had hoped would be applied within a variety of disciplines (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b, 2018a). Johnstone et al. (2019) highlight the need for the PTMF to be adapted to suit different purposes, whilst also spotlighting the early successes of various professionals and service users translating the framework to their contexts. This indicates the emergence of an evidence base considering the PTMF in applied psychological practices.

1.2.1 A Role within EP Practice?

The application of the PTMF to EP practice remains relatively unexplored. Arguably, the PTMF applies to the five core functions of Educational Psychologists (EPs), in that it could support assessment, consultation, intervention, training, and research (Browne et al.,

2024; Milligan, 2022; Scottish Executive, 2002). EPs also tend to work within schools at individual, organisational, and systemic levels (Curran et al., 2003). This means that they are well-positioned to support children and young people's (CYP) MH, and using holistic models to guide this work can be advantageous (Atkinson et al., 2011; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

Given its introduction into psychology practice, it would be plausible to assume that the PTMF *could* apply to EP practice (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). However, it cannot be neglected that the PTMF has been primarily introduced within the realms of Clinical Psychology and psychiatric diagnoses (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). When comparing concepts of MH, research suggests that EPs and Clinical Psychologists (CPs) hold differing conceptions of MH and are ambiguous about each other's job roles and interventions (Miller, 2016). This raises questions about whether a model, such as the PTMF, can be translated directly from clinical/psychiatric to educational practice. This is further compounded by potential differing epistemological standpoints represented within the professions (Moore, 2005; O'Donohue, 2013) and my own contextualist epistemological stance, which holds that knowledge and truth differ in different contexts (see Section 3.2.2).

1.3 Personal and Professional Interest

This research emerged from my interest in narrative approaches in EP practice. Prior to the doctorate, I worked with permanently excluded young people and frequently observed how adults' narratives about young people seemed to influence their sense of identity, agency, and hope. I also saw young people with complex and adverse life

experiences frequently having their stories overlooked, often reducing experiences to a label that implied a deficit or blame. Throughout this role and my time as a Trainee EP, I've often contemplated the influence of language and narratives on individuals and systems.

Upon learning about the PTMF, I felt it captured many of my personal and professional values and was inspired by its possibilities in my practice. However, at the beginning of my research journey, there was only one piece of research exploring the PTMF in EP practice (Milligan, 2022). Through critically engaging with research, a national interest group, and a strategic psychology group (SPG) in my placement service, I realised that early adopters of the PTMF were experiencing hurdles to implementation. I noticed a significant gap in the literature as the current research assumed its role without consideration for how it might translate differently to educational practice (see Chapter 2). This, alongside an emerging interest in implementation and systemic change, became the focus of my thesis.

1.4 Research Overview

The research aims to investigate the potential adoption of the PTMF in EP practice by examining EPs' perspectives on its relevance and possible challenges for EP practice. This exploration will unfold in the following five chapters, as detailed below:

- *Chapter 2* will examine existing systematic reviews on the PTMF, before using a narrative review to consider the PTMF's application to applied psychological practice and its possible relevance to EP practice. This concludes with the rationale and research questions, founded on an implementation theory.

- *Chapter 3* contains the methodology. This outlines philosophical underpinnings, the World Café (WC) methodology, ethical considerations, and the Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) process.
- *Chapter 4* presents findings from three WCs. The account consists of twelve themes illustrated with quotes and extracts from participants' visual records of conversations.
- *Chapter 5* draws on previous research to discuss the findings and tensions between perceived relevance and challenges of applying the PTMF in EP practice. The chapter highlights strengths and limitations of the study, suggestions for further research, and implications for EPs in the form of reflective questions drawn from the PTMF and the current findings.
- *Chapter 6* provides a concluding summary and dissemination strategy.

In this thesis, the use of first-person narration is intended to reflect the relational values of both the PTMF and WC methodology, as well as to remain consistent with the expressed shift away from prevailing academic discourses (Section 2.1.3). This also supports embedding a reflexive approach, positioning myself as an active part of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022) and aligns with RTA Reporting Guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2024a, 2024b).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter consists of three parts. Part 1 will outline the findings of an initial scoping search. It will primarily explore three existing scoping, narrative and systematic reviews on the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF). The rationale for the narrative approach will be outlined.

In part 2, a narrative review will be used to explore how the PTMF benefits applied psychological practice and what hinders its application. In line with a contextualist epistemology, each discipline will be considered individually, and a range of practitioners' and service users' views and experiences will be considered. Overarching themes consistent within each discipline will be identified, however, the gap in research around Educational Psychology (EP) practice highlights the need for further exploration.

Finally, in part 3, literature concerning the role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) will be explored. Drawing on the overarching themes identified in part 2, this section will explore broader literature to consider the PTMF's application to EP practice. The role of the EP will be critically discussed, highlighting the need for further research that explicitly explores the potential relevance and challenges of adopting the PTMF to EP practice. The research questions will be introduced.

2.1 Part 1: Initial Scoping Review

A scoping review can be defined as a "preliminary assessment of potential size and scope of available research literature…[which] aims to identify nature and extent of research

evidence" (Grant & Booth, 2009, p.95). They are typically used to map key concepts and studies within a field of research and can be a useful preliminary exercise before conducting a systematic review (Peters et al., 2020). I initially held the research question, *"How has the PTMF been used within psychology disciplines?"*. In line with the nature of a scoping review, the aim was to understand what research exists about the PTMF in psychological practice and possible gaps in the literature (Peters et al., 2015, 2020).

2.1.1 Search Strategy

In April 2024, an initial scoping review was conducted by searching for the term "power threat meaning framework". The following databases were searched: EBSCO, Web of Science, Scopus, PsycINFO, and ProQuest. Covidence was used to automatically and manually screen out duplicates, and a Google Scholar search to identify further studies. This search strategy identified 90 studies (Appendix 1).

In the process of screening these studies, three existing reviews were identified. This included a systematic literature review on what is known about the PTMF and how it is being used (Milligan, 2022), a narrative review on publications about the PTMF (Omur, 2023), and a scoping review on empirical research involving the PTMF (Gallagher et al., 2024a). It has been suggested that further systematic reviews may not be necessary if recent reviews exist (Powell & Koelemay, 2022), or where the topic is very recent and there is insufficient new literature for synthesis and analysis (Peters et al., 2020). Therefore, the next section of this chapter will focus on examining these three reviews and their contributions to understanding the research on the PTMF.

2.1.2 Existing Reviews

2.1.2.1 Milligan (2022): A Systematic Review

Milligan's (2022) systematic literature review asked the question: "What is already known about how the PTMF is being used by EPs and other professionals?". Fifteen relevant studies were identified and synthesised based on how the PTMF had been used (Figure 3).

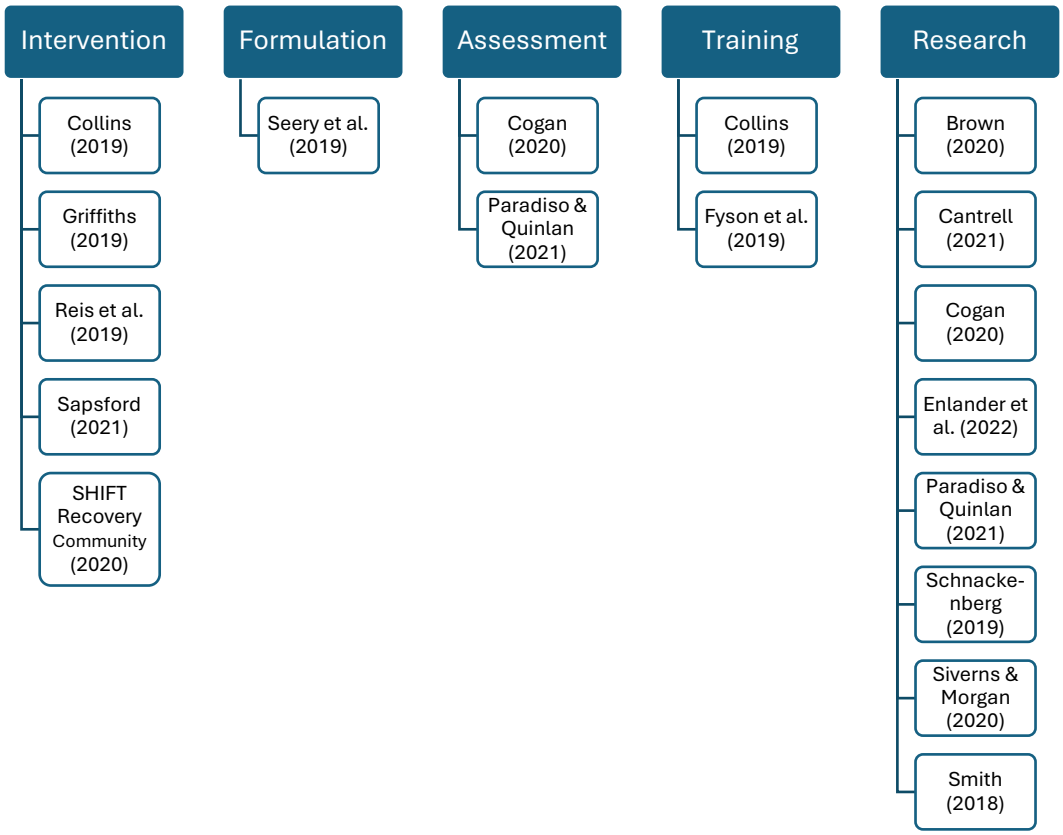

Figure 3: *Synthesised map of 15 studies identified in Milligan's (2022) review*

Milligan (2022) highlighted how the literature from different psychological practices largely mapped onto the five core functions of EPs (Scottish Executive, 2002). Thus, the systematic literature review was used to show how the PTMF could be useful for EP practice when working with vulnerable populations, enabling a person-centred

approach, offering support around Mental Health (MH), and for research purposes. From the literature, she briefly highlighted time and accessibility as potential barriers for EPs using the PTMF.

While Milligan (2022) does outline her search strategy and inclusion/exclusion criteria, it is not explicit how she came to include these fifteen studies. For example, Fyson et al.'s (2019) reflective paper on using the PTMF in social care education was included, but the review excluded two similar papers in the same journal regarding the PTMF in teacher education (O'Toole, 2019) and Clinical Psychology (CP) training (Griffiths & Baty, 2019). The lack of a PRISMA flowchart, or equivalent explanation, makes it difficult to understand the reviewer's reasoning behind this. Furthermore, whilst Milligan's review may have been encompassing at the time, it is noteworthy that her initial search using the term "power threat meaning framework" yielded 40 studies. By contrast, the initial scoping search outlined above (using the same search term in April 2024) produced 90 studies, many of which were published from 2022 onwards. This likely reflects that Milligan conducted her systematic review within three years of the PTMF's publication.

2.1.2.2 Omur (2023): A Narrative Review

Omur (2023) argues that narrative reviews are more suited for new areas of study and enable the inclusion of a wider range of literature. Two databases and Google Scholar were searched using the terms: "Power Threat Meaning Framework", "Power Threat Meaning Framework: Overview", and "PTMF". No clear research question was presented, but the inclusion criterion was "peer reviewed publications that engaged with the PTMF in a substantial way" (p.11). The review focused on 45 studies that fit this criterion. They were categorised into "theoretical and conceptual contributions" or "clinical

applications and contributions". The review is within a CP professional doctoral thesis, so its summary and implications focus on CP practice.

Within the 'theoretical and conceptual contributions' category, Omur encapsulates literature from the co-authors outlining what the PTMF is and explaining its different components, as well as research employing the PTMF and several reflective articles where practitioners consider how the PTMF *could* be used in various disciplines.

The 'clinical application and contributions' category primarily outlines the articles found in the *Clinical Psychology Forum* PTMF special issue (BPS, 2019). Beyond this, Omur (2023) commented that few articles explicitly reflected on practice, and CPs appeared to be talking about the framework through other means (such as YouTube). However, no evidence was provided to support this claim. Despite the title of "clinical application", Omur outlines several studies across various disciplines (e.g., Fyson et al., 2019; O'Toole, 2019; Reis et al., 2019). Omur's review provides a broad overview of the research across the field but offers limited description, structure, and synthesis of the evidence. She concludes by stating that there is a large gap in the literature of 'good quality' research demonstrating the clinical and practical applications of the PTMF.

2.1.2.3 Gallagher et al. (2024a): A Scoping Review

The most recent literature review from Gallagher et al. (2024a) aimed to identify all empirical research which intentionally used the PTMF as part of its methodology. A scoping review was selected as the most appropriate method to assess the field of literature five years after the initial publication of the PTMF. The review followed the PRISMA scoping review extension process (Tricco et al., 2018) by systematically searching, screening, appraising, and synthesising the research. In July 2023, the

reviewers searched four databases for the terms: “Power Threat Meaning Framework” or “PTM Framework” or “PTMF”. After excluding duplicates, 156 references were identified; 17 were included in the final review (6 doctoral theses and 11 published manuscripts). These studies were synthesised based on their use of the PTMF (Figure 4).

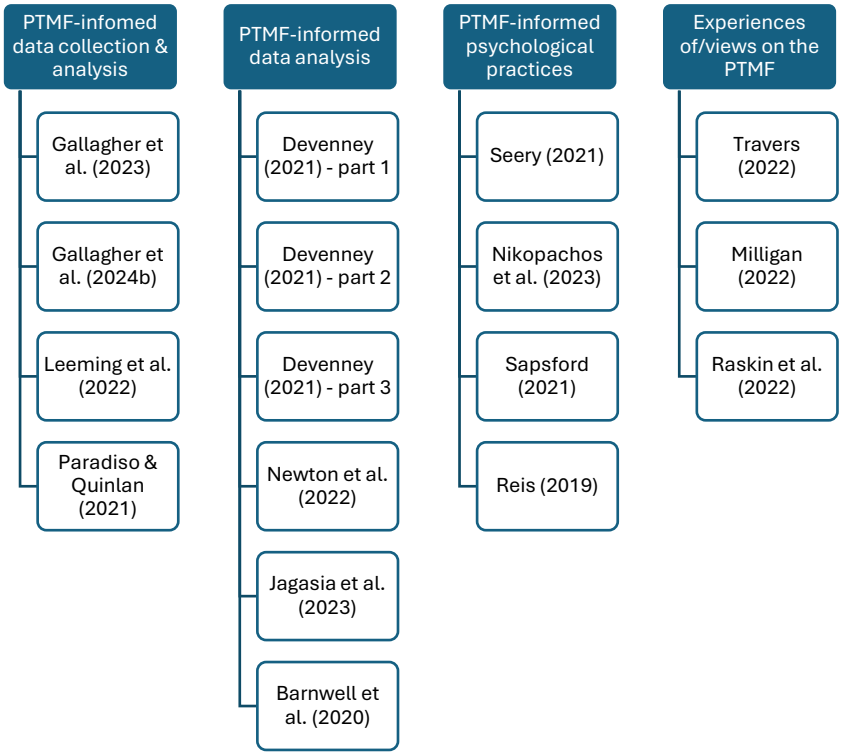

Figure 4: *Synthesis of 17 studies according to their use (Gallagher et al., 2024a)*

Gallagher and colleagues highlighted that the literature included within the review encompassed various disciplines (Clinical, Forensic and Educational Psychology, MH communities, and Education). This was positioned as one of the strengths of the PTMF, as it demonstrates versatility and applicability. However, in terms of literature synthesis and interpretation, it presents a challenge to drawing meaningful conclusions. Gallagher’s synthesis highlights that whilst many opt to use the PTMF as a research tool, there is a lack of consistency or guidance in how it should be used, resulting in vastly

different approaches to its use in research (e.g., both inductively and deductively). They conclude that more explicit guidance for using the PTMF as a research tool is needed to enable consistency and effectively demonstrate its applicability within research.

The review also highlighted that research exploring the use of the PTMF in practice and policy suggests that individual practitioners *want* an alternative. However, there is limited quality research exploring the PTMF's use and application in this area. Three studies in the review suggested that there are possible barriers linked to training needs, collaborative working, and systemic change (Milligan, 2022; Raskin et al., 2022; Travers, 2022). Nonetheless, a further three studies developed PTMF-informed interventions for use in clinical settings (Nikopaschos et al., 2023; Reis et al., 2019; Sapsford, 2021). The reviewers conclude that this is “promising” and “reflects the value placed on the PTMF by therapeutic professionals” (Gallagher et al., 2024a, p.19). However, further work is needed to develop high-quality interventions that, in time, can be evaluated to provide a clear evidence base around the PTMF’s use in practice.

2.1.2.4 Limitations and Conclusion

Across these three reviews, a similar challenge is presented. The PTMF is a relatively new publication, therefore, there is limited evidence on its application. Where there is evidence deemed ‘good quality’, it tends to be across various disciplines which apply the PTMF in vastly different ways. This means that synthesising and drawing meaningful conclusions from the research around the PTMF is currently a challenge.

While Milligan (2022) adopted a systematic approach, the evolving field of research means that a significant number of studies have been published since this review. Some of these could have been captured a year later in Omur’s (2023) review. However, this

review lacked clarity of detail and systematisation, resulting in a broad and largely descriptive review with limited focus on drawing meaningful conclusions. Contrastingly, Gallagher et al. (2024a) adhered to a systematic process and presented explicit details about their approach. This resulted in a clear, critically-appraised synthesis of the empirical research using the PTMF in the last five years. However, Gallagher et al. (2024a) acknowledge that their review fails to capture some publications which draw on service users' and practitioners' viewpoints and experiences of the PTMF. These studies most often fell within the "commentary literature" category, which was listed as an exclusionary criterion within the review. They note that the quality of commentary literature can be variable and that their review primarily aimed to capture empirical research. So, whilst this review helpfully synthesises the empirical research evidence-base for the PTMF, it fails to fully capture what is known about the PTMF's practice-based evidence.

2.1.3 Rationale for Narrative Review

Systematic literature reviews are often held as 'gold standard' because they can methodically draw together everything known about a particular topic, especially within clinical research (Grant & Booth, 2009; Greenhalgh et al., 2018; Powell & Koelemay, 2022). However, they have been deemed most purposeful for evaluating the effectiveness of standardised interventions, rather than answering complex questions, as the process can be restrictive (Grant & Booth, 2009; Powell & Koelemay, 2022). A systematic review would tend to exclude the likes of 'reflective/commentary literature' due to dominant discourses about what constitutes "good quality" research or "credible knowledge" (Nolte et al., 2016; Parham et al., 2019; Roy–Chowdhury, 2003). The

dominant power structures within research give epistemic privilege to traditional research methodologies and measures (Smith & Willms, 1997), but in doing so tend to exclude rich descriptions and present a single discourse as "academically legitimate" (Ennser-Kananen, 2019).

Aligned with the values of the PTMF, the current review seeks to include and amplify the voices of service users and professionals (including those not from scientific backgrounds) to ensure that epistemic privilege is not solely given to those conducting more "academic" research (Harper, 2022; Sewell, 2016). As a contextualist (Section 3.2.2), I also hold that each individual's context and their reflections on the PTMF should be equally considered in the PTMF's emerging evidence base. In considering both research evidence and practice-based reflective articles, it is hoped that the gap between research and practice can be further bridged (Greenhalgh et al., 2018; Parham et al., 2019).

Narrative reviews are presented as a useful approach for under-researched topics and meaningful synthesis of broad and/or complex research (Sukhera, 2022). The flexibility of approach allows for synthesising and interpreting in a more detailed and nuanced way (Ferrari, 2015; Sukhera, 2022). Therefore, rather than adopting the discourse that positions systematic reviews at the top of an assumed hierarchy, narrative reviews can be held as an equally valid source of evidence for deepening understanding (Greenhalgh et al., 2018).

Furthermore, some suggest that elements can be taken from systematic reviews to increase the reliability and rigour of narrative approaches, whilst remaining a dynamic process encompassing a breadth of literature (Ferrari, 2015; Gregory & Denniss, 2018).

Therefore, the current review will employ a narrative approach to explore the PTMF's use in applied psychological practice.

2.1.4 Acknowledging Further Reviews

In April 2025, the initial searches were repeated (Appendix 2). It should be noted that two further narrative reviews emerged. The first explored the question: "How are professionals/EPs currently applying the PTMF within their formulation and practice?" (Stroud, 2024, p.36) and the second explored "How the PTMF has been utilised across diverse cultures and within settings beyond the individual level" (Miller, 2025, p.36). Both researchers opted for narrative reviews encompassing practice-based literature, adopting a logic similar to that outlined in Section 2.1.3. Both reviews outlined *how* the PTMF has been applied in professional settings, including those beyond psychological disciplines. However, neither consistently acknowledged practitioners' reflections on the framework, instead focusing more on descriptions of how the PTMF is used. So, whilst the reviews recognise *how* practitioners use the framework, without considering the practitioners' or service users' views and reflections on its effectiveness, the usefulness of the reviews is limited. As outlined in Section 2.1.3, the current review seeks to embody the values of the PTMF and my epistemological stance (Section 3.2.2) by including and amplifying the voices captured within a range of literature. Therefore, the current review seeks to extend beyond naming the PTMF's uses by capturing practitioners' and service users' reflections on the application of the PTMF. It is hoped that this will help to critically consider whether the PTMF should be applied to EP practice.

2.2 Part 2: Narrative Review – Using the PTMF in Practice

2.2.1 Search Strategy and Questions

A narrative literature review was chosen due to the flexibility of the approach for interpreting and synthesising both research and practice-based evidence. It also reflects my epistemological beliefs and those of the PTMF authors (Pilgrim, 2022; Pilgrim & Cromby, 2020) (Section 3.2.2). In line with evolving narrative review guidance, elements of a systematic approach were retained (Ferrari, 2015) and iterative searches were used to understand the scope of the evidence base (Gregory & Denniss, 2018) (Appendix 3). Grounded in a contextualist epistemology, it is hoped that the narrative approach can best capture the heterogeneity of the current research (Gallagher et al., 2024a) and different disciplines can be considered individually to understand how the PTMF applies uniquely to each. This will draw on both "reflective articles" and traditional empirical studies. Considering the gap in current literature reviews, this narrative review will explore the questions:

a) *In what ways does the PTMF help applied psychological practice?*
b) *What hinders the application of the PTMF in applied psychological practice?*

Utilising the initial scoping review and iterative searches, the review will draw on literature found through a range of databases and citation searching (Appendix 3). The search terms were: "power threat meaning framework" or "PTMF" or "PTM Framework". Within this process, Covidence, MarginNote3, and NVivo were used to organise and analyse the articles (Appendices 1 and 3). Themes were drawn from quotes linked to each question and grouped based on similar ideas (Appendix 4). To ensure a balanced and unbiased exploration, I intentionally explored both helping and hindering factors, which

encouraged me to attend to a range of perspectives within each article. After each initial read, I revisited the extracted quotes alongside the original texts to check that I had accurately and comprehensively represented the authors' experiences of applying the PTMF.

The search was repeated in April 2025, when eleven further studies were identified and included in the review (Appendix 2). It is acknowledged that the reflective articles are open to bias and can hold low reliability and validity according to scientific discourses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schaffer & Rodolfa, 2020). Therefore, wider literature will also be included to consolidate and understand the narratives presented within the reflective articles.

2.2.2 Psychologists in Clinical Settings

This section focuses on the findings of: three doctoral theses (Leverington, 2023; Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022) which interviewed CPs about their use of the PTMF; one qualitative study on a PTMF intervention for a 55-year-old male with multiple complex needs (Sapsford, 2021; Sapsford et al., 2025); two reflective journal articles applying the PTMF to support staff (Akande & Bland, 2023) and CPs working in an autism and learning disability team (Flynn & Polak, 2019). The themes drawn from these studies are summarised in Figure 5.

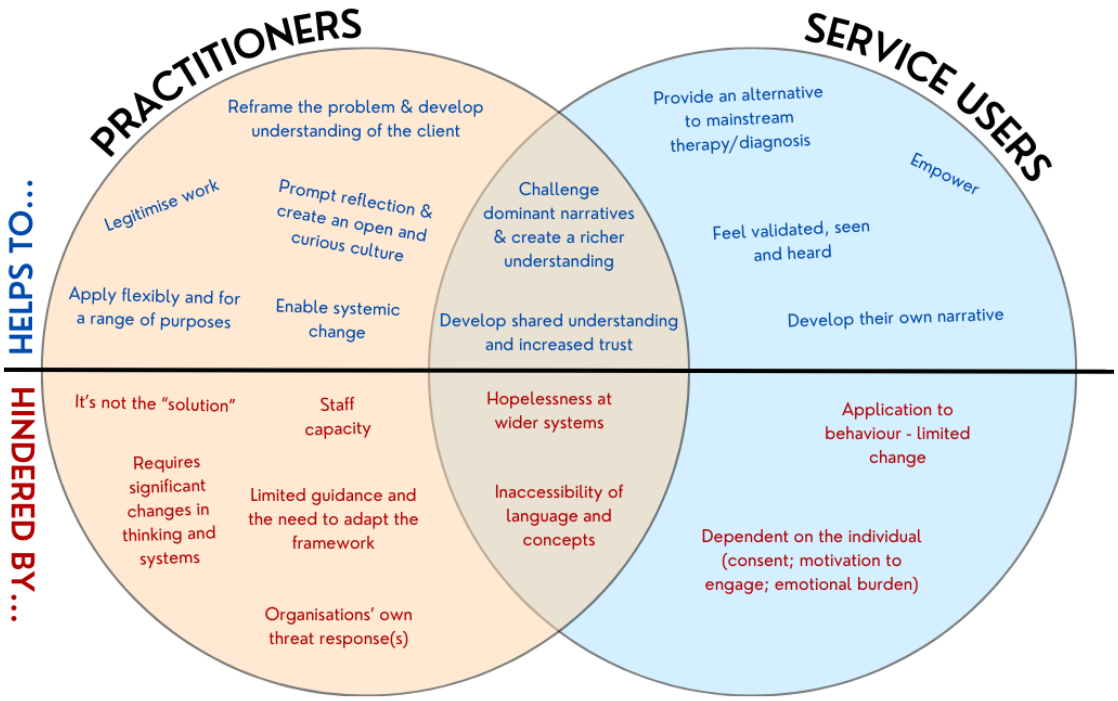

Figure 5: *Themes identified from the literature in clinical settings practice*

Helping Factors

The PTMF helped practitioners consider broader contextual factors and shift their understanding of the client to include wider societal factors and power operations (Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). Contextual narratives were helpful for practitioners as an alternative to the medical model at all stages, from assessment and formulation to intervention and evaluation (Akande & Bland, 2023; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Leverington, 2023; Omur, 2023). PTMF-based formulations have often been presented in research, for example, in de-pathologising: grief (Poxon, 2024); psychosis (Rainey et al., 2025a, 2025b); borderline personality disorder (Hewitson, 2021); and post-traumatic stress disorder (Carthy et al., 2023; Smith, 2018). These narrative formulations have been suggested as useful for Trainee Psychologists (Griffiths & Baty, 2019; London & Quinlan, 2022), staff formulation meetings (Akande & Bland, 2023; Jagasia et al., 2023;

Nikopaschos et al., 2023), and for clients themselves in better understanding their behaviour (Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023; Sapsford et al., 2025; Travers, 2022).

Using the PTMF enabled trusting clinician-client relationships (Flynn & Polak, 2019; Travers, 2022), helped staff to know ways to avoid re-traumatisation (Sapsford et al., 2025; Travers, 2022), and provided new perspectives to empower the individual (Flynn & Polak, 2019; Mitchell & Thorne, 2019; Omur, 2023; Sapsford et al., 2025). For those with learning disabilities, the PTMF was said to 're-humanise', validate, and empower in a system that often disempowers and reduces difficulties to internal problems (Leverington, 2023).

The PTMF also helped prompt reflection amongst practitioners, facilitating an open and curious culture (Akande & Bland, 2023; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023). Wider literature also highlights a role for the PTMF in self-reflection for practitioners (Amari, 2023; Davison, 2021). As a publication from the BPS and endorsed within the NHS long-term plan, the PTMF was felt to legitimise value-aligned work (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). For some, this enabled practitioners to operationalise their work, create a shared language between multi-disciplinary teams, and secure additional funding for services (Omur, 2023).

Across the clinical setting literature, the PTMF was highlighted as a flexible tool for use in varying circumstances and alongside many different diagnoses and models (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022).

Factors Hindering the PTMF's Application

Several practitioners spoke of the PTMF only providing an overview or foundation for ideas, rather than explicit practices (Omur, 2023). Some argue that the PTMF only draws on concepts already presented in narrative therapy, psychological formulation, and trauma-informed practice (Morgan, 2023; Sapsford et al., 2025) and is more theoretical than practical (Omur, 2023).

There was also a wider question amongst CPs regarding whether an alternative to diagnosis is needed or ethically right. Some research suggests that practitioners are disillusioned with mainstream means of diagnosis (i.e., DSM-5), but continue using them due to practical ease (over scientific conviction) and apprehension about change (Raskin et al., 2022). Some CPs share this reflection, even after attempting to apply the PTMF within their practice (Akande & Bland, 2023; Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). This was linked to the "threat response of workers and organisations" (Omur, 2023, p.47). Fully implementing the PTMF requires significant epistemic and ideological shifts across society (Beck, 2020; Read & Harper, 2022), which could present as a threat to some organisations and individuals (Beck, 2020; Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). Where dominant voices hold more power, medical narratives could maintain a stronghold and prevent alternative narratives (such as the PTMF) from entering due to perceived and real threats (Harper, 2022). One of the co-authors of the PTMF suggests that a concerted effort from professionals, service users, and organisations will be required to challenge the dominant medical discourse and address the hermeneutical injustice within MH and clinical conversations (Harper, 2022). Psychologists in clinical settings did not feel they had the impetus to change this (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022).

Some argue that this ideological shift needs to start with the training of psychologists (Griffiths & Baty, 2019; London & Quinlan, 2022; Raskin et al., 2022). However, current practitioners highlighted the fast-paced nature of healthcare systems, staffing shortages, resource limitations, and existing staff culture as hindering factors to clinical staff even beginning to engage with the PTMF (Akande & Bland, 2023; Leverington, 2023; Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). Furthermore, the PTMF's focus on power can be seen to juxtapose the client-therapist relationship, which holds an inevitable power dynamic (Leverington, 2023). The PTMF was viewed as having the potential to positively shift CPs' view of power (Tribe & Marshall, 2024), however, some practitioners acknowledged that this would not be accepted by all clinical staff (Leverington, 2023; Omur, 2023).

Furthermore, the PTMF's language and concepts were sometimes deemed inaccessible or difficult for practitioners and service users to understand. This was a hurdle for staff wanting to introduce the framework quickly to colleagues and service users (Akande & Bland, 2023; Omur, 2023) and for service users engaging meaningfully with the framework (Leverington, 2023; Sapsford et al., 2025).

Finally, practitioners and service users expressed that PTMF-informed narratives left them feeling hopeless about systemic injustices that cannot be easily changed (Sapsford et al., 2025; Travers, 2022). This presented a significant emotional toll for one individual and, when compared to traditional therapies that often focus on factors within the individual's locus of control, this left the question of whether the PTMF is an ethical or useful tool for practice (Sapsford et al., 2025). Sapsford's PTMF-based intervention found a shift in thinking, agency, and empowerment, but no evidence that this translated to a behavioural change for the individual (Sapsford, 2021; Sapsford et al., 2025). The authors

acknowledged that the therapeutic intervention depended on the individual's consent and motivation. The participant wondered if his self-determination contributed to the shift in empowerment more than the framework itself (Sapsford et al., 2025).

2.2.3 Community Mental Health Settings

For this review, 'community MH' has been defined as the application to practice in non-clinical settings. These articles are written by members of community groups and a range of practitioners (including peer support workers, social justice advocates, and CPs). These apply the PTMF to: youth MH services (Aherne et al., 2019); MH support groups (Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022); and training for MH practitioners (Collins, 2019). Within this literature, a range of settings are represented, including 'Jigsaw' (the National Centre for Youth MH in Ireland offering community-based therapeutic support) (Aherne et al., 2019), a charity for women who have experienced trauma and abuse (Collins, 2019), a MH recovery community group (SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022), a MH peer support group (Griffiths, 2019), and a community activist group of 'experts' and 'experts by experience' about personality disorder, suicidal distress, and chronic self-harm (Darcy et al., 2022). Figure 6 shows the themes from these papers.

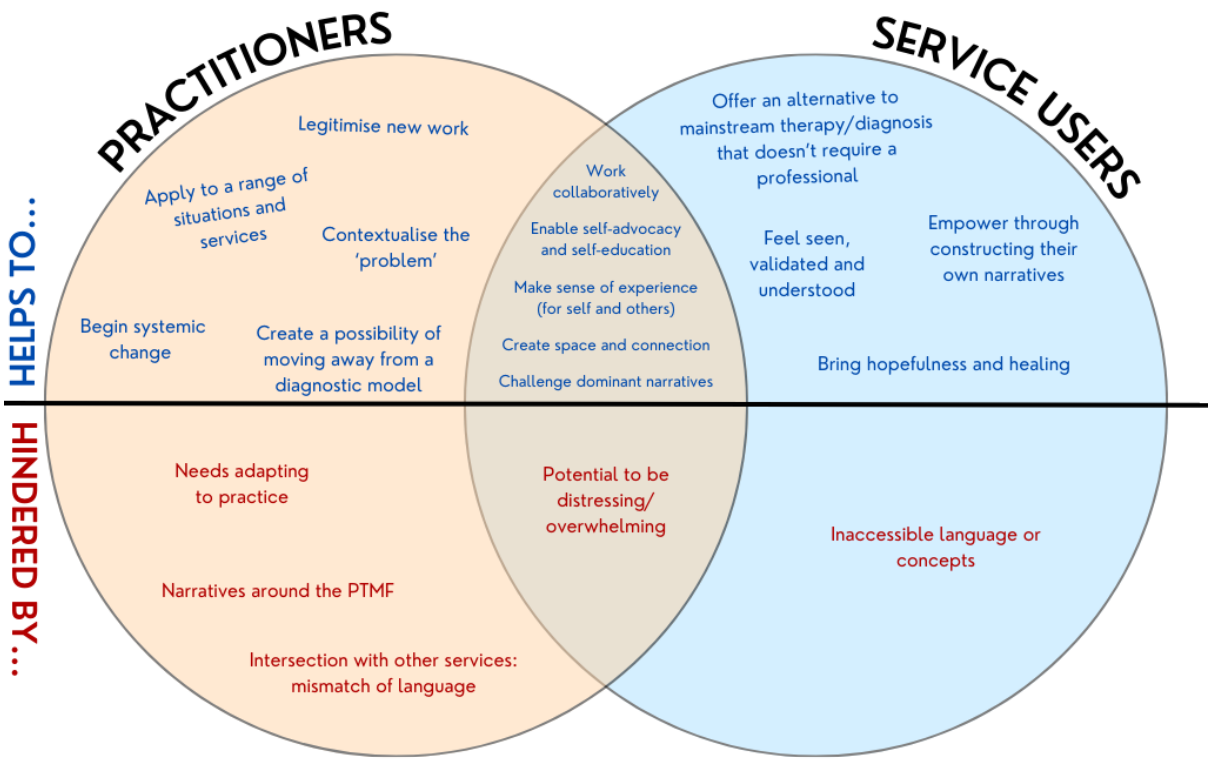

Figure 6: *Themes identified in literature from practice in community MH settings*

Helping Factors

The PTMF enabled practitioners to contextualise difficulties and understand them as a function of societal inequalities and abuse of power (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022). Understanding wider contextual factors opened opportunities to challenge the status quo and construct alternative narratives that could enable wider systemic shifts (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). Systemic change was a more pervasive theme across the community MH literature, compared to clinical settings.

Practitioners valued the PTMF's explicit, evidence-based approach as a reasonable alternative to medical diagnostic models (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). Practitioners implied that they were already

working in ways that resonated with the PTMF, but they welcomed the support of a formal model aligned with their personal and organisational values (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). There was also a sense of hope that the PTMF would enable more 'bottom-up' work through communities and grassroots organisations rather than 'expert-led' MH services (Darcy et al., 2022) and a shift to viewing MH practitioners as activists within wider communities (Aherne et al., 2019; Grant & Gadsby, 2018). Wider literature suggests that the PTMF could be a tool that enables a simultaneous 'top-down' approach by allowing professionals to understand their communities better and thus break down power barriers (Charura & Al-Murri, 2024; Miller, 2024).

The PTMF fostered collaborative formulations, helping practitioners and individuals understand their own and others' experiences (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). Service users felt recognised, validated, and understood, particularly in group settings (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). PTMF-informed discussions built connection and community, reducing dependence on professionals and enhancing self-advocacy and self-education (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). The question "what happened to you?" was felt to position individuals as experts and empower them to express their meaning (Charura & Al-Murri, 2024; Darcy et al., 2022).

In contrast to clinical settings, service users reported feeling hopeful and empowered that healing from their mental distress was possible without a diagnosis or being deemed as having a within-person deficit (Aherne et al., 2019; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery

Community, 2022). Individuals reported the PTMF removing feelings of guilt and shame or being “abnormal and disordered”, enabling reflection and reframing that built their confidence (SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022, p.7).

Factors Hindering the PTMF’s Application

Similar to clinical settings, there were concerns around the accessibility of the PTMF resources for service users (Aherne et al., 2019; Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022) and the potential for PTMF-informed interventions to be emotionally overwhelming and distressing (Griffiths, 2019; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). Research from *Jigsaw* indicates that young people with ‘mild to moderate’ MH challenges can use the PTMF to understand their experiences (Aherne et al., 2019, 2020). However, empirical research showed that young outpatients from a Swedish clinic found it challenging to engage with the PTMF (Ekbäck et al., 2024). It was hypothesised that broader factors, like MH needs, metacognitive capacity, and brain development, might limit children and young people’s (CYP’s) ability to form coherent narratives. This raises questions about the PTMF’s optimal application and whether its application differs for CYP, particularly when compared to adults who have opted into reflective groups or are in acute clinical environments.

When considering implementation of the PTMF, practitioners seemed to feel most hindered by the intersections with other services. For example, *Jigsaw* had introduced the PTMF within their practice, but felt that fully adopting it as an alternative to psychiatric diagnosis could disadvantage their service users (Aherne et al., 2019). For instance, limiting CYP’s access to wider MH services and potentially impacting funding from organisations aligned with the medical model. Therefore, to fully embed the PTMF within

MH practice, a wider ideological shift is needed (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022). This could be impeded by the opponents of the PTMF (Griffiths, 2019) or the fact that the PTMF is not a quick-fix solution in an instantaneous culture (Aherne et al., 2019).

2.2.4 Forensic Psychology

Five studies were identified that explicitly applied and/or reflected on using the PTMF in Forensic Psychology practice. Reis et al. (2019) overtly applied the PTMF to practice through developing and delivering a 'Surviving Prison' group for males in long-term imprisonment. A co-author of the PTMF wrote two further articles reflecting on how the PTMF applies to the Criminal Justice System (CJS) (Ramsden, 2019; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). The final two articles reflect on using the PTMF to develop culturally-informed formulations (Willmot, 2023) and applying it to direct work around extremist violence through a fictitious case study (Dean, 2024). The themes from these papers are summarised within Figure 7.

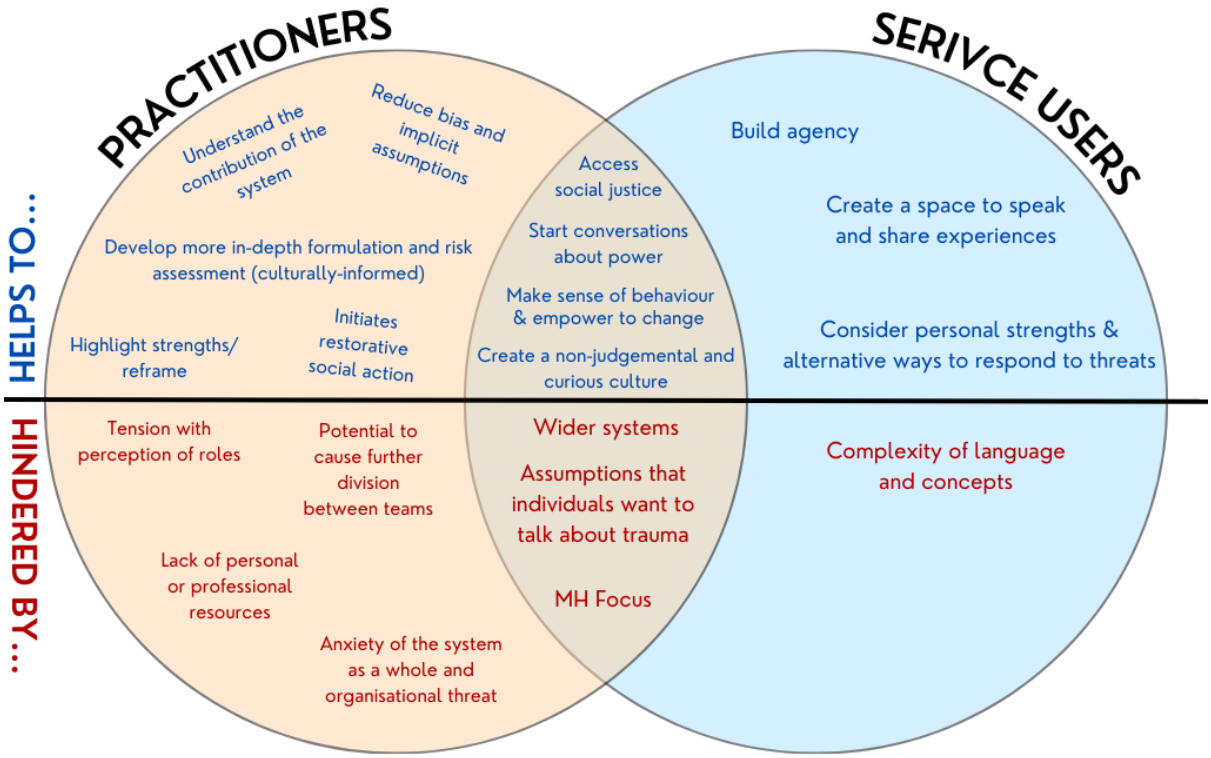

Figure 7: *Themes identified in Forensic Psychology practice literature*

Helping Factors

Similar to community MH literature, participants in the PTMF-informed discussion group spoke positively about sharing their experiences and reflecting on what happened to them (Reis et al., 2019). Exploring narratives helped individuals understand their behaviour and promoted "ownership, self-compassion, and self-belief" (Reis et al., 2019, p.31). This was deemed supportive for an often-disempowered group, who can be further marginalised by not being given opportunities to process their experiences (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Reis et al., 2019; Willmot & Siddall, 2022). Helping individuals to understand their meanings, threat responses, and positive power resources was thought to help prepare them for future threats (like court appearances and parole hearings), thereby managing risk within the CJS (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022).

The PTMF's unique contribution appeared to be less in the framework's structure, but more in shaping the approach towards individuals within the system (Ramsden, 2019). The framework enabled practitioners to maintain a "non-judgemental and curious stance", which prompted open conversations between inmates and elicited meaning-making for individuals and the group (Reis et al., 2019, p.26). This was echoed in PTMF-informed research with Irish prisoners, which implied it to be a useful tool for therapeutic work (Gallagher et al., 2023, 2024b). Explicitly addressing power with prisoners could in itself begin to heal social injustices and enable the co-production of risk management strategies (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). Joint case formulation with service users can also foster these therapeutic benefits and consider culturally-accepted ways to protect core needs and more effective interventions accounting for prisoners' life stories (Dean, 2024; Willmot, 2023).

Furthermore, if practitioners adopt the PTMF when approaching individuals, it could have radical implications for how individuals are treated across the system. The PTMF provided the language to enable this, through colleague-to-colleague reflections, supervision, and formulation meetings (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022), as well as through direct work with individuals in the system (Dean, 2024; Gallagher et al., 2023, 2024b). Researchers highlight that Forensic Psychologists work in complex prison cultures and inmates often differ distinctly from them (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Willmot, 2023). Therefore, the PTMF is a powerful tool for facilitating reflections on individual casework and practitioners' own threat responses, which could be founded on implicit biases and assumptive errors (Willmot, 2023). The PTMF could enable workers to move towards difficult conversations and situations, rather than using power to silence or blame

individuals. This could be a significant first step in social action to shift current ideologies (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022).

The PTMF can also help to understand the CJS as a whole (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). The 'organisational threat' concept discussed previously was also prominent in forensic literature. Arguably, the entire CJS functions on the concept of organisational threat, as individuals are imprisoned/punished to reduce 'threats' and enable survival. However, this simultaneously perpetuates threat responses from the individuals within the system and often exacerbates risk and social injustices (Ramsden, 2019; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). A radical cultural shift could be enabled by the system applying the PTMF to itself and adapting responses.

Factors Hindering the PTMF's Application

While the PTMF helps to comprehend this organisational threat, it equally presents a barrier. Acting in ways that potentially abuse power is the organisational means of survival, and as with any threat response, this is not simple to remove/undo. Authors acknowledge how radical it would be for the system to adopt a PTMF approach (Ramsden, 2019; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Willmot, 2023). Furthermore, individuals within the system are perhaps not well-equipped for this change. Prison officers lack organisational support and physical resources to deal with frequently violent behaviour (Gallagher et al., 2022). Workers themselves are often deeply traumatised and/or afraid, and often without access to the supervision that would be integral for a PTMF-informed approach (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). The complexity of systemic challenges led Ramsden (2019) to highlight that potentially, a new framework is not what is needed to build authenticity and compassion within the system, but rather greater investments in

the structures around the system. The acknowledgement for practitioners that they are "agents of an oppressive CJS" (Willmot, 2023, p.23) could be a hurdle to conceiving alternative formulations. The idea of implementing the PTMF in a system that is so dependent on exercising power negatively to maintain order and safety, presents a significant conceptual and practical challenge, which could cause further divides between different practitioners within the systems (Gallagher et al., 2022; Ramsden, 2019). The ideological shift in conceiving crimes as 'meaning-based responses to threat' could also receive pushback at a political level and be perceived as removing responsibility from perpetrators (Dean, 2024).

Finally, it cannot be assumed that individuals within the system will be able or willing to discuss their adversities, particularly if they are unfamiliar with therapeutic work or if they perceive that sharing might impact their parole or sentence (Reis et al., 2019). Prisoners can also hold overly simplistic narratives about power (e.g., "the police hate me"), they may not want to revisit deeply shaming events from their past, and they may lack speech and memory skills to construct coherent narratives (Ramsden, 2019). The PTMF may need adapting for use in forensic settings, in terms of its conceptual and linguistic complexity and its current MH focus (Dean, 2024; Gallagher et al., 2024b). For individuals and practitioners alike, negative power operation and threat responses have been relied on to enable survival; application of the PTMF to these would need to be carefully considered (Gallagher et al., 2024b; Ramsden, 2019).

2.2.5 Educational Psychology

The power dynamics within the education system are complex. Arguably, teachers, parents, and students all lack power in different ways and demonstrate various threat

responses (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024). It has been argued that there is a role for the PTMF in understanding these dynamics and challenging narratives in the UK education system, such as those around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and diagnoses (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2023, 2024). Several researchers have also employed the PTMF to better understand experiences within the education system, including for 'school refusers' (Devenney, 2021), CYP in special schools during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gibson, 2022), children who have experienced domestic violence (O'Leary, 2024), adolescents with ADHD diagnoses (Edwards, 2022), post-16s (Cogan, 2020), undergraduates (Sutherland, 2023), and LGBTQ+ teachers (Brett et al., 2024). However, there are few studies directly applying the model in educational settings. O'Toole (2019) encourages introducing the PTMF in Initial Teacher Training to de-pathologise and understand distress for CYP in education. While she implies that training teachers to understand/apply the model is a strength, her reflections on its helpfulness and challenges are limited.

At the time of the initial literature search, there was one piece of research applying the PTMF to EP practice (Milligan, 2022). This doctoral thesis interviewed six EPs and one Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) about their views and experiences of using the PTMF in their practice. Since then, two additional studies examining the use of the PTMF in EP practice have become available. One thesis outlined interviews undertaken with six EPs and one TEP about their use of the PTMF, specifically concerning their formulation in individual casework (Stroud, 2024). The second is a journal article describing how EPs/Doctorate Training Tutors and TEPs at the University of East London have applied principles of the PTMF in their practice and research (Browne et al., 2024). The PTMF is

discussed in this paper as a tool for enabling global anti-oppressive EP practice. The themes from these three papers are summarised in Figure 8.

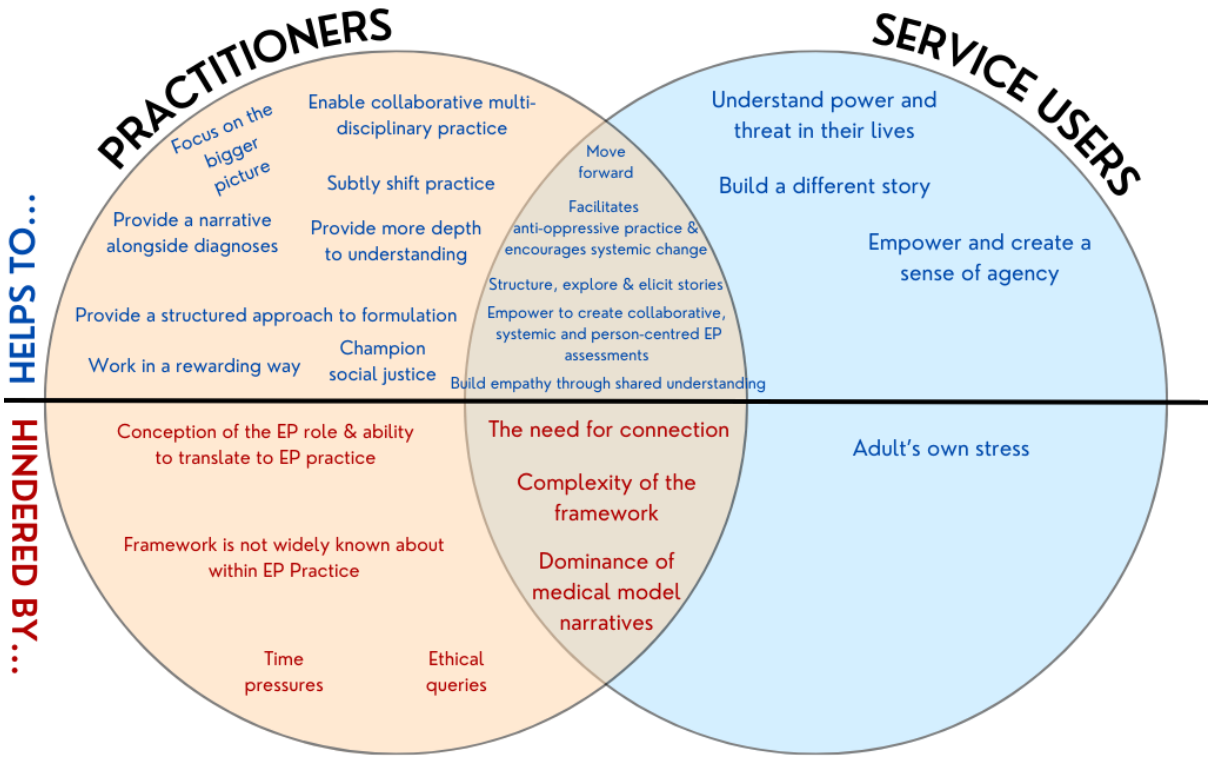

Figure 8: *Themes identified in EP practice literature*

Helping Factors

Practitioners reported that the PTMF helped to focus on wider contextual factors and unpick complex problems to bring greater understanding (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). It was frequently used alongside diagnoses and helped shift away from narratives that risked implying blame (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). It was used explicitly with service users and colleagues, subtly to shift language or questioning, or implicitly to shape EPs' thoughts and formulations during casework (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024).

Some practitioners spoke of the PTMF opening avenues for multi-disciplinary work (e.g., with MH services and social workers) and collaborative work with other EPs around

formulations and peer supervision (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). For some, this translated into 'rewarding' practice with service users through providing a structure to elicit and discuss stories. This facilitated building empathy, generating helpful and equitable next steps, and empowering CYP to break cycles of repetitive threat responses (Milligan, 2022).

Beyond direct work, the PTMF was also seen to be helpful for formulation across EP casework (Stroud, 2024). The PTMF was felt to bring a unique focus on power and a structured approach to collaborative formulations. When used with teachers, the PTMF was seen to aid a deeper understanding of both their own and their pupils' narratives (Brett et al., 2024; Browne et al., 2024).

The flexibility of the PTMF and its shift away from Western biases were also thought to support EPs in embedding anti-oppressive practice. Browne et al. (2024) highlight that the PTMF enables critically reflective practice that contrasts the EP professions' "colonial and sometimes oppressive roots" (p.2). This could encourage systemic shifts in the EP profession and the systems they work in by understanding and resisting negative power flow.

Factors Hindering the PTMF's Application

Practitioners questioned how the PTMF fits with their own and others' conceptualisations of the EP role. EPs felt limited by traded systems and service users' ideas around assessment and intervention (Milligan, 2022). Some practitioners voiced that though they liked and used the framework, they struggled to see how it could be fully implemented within EP practice due to time and resource pressures on EPs, the complexity of the framework for themselves and service users to grasp, and ethical

concerns about moving away from diagnoses (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). The medical model was also seen to be ingrained in how education and SEND systems function and how adults working with CYP understand need (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2023; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). Shifting teachers' perceptions to a PTMF-informed view was challenging due to their capacity, stress, and pre-conceived beliefs (Browne et al., 2024).

The PTMF's focus on relationships and deepening understanding was seen to contrast with the education system's desire for quick fixes (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022). EPs also recognised the need for connection and relationship for service users to talk about 'what happened' to them openly. This contrasts with EPs' relatively short involvement, often at crisis point (Milligan, 2022) or within statutory work where the assessment time is limited and more prescribed (Stroud, 2024). Where other disciplines have reported using the PTMF over many weeks/sessions and built therapeutic rapport (e.g., Sapsford et al., 2025; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022; Willmot & Siddall, 2022), this is not a privilege that EPs tend to have (Lee & Woods, 2017; Stroud, 2024).

Across all three articles, the PTMF was described as inaccessible for time-pressured EPs and service users. Browne et al. (2024) highlighted two examples of ongoing TEP research, which is seeking to develop and adapt the framework to be more accessible to students and teachers. However, all studies noted the considerable time and effort needed by EPs to apply the PTMF appropriately, emphasising that it's not necessarily a tool ready for EPs to pick up and use (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024).

2.2.6 Summary

The breadth of research explored through the different psychological disciplines highlights the complexity of implementing the PTMF within applied psychological practice. As the PTMF's authors had hoped, this literature review shows how the framework has been taken and adapted for use in different disciplines (Johnstone et al., 2019; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). However, this review also suggests that what works within one discipline cannot be directly translated. For example, whilst 'value-driven work' emerged across clinical settings, community MH, and EP practice, each spoke about the PTMF helping them differently. Conversely, the PTMF was thought to help unlock funding avenues in clinical settings (Omur, 2023), but hinder funding in community MH (Aherne et al., 2019). Across most disciplines, the PTMF was thought to draw out narratives and understand contextual factors. However, how Ramsden and Beckley (2022) apply this to the CJS differs from how EPs conceptualise this with individual CYP (Milligan, 2022). This is not an exhaustive list, but it highlights the importance of the contextualist viewpoint; knowledge holds different meanings and value in different contexts (McKenna, 2015).

Notably, many studies within this review are short reflective articles. These contained limited details of the contexts to which they seek to apply the PTMF and remain open to bias in the narratives presented about the PTMF's application (Schaffer & Rodolfa, 2020). However, this review's unique integration of reflective and empirical research from different psychological practices highlights a complex interweb of factors to consider when applying the PTMF. This provides an impetus for further research to explore the PTMF's application to EP practice.

Whilst acknowledging the limitations of some studies and subtle differences in how the PTMF helps and what hinders in different contexts, broad themes can be seen in the research. These indicate the potential and challenges of using the PTMF in applied psychological practice. Considering Figures 5-8, overarching themes occurring in most disciplines have been identified (Figure 9). The helping factors can loosely be linked to hindering factors, though these connections are not mutually exclusive.

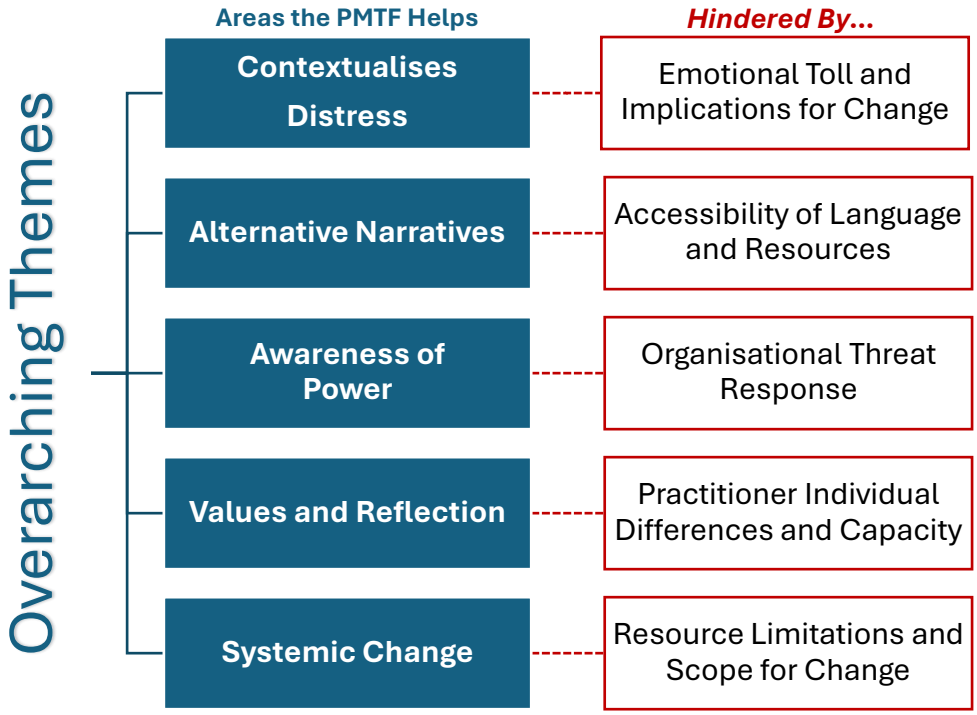

Figure 9: *Overarching themes identified across the literature*

In summary, the review highlights that where the PTMF has been applied to psychological practice, there are both perceived benefits and hindering factors. Overarching themes suggest some commonalities between different disciplines, but the review illustrated that different practitioners perceive its application and usefulness differently within these themes.

2.3 Part 3: A Role for the PTMF within EP Practice?

The literature reviewed thus far suggests that the PTMF *could* be helpful in applied psychological practice. However, given the limited scope of research on the PTMF in EP practice, the final section of this literature review will briefly explore research regarding the EP role and the 'helping' themes identified in Part 2. This section considers a broader literature base around the EP role to establish whether the PTMF *could* be adopted into EP practice.

2.3.1 Contextualising Distress

Across various disciplines, practitioners and service users spoke of the PTMF providing a better understanding of wider contexts to explain their own or others' distress. This often enabled the development of context-sensitive formulations around MH and adverse life circumstances (Flynn & Polak, 2019; Milligan, 2022; Omur, 2023; Willmot, 2023, Stroud, 2024). This points to a core part of the EP role – understanding contextual factors and unpicking 'problems' (Birch et al., 2015; Bowler et al., 2007; Cameron, 2007).

The PTMF draws particular focus towards contextualising MH and adversity/trauma. The role of EPs around MH has been debated over many years, but is increasingly pertinent with rising concerns about CYP's MH (Birch & Gulliford, 2023; McGorry et al., 2024). In 2017, the UK government called for more holistic MH support for all CYP in schools and announced funding for MH Support Teams (Department of Health and Social Care & Department for Education, 2017). In light of this, it has been argued that EPs play a vital role in supporting individual students, groups, and whole school systems and enabling effective multi-agency work (Birch & Gulliford, 2023; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). There is

a breadth of literature capturing the range of EP work around MH (e.g., Carney, 2017; Crosby, 2022; Price, 2017; Skene, 2023). EPs' unique contribution has been positioned as their ability to adopt a holistic psychological perspective to understand and explain 'problems' (Ashton & Roberts, 2007; Cameron, 2007). However, research amongst Scottish Educational Psychology Services suggested that whilst EPs have a lot to offer around MH, they struggle to work cohesively with other agencies and EPs functioned more as an "onward referrer" to specialist services like MH services, rather than a "collaborative service provider" (Greig et al., 2019, p.266). The PTMF could perhaps open more avenues for multi-agency work and collaborative practices (Milligan, 2022).

Similarly, EPs can play a key role in supporting where CYP have experienced complex adversities in early life. This is an emerging field, however, research suggests that EPs can assist at an individual and whole-school level in developing trauma-informed approaches within schools (Carter & Borrett, 2023; Diamanduros et al., 2018; Hackett-Evans, 2023; Little & Maunder, 2021; Luthar & Mendes, 2020). It is possible that the PTMF could support understanding the roots of adversities and reframe its impact on the individual (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b).

2.3.2 Alternative Narratives

The PTMF was highlighted as a helpful tool for eliciting, structuring, and exploring alternative narratives to dominant Western medicalised narratives. Practitioners and service users spoke of the narrative element helping them to understand themselves and their threat responses (e.g., Aherne et al., 2019; Milligan, 2022; Reis et al., 2019; Sapsford et al., 2025). Although the PTMF is not strictly a therapeutic tool (Harper, 2022), it was

often used in therapeutic ways within the literature to help an individual work through and construct their story.

The role of the EP in delivering both therapeutic and narrative work is debated. A recent systematic literature review highlighted that EPs (and their international equivalents) work in therapeutic ways, most often to support MH and wellbeing (Simpson & Atkinson, 2021). Similarly, in a sample of 455 British EPs, 92% reported using therapeutic interventions as part of their practice (Atkinson et al., 2011). This was most often using Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Personal Construct Psychology. However, EPs also highlighted competing demands with statutory duties and time limitations.

Rather than direct interventions, therapeutic work for EPs can also encompass working with adults who support the CYP (MacKay & Greig, 2007). A key example of this is through the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme (Atkin, 2019; Krause et al., 2020). EPs have been said to play a key role in building alternative narratives and reducing stigma within the whole school system (Atkinson & Earnshaw, 2019). Atkinson and Kenneally's (2021) model for therapeutic EP practice captures this, suggesting that therapeutic practice can be holistic and not limited to prolonged one-to-one intervention sessions. As such, therapeutic working can be woven within EPs' practice (Atkinson & Kenneally, 2021; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

Similarly, narrative work can be construed as part of the EP role in many different facets. Narrative approaches can be embedded within a range of EP practice, including conversations, direct work, and consultations (Denborough, 2012; Fogg, 2016; Hannen & Woods, 2012; Hobbs et al., 2012). EPs appear to hold different conceptualisations of

narrative approaches, the overlap with 'narrative therapy', and the translation to the EP role (Bradbury, 2023). However, EPs can be essential in reframing narratives held by CYP and adults around them, making stories and narratives fundamental to the EP role (Fogg, 2016; White & Epston, 1990). Ensuring that CYP's narratives are heard can be a key function of the EP role, as CYP can be left disempowered or unheard (O'Leary, 2024; Sewell et al., 2022; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). The PTMF could be a further tool to support EPs in doing this (Harper, 2022).

2.3.3 Awareness of Power

The focus on power was often noted as the PTMF's unique contribution. This enabled narratives with broader perspectives, reframing of 'problems' away from within the individual, a different focus for moving forward, and opening avenues to social justice (e.g., Darcy et al., 2022; Milligan, 2022; Omur, 2023; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). When adopting a PTMF-informed lens, Enlander et al. (2022) argues that practitioners *should* use their positions of power to fight for change.

A systematic review has highlighted that EPs are uniquely positioned to promote social justice across various systems (Schulze et al., 2017). The review found EPs were associated with the terms 'advocacy', 'inclusion', 'equity', and 'opportunity'. In practice, EPs perceived this as engaging consultatively and building relationships, along with advocating for CYP at a macro level and driving systemic changes (Schulze et al., 2019). Within another study, eleven EPs unanimously agreed that promoting social justice was a core part of the EP role (Cumber, 2022). These participants identified that EPs hold power and can use this to challenge and advocate; equally, EPs can perpetuate cycles of injustice and inadvertently disempower through assessments, practices, and/or limited

access to services. Therefore, the PTMF could provide a helpful tool for self-reflection and supervision to bring awareness to power inequalities and ensure that power is used positively where possible (Boyle, 2022; Enlander et al., 2022).

The PTMF is also presented as a means of developing culturally-informed formulations (Charura & Al-Murri, 2024; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b; Johnstone & Kopua, 2019; Miller, 2024; Willmot, 2023). Historically, EP practice has been deemed as culturally biased (Browne et al., 2024; Meheux & Bushell, 2022; Williams, 1965). However, research and practice appears to be moving towards more culturally-informed and critically reflective practices (Bateman, 2023; Browne et al., 2024; Noltemeyer & Grapin, 2021; Parker et al., 2020; Sakata, 2024). EPs are also guided by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards, which call for discrimination to be challenged (HCPC, 2024). The PTMF could support embedding this within practice and systems (Browne et al., 2024; Johnstone & Kopua, 2019; Willmot, 2023) and helping EPs to recognise implicit biases and assumptions (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022).

2.3.4 Values and Reflection

The theme of values and reflection was multi-faceted within the PTMF literature. Across disciplines, most practitioners agreed that it was a useful and flexible reflective tool for individuals, supervisors, groups, teams, and whole systems. CPs argued that it enabled them to start working in a more values-driven way (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022), whereas MH practitioners spoke more of it aligning with what they already did and their preconceived values (Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019). Values was a more subtle theme within EP and forensic literature (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Willmot, 2023).

Referring to EP practice, Rees (2016) writes that beliefs and values "will drive, guide and organise your work, shape your mindset and ultimately influence everything that you do" (p.224). He argues that awareness of one's values and prejudices, their impact, and being willing to adapt practice appropriately should help EPs to offer suitable and well-grounded solutions to problems presented. EPs have also been positioned as unique in bridging psychological research and education practice (Ashton & Roberts, 2007; Cameron, 2007). Therefore, using evidence-based frameworks can be useful in supporting practitioners to work in values-aligned ways (Rees, 2016; Sedgwick, 2019). The PTMF could potentially resonate with this.

Reflective practice is seen to be a core part of the EP role; yet EPs' vary in their conceptions and means of embedding reflective practice (Andrews, 2018; Ohara, 2021; Rowley et al., 2023; Tarrant, 2013). Considering the eclectic mix of epistemological bases in EP practice, Moore (2005) argues for EPs to reflectively and reflexively question their beliefs and knowledge around practice and the interactions between power, knowledge, truth, and language. He holds that values are the basis of practice, and awareness of assumptions based on one's values is integral to ethical EP practice. Arguably, the PTMF can be used as a model to help EPs do this implicitly and explicitly (Boyle, 2022; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b; Ramsden, 2019).

2.3.5 Systemic Change

The final theme emphasised the PTMF's ability to envision and enable systemic change. In EP practice, Fox (2009) distinguishes between 'systems work' and 'systemic thinking'. 'Systems work' encapsulates a long history of EPs working at organisational levels and the shift towards consultation-based approaches to involve different systems around

CYP (Gutkin & Curtis, 2008; Wagner, 2016). Simultaneously, EPs also bring 'systemic thinking' by shifting away from within-child narratives and helping individuals to view 'problems' within wider systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It can be argued that the 'problem' (which warrants an EP referral) never sits neatly within one system; rather, EPs always work within the complex overlap of schools, families, communities, politics, etc. (Miller, 1995; Young et al., 2019). Furthermore, there are also complex and interwoven 'systems' *within* a school (e.g., culture, targets, emotional climate, staff wellbeing, inclusion, wider communities, etc.) (Young et al., 2019). Therefore, the PTMF could be a helpful model in enabling both practitioners and service users to think systemically and broaden power horizons (Boyle, 2022).

In considering wider systemic change, there are calls amongst EPs for whole reforms of the education and SEND systems (Norwich, 2019; Pluquailec & O'Connor, 2023; Smith & Broomhead, 2019; Stanbridge, 2024; Taberner, 2023). EPs are well-positioned to advocate and support systemic change when working across many different systems, from the family and school communities through to local authority and policy level (Ashton & Roberts, 2007; Cameron, 2007; Hill, 2017; Lee & Woods, 2017). The concepts of power horizon and organisational threat could support EPs in defining their role and enhance their confidence in this area (Cameron, 2007; Farrell et al., 2006; Farrell & Woods, 2015).

2.3.6 Summary

Despite the dearth of literature directly applying the PTMF to EP practice, this section shows that broad themes identified across other disciplines *could* translate to EP practice. Applied psychology practitioners have found the PTMF helpful in

contextualising distress, constructing alternative narratives, increasing awareness of power, developing reflective and values-driven practice, and enabling systemic change. The wider literature base outlined above suggests that these themes are all pertinent to the EP role. This provides an initial rationale for considering adopting the PTMF in EP practice. However, it cannot be neglected that the PTMF emerges from clinical practice, and significant factors also hinder its application to applied psychological practice. Further research is needed to understand the relevance and challenges of adopting the PTMF in EP practice.

2.4 Implementing New Frameworks

An idea, practice, or object perceived as new can be defined as an "innovation" (Rogers, 2003). Innovations, like the PTMF, present individuals and organisations with new alternatives. However, innovations will only become more widely implemented (or "diffused") if the wider majority perceives the innovations as better than their current practice and relevant to their needs (Rogers, 2003). For an innovation to "diffuse" and become more widely adopted, Rogers argues that individuals or organisations need to go through an 'innovation-decision process' (Figure 10).

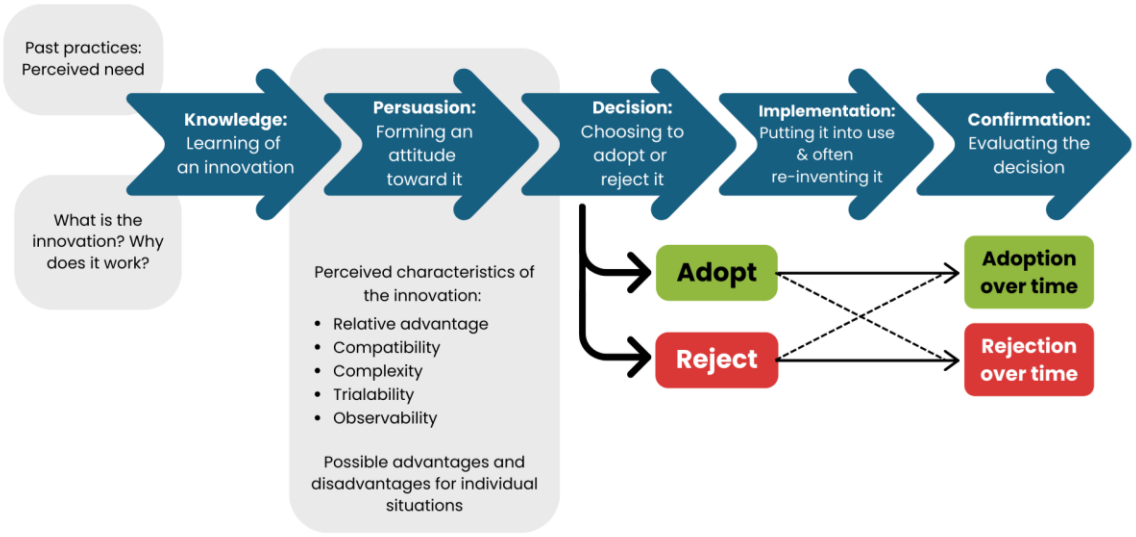

Figure 10: *The Five Stages of Innovation Diffusion (Rogers, 2003) (Adapted from: Miller et al., 2006, p.1295).*

As more individuals or organisations progress through the five stages and choose to adopt the innovation, the innovation moves along a normally-distributed "diffusion curve" (Rogers, 2003). This categorises individuals/organisations as 'innovators', 'early adopters', 'early majority', 'late majority', and 'laggards' according to what point they adopt the innovation. Theorists argue that there is a 'chasm' between 'early adopters' and the 'early majority'; the majority tends to be more pragmatic, rational, and risk-averse than the visionary and enthusiastic early adopters (Moore, 1991; Rogers, 2003). For an innovation to be adopted, Rogers argues that individuals/organisations need to be persuaded of its relevance based on key characteristics: its relative advantage compared to previous ideas; compatibility with their values and needs; ease to understand and use; ability to experiment with it; and the extent to which they can see the results of using it.

2.5 Current Research Rationale

Given its relatively recent publication, the PTMF can be considered an innovation. The limited research into its application to EP practice suggests it is at the early stages of diffusion. To my knowledge, only three studies have explored its use in EP practice (Section 2.2.5). The two theses (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024) undertook national recruitments seeking EPs with prior knowledge and experience implementing the framework. Each only recruited seven individuals using the framework, and both drew from a national interest group as part of their recruitment strategy. Similarly, the other article is co-authored by a University-based interest group exploring early implementation of the framework (Browne et al., 2024). All three papers explicitly acknowledge that the framework is currently not widely known or used in EP practice. The PTMF is presumed to apply to EP practice, despite expressed challenges in early adoption (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024).

Following the PTMF's release, there were suggestions that it could be used and adapted for various disciplines (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). However, this ignores the framework's introduction as a conceptual alternative to psychiatric diagnoses and disregards that knowledge and truth may differ in various contexts (McKenna, 2015). The literature review indicates that those who adopt the framework have encountered both positives and challenges in applying the PTMF to psychological practice (Section 2.2). This offers preliminary evidence for considering the PTMF as an innovative approach. Yet, implementation science suggests that those who adopt an innovation must first be convinced of its relevance to their specific situations before it

can be effectively adopted, and before helping and hindering factors can be fully explored (Damschroder et al., 2022; Rogers, 2003).

To my knowledge, there is no research explicitly considering whether the PTMF, a conceptual model, can be implemented in practice. Current research has jumped to the "implementation stage" without fully exploring the initial stages of adopting an innovation (Figure 10). Current literature includes the views of those who overtly oppose the PTMF (Section 1.2) and those who have tried to implement the framework (Section 2.1). The challenges of implementation are acknowledged in commentary literature (Section 2.2), but have not been explicitly explored. In EP practice, the research solely represents the perspectives of early adopters interested in the framework. To my knowledge, no existing research incorporates the perspectives of EPs new to or unfamiliar with the framework, nor does it capture the viewpoints of whole EP services regarding the application of the framework.

This research will adopt an exploratory approach to investigate both the perceived relevance and potential challenges in adopting the PTMF. Aligned with implementation theories (Damschroder et al., 2022; Rogers, 2003), this aims to explore whether the PTMF is perceived as an innovation that can be implemented more widely into EP practice and addresses a gap in the literature by seeking to capture a wider range of views on the PTMF's application to EP practice.

2.5.1 Research Questions

Therefore, in line with models for translating innovations into implementation, the current research will investigate whether the PTMF can be more widely adopted in EP practice by addressing the following questions:

1. *How is the PTMF perceived as relevant to EP practice, and in what specific areas of EP work could it be used?*
2. *What concerns or barriers might influence EPs' decisions to adopt or use the PTMF in practice?*

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter first outlines the methodological orientation, informed by my ontological and epistemological stance. The chapter will explain how this stance informed the research design, highlighting the purpose, structure, and means of data collection and analysis. I will also outline my commitment to ethical and reflexive practice throughout the research. This chapter aims to outline and justify the decisions made within the research and, in doing so, provide a clear rationale and basis for the remaining chapters.

3.1 Research Aims

The current research aims to explore Educational Psychologists' (EPs) views on the perceived applicability of the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) and consider whether it is an innovation that could be implemented into Educational Psychology (EP) practice. It seeks to address a gap in the current research and expand understanding of using the PTMF in practice by capturing views from Educational Psychology Services (EPSs). By investigating the relevance and challenges of using the framework in EP practice, the research intends to critically consider the PTMF's use in EP practice.

3.2 Methodological Orientation

3.2.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Psychological and educational research is often positioned as quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of the two (Cohen et al., 2011; Mertens, 2022). Quantitative research is often paired with a positivist approach, which seeks to determine an objective truth

through hypothesis testing (Robson & McCartan, 2015). By contrast, qualitative research aims to develop a rich and in-depth understanding of phenomena and can be underpinned by a range of epistemologies (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Smith, 2024). Whilst this can be deemed a strength of qualitative research (Hardy & Majors, 2017), it also means that careful planning is needed to ensure methodological rigour and trustworthiness (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Yardley, 2017). The nature of this within the current study will be further explored in section 3.3.4, after providing an initial rationale for the qualitative methodology, rooted in an ontological and epistemological perspective.

3.2.2 Ontological and Epistemological Position

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2022). Epistemological assumptions are underpinned by ontological beliefs (the nature of reality) and feed into methodological choices (the approach to systematic inquiry) (Cohen et al., 2011; Mertens, 2022).

The PTMF has been closely linked to the critical realist paradigm (Pilgrim, 2022). Critical realism proposes that reality is more nuanced than just what we see. Roy Bhaskar, the founder of critical realism, argues that reality exists across three domains – empirical, actual, and real (Figure 11; Bhaskar, 1975). In this, reality encompasses causal mechanisms and events/experiences that are not observed, *as well as* what is experienced by individuals (Bhaskar, 2008). This closely aligns with the PTMF's focus on considering underlying mechanisms for human distress, specifically power structures and personal meanings (Pilgrim, 2022). The PTMF explicitly denies psychiatric positivism,

the notion that there is one answer for what is "wrong" with someone and a right or wrong way to respond to that (Pilgrim, 2013, 2022). Instead, it emphasises the need to look beyond the empirical level to understand the deeper, often unseen, 'real' level of explanation behind human distress.

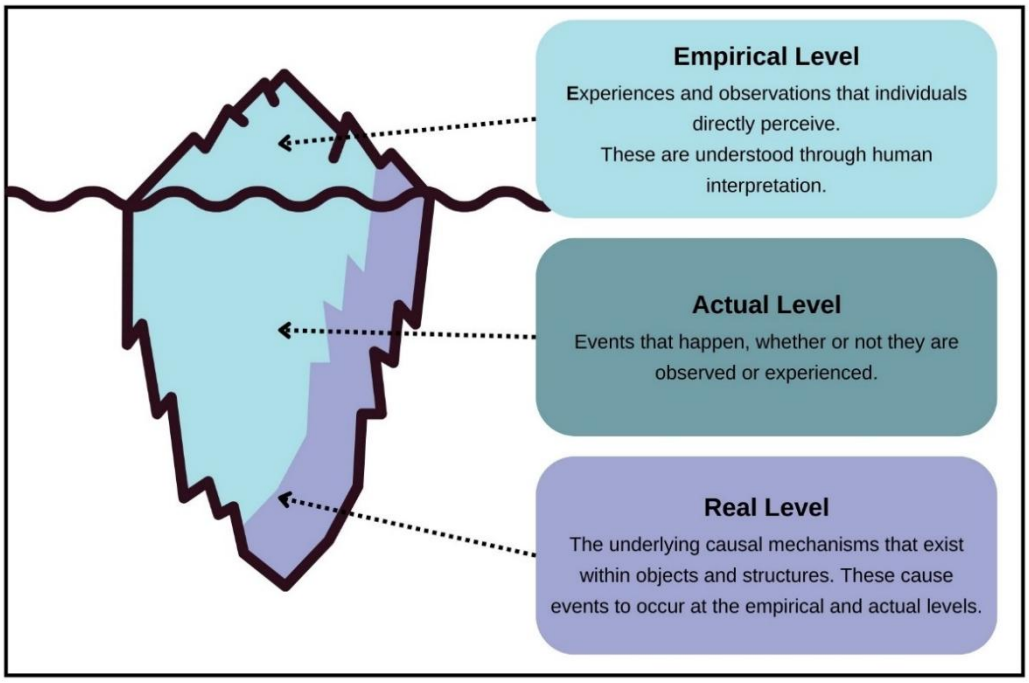

Figure 11: *Iceberg metaphor for critical realism (Adapted from: Fletcher, 2017)*

Thus far, the focus of research on the PTMF has been on EPs' views and experiences of using the framework in their practice (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). This arguably prioritises the empirical level. However, the layered view of reality within critical realism encourages the exploration of *both* the visible experiences and deeper forces shaping them.

The current study holds a critical realist ontology alongside a contextualist epistemology. Contextualism holds that knowledge is understood and situated in specific contexts and that meanings are shaped by contextual factors, such as societal, cultural, and historical

factors (McKenna, 2015). Humans, therefore, cannot be separated from the context they exist within, as the context is integral to the meanings that are formed (Tebes, 2005).

Contextualism aligns closely with the critical realist ontology, as contextualism holds that multiple accounts of reality can be held as 'true' (Braun & Clarke, 2022). However, contextualism tends to focus on the utility of the information and can prioritise some accounts as more valuable or persuasive (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Madill et al., 2000). Therefore, whilst the PTMF is perhaps a beneficial and applicable tool in some contexts/disciplines, adopting a contextualist standpoint highlights the need for research explicitly exploring its use in EP contexts.

In a contextualist epistemology, knowledge is inseparable from the knower (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This highlights the importance of researcher reflexivity, as the researcher's values impact the knowledge produced and meaning is effectively co-produced between the researcher and participants (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Madill et al., 2000; Tebes, 2005). It is therefore also important that the context of the findings is acknowledged within the analysis and results of contextualist research, as well as being grounded in the participants' accounts (Madill et al., 2000). This closely aligns with the World Café (WC) methodology, where co-constructing knowledge, minimising power imbalances, and encouraging everyone's contributions are held as core principles (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Schiele et al., 2022) (Section 3.3.2.1).

In adopting these ontological and epistemological positions, it can be acknowledged that EPs might understand, apply, and reflect on the PTMF differently and hold diverse views on its application to EP practice. This aligns with the qualitative approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Each participant's viewpoint will be considered a valid account, and my

role, as researcher, is to reflexively analyse and ground the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2022, 2024b; Madill et al., 2000; Tebes, 2005).

3.2.3 Position Statement

From a contextualist standpoint, I recognise that my own perspectives, experiences, and values inevitably shape how I engage with the research. Rather than viewing this as a limitation, contextualism positions reflexivity as a strength that adds depth, transparency, and relevance to the research process. My interest in narrative approaches and social justice, my initial desire to apply the PTMF in practice, and my experience of being on placement in some of the services involved have all shaped the research. I have embraced these influences as valuable lenses through which to engage with the data. In particular, my appreciation for dialogic and participatory approaches informed the research design, the questions asked, and the interpretation of data, supporting attentiveness to the relational, contextual, and meaning-based values central to both the PTMF and WC approach.

As a practitioner-researcher close to the field, I brought a level of insight that enriched the analysis, while also remaining mindful of the risk of bias. I sought to maintain a critical and ethical stance by reflecting on my assumptions through ongoing discussions with EPs in strategic and interest groups, regular research supervision, and the use of a reflexive diary. This was especially important during data analysis, where the diary enabled openness to diverse perspectives and provided space to note resonance or discomfort with participants' views (e.g., Appendix 14). This approach aligns with Braun and Clarke's (2021, 2024b) guidance on reflexivity and the importance of becoming a 'knowing' and active researcher throughout the research process.

3.3 Design

Within research, 'design' can be defined as the framework or strategy used to plan, conduct, and analyse a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This typically involves the purpose, approach, structure, data collection methods, and validity and reliability measures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This section will seek to outline each of these design elements.

3.3.1 Purpose and Approach: Rationale for Exploratory Qualitative Sequential Design

'Design' within qualitative research is an interactive and evolving process that emerges through repeated cycles of reflection and refinement (Maxwell, 2022). Adopting a flexible approach to research design can aid deeper and more meaningful research than pre-established designs.

In the current research, an exploratory sequential qualitative design was employed (Levitt et al., 2017). The 'exploratory' element aligned with research aims around exploring the framework's relevance and its potential to move from innovation to implementation. The 'qualitative sequential' nature allowed for reflexivity and adaptability throughout the research, with each phase informing the next (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Pritchard, 2012).

3.3.1.1 Other Approaches Considered

Initially, an action research design was considered for the current study. Action research potentially aligned with the practice-based nature, critical reflection, and focus on innovation and implementation (McAteer, 2013). However, action research also tends to start with observing and identifying a 'problem' alongside participants and is characterised by bringing about change (McNiff, 2013; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011;

Timmins et al., 2003). Due to the exploratory nature of the current study, action research did not appear to be the best fit. Currently, it is not necessarily a 'problem' that the PTMF is not widely used in EP practice, and the participating services were not at a point of trying to apply the PTMF. Instead, the current research seeks to explore the potential application of the PTMF in EP practice. This research does not explicitly aim to result in a change, rather, it is hoped that this will capture views about whether the PTMF is perceived as applicable to EP practice. Therefore, action research could be appropriate for future research if EPs want to implement the PTMF in practice. However, there was not scope for this within the designated time frame of the current research.

The exploratory nature of the current research also led me to consider grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) as a means of understanding EPs' experiences and the implementation process within EP practice. However, 'generating a new theory' did not fit with the intended outcome of this research. Starting with literature on the PTMF in other disciplines was also more appropriate than beginning with the data collection. Therefore, the flexibility afforded through an exploratory sequential design appeared to fit best.

3.3.2 Structure: Overview of the Current Study

The exploratory qualitative sequential design involved two phases, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: *Outline of the current study*

Phase	Event	Purpose	Who was involved?
1	CPD Session	To build a collective understanding of the PTMF and reflect on its possible application to EP practice.	EPS 1
	Data Collection: WC	To collect EPs' views on the PTMF in EP practice.	EPS 1
	Data Analysis: RTA	To understand the findings from phase 1 to inform further research.	Researcher
2	CPD Session	To build a collective understanding of the PTMF and reflect on its possible application to EP practice. CPD was adapted, based on results from phase 1, to enable a deeper discussion around the PTMF.	EPS 2 EPS 3
	Data Collection: WC	To collect EPs' views on the PTMF in EP practice to add further depth and include different EPs' perspectives.	EPS 2 EPS 3
	Data Analysis: RTA	To understand the findings from both phases and synthesise overall findings in line with the research questions.	Researcher

Note. CPD = Continuous Professional Development; EPS = Educational Psychology Service; WC = World Café; RTA = Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The original research proposed involved two sequential phases within the same EPS. Phase one took place as planned; phase two had intended to revisit the same participants to collect their reflections and experiences of implementing the PTMF in EP practice, considering the 'decision' and 'implementation' stages of Rogers' (2003) process (Figure 10, p.70). However, following the completion of phase one, initial data

analysis suggested challenges preventing EPs from deciding about and/or implementing the framework. In discussions with my research supervisor and through reflecting and revisiting my research questions, the third research question about EPs' reflections and experiences of using the framework was removed. This decision was driven by the timeframe and scope of the current project, alongside the exploratory sequential design, which allowed the flexibility to adapt research according to the emerging findings.

The adapted structure repeated a similar process to phase one with two more services. The aim for phase two was to gain a deeper understanding of the possible applicability of the PTMF to EP practice in different contexts. In line with the sequential design and WC methodology, the results of phase one were used to shape conversations in phase two (see Section 3.3.2.2), and different services were approached to include differing viewpoints and build 'networks of conversation' (Brown & Isaacs, 2005).

3.3.2.1 World Café as a Research Methodology

When using traditional data collection methods (e.g., interviews and focus groups), the process of disseminating findings can be time-consuming and disjointed (Schiele et al., 2022). The WC has been presented as a feasible option for academic enquiry, which actively involves participants and is a time-efficient method by which collaboration and knowledge-sharing can happen (Bumble & Carter, 2020; Löhr et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2022).

The WC can be defined as "a structured but conversational process, [where] artificial cafés are set up in which participants can sit, meet, and talk" (Löhr et al., 2020, p.2). It is characterised by seven principles which aim to create networks of 'conversations that matter' (Brown, 2002; Brown & Isaacs, 2005) (Figure 12). The approach has been used in

community settings (Gill et al., 2016), for academic learning (Anderson, 2011; Tan & Brown, 2005), and as a research methodology (Bumble & Carter, 2020; Löhr et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2022).

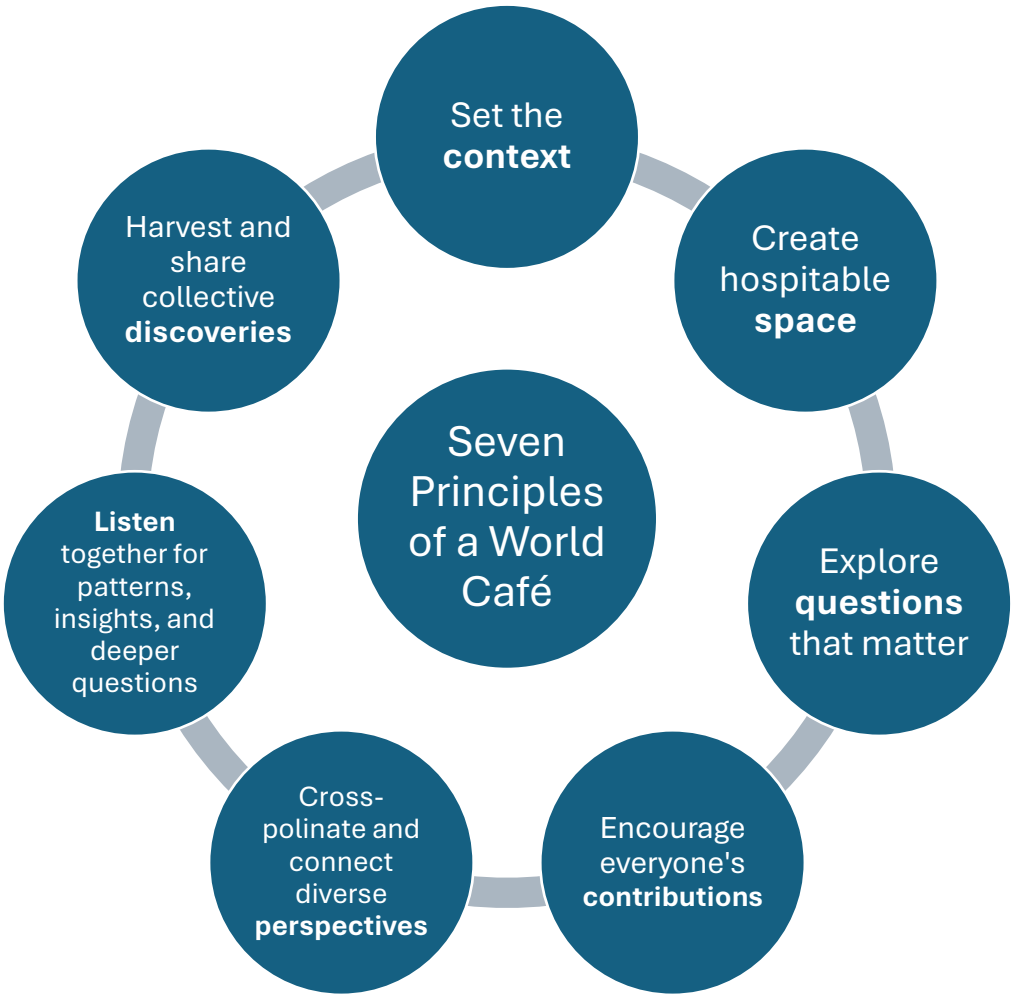

Figure 12: *WC principles (Adapted from: Brown & Isaacs, 2005, p.40)*

Schiele et al. (2022) describe the WC process as a research methodology characterised by the following distinctive features. Participants are seated at tables of up to six people, each focused on a specific discussion question. As the process unfolds, participants rotate between tables, mingling with new groups, facilitating the cross-pollination of ideas, and allowing them to build on one another's contributions. Participants are

encouraged to visually document their discussions on paper tablecloths using notes and sketches, enabling subsequent groups to identify patterns and themes while expanding or refining earlier conversations.

Each table has a designated "table host", a participant who remains at the same table throughout the process. The host summarises the discussions for new groups, facilitates dialogue, and encourages everyone to share their ideas and record them on the tablecloth. The WC is an inherently social process, with the continuous mixing of groups encouraging participants to explore diverse perspectives in a relaxed, café-style atmosphere.

As groups interact and build upon previous discussions, participants are prompted to engage in critical thinking, challenge their assumptions, and consider alternative viewpoints. The process culminates in a large-group discussion involving all participants. This final stage consolidates insights and highlights actionable collective knowledge (Brown & Isaacs, 2005).

3.3.2.2 World Café in the Current Study

The WC approach aligns with the exploratory nature of the current study, the research aims, and the philosophical underpinnings (Kimber, 2024; Schiele et al., 2022). When compared to interviews and focus groups, the WC has been found to engage a wider range of perspectives, enrich the quality of the data collection, and better facilitate dialogues and mutual learning for both participants and the researcher (Löhr et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2022). This resonates with the research focus on innovation and implementation.

Traditionally, the WC is used to create networks of conversations as paths to large-scale change (Brown & Isaacs, 2005, 2016). In the current study, this was echoed through the sequential design. Each EPS was offered a CPD session introducing the PTMF before the WC (Table 1, p.81). Participants were required to access the CPD (either in person or via a recorded link) before partaking in the WC, however, attending the CPD did not obligate them to participate in the WC (see Section 3.5.1). Small tweaks were made to the content of the CPD session based on the results of the WC in phase one to reflect building a network of conversations (Figure 13; Appendix 5).

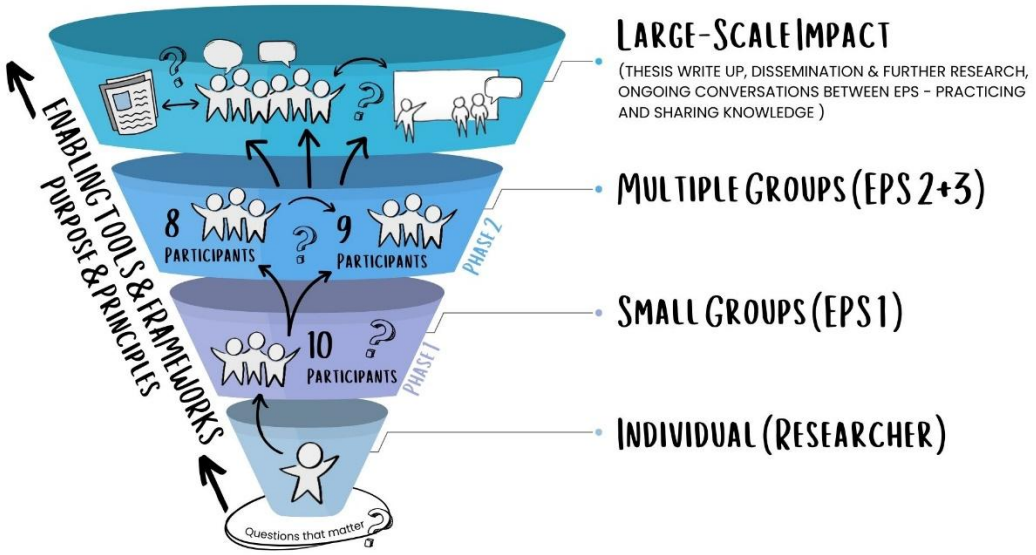

Figure 13: *WC conversations within the current research (Adapted from: Brown & Isaacs, 2005, p.85, 2016)*

While the adaptation of the CPD may appear to deviate from traditional notions of scientific standardisation, it demonstrates a 'sensitivity to context' and 'commitment and rigour' that align with markers of quality qualitative research (Yardley, 2017). Rather than applying a rigid procedure, I remained sensitive to emerging results and the context of each WC, whilst also committed to the WC's participatory and dialogic values (Bumble

& Carter, 2020; Löhr et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2022). I sought to ensure rigour through transparent documentation of decisions and reflexive engagement with the research (Appendices 5 and 6). Each iteration was developed with feedback from my research supervisor, two TEPs, and PTMF Strategic Psychology Group (SPG) colleagues to ensure it accurately reflected the core concepts of the PTMF and provided an adequate foundation for EPs to engage meaningfully with the research questions.

The relaxed café environment was facilitated through quiet background music, flowers, cakes, and drinks for the participants. Tables were covered with large sheets of graphic paper for participants to record their answers. Across the three WCs, tables typically had three or four members for each round of discussion. Figure 14 illustrates participants' positioning and the questions on each table.

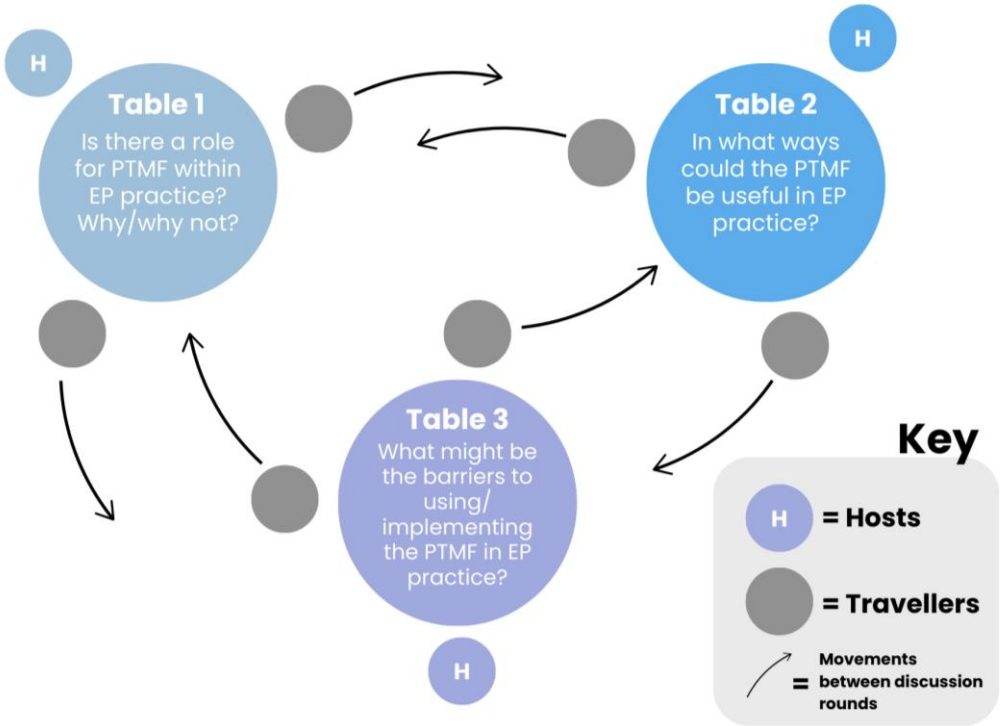

Figure 14: *Visual of the table questions and WC process (Based on a diagram from: Kimber, 2024, p.60)*

At each WC, three volunteers functioned as 'table hosts'. Some researchers using the WC methodology have trained hosts in the role before conducting the café (e.g., Kitzie et al., 2020). However, where the WC has been used with EPs, it has been argued that their existing expertise in facilitating group discussions eliminates the need for host training (Kimber, 2024). This was reflected in the current study, hosts were given a short verbal introduction to the role and a prompt sheet which encouraged them to use pre-existing skills as needed (Appendix 7).

For each WC, the planned procedure was:

1. Welcome and agree on the ground rules together (see Appendix 8).
2. Split into three equal tables and identify a table host.
3. Start a discussion round based on the question at that table. Everyone contributes to verbal discussion and is responsible for recording the discussion visually on the tablecloth. The table host partakes in the conversation and can summarise, clarify, and encourage contributions, as needed.
4. After 20 minutes of discussion, the host remains at the table. Everyone else (known as 'travellers') moves to different tables.
5. Table host welcomes new 'travellers' and summarises the previous discussion(s) (approximately 5 minutes).
6. The next round of discussion happens, repeating steps 3-5 until 'travellers' have visited every table (3 rounds of discussion).
7. All participants move around the room to revisit the visual summaries. Participants can see how conversations evolved and add to or change the visuals

if desired, to ensure they accurately summarise the discussions and capture all ideas.

8. Finally, an end discussion is hosted to summarise the knowledge gained from the WC and each individual's main takeaway points. Participants were given Post-it notes to record their response, then asked to partake in a group discussion, sharing their key learning from the WC guided by prompts outlined in Figure 15.



Figure 15: *End discussion prompt questions based on Brown and Isaacs (2005, p.173)*

The procedure and table questions were kept consistent across WCs. However, WC2 only had eight participants, meaning there were insufficient numbers for three simultaneous group discussions. The procedure was adjusted to form two groups of four, and discussions occurred for tables two and three, with hosts summarising for the second group. All eight participants then visited table one together. After which, one person summarised the discussion, and individuals noted their takeaways on Post-it notes. No end discussion occurred since participants had already had a whole group discussion, and time was limited.

3.3.3 Data Collection

In some WC research, whole conversations are recorded and transcribed (Löhr et al., 2020). However, the WC approach aims to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere where individuals feel able to contribute; recording the full discussions can contradict the intended atmosphere and values of the approach (Kimber, 2024; Monforte et al., 2023; Segeren, 2019). Therefore, the whole discussions were not recorded in the current study. Instead, the host summaries and end discussions were recorded via Dictaphones and transcribed. These constituted the data, alongside the visual summaries from each table and individual summary Post-it notes from the end discussion. This aligned with approaches used in other WC research (Kimber, 2024; McGrath et al., 2023) and enables the discussions to be understood and documented, without hindering the WC process and atmosphere (Löhr et al., 2020).

3.3.4 Reliability and Validity

Due to the nature of flexible qualitative designs, it can be hard to establish and control threats to reliability and validity (Robson & McCartan, 2015). Yardley (2017) provides four flexible criteria to determine quality research: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. These principles have been echoed throughout the current research in my contextualist epistemology (McKenna, 2015), commitment to reflexivity throughout the process (Braun & Clarke, 2024a, 2024b), exploratory focus, and WC methodology that prioritises asking important questions (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). Table 2 outlines several further ways the WC methodology prioritises methodological rigour.

Table 2: *Validity and reliability threats and controls*

Methodological Threat	Controls within the World Café Methodology (Schiele et al., 2022)	Additional controls within the current research
Construct validity	• As participants change tables and groups, different constructs can be challenged, refined, and triangulated. • Hosts help to maintain clear strands of argument. • The iterative process enables increasingly precise themes and constructs. • End discussion enables a review of results.	To minimise researcher bias (Maxwell, 2009): • I remained outside of the individual table discussions. • Use of a research journal enables reflexivity and awareness of one's own biases in data interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). • Member checks (step 7 in the above WC procedure) to confirm accuracy and enhance credibility.
Internal validity	• Participants recognise patterns and link constructs through iterative discussions. They can test their own and others' theories/constructs as they rotate groups. • The researcher's analysis can draw out further patterns through coding.	To minimise the impact of the researcher's presence (Maxwell, 2009): • The relaxed environment and conversational style can help to minimise the possible demand characteristics and aid openness and sharing. • Careful introduction of the study to highlight exploratory goals and establish ground rules for participation. • Participants have the opportunity at the end to revisit visuals and check summaries. This can help to identify if hosts or dominant participants have skewed narratives and give opportunities to ensure everyone's contribution is included in the final summary.

External validity	• A range of participants from different backgrounds are included in the table discussions. • There is a possibility for replication of findings through iterative discussions. • End discussion enables a collective agreement on the most salient ideas.	The limited sample (three inner-city EPSs in the Midlands) creates possible difficulties around the study's generalisability: • Considering the epistemology and methodology, the research seeks to explore the use of PTMF in this specific context, rather than create generalisable findings (Braun & Clarke, 2022). • As exploratory research, this could highlight areas for further research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).
Reliability	• Careful recording of discussions through visuals and host summaries, along with detailed method and results write-up.	• Clear audit trail within research diary, including rationale for decisions and how analysis was undertaken and conclusions drawn (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.4 Recruitment and Participants

Three local authority EPSs were recruited through purposive sampling. All three services were inner-city contexts offering traded services; Table 3 outlines further contextual information gathered from Principal EPs at the point of recruitment. Aligned with the contextualist epistemology, this allowed for a relatively homogeneous sample in both community dynamics and service delivery models (see Section 3.6 for implications for data analysis). However, it should be acknowledged that a wider sample of services (e.g., rural, private, or non-traded services) could have led to different themes emerging and could be explored through further research.

As outlined in Table 3, I was a trainee on placement at two of the services involved in the research. Therefore, efforts were made to distinguish my 'researcher' role from 'Trainee EP' role by highlighting this explicitly with participants and liaising through my university email address.

Table 3: *Profile of EPSs involved*

Identifier	Context of Service and prior knowledge or interest in PTMF	Timeline of Involvement
EPS1/WC1	• Inner-City EPS • Traded service delivery model • The service includes Principal, Senior, Senior Practitioner, Maingrade, and Trainee EPs. • The service was introduced to the PTMF in a CPD session (September 2023). Following this, a strategic psychology group (SPG) was formed to explore the PTMF consisting of three members (including myself). • I (the researcher) was on placement at this service throughout the research.	11th June 2024: CPD – delivered alongside SPG members 25th June 2024: WC (10 participants)
EPS2/WC2	• Inner-City EPS • Traded service delivery model • The service includes Principal, Senior, Specialist, Maingrade, Trainee and Assistant EPs. • In 2021/22, the service was introduced to the PTMF and had an interest group considering its use. Two EPs from the interest group are still in the service; the team has changed significantly since. • I was previously on placement within this service.	15th October 2024: CPD 7th January 2025: WC (8 participants) *Note: the WC was organised closer to the CPD but was delayed due to adverse weather conditions and other logistical challenges.*
EPS3/WC3	• Inner-City EPS • A traded service delivery model • The service includes Principal, Senior, Maingrade, Trainee, and Assistant EPs. • There was no explicit training or interest groups around the PTMF at a service level. • I had no connection with this service before the research	28th January 2025: CPD & WC (9 participants)

Principal EPs were contacted and provided with research details and information sheets. After securing stakeholder agreement, all EPs in the service were sent an introductory email, including an invitation to participate and the information sheet (Appendix 9).

A total of 27 participants took part in the research across three WC events (Figure 13, p.85). The participants included Assistant, Trainee, Maingrade, Specialist, Senior, and Principal EPs. Throughout this thesis, the term "EP" has been used to encompass this range of individuals, regardless of their career stage. This will be used interchangeably with the term "participant" to reflect their professional identity and role as active contributors, rather than solely subjects of research. This echoes the contextualist epistemology and WC ethos of establishing knowledge collectively (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; McKenna, 2015).

The dates were confirmed with the Principal EPs when recruitment occurred. CPD sessions and WCs were conducted during scheduled EPS team meetings. This allocated time was typically reserved for professional development within EPSs, providing EPs with protected time to attend and engage if they chose to. For EPS2, there was a longer interval between the CPD and WC than originally anticipated; this delay might have affected the data collected from this WC, as participants may have forgotten key information and insights from the CPD. To address this, participants were encouraged to bring notes they took during the CPD, access the recorded session if they wished to revisit the CPD, and a short summary of the CPD was provided at the beginning of the WC.

The contents of the CPD were made available to each EPS. Where there was a gap between the CPD and WC, a recorded version of the CPD was emailed to the team. EPs unable to attend the CPD in person could also access this; all participants of the WCs

had to have engaged in the CPD either virtually or in person. An overview sheet of the PTMF was accessible both during the CPD and WC to prompt reflections and consideration of the framework (Appendix 10).

3.5 Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Nottingham (Appendix 11). The current research has been undertaken in line with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2021) and Code of Human Research Ethics (Oates et al., 2021), alongside the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics (HCPC, 2024) and the University of Nottingham's (2023) ethical guidelines. The following ethical principles were closely considered for the current research: informed consent; right to withdraw; confidentiality and data protection; reducing harm; and power imbalances.

3.5.1 Informed Consent

All participants were provided with a written information sheet containing details of the study, data collection and how data would be used and stored (Appendix 9). Participants were made aware of the full aims of the study, therefore, there were no issues around deception.

It was made clear to participants that they could attend the CPD without giving consent, as part of their usual service CPD offer. Also, attending the CPD did not obligate them to participate in the research, and there would be no negative consequences for them not attending the WC event (as agreed with Principal EPs). After the CPD, the research aims and procedure were outlined verbally and through printed copies of the information

sheets. All were invited to participate and given opportunities to ask questions in person or via email. Voluntary and informed written consent was gained before participation in the WC (Appendix 12). Participants were thanked and debriefed at the end of each WC, including a further opportunity to ask questions (Appendix 13).

3.5.2 Right to Withdraw

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw without giving a reason, before or during the WC. During the introduction to the WC, participants were reminded that they could leave the discussion at any point.

Participants were informed that due to the co-constructed nature of the data, it would not be possible to withdraw their data once the WC had ended. This was communicated verbally and through the information sheet, which participants confirmed that they had read and understood. At the end of the WC, participants could move around the tables and review the visuals, adding/changing any sections they felt necessary. This allowed participants to redact or change any information before the WC ended.

3.5.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Due to the co-constructed nature of knowledge in the WC, no identifiable information was collected from participants. Any information shared in discussions that could identify a participant or service was redacted during transcription (both from written and audio recordings).

Internal confidentiality could be limited within group discussions. Therefore, to reduce this risk, ‘ground rules’ were collectively discussed at the beginning of each WC. This discussion was supported by the “Café Etiquette” graphic on each table (The World Café

Community Foundation, 2023) (Appendix 8). This discussion included an agreement for participants to share only what was necessary for the conversations and to respect confidentiality between one another. During the introduction, it was outlined that it was both the 'hosts' and 'travellers' responsibility to uphold these ground rules.

Data was stored confidentially in password-protected OneDrive files. Audio recordings were deleted following transcription.

3.5.4 Reducing Harm

The conversations were not expected to cause harm to participants as they were discussing their usual work situations. However, there was potential for sensitive topics to arise or disagreements between participants during discussions. To mitigate this, hosts were encouraged to use their consultative skills to support constructive discussions (Appendix 7). Participants were reminded of their right to leave the discussions at any point. During the debrief, participants were also encouraged to use existing supervision structures to discuss any issues that had arisen (Appendix 13).

3.5.5 Power Imbalances

It can be held that researchers hold epistemological power due to their capacity to design the research, analyse and present findings, and generate and disseminate new knowledge (Ennser-Kananen, 2019). Therefore, there was a risk that I, as the researcher, held more power than the participants, which could influence findings. For example, participants could feel pressured to respond in a certain way, impacting the integrity of the data (Toole, 2024). However, the nature and set-up of the WC seeks to minimise power imbalances through the core principles of encouraging everyone's contributions

and collaborative knowledge sharing (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). This was communicated to participants through initial written communications about the WC (Appendix 9) and verbal introductions on the day. Furthermore, as a researcher, I abstained from group discussions but was present in the room to support the facilitation of the process. This is positioned as a strength of WC methodology, as the participants may feel able to share more openly (Löhr et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2022).

3.6 Data Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2022) was used to understand meanings made in different contexts, draw together patterns and themes across the data, and answer the research questions meaningfully.

Braun and Clarke (2006) introduced six phases of thematic analysis. They later developed this to further emphasise the role of reflexivity within the process (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022). RTA is presented as a flexible approach that aids rich and detailed analysis of qualitative data. This is most often textual data, but the process is also suitable for analysing visual data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Davis et al., 2023; Gleeson, 2021; Kimber, 2024). The reflexive element of RTA appealed to me as a researcher using the WC methodology, as the nature of the data produced from the hosts' summaries and visuals can already be initially themed by the participants. Therefore, reflexivity felt integral to the analysis process and to meaningfully incorporating the spoken and visual data (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2024b; Gleeson, 2021).

In the current study, the sequential design meant that data was initially analysed after phase one. After changing the nature of phase two, I considered continuing to analyse

each dataset individually using RTA, then using a meta-ethnography synthesis to identify meta-themes (Noblit & Hare, 1988). While this might have enabled a more nuanced unpicking of contexts, the contexts of the three datasets were relatively homogeneous. RTA's flexible, reflexive, and context-sensitive ethos enabled a nuanced understanding of patterns across datasets whilst still respecting the individual contexts. Therefore, RTA aligned best with both the research aims and contextualist stance.

The data was analysed and initially themed between phases one and two of the research. However, once all three datasets were collected, the analysis was started again from the familiarisation phase, and all three datasets were coded cumulatively. This aimed to preserve the integrity of later datasets and avoid imposing WC1 themes onto subsequent analyses.

As a novice researcher, I have enacted Braun and Clarke's (2022) "learning by doing" approach (p.xxix), benefitting from immersing myself in the theoretical underpinnings, worked examples (e.g., Bradbury, 2023; Trainor & Bundon, 2021), and engaging with my dataset. The quality of RTA in the current research was guided by reflecting on Braun and Clarke's guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022, 2024b, 2024a) and maintaining Yardley's (2017) principles of quality research. Reflexive examples have been included in Appendix 14 Appendix 15. The following sections will explain each step further and how reflexivity was woven throughout the process to understand the datasets individually and as one coherent analysis.

3.6.1 Familiarisation

The first stage of analysis is about the researcher immersing and critically engaging with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Due to the nature of WCs, I was not involved in the conversations or summaries as they happened. Therefore, transcribing the data was a helpful first step to familiarise myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (Appendix 16). All transcripts were reviewed a couple of times to check for accuracy, in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) criteria for appropriate transcription. Visuals were transcribed into textual data to support analysis (Appendix 16).

Part of the familiarisation process also entails asking questions about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Each visual and audio transcript was printed, highlighted, and annotated with reflections and questions aligned with the research questions (Appendix 14A). As each dataset is made up of the host summaries, visual recordings, and end summaries, I felt it particularly important to consider the summaries together and reflect on why participants might have chosen to record what they did and how that might reflect their meanings made (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The reflexive diary helped to support this process (Appendix 14A). It was decided at this point that subsequent analysis phases should be undertaken separately for each research question, to maintain clarity and focus.

3.6.2 Coding

Braun and Clarke (2022) define codes as "the building blocks of analysis" (p.52). Codes seek to capture ideas, concepts, and meaning within the data. Codes are not fixed but remain fluid and organic as the analysis progresses. Good practice in RTA involves reiterating and re-defining codes to capture meaning across the dataset relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Codes can lie on a continuum from semantic

(explicitly-expressed meanings from participants) to latent (researcher-driven identification of underlying or implicit meanings) (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

For each dataset, the coding followed the familiarisation phase. I began by using annotated transcripts to draw out initial codes. These were primarily recorded using NVivo (Appendix 14B). For WC2 and WC3, the initial codes from previous WCs provided a starting framework, but I remained open to new codes. Reflexivity and flexibility were core to ensuring that the contexts and nuances of later datasets were considered carefully (see reflexive diary entries in Appendix 14C).

3.6.3 Generating Initial Themes

A theme can be defined as "a pattern of shared meaning organised around a central concept" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.77). Like codes, themes can be latent and/or semantic. However, multiple codes should be captured within a theme. Initial themes can change significantly through the process, as this step is about exploring the clusters of data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

At this point, I continued using NVivo to record groupings of codes, as well as the whiteboard feature on Canva to begin trialling different thematic groups and visualising connections between codes (Appendix 14C). The iterative process was key to reaching a meaningful analysis that accurately captures the data.

3.6.4 Developing and Reviewing Themes

This step is about ensuring that themes hold validity, both in terms of quality and scope (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This involves revisiting initial coded data extracts and the datasets as a whole to consider if the themes adequately capture the richness and

nuance of the data. The themes are reviewed and reconsidered by asking questions of the data and the process.

I revisited the data using initial transcripts and NVivo to consider possible overlapping or sparsely populated themes and develop initial themes (Appendix 14D). A particular focus during this phase was ensuring that themes captured a breadth of ideas, rather than single ideas repeated across multiple host summaries and the visual. This aligned with Braun and Clarke's (2022) guidance that themes should be collective and not just label a single idea. Researcher reflexivity remained core to this (Appendix 14D).

3.6.5 Refining, Defining and Naming Themes

This stage involves creating more defined themes and mapping them before the final stage (writing up). The stage begins when the researcher has an adequate thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase involves defining each theme's scope, boundaries and core concepts. This was done using the reflexive diary and reflecting on key questions from Braun and Clarke (2022) to define the themes (Appendices 14E and 15). Initially, it became clear that there were some overlapping themes, so steps four and five were revisited to ensure that the analysis accurately reflected the data (Appendices 14F and 14G).

3.6.6 Write-Up

The 'write-up' stage is as core to the analysis as earlier stages (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This entails writing a detailed narrative for each theme, demonstrating how the theme emerges from different datasets. This tends to incorporate illustrative quotes/images and interpretations of the data. This stage is captured within Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the findings from the three World Cafés (WCs). Themes were collated separately for Research Question One (RQ1) and Two (RQ2). Therefore, this chapter will be structured around each research question, exploring the perceived relevance and areas in which the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) can be used (RQ1), followed by concerns and possible barriers to adopting the framework (RQ2). This aims to reflect the discussions held within the WCs and tell a "meaningful and coherent story" about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.228). Situated in a contextualist epistemology and WC methodology, it is recognised that participants' accounts are shaped by their contexts, and the themes presented in this chapter reflect meanings constructed between myself (as the researcher) and participants.

Throughout the chapter, each theme will be explained using a thematic map. Within Reflexive Thematic Analysis, themes and their relationships can be conceptualised in various ways depending on how the researcher interprets the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Whilst thematic maps are often presented hierarchically, Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022) highlight that thematic maps should visually represent the themes and their relationships in whatever way helps to conceptualise the narrative of the analysis. Therefore, this chapter presents thematic maps as circular diagrams to illustrate the dataset and my interpretations.

Themes will be evidenced using direct quotes from the transcriptions of host summaries, visuals, end written summaries, and the end discussion. Some direct quotes include

ellipses (...), denoting either a pause in speech or where parts of the transcript have been omitted. This supports the readability and clarity of quotes, as relevant to the theme. Figures showing extracts from the visuals produced by the participants have also been included to anchor interpretations in participants' voices. The full visuals can be found in Appendix 17. This aligns with the WC principle of 'harvesting collective discoveries' and using visuals made in WCs to "document and display collective knowledge" (Brown & Isaacs, 2005, p.145).

4.1 RQ1 Themes

These themes address RQ1: "*How is the PTMF perceived as relevant to Educational Psychology (EP) practice and in what specific areas of EP work could it be used?"*. Educational Psychologists (EPs) within the research seemed to conceptualise their work across four key areas: directly with children and young people (CYP); with adults around a specific CYP; with whole school systems; and within wider systems (including wider communities/neighbourhoods, government/statutory systems, and social and cultural norms and ideologies). EPs suggested that the PTMF could be relevant to their practice in each of these areas, alongside two ways specific to their individual practice. These constitute the themes, illustrating potential applications of the PTMF across different areas of EP work. Figure 16 represents these themes; themes relating to individual EPs' practice have been conceptualised as bridging across the other four areas. The remainder of this section will explore each theme in turn.

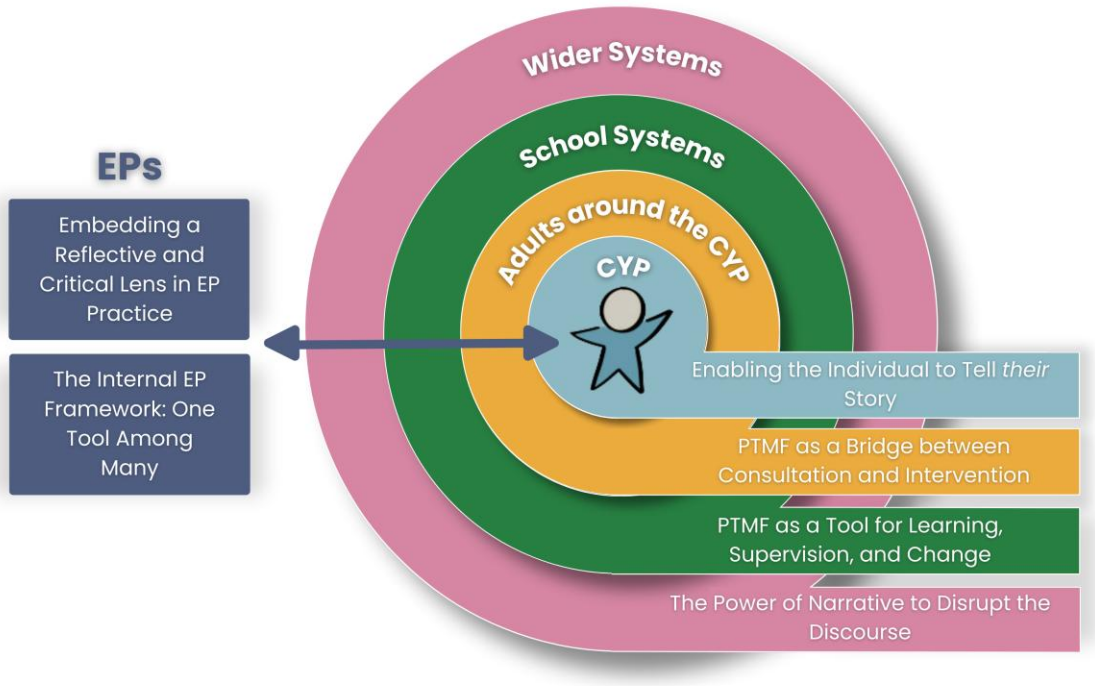

Figure 16: *Thematic map for RQ1*

4.1.1 EPs: Embedding a Reflective and Critical Lens in EP Practice

Participants in all three WCs noted that the PTMF could be a helpful tool to enrich EPs' reflections. This included reflecting on individual CYP within their casework and on the systems they work in (Figure 17). This could be as individual practitioners, in teams, or as a tool to reflect during their own supervision.

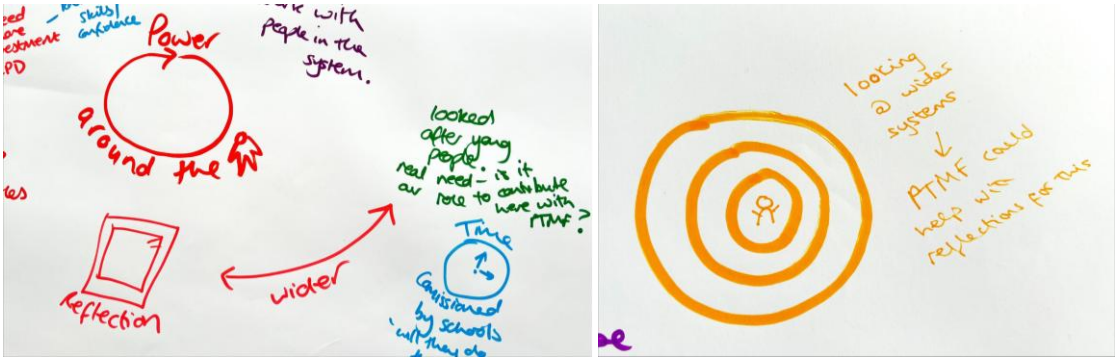

Figure 17: *Extracts from WC1 Table 1 Visual demonstrating the perceived role for the PTMF in reflection on individual CYP and wider systems*

EPs seemed to particularly emphasise the 'power' section of the framework in supporting reflections. EPs suggested that the PTMF could be used to reflect on their own story and responses professionally, the position and power that EPs hold, or to build cultural competence by reflecting on possible cultural and personal biases. This emphasis on power was framed as a unique contribution of the PTMF:

"Nice to have [a] model that acknowledges that power exists!"

(WC3 Table 1 Visual)

The PTMF was felt to help EPs reflect on the functioning and impact of power across systems and from the perspectives of different service users. For example, EPs in WC2 reflected on parents' lack of power within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) systems and how this might influence a parent's response when working with an EP (Figure 18). There was a sense of tension from recognising and reflecting on power imbalances between themselves and service users.

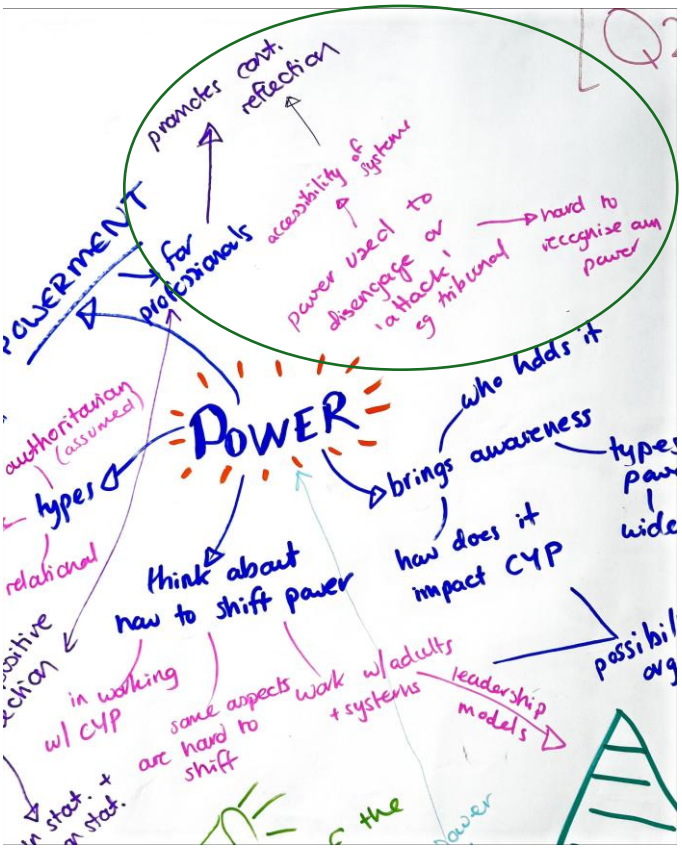

Figure 18: *Extract from WC2 Table 2 Visual. Green circle to emphasise reflections on parents' power.*

Some EPs highlighted that this could encourage further reflection on the EP role in shifting power (Figure 18). However, others noted the PTMF played a role in EPs just reflecting and sitting with the discomfort of negative power operations:

> *"As practitioners, as EPs…it can be difficult to think about the ongoing struggles that may exist…for the people, the situations, the contexts that we're working within. But we sometimes have to live with that discomfort."*
>
> (WC2 Table 1 Host Summary)

"[The PTMF provides] space to sit with the uncomfortableness…so just to acknowledge the hard parts of it and the power imbalances…or the impact…that the power has on others." (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

Furthermore, the role of new models (like the PTMF) was highlighted as fostering curiosity and prompting EPs to reflect on and explore different practice (Figure 19). This indicated a desire for continual learning and professional growth from some EPs. Some conceptualised themselves as 'research practitioners' when speaking of the value in adopting new models and building practice-based evidence through trialling, refining, and learning through doing (e.g., WC2 Table 1 Visual). This implies that EP practice will evolve as they learn of and trial new ways of working.

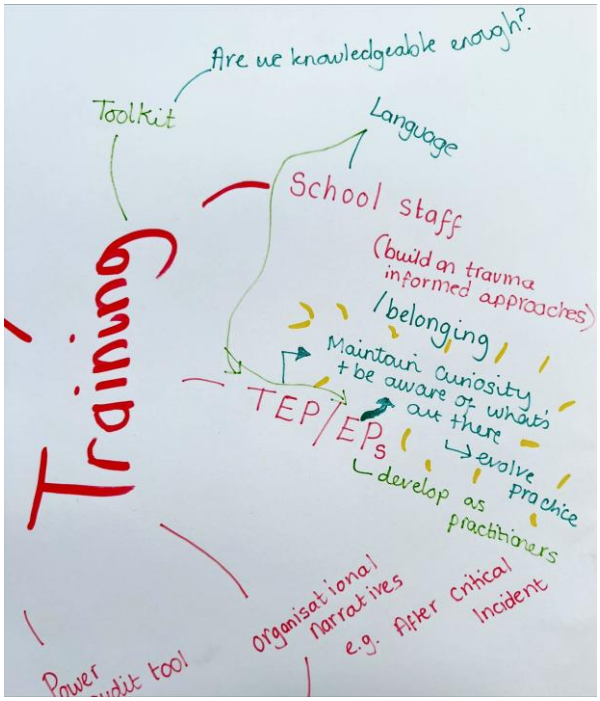

Figure 19: *Extract from WC1 Table 2 Visual demonstrating a desire for training in new approaches to encourage professional growth*

In WC1, the idea of evolving practice was often linked to working therapeutically and using EP's versatile skillset in new and diverse ways:

"EPs lend ourselves to work more systemically but constantly drawing on variety of therapeutic skills – maybe are more skilled than we think"

(WC1 Table 1 Visual)

"Possibly working therapeutically with that young person, making use of the skills that EPs have" (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

"Although I wouldn't use it therapeutically with young people, I think that there's…a role for us and I'd love to expand in that sort of way…and use therapeutic work more generally" (WC1 End Discussion)

Therefore, this theme highlights that the PTMF could help EPs reflect on themselves and those they work with, while encouraging a critical and evolving perspective on their current practice.

4.1.2 The Internal EP Framework: One Tool Among Many

This theme captures the notion that EPs tend to utilise numerous models implicitly, aligned with personal or shared values. The PTMF was positioned as a tool that could be used implicitly and adopted as part of an EP's metaphorical toolbox.

EPs explicitly noted that the PTMF resonated with their values (Figure 20). Across different WCs, EPs emphasised that the PTMF aligned with person-centred, relational, strengths-based, narrative, and psycho-social approaches. The PTMF was perceived as an open and flexible model that could enable work consistent with EPs' values.



Figure 20: *Three extracts from WC visual summaries to demonstrate perceived alignment between the PTMF and EPs' values.*

Some positioned the PTMF as something that could be used implicitly. EPs implied that it might influence EP practice, but not in a way that would not be notably obvious or named as such to service users. For example, across WCs, EPs noted that the framework could shape their thinking and decision-making, and inform questions they ask, the language they use, and the structure for their reports. Through this, EPs would be modelling language and alternative perspectives to service users, which could shift their conceptualisation of "problems" (WC1 Table 2 Visual). EPs noted that the concepts of the PTMF already inform how they approach their work (e.g., Figure 20). Therefore, it could be part of the collection of frameworks they use, incorporating aspects of the PTMF as needed:

"We were thinking about our internal EP framework, that maybe [the PTMF is] not always something that we explicitly use or share with a school, but it might be that it's something that we hold when we're making our formulations, just to help us." (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

"PTMF as 'a' model rather than 'the' model → pragmatic approach → use bits as fits [with] work" (WC2 End Summary)

This also highlights that the PTMF might support EPs in making their formulations. Participants likened the PTMF to the 5P Model (Johnstone & Dallos, 2013) (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary) and Interactive Factors Framework (Frederickson & Cline, 2009) (WC1 Table 2 Visual). EPs spoke of the PTMF providing "a consistent method of formulating", particularly emphasising the 'meaning' element (Figure 21). One table indicated that the structured approach may be especially helpful for trainees in developing formulations (WC1 Table 2 Visual).

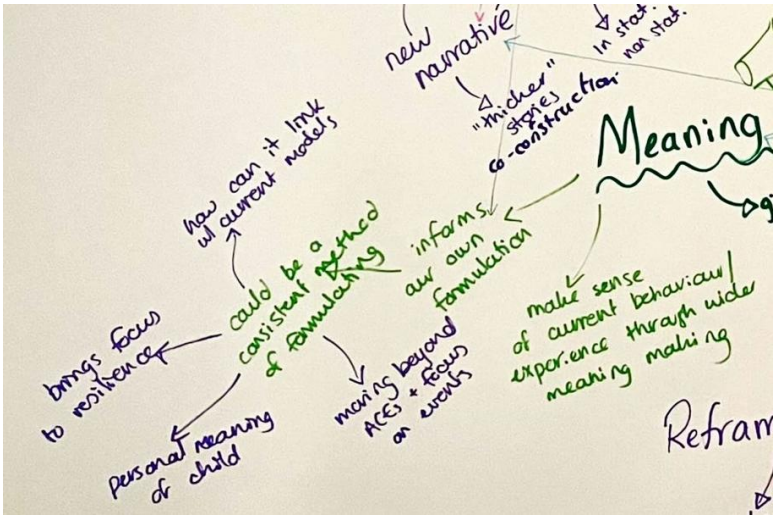

Figure 21: *Extract from WC2 Table 2 Visual demonstrating ideas around the PTMF as a tool for formulations*

In summary, the PTMF could influence a range of EP work as an implicit part of their toolbox of frameworks/approaches. This could support values-aligned practice, shape explicit practices with service users, and structure EPs' formulation.

4.1.3 Children and Young People: Enabling the Individual to Tell *Their* Story

This theme centres around how the PTMF could be used during direct work with CYP. The account contains differing views over whether the PTMF should be used purely to collect pupil views (listen to their story) or with a therapeutic focus (to 'reauthor' their story). For instance, all three tables in WC1 noted that the PTMF could be a tool to collect pupil views, eliciting their meaning of a situation and what has happened to them, to share with key adults. Alternatively, others positioned the PTMF as a tool to be used over a few sessions with CYP to support reflecting on, rewriting, and narrating their own story. Some EPs likened it to therapeutic approaches already embedded within their practice or those used by other professionals (e.g., Figure 22). There was a question over whether Assistant EPs "might be more likely to use it", as they have greater capacity for longer-term work with CYP and perhaps rely more on frameworks to guide practice (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary). This implies that the PTMF's application to EP work with CYP could depend on the purpose of EP work, whether it is to listen and understand CYP's narratives or help author their narratives.

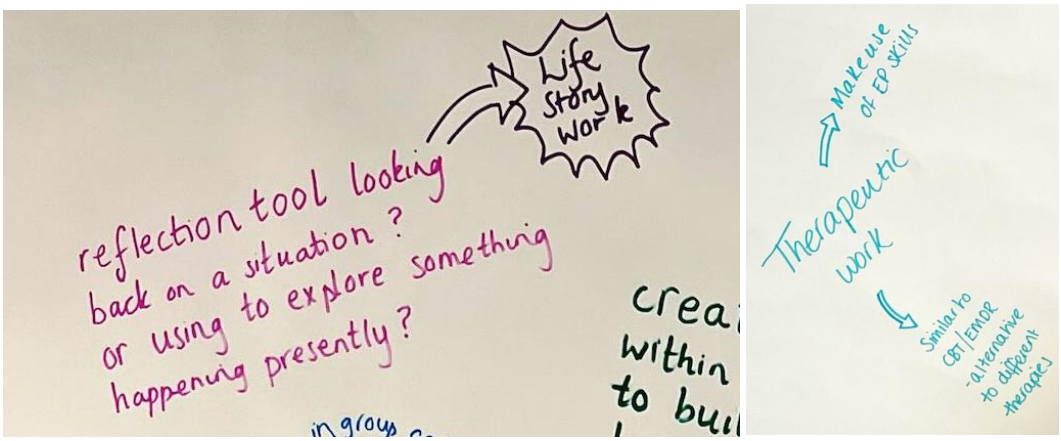

Figure 22: *Extracts from WC3 Table 2 (left) and WC1 Table 2 (right) visuals giving examples therapeutic uses and likened to other approaches*

Whether using the PTMF to listen to or shape narratives, EPs conveyed that the PTMF could enable co-construction and promote the voice of the CYP (e.g., Figure 23). The PTMF was seen to bring the focus to "the personal meaning of a child" (WC2 Table 2 Visual) and enable them to tell *their* story of an event or their life. Some EPs perceived that just the opportunity for a CYP to share their story would be a positive outcome of PTMF-informed work (Figure 24). Whilst others felt that the PTMF would help restructure narratives of past events and enable growth through reframing "symptoms" as means of coping:

> *"The links…with post-traumatic growth and thinking about the strengths and the responses [parts of the PTMF]…how has that young person…coped with that situation and how have they grown from that…like as a reflective tool."*
>
> (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)



Figure 23: *Extracts from WC2 Table 1 (left) and WC2 Table 2 (right) Visuals illustrating an emphasis on the CYP's voice and co-construction.*

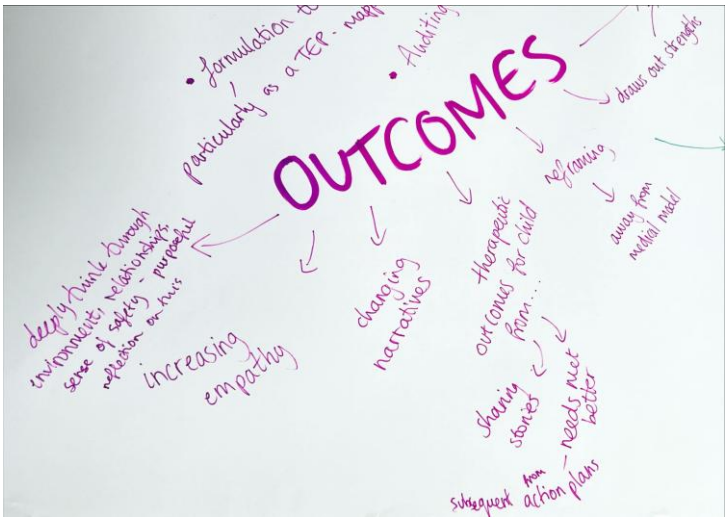

Figure 24: *Extract from WC1 Table 2 Visual showing perceived outcomes for CYP*

In summary, this theme highlights the PTMF as a tool that could support CYP in telling their story. Participants spoke of the PTMF being used to listen to and understand CYP's narratives or to shape narratives through therapeutic-style work with CYP.

4.1.4 Adults around the CYP: PTMF as a Bridge Between Consultation and Intervention

This theme highlights how EPs could use the PTMF when working with parents, school staff, and other agencies working around a specific CYP (see Figure 25). There was a particular focus on using the PTMF within consultation; EPs felt the PTMF could enable reflections on what is happening/happened for the CYP and explicitly support group formulation and problem-solving. In all three WCs, EPs noted that this might involve using it as a graphic within consultation to problem-solve collectively, in a similar fashion to 'Circle of Adults' (Wilson & Newton, 2006).

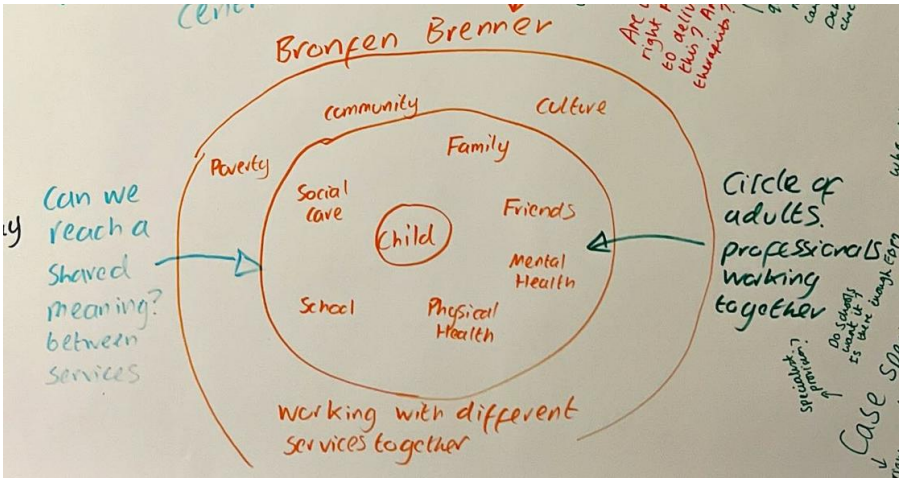

Figure 25: *Extract from WC3 Table 2 Visual demonstrating a circle of adults that could be working around a CYP*

Some EPs appeared to closely link using the framework in consultations with the concept of intervention. For example, using the framework within a consultation could lead to generating strategies to support CYP:

"We talked [about] the threat part of the framework and that being a way that we could maybe come up with some intervention strategies…it might be a way of creating an action plan" (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

"EPs do a co-produced plan of support with the CYP/adult…To prevent threats/support strengths" (WC3 Table 2 Visual)

However, there was also a sense that using the PTMF to reframe narratives held by adults would equally act as an intervention. The PTMF was thought to have the potential to reframe how adults view specific situations and/or behaviours surrounding CYP. For example, it can "just give a fresh way of looking at things" (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary), "a 'thicker' narrative" (WC2 Table 2 Visual Summary), or provide a different, more holistic perspective (WC3 Table 2 Host Summary). One table spoke of how "stories have power" and "are engaging" (WC2 Table 1 Visual). This was often linked to building understanding, empathy, and compassion in key adults, which could be the foundation of developing strategies and supportive next steps for CYP (e.g., Figure 26).

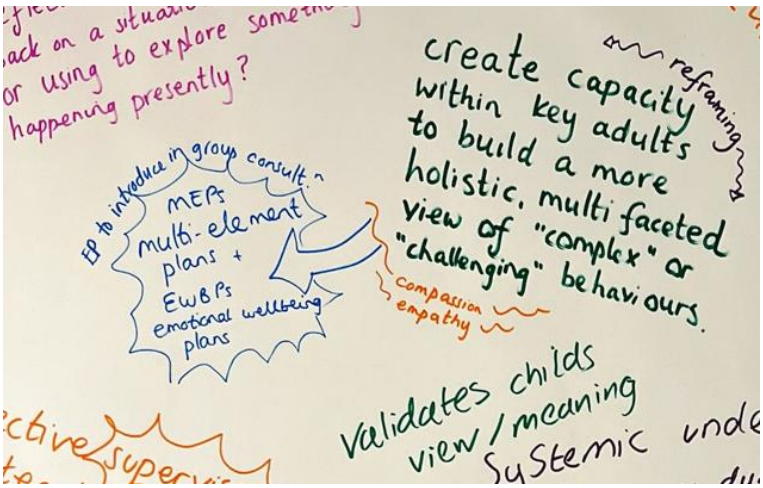

Figure 26: *Extract from WC3 Table 2 Visual demonstrating some perceived benefits of using the PTMF in consultation*

EPs believed that utilising the PTMF in complex situations or where CYP had diagnoses could enable adults to gain a broader perspective and give "time to unpick the 'why'" before "reaching straight to 'what'" (WC3 Table 1 Visual). The shared understanding and narrative emerging from the PTMF seemed to be positioned as a positive outcome:

"What it might do as well is create a shared narrative for everyone that is working around that young person together, so that everyone is kind of understanding the same perspective." (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

"The other outcomes...were the opportunity to increase the empathy...get everybody involved in that casework or around that young person, changing narratives...reframing kept coming up, drawing out strengths."

(WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

While participants did not explicitly name this as an 'intervention', they implied that creating shared narratives, building empathy, and reframing perspectives were in themselves interventions that would support CYP in the adults' care.

Its use was primarily discussed in reference to casework consultations facilitated by EPs. However, EPs within WC2 and WC3 noted that it could also be used with adults around the CYP as part of the statutory advice that EPs write. For instance:

"We talked about how the 'story' section of an education, health and care plan is like a journey, so lends itself quite well to using the model"

(WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

Some EPs linked using the PTMF in statutory work with an opportunity for "more positive reflection" in the assessment process (WC2 Table 1 Visual). Meanwhile, others considered whether the PTMF could be a recommended provision included in statutory advice (WC3 Table 2 Host Summary).

The *'PTMF as a Bridge Between Consultation and Intervention'* encapsulates EPs' practical insights on applying the PTMF with adults around CYP, alongside their focus on the PTMF's potential to develop shared narratives, compassion, and empathy. This may serve as a foundation for supporting CYP.

4.1.5 School Systems: PTMF as a Tool for Learning, Supervision, and Change

Through this theme, participants suggested that the PTMF could enable systemic change in schools, grounded in learning about the framework and using it in EP-facilitated supervisions.

Some EPs positioned the PTMF as a "psychological tool to share" with school staff through training (WC1 Table 2 Visual). Ideas emerged around offering explicit training on the PTMF (e.g., WC3 Table 1 Host Summary) or incorporating it into existing training delivered by EPs. Participants perceived it as relevant to their current training on trauma-informed approaches, relational approaches, and belonging (e.g., WC2 Table 2 Host Summary). One EP also considered that it could be used to deliver "general training on power" (WC3 End Summary).

Following training, WC3 proposed supervising school staff to implement and embed PTMF principles. One table indicated it could be an intervention offered across the school system, and EPs could supervise staff to do one-to-one work with CYP:

"Perhaps, like the ELSA supervision model...it almost feels like it could be used as...a one-to-one weekly intervention that someone is working with a member of staff with the EP delivering that supervision"

(WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

Alternatively, it was thought that the framework could also be used as a tool for reflective supervision with school staff. This was suggested as perhaps useful for teachers, pastoral staff, or broader "staff groups" (Figure 27).

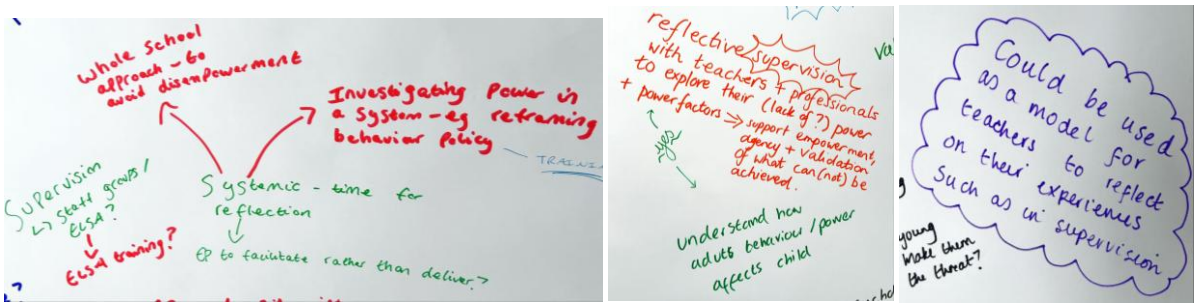

Figure 27: *Extract from WC3 Table 1(left) and Table 2 (middle and right) showing ideas around using the PTMF for staff supervision*

The PTMF was viewed as having the potential to create reflective spaces for staff to consider their own experiences of power within school systems (WC3 Table 2 Host Summary), their position and power, and how CYP might experience that (Figure 27). EPs also considered using the PTMF to support staff in reflecting on their wider life experiences and how that shapes them/their responses in school (WC3 Table 2 Host

Summary). EPs drew links between 'continual reflection' for professionals and 'empowerment' (WC2 Table 2 Visual). There was also a suggestion that reflecting on power in a supervisory setting could validate what can or cannot be changed moving forward (Figure 27).

EPs also suggested that the PTMF could be used in staff supervision around specific incidents within the school community (e.g., critical incidents). This was thought to help establish the meaning made for different individuals (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary), and to create "reflective space for individuals, teams, wider groups and systems…[to think] about strengths and changes for the better" (WC1 Table 2 Visual).

Participants appeared to link reflecting on the concept of power with initiating systemic change. EPs spoke of the PTMF helping school staff to gain a better understanding of the functioning of power within the system:

> *"We talked about how it might work in schools to use it as like a whole school approach as a power audit tool. So 'how has power featured in their organisation or their school?' as a way of auditing power"*
>
> (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

Reflecting on the PTMF was thought to have the potential to influence behaviour policies (WC1 Table 2 Visual) and evoke systemic change through a more nuanced view of power:

> *"There's lots of possibilities for organisational change in schools, if schools were able to understand how power interacted on different levels, how it's not just the power that they hold over children but the power within different*

parts of the school, SLT verses teachers and TAs, and all of those kinds of things." (WC2 Table 2 Host Summary)

EPs talked about how teachers, teaching assistants (TAs), and school leaders need more opportunities to reflect and understand power for CYP. EPs expressed that the PTMF could enable them to hold explicit conversations about power within the school system:

"'Who is holding the power' allows us to explore that and be more explicit about power. So sometimes it's something we perhaps think about in our hypothesis, but this brings it to the front and...[allows] more open and honest discussions about it." (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

"One EP was saying that they just really like the power element. Can we just talk...with school settings about power and what that means to their young people...Can we use it in a wider systemic way?"

(WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

Through talking more openly about power, it was thought that this could perhaps shift schools' understanding of power away from a top-down approach to consider how power interacts at all different levels (Figure 28). There was a sense of hope that systemic reflection would enable wider changes in schools (e.g., WC2 Table 1 Visual).



Figure 28: *Extract from WC2 Table 2 Visual illustrating a flip from top-down approaches of power to "complementary roles"*

There was a focus across the WCs on how bringing concepts from the PTMF into training and supervision at a school systems level could help to shift understanding, encourage reflection, and initiate meaningful systemic change in how school systems operate.

4.1.6 Wider Systems: The Power of Narrative to Disrupt the Discourse

The final theme suggests that the PTMF could be a tool that enables EPs to work at a wider systems level to disrupt and shift dominant discourses. EPs, particularly within WC2, conceptualised the EP role as advocates for change on this wider level. This theme captures elements of the discussions which focused on the dominance of the medical model and deficit narratives within SEND services and policies. Within these discussions, the PTMF was positioned as something that could help EPs challenge this dominant ideology:

"The framework actually gets away from the labels that come from…the medical model or a…more deficit model…To get away [from] or de-emphasise labels, might the question…'what has happened to you?' be helpful?" (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

"This approach that the framework offers values the narratives and stories that help people understand their lives. The medical model is different to our model because the medical model can…lead to prescribed approaches based on the conditions and labels…But our focus is very much about helping to support the child and young person and, you know, their families to tell their stories, to help understand what they…may be experiencing and what their needs and their aspirations may be."

(WC2 Table 1 Host Summary)

In this, the PTMF seemed to be viewed as a tool that helped EPs work at the wider system level in subtle ways. WC2 Table 1 and 2 raised the concept of "epistemic power" and "whose narrative gets heard?". They held that EPs had a role in amplifying and empowering alternative narratives, and the PTMF encouraged them to do this:

"Using our power to amplify…the other narratives and having awareness of different people's power that exists…we are talking more openly now around EDI [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion] and other current agendas, so…we were discussing the power threat meaning [framework] and more use of this"

(WC2 Table 1 Host Summary)

The emphasis on epistemic power and amplifying alternative narratives seemed to align with participants' references to "privilege and power" (WC3 Table 1 Visual) and "fairness, justice and power" (WC3 Table 2 Visual). This implies a perceived social justice role for EPs in shaping how narratives are framed. It appeared that the PTMF could practically support this reframing, but some participants emphasised that EPs need to use their power to amplify marginalised narratives.

In all three WCs, EPs highlighted the PTMF as a way of reframing "within-child narratives". Within-child assumptions were said to be prevalent within "medical discourse" (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary) and usually positioned as equivalent to a "deficit model" (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary). However, both WC2 and WC3 felt that a key benefit of the PTMF was its potential to be used alongside medical diagnoses to reshape ideologies and narratives away from solely a medical/deficit focus, toward more holistic narratives:

> *"How do diagnoses such as ASD or ADHD fit in here…Can the framework actually open out discussions…labels need their journeys to be discussed…the journey by which someone actually arrives at having a particular diagnosis or label."* (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

> *"Still giving the label that some parents would be kind of keen to secure, but telling the why of how we got to this part, the story and the narrative…I guess giving meaning to the diagnosis…It's a tool that complements diagnosis, so linking back to that validation."* (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

There was also a question posed as to whether the PTMF was "a tool to help prevent future mental health problems?" (WC1 Table 1 Visual). This perhaps indicates that the

PTMF could support a wider ideology shift in the need for labels or just a shift in what is conceptualised as a mental health "problem". Similarly, there was a suggestion that the PTMF would be a helpful framework in EP training courses to "understand ways of…moving away from medical models and understanding need…in a more narrative approach" (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary). This suggests that EPs noticed a potential in the PTMF's use of narrative to shift discourses, which could start with the training of EPs.

Finally, the PTMF was also considered as a tool to understand broader community, organisational, and societal narratives affecting CYP. One table discussed the idea of the PTMF spanning beyond the school systems to understand experiences for CYP:

> *"Then we thought even bigger…like the significant international narratives like COVID or…vaping or peer pressure or social [media] issues that young people experience and you could use it to sort of frame those."*
>
> (WC1 Table 2 Host Summary)

Some EPs conceptualised that this could enable them to reframe narratives held within Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) to encourage systemic change from the top, through understanding the contexts and narratives of CYP within the system:

> *"It could be something that's done within a specific area to understand the broader contexts of some of the challenges the young people are experiencing in this area and be presented as sort of feedback to a MAT to maybe encourage systemic change. Which then sort of linked to…moving away from the child and linking this between fairness, justice, and power and*

what that looks like for specific groups – such as neurodiverse groups, LGBT, or ethnic minorities?" (WC3 Table 2 Host Summary)

This implies that EPs perceived using the PTMF at the wider systems level as promoting greater equity and inclusion by illuminating and empowering the narratives held by CYP within the system and using narratives to reshape how CYP are understood. Throughout this theme, EPs appeared to position themselves as having power to amplify marginalised narratives, through their everyday work and in wider communities and organisations.

4.2 RQ2 Themes

This set of themes addresses RQ2: *"What concerns or barriers might influence EPs' decisions to adopt or use the PTMF in practice?"* Six themes corresponding to this research question were identified. Whilst these themes stand independently, Figure 29 conceptualises them using the same areas of work identified from RQ1. The themes do not sit exclusively within distinct areas. However, the figure illustrates the six RQ2 themes interacting across different areas, highlighting the challenges to adopting the PTMF at multiple levels. The remainder of this section will explore each theme in turn.

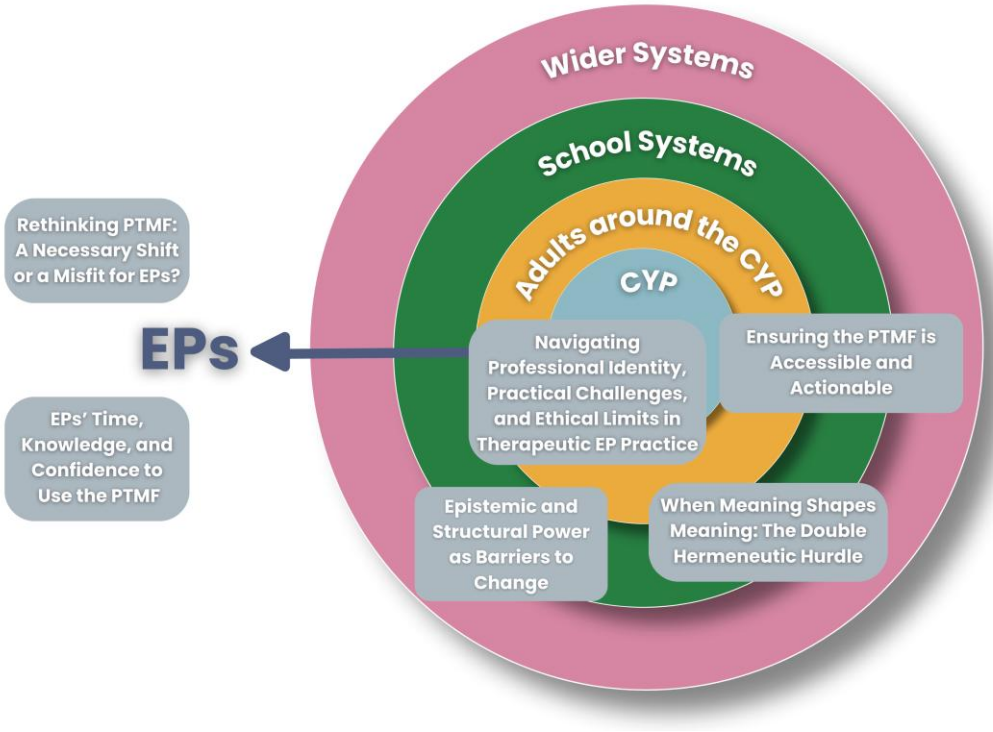

Figure 29: *Thematic Map for RQ2*

4.2.1 Rethinking PTMF: A Necessary Shift or a Misfit for EPs?

The first theme focuses on whether the PTMF is suited to the EP role at all. While EPs recognised that the framework has clinical roots, opinions were divided on what this meant for its application to EP practice. Some argued that this background makes the PTMF unsuitable for EP work:

"I think the model has a role to play in a more therapeutic role."

(WC3 End Summary)

"It's based on clinical knowledge, so actually should we use alternative models based on EP practice...Should it be this hard to try and think about how it would slot in? Would it not be better to think about something that complements what EPs are doing already?" (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

Some participants highlighted the limited applicability of the PTMF to other aspects of their role, such as learning assessments and statutory processes (WC2 Table 3 Visual). Others asked the question of whether a "therapeutic model" could be incorporated into systemic work (Figure 30).

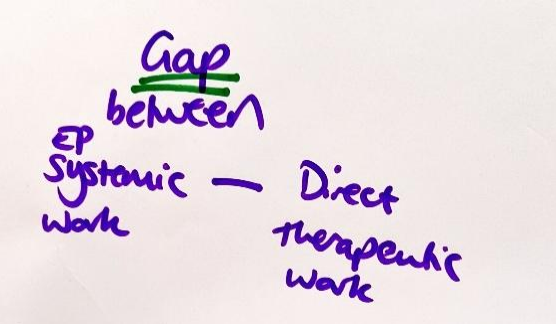

Figure 30: *Extract from WC1 Table 1 Visual illustrating a challenge of translating a model across both therapeutic and systemic work*

Contrastingly, some EPs in WC1 and WC3 held that the framework was relevant to the EP role but needed to be adapted. One suggested adaptation was making the PTMF more solution-focused to fit EP practice better:

> *"How do we adapt [the PTMF] rather than copy it? So, adapt it more to the educational psychology world."*
>
> *"In the EP world, we do tend to be more strengths and solution-focused, or solutions-based…is there, in [the PTMF], too much focus on the threats and the negatives…what are the risks of just focusing on the threats and the negatives? In the EP role, we would need to be more positive and looking at what's working."* (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

"For EP world would we need a rebrand? → More solution-focused"

(WC3 Table 3 Visual)

However, EPs across all three WCs also expressed a lack of clarity as to what this 'adaptation' would look like. They appeared to link this with a need for more in-depth understanding of the framework and time for further discussion. The questions EPs posed also suggested a hesitancy over whether they needed to maintain fidelity to the framework:

"The other bit about EP practice was we don't really ever follow one particularly prescriptive model. We sort of borrow elements of different things and different psychological theories along the way. And so does this need to be delivered in purely a PTM framework, or do we incorporate bits of it…and how do we fit that into current practice?"

(WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

"EPs like to work flexibly – is it too rigid?" (WC1 Table 3 Visual)

"It's all very new…I'm not sure who we're asking for permission on this, it's just kind of knowing the rules of engaging with it and what can we do with it…Re-imagining it for us…Not a clinical tool, an EP tool."

(WC1 End Discussion)

Whilst there was a notion that the PTMF needed "rethinking" for EP practice, there was also the question of whether the PTMF was necessary. Participants felt the PTMF aligned with the EP role *because* of its fit with their existing practices. However, some EPs then

asked whether the PTMF is needed if EPs are already doing what the model conceptualises:

"What does this provide as something different to a tool that's already used?" (WC3 Table 2 Host Summary)

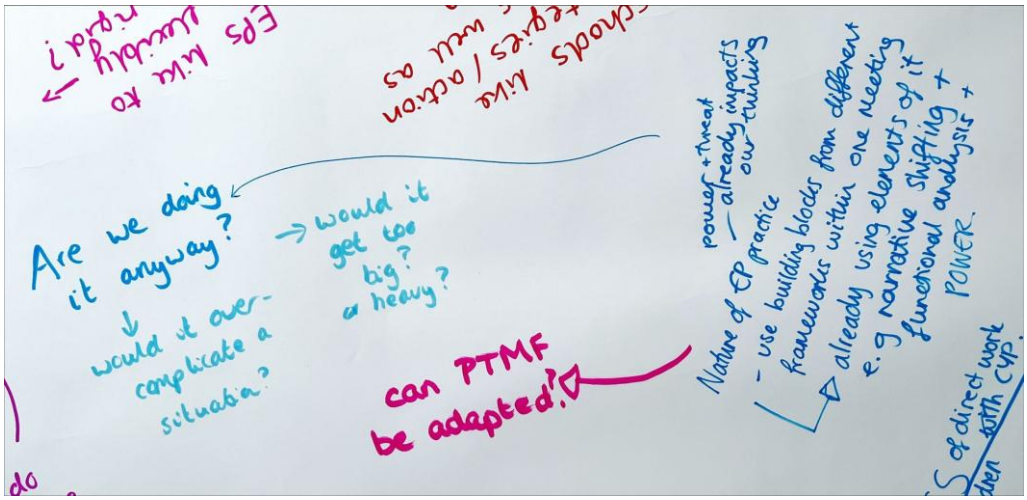

Figure 31: *Extract from WC1 Table 3 Visual illustrating discussions around whether the PTMF is needed in EP practice*

This theme highlights potential tensions around adapting the PTMF from clinical to EP practice. EPs appeared to be left asking whether the PTMF fits with EP practice, whether they *should* adapt, 'rebrand' or 'reimagine' the PTMF, or whether it's unnecessary for EP practice.

4.2.2 EPs' Time, Knowledge, and Confidence to Use the PTMF

EPs identified their knowledge of the PTMF as another barrier to adopting the framework. EPs appeared to somewhat link their knowledge with confidence to adopt the PTMF:

"Although we've had that training input, how confident are individual EPs? Actually, without this prompt sheet, I wouldn't be able to tell you too much about the framework off the top of my head…we identified that we perhaps need more understanding of the framework" (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

This emerged often in individuals' end written summaries:

"I think I need to be more familiar with its structure before I try and apply it."

(WC2 End Summary)

"Don't feel confident enough with [the PTMF] yet or know it in enough detail"

(WC1 End Summary)

"Feel I need more knowledge and training, but I like the framework"

(WC1 End Summary)

Participants also asked, "How do we develop fluency?" (WC2 Table 3 Visual). EPs' time was highlighted as a further barrier to being able to learn and fully understand a new framework, and to use and embed it within their practice:

"[The WC discussion] also brings up how long it would take to come to a consensus about how we might use it coherently and develop tools/interventions that we're happy with and are useful/effective and accepted more widely within schools and our SEND division"

(WC2 End Summary)

"The idea of time, how much time would it take to really use the model…it will take time to actually frame meetings and frame reports in terms of that"

(WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

EPs across all three WCs suggested that it would be helpful to develop specific templates, tools, and questions to elicit the different elements of the PTMF with service users. Yet, simultaneously, EPs expressed uncertainty about the framework's purpose and what contexts they would use it in. This also pointed to a broader concern over whether EPs felt confident that this was an approach that they wanted to prioritise:

"How do we say that power threat meaning framework is the one we want to use…why don't we make everyone in the team more familiar with CBT approaches or something along those sort of lines?"

(WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

All three WCs highlighted that the evidence base for the PTMF was still emerging and very limited, particularly for EP practice. This presented as a challenge for EPs to be confident in delivering it and to "buy-in and sell it as an intervention" (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary). The limited evidence base was linked with a "reluctance to use it" in practice (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary).

Some EPs contrasted this with the idea of developing practice-based evidence (Figure 32). Whilst limited practice-based evidence could be conceptualised as a positive way to evolve practice (see Section 4.1.1), EPs across the WCs asked the question of how they would evaluate the use of the PTMF in practice and measure its impact (Figure 32). The lack of measurable outcomes for service users was presented as a hurdle that could

make it difficult to develop practice-based evidence. This also implies EPs might find it difficult to justify using the PTMF.

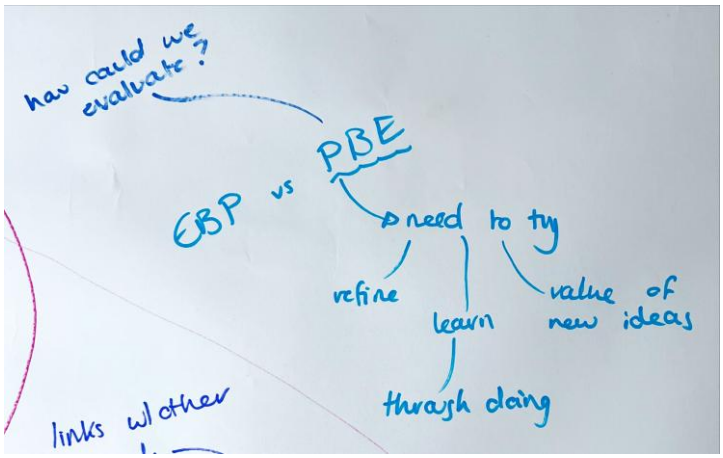

Figure 32: *Extract from WC2 Table 1 Visual contrasting evidence-based practice (EBP) with practice-based evidence (PBE)*

EPs implied there was a level of risk in implementing a model with a limited evidence base and lack of practical examples for EP practice:

> *"We talked about how if somebody came up and said 'look, we've introduced this into how we work in the EPS, and it's made this amount of difference or this or that'. We'd almost be compelled to say we've got to pay attention to that…there isn't that basis for it at this sort of stage…It's a risk."*
>
> (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

> *"Is it safe to do this as trial and error?"* (WC3 Table 2 Visual)

This theme shows the importance of the evidence base for EPs in being confident to use or implement the PTMF in practice. The limited evidence seemed to present a threat to EPs' delivery of evidence-based practice, whilst questions around evaluation and risk

also appeared to threaten building practice-based evidence. This seemed further compounded by EPs' limited knowledge of the framework and restricted time to invest in learning and embedding.

4.2.3 Navigating Professional Identity, Practical Challenges, and Ethical Limits in Therapeutic EP Practice

This theme was positioned primarily concerning EPs working directly with CYP. EPs possess skills that *could* enable them to work therapeutically (Section 4.1.3). However, this theme raises the question of whether such work aligns with EPs' professional identity and whether the practical and ethical challenges of therapeutic work within the EP role are too prohibitive. Participants expressed uncertainty about their collective position on this, often framing thoughts as questions:

> *"We went down a little bit of a route around, do we work therapeutically at all? Do we do enough therapeutic work? Is it something we want to do?"*
>
> (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

> *"Are we the right people to deliver this? Are we therapists?"*
>
> (WC3 Table 2 Visual)

EPs expressed concerns about their training, skills, and confidence or fluency in therapeutic skills. They felt these would be significant barriers to using the PTMF therapeutically with CYP.

Furthermore, EPs' perception of the role appeared to be a barrier that could influence how the PTMF is adopted. While some EPs had conceptualised that EP work could span into a more therapeutic approach (Section 4.1.3), others felt this was not part of their role

(Figure 33). The idea of "boundaries of the EP role" emerged in WC1 (Table 1 Visual) and WC3 (Table 2 Host Summary), suggesting that some EPs felt that the therapeutic work overstepped what could be defined as the EP role. These differing viewpoints and the subsequent potential for a "fragmented" EP team was posed as a further barrier to adopting the PTMF in practice (WC2 Table 3 Visual).

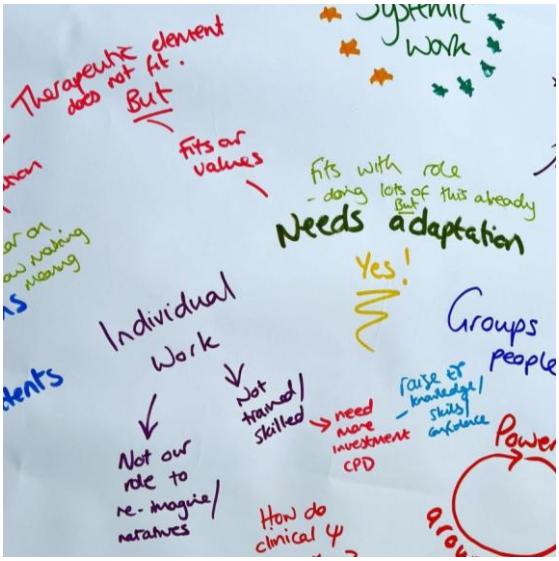

Figure 33: *Extract from WC1 Table 1 Visual demonstrating concerns around individual therapeutic work in the EP role*

The practical challenges of therapeutic EP practices were largely centred around traded EP services. The most prominent idea was that schools may not be willing to invest the number of EP sessions needed for prolonged PTMF-based work:

> *"Other barriers are around our traded model. If we actually wanted to go down the therapeutic model, it's a big onus on the school, isn't it, to actually commit to a certain number of sessions for one individual child, as opposed to…10 sessions, then well that's 10 young people we can see."*
>
> (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

"Schools aren't going to pay for that" (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

Traded systems were also seen to restrict what work EPs felt they could offer to schools. EPs expressed that their limited time and capacity could make it difficult to do justice to a piece of individual work using the PTMF:

"We don't really have the time to use it...in terms of traded work, we're less likely to have time to do it and enough time to really explore things with the child" (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

Time limitations were also felt to restrict the time needed to build therapeutic rapport with the CYP. A lack of relationship between the EP and CYP was felt to possibly inhibit the effectiveness of using the PTMF (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary; WC2 Table 3 Visual).

Furthermore, if EPs did engage in longer-term work, some participants highlighted the threat this could cause in reducing EPs' availability for other work. This prompted questions over whether the impact of therapeutic work would be worth the cost of EP time (Figure 34).

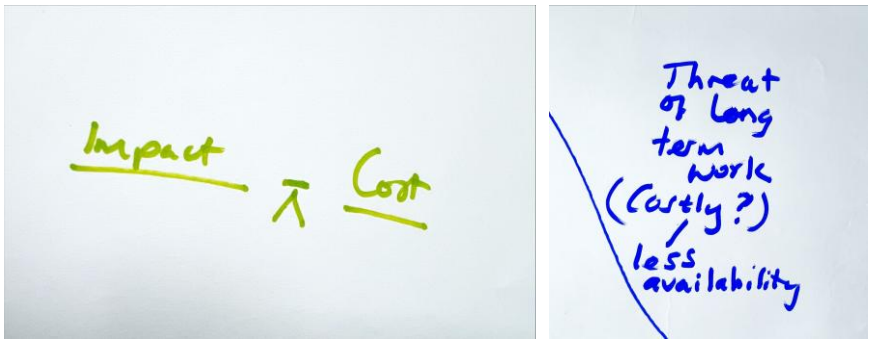

Figure 34: *Extracts from WC2 Table 3 Visual demonstrating concerns over wider impacts of long-term EP work with CYP*

Alternatively, WC1 posed that if EPs were to work in this way, it would need to become a "service priority" and potentially require service restructuring. For example, to "run or add a therapeutic branch" (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary) and provide access to clinical supervision (WC1 End Discussion). On one table, this was positioned as contrasting to their "consultation-based service" which "in effect…removes us from therapeutic type work" (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary). This table implied that using the PTMF therapeutically would be a significant undertaking for them as a service, and emphasised the questions of "where does it sit as a service priority?" and "how do we make that decision?".

These practical barriers to therapeutic work were further underpinned by ethical dilemmas around using the PTMF therapeutically. Participants in all three WCs highlighted that EP involvement is often brief and sporadic, limiting their ability to engage ethically in therapeutic work:

> *"Our role is often dip in, dip out. You don't want to unpack someone's deeper, innermost threats then be like, 'okay, now you're going back to lunchtime, and I'll never see you again'…so thinking, around how this was managed and…contracted with key stakeholders."* (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

> *"Like we looked at power this week and wait until next week to look at how you made sense of that and how you get through that"* (WC1 Table 3 Host Summary)

One suggestion to overcome this barrier was through training and supervising school staff to deliver a PTMF intervention (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary; Section 4.1.5). However, EPs in a different WC felt that it was not the school staff's role to deliver therapeutic work:

"Doing some sharing psychology but [this] needs to be done carefully so that then the school staff don't think they're able to go and do therapeutic work with a child" (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

EPs expressed concerns that individual work could lead to "a big explosion" as CYP potentially bring up, process, and deal with trauma (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary). They noted that other adults would need to be appropriately trained and ready to support CYP in this, and a guarantee that work with the CYP would continue over several weeks. EPs felt this was not consistently possible (e.g., WC1 Table 3 Host Summary).

Furthermore, EPs suggested that there was a "psychological risk involved in delving into things with a child" as they could be left "feeling powerless after a session" (WC3 Table 3 Visual). Some felt concerned regarding the depth of the concepts within the PTMF, and the ethical implications of this:

"Fear of re-traumatising children → 'what has happened to you?' feels too much" (WC3 Table 3 Visual)

"Very heavy to bring to a child directly as a fleeting EP" (WC3 Table 3 Visual)

"You're opening quite a can of worms!" (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

In summary, therapeutically using the PTMF with CYP seemed to raise concerns on practical and ethical levels for EPs. Contrasting opinions were also expressed around professional identity and how therapeutic work fits within the EP role.

4.2.4 Ensuring the PTMF is Accessible and Actionable

The next theme spans beyond solely working with CYP to *ensuring the PTMF is accessible and actionable* for all service users. Within this theme, EPs expressed concerns about whether the concepts and model itself are accessible for the CYP and adults they work with. They highlighted a potential need for underpinning psychological knowledge and asked what interventions, outcomes, and next steps the PTMF would provide.

In terms of the PTMF's accessibility during direct work with CYP, some participants highlighted the need to consider more than just the individual's age:

"You need quite a high level of cognitive ability to be able to understand and reflect."

"This was all about not having it assigned to secondary aged pupils but more about level of competence." (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary)

Another table linked decision-making about who the PTMF is accessible to with Gillick's competence and the CYP's language and their cognitive abilities (WC3 Table 3 Visual). Yet, others questioned the complexity of some of the PTMF's concepts for any CYP (WC1 Table 3 Visual).

In parallel, EPs expressed worries about the framework's comprehensibility for other service users. They contemplated whether adults might require training on the model before using it in consultation (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary), or whether they could communicate it effectively and accessibly if using it in the moment:

> *"Explaining the framework to others verbally or in reports, will they know what you're talking about…Making things clear to parents might be difficult; the word threat can be scary."* (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

Some felt that engaging with the framework required a good background knowledge of developmental trauma or attachment theory, particularly if school staff were using the PTMF themselves (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary). Some expressed that this was a significant obstacle to using the framework in any manner. In response to the question, "Is there a role for the PTMF in EP practice?", one recorded answer was:

> *"No? Too theoretical for individuals not from a psychology background to understand and apply"* (WC1 Table 3 Visual)

There was a perception that for the PTMF to be successful, there needed to be "investment from all" (WC3 Table 1 Host Summary). This was explicitly linked to "reluctant parents" and the idea that if parents have their guards up, the PTMF was "quite a hard model" and might be difficult to explain sensitively or use to help move a situation forward.

The lack of clarity around outcomes and actions from the framework was presented as a further barrier to using the PTMF with CYP, parents, and schools. EPs appeared concerned about what the PTMF could offer as next steps for service users:

"It doesn't deliver an intervention necessarily…the work is for the person to have that sort of self-realisation and like, for that to be the impact…it's not saying 'right, you know, this is what the school needs to do, this is what the family needs to do, this is what the child needs to do'"

(WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

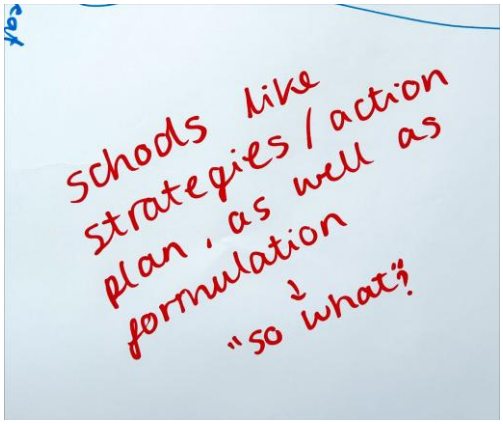

Figure 35: *Extract from WC1 Table 3 Visual showing concern about the lack of actionable outcomes from the PTMF*

Taken together, these accounts highlight EPs' perceptions that the complex concepts and the lack of actions from the PTMF could prevent service users from fully engaging with the framework and/or finding it helpful. These perceived challenges could pose a barrier to EPs choosing to adopt the framework.

4.2.5 When Meaning Shapes Meaning: The Double Hermeneutic Hurdle

This theme centres on the premise that individuals hold unique meanings, not only of the concepts within the framework (like what is perceived as 'power' or 'threat'), but also of the 'meaning' derived from a particular event. Some participants explicitly referenced the

concept of ‘double hermeneutics’ (Giddens, 1982), which explains the existence of multiple layers of interpretation. For instance, as an individual talks of an event, they share their interpretation through a lens of their experiences and understanding of the world. Another will listen and develop their own understanding and meaning, resulting in an interpretation of their interpretation. This is known as ‘double hermeneutics’.

Firstly, how an individual understands the words within the framework could shape their response to the PTMF. Participants suggested that the words ‘power’ and ‘survive’ have different meanings in different contexts (WC3 Table 2 Visual), implying that individuals would each bring their contextual understanding of the phrases. However, EPs also described the words ‘power’ and ‘threat’ as “scary” (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary), “blamey” (WC3 Table 3 Visual), “provocative” (WC2 Table 1 Visual), “loaded terminology” (WC3 Table 3 Visual), and “like control” (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary). This could be contrasted with the perceived need for “gentle language” in the EP role (Figure 36).

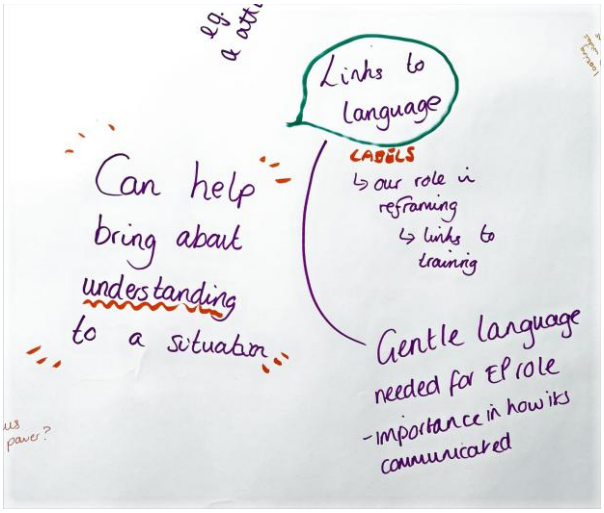

Figure 36: *Extract from WC1 Table 1 Visual emphasising the importance of EPs communicating the PTMF carefully*

Nonetheless, the differing connotations held about the words/phrases within the PTMF were viewed as a possible barrier to using the framework:

> *"A barrier might be that the question itself, 'what has happened to you', can be interpreted as blaming…a parent, perhaps, might hear 'what have you done'"* (WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

> *"They might have existing constructs…so depending on their own experiences in terms of relationships, or…how they were parented, or their socio-economic background and so on, that might influence their perceptions of what power is, what threatening means, and what meaning means."* (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

This illustrates how an individual's existing interpretations might shape their understanding of the concepts in the PTMF. So, as parents, for example, filter the question "what has happened to you?" through their own experiences and constructs, it could alter how they interpret and respond to the framework (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary). EPs expressed concerns about the framework being perceived negatively and evoking an "emotional response" from service users (WC2 Table 3 Visual) or parents putting "their guard up" (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary).

EPs seem to perceive that the original intention of the framework could be lost if using the framework indirectly. Considering double hermeneutics as a hurdle, EPs wondered if adults could be imposing *their* constructs, meanings and interpretations of a situation/event:

"We're then in danger of…it's not their meaning, it's the adults' assumptions of the meaning or someone else's interpretation of their meaning. So…it feels like you've really shifted from the framework" (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary)

"If that adult has experienced domestic violence, they might…think 'oh well this is what's going on for the child'…Or if the adult hasn't experienced that, they might…put different constructs on that." (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

If EPs intend to use the framework indirectly, one group noted the importance of the facilitator's cultural awareness to avoid imposing biases:

"Within this double hermeneutics, if you don't understand about the culturally specific things that are going on for the child…then that might go missing. So, I suppose it does require the facilitator…if you're doing it in that kind of consultation role, to be aware of [culturally specific factors] and to bring it back to that." (WC3 Table 3 Host Summary)

This suggests that without careful co-construction of meanings and cultural awareness from practitioners, there remains a risk of imposing dominant cultural norms. EPs presented this as a barrier to adopting the framework. Though not explicitly named, there was a sense of apprehension around the PTMF requiring a high level of cultural competence if used indirectly.

One table highlighted 'meaning' as the crux point, identifying that "that's where it becomes unstuck" (Figure 37). This implies that they could perhaps identify 'powers' and 'threats' for a CYP, but 'meaning' is where the framework becomes less usable. The subjective nature of meanings appeared to leave EPs concerned about ethically gaining

a true understanding of meanings made by a CYP. This reflects tension over the complexity and possible inaccessibility of gaining insight into CYP's meanings.



Figure 37: *Extract from WC1 Table 3 Visual demonstrating how meaning is the point where it "becomes unstuck"*

Overall, the need for EPs to employ a double hermeneutic approach was seen to be a significant barrier to using the framework. Preconceived meanings and connotations associated with the concepts within the framework, alongside the risk of imposing biases, were regarded as challenges to using the PTMF with service users. There was a sense that using the framework indirectly deviated from the intentions of the PTMF and made 'meaning' the hardest part of the PTMF to apply to EP practice.

4.2.6 Epistemic and Structural Power as Barriers to Change

The final theme highlights that power, in various forms, appears to shape EPs' ability to use a new model or the concepts from the PTMF within their practice in schools.

Epistemic power refers to influence over who controls narratives, whose knowledge is valued, and how meaning is constructed (Archer et al., 2020; Sewell, 2016). *Structural power* can be defined as "the power to shape and determine the structures within which others must operate" (Strange, 1988, p.208).

EPs acknowledged that they sit within wider systems which conflict with the PTMF's approach. However, they appeared to feel limited in their capacity to change these wider systems and power operations:

"A lot of special educational needs and disability work is couched in the medical framework, or a deficit model, so how do we begin?"

(WC2 Table 3 Host Summary)

"Some parts of system (power) are beyond influence of EPs"

(WC2 Table 3 Visual)

"Barrier: Systems in place in schools already" (WC3 Table 3 Visual)

Similarly, when using the PTMF with service users, EPs seemed to wonder if raising awareness of power could inadvertently disempower service users. This was especially considered for CYP, who might struggle to influence negative power structures around them. Some EPs associated "feelings of powerlessness" following a session with a "risk of harm" for CYP (WC2 Table 3 Visual). Where power might restrict service users' capacity for change, EPs appeared uncomfortable about the use of the PTMF:

"What if the threat is the school? And then, once they've completed something like this…they feel empowered, but then do they feel more

disempowered because when they return, they can't make the change."

(WC3 Table 2 Host Summary)

"It can be difficult to think about the ongoing struggles that may exist…It's that balance between giving voice and agency. But sometimes that may be leaving a person or situation without that power to make that choice"

(WC2 Table 1 Host Summary)

EPs also appeared to feel restricted in *their* ability to enact change at systemic levels, as schools may not commission work aligned with the PTMF. There was a notion across several tables that "schools aren't necessarily asking for this" (WC3 Table 3 Visual) and that it would be hard to get "buy-in from school to use [it] systemically" (WC1 Table 3 Visual). It was felt that EPs' ability to shift narratives could be limited if schools were unwilling to engage in this type of work, particularly within traded systems dependent on time commissioning (e.g., WC1 Table 1 Visual). To bring about meaningful change, there would also need to be "dissemination of ideas across school" (WC2 Table 3 Visual). EPs appeared to perceive this as another hurdle to using the PTMF to create systemic change, seemingly positioning traded systems as a barrier to accessing systemic change work.

Additionally, schools were perceived to hold "power" in their referrals (WC1 Table 3 Visual), which may hinder EPs from implementing the PTMF with individual CYP. WC1 Table 3 framed this as an ethical issue due to schools having "power" over who an EP can work with and the potential to change their minds or leave work incomplete. Yet, Figure 38 underscores multiple instances where the question of "who" arises, indicating that various other gatekeepers may also influence access to PTMF-informed interventions, their structure, and the resulting changes. There was a sense that parents could oppose

PTMF-informed interventions (WC3 Table 3 Visual). However, the nature of the questions in Figure 38 implies that EPs felt uncertain about who should or could impact PTMF-informed work with CYP.

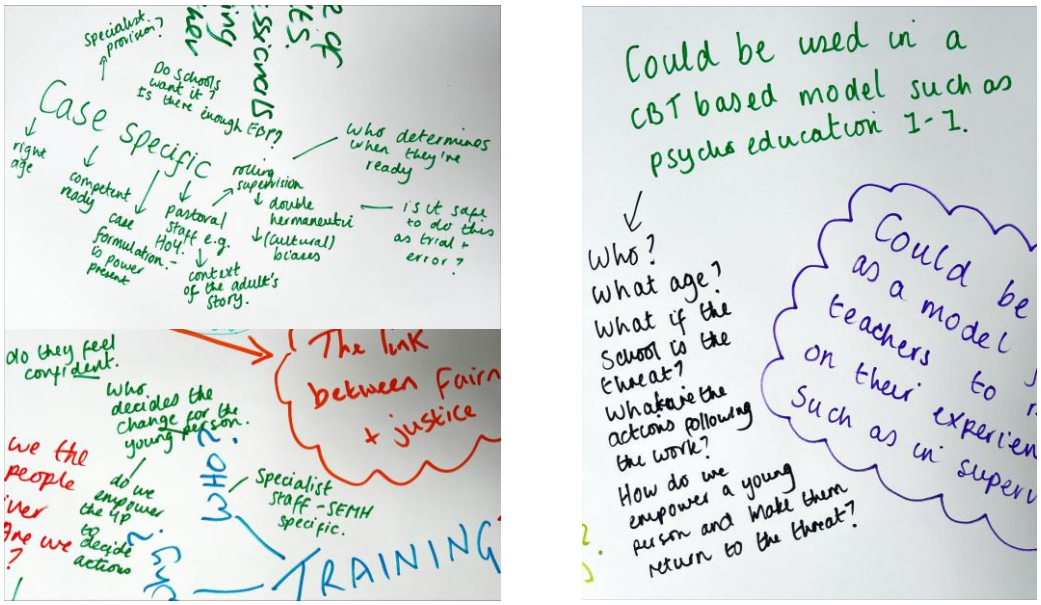

Figure 38: *Extracts from WC3 Table 2 Visual posing questions of "who" influences decisions before, during, and after PTMF-informed work with CYP*

However, it was also noted that EPs hold power that could be perceived as a threat (Figure 39). Some EPs noted that it can be “hard to recognise” their power and how it operates (WC2 Table 2 Visual). There was an implication that the perceived power of EPs could be in tension with the PTMF’s emphasis on the individual, either by EPs inadvertently imposing views or service users’ not feeling open to share.

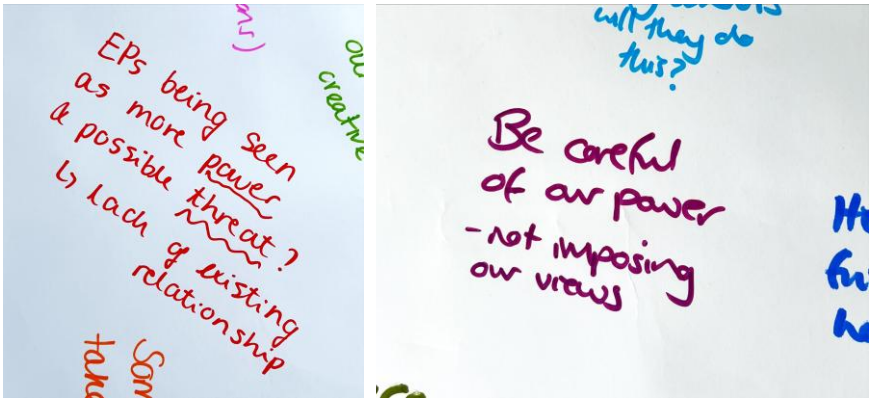

Figure 39: *Extract from WC1 Table 3 Visual (left) and WC1 Table 1 Visual (right) illustrating possible concerns around EPs' perceived power and its impact on service users*

EPs also implied that the nuance around 'power' in schools made it difficult to apply the PTMF. For example, WC3 Table 3 Visual noted that "sometimes there needs to be an imbalance" of power in schools, and existing systems could be difficult to change. This suggests EPs were wary of a simplistic application of the PTMF (e.g., that all negative power operations need to be removed) and that the nature of power must be carefully considered for the specific contexts.

Finally, epistemic power seemed to challenge EPs' perceived ability to foster change in wider systems. EPs in WC2 expressed this as a particular concern; they acknowledged that the PTMF poses "some threat to the medical model and the SEND systems that can be power driven" (WC2 Table 1 Host Summary). This posed the question of how they would use the PTMF within systems driven by these epistemic powers (Figure 40). Across WC2, EPs appeared to feel that epistemic power reinforces the status quo, and navigating the tension between that and the PTMF's approach would be difficult in practice.

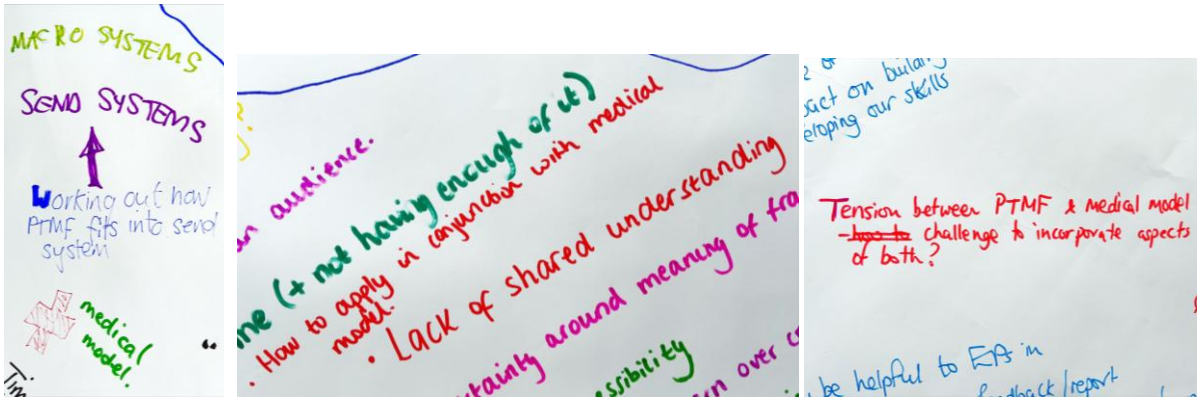

Figure 40: *Extracts from WC2 Table 3 Visual demonstrating how EPs positioned fitting into existing systems and ideologies as a barrier to using the PTMF*

Though closely linked, this theme highlights how structural power might create barriers to EPs using the PTMF in their work, and epistemic power could maintain dominant narratives and perhaps limit the type of work EPs have access to or can engage in. This appears to reinforce a resistance to change or to embracing the approach laid out within the PTMF.

4.3 Summary of Findings

In summary, the findings of this research highlight that the PTMF is perceived as relevant to areas of EP practice, yet there are also several challenges to its application in EP practice. Figure 41 shows a thematic map merging the themes from both research questions to demonstrate the perceived relevance of the PTMF, alongside potential barriers to its adoption.

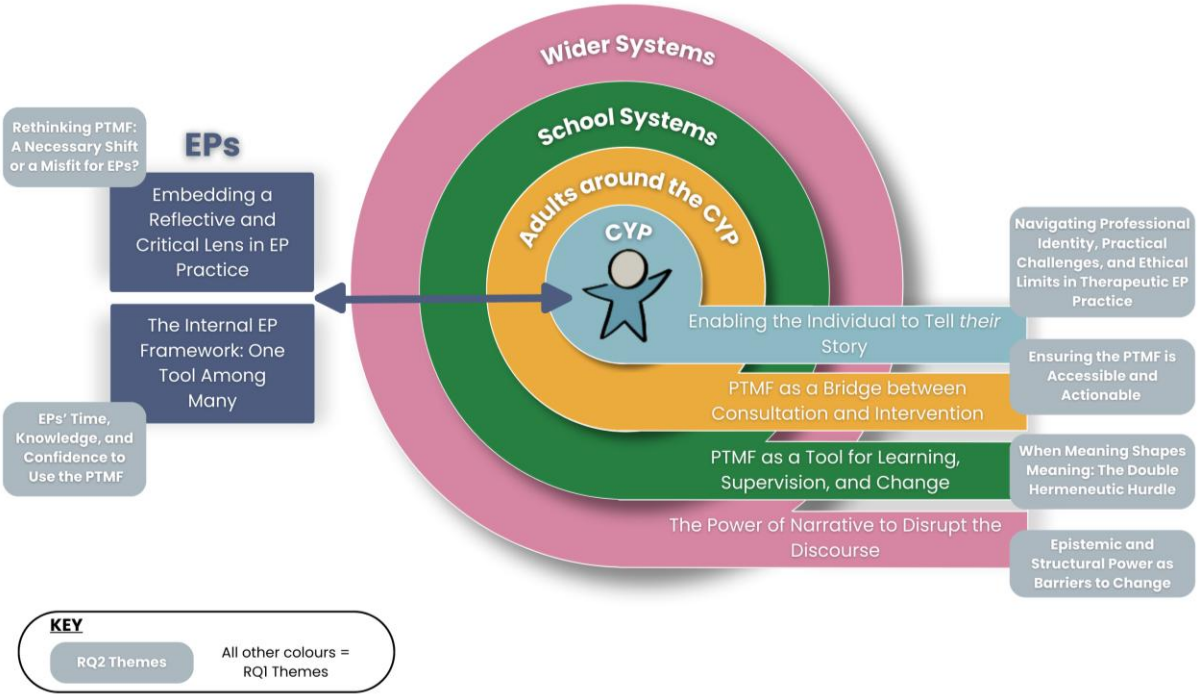

Figure 41: *Thematic map showing both RQ1 and RQ2 Themes*

RQ1 themes highlighted ways in which the PTMF is perceived as relevant to EP practice and how it could be used across different areas of work. EPs suggested that it could shape their professional growth and personal reflections, as well as be used as an implicit tool within practice. It was perceived to have potential to support CYP in telling their story, adults in understanding and responding to a CYP's story, and a tool to support school staff's learning and reflections. Across the systems levels, the PTMF was thought to enable systemic change and harness the power of narrative to shift and challenge dominant ideologies.

However, participants also raised potential challenges to adopting the PTMF in EP practice. EPs highlighted the framework's clinical origin; some perceived this as a mismatch for EP work, while others suggested that adaptations would be needed to align it with EP practice. EPs' time, knowledge and confidence in the framework were seen as

barriers to adapting and initiating implementation of the framework in practice. Participants felt that the PTMF might not be accessible to all service users, and there was a lack of clear actions stemming from its use; these factors led EPs to query its fit with their role and its appeal to schools who commission their work. The idea of professional identity and the nature of EPs' direct work with CYP was discussed with a particular focus on therapeutic work and its perceived practical and ethical challenges. The meaning part of the framework also appeared to cause tension for EPs due to the double hermeneutic nature of EP work and risks of imposing biases or meanings. Finally, when considering the idea that the PTMF challenges the status quo, EPs felt that epistemic and structural power could be a barrier to working in PTMF-aligned ways and evoking wider changes within SEND systems or changing dominant ideologies (e.g., those associated with the medical model). EPs seemed to suggest that power operations and the complexities of power in systems might restrict the type of work they could access; it also seemingly impacted EPs' perceived capacity to foster systemic change.

Therefore, there appeared to be a tension over the applicability of the PTMF in EP practice. Whilst there were many ways that it was perceived to be relevant to the EP role and areas in which it could be used, there were also challenges that might have the potential to prevent EPs from adopting the framework in their practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter further explores whether the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) can be adopted into Educational Psychology (EP) practice by combining the current findings with previous research. Chapter Four outlined findings according to each research question, however, the current chapter will be structured around the different areas in which Educational Psychologists (EPs) conceptualised themselves working with the framework. For each area, the perceived relevance and challenges to using the PTMF will be discussed to consider the overall story of the data and some of the tensions around the decision to adopt the framework. This chapter aims to integrate EPs' views expressed in the World Cafés (WCs) with the literature outlined in Chapters One and Two and ultimately consider whether the PTMF is a framework that can be adopted into EP practice.

It should be noted that the nature of discussions within the WCs highlighted wider questions about the EP role. This included differing views on therapeutic work, consultation, the nature of systemic work, anti-oppressive practice, and professional and collective identities. These issues intersect with a broader literature base but are not central to the research focus. As such, literature around these questions will be acknowledged but not exhaustive. The primary focus will be on EPs' views relating to the evolving research base for the PTMF and its use in practice, aligned with the exploratory research aims.

Given the strong emphasis on EP practice within the current research, implications for practice will be discussed throughout. A summary of implications will be presented through a list of reflective questions for EPs to consider concerning their practice. Suggestions for further research are included at the end of the chapter, alongside reflections on my positionality and reflexivity, and strengths and limitations of the research methodology.

5.1 Overall Themes

For each research question, six themes were interpreted through Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA). Research Question One (RQ1) themes identified six ways in which the PTMF was perceived as relevant to EP practice. Within WC discussions, EPs appeared to conceptualise their work in four key areas: directly with children and young people (CYP); with adults around the CYP; in school systems; and wider systems. Their own reflective and implicit practices were conceptualised as spanning these four areas.

CYP remained the central focus of EP activities across all domains, leading to the conceptualisation of themes as concentric circles surrounding the CYP (Figure 18, p.105). This somewhat mirrors Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Although the themes emerged inductively, this theory may have shaped EPs' conceptualisation of their role, as it is recognised as a foundational theory in EP practice (Kelly, 2016; Turner & Nolen, 2015). However, EPs in the current research seemed to focus on their role with school staff and adults concerning specific casework; they did not often discuss engaging with broader family and peer networks, which are also core to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Alternatively, the areas of EP work

represented in the themes of this research may align more closely with Curran et al.'s (2003) view of EPs functioning at individual, organisational, and system levels. The additional area in this research, termed 'adults working with CYP' may encompass both individual and organisational levels, and perhaps signifies a growing emphasis on indirect and consultative practices (Fox, 2009; Gutkin & Curtis, 2008; Scottish Executive, 2002).

Under Research Question Two (RQ2), EPs also identified six challenges that may hinder their decision to use the framework. These themes appeared to overlap across areas of work conceptualised by EPs (Figure 29; p.127). For a new framework to be adopted into practice, Rogers (2003) argued that individuals or organisations need to be persuaded of the advantages and disadvantages of an innovation in distinct situations. He argues that this lies in the perceived characteristics of the innovation, namely its relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and visibility of the results (observability) (Figure 10; p.70). Aligned with my contextualist epistemology, there is no objective truth regarding whether the framework should or should not be adopted. The extent to which individuals and organisations are persuaded to adopt the framework will depend on their contexts and may vary over time and in different scenarios. However, by bringing together collective knowledge established within the WC discussions (Chapter 4) and what is known about the PTMF in the literature (Chapters 1 and 2), it is hoped that a deeper insight can be established regarding relevance and challenge for the context of EP practice. This chapter culminates in a set of reflective questions for EPs, emphasising their capacity to critically evaluate their practice and determine the relevance of the framework within their specific context.

5.2 CYP: What is the EP role in Narrative Work?

5.2.1 Perceived Relevance

The PTMF's ability to enable voice for CYP was drawn out as particularly relevant to EP practice (Section 4.1.3). This aligns with previous research highlighting the PTMF as a tool to empower service users' voices (Aherne et al., 2019; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Milligan, 2022; Omur, 2023). Particularly in WC2, EPs positioned a key element of their role as giving power and amplifying the narratives of CYP who often go unheard. Therefore, the PTMF could be both an implicit tool for EPs (to reflect on whose voice has been amplified) and an explicit tool (for pupil voice or longer direct work with CYP). This could be seen as a key aspect of the EP role (O'Leary, 2024; Sewell et al., 2022; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

There was broad consensus among EPs about the perceived benefit of using the PTMF to explore pupil views and hear their story (Section 4.1.3). EPs in the current study spoke of valuing stories and narratives. Some EPs viewed the PTMF as a therapeutic tool relevant to their work, which aligns with its application in existing literature (e.g., Aherne et al., 2019; Reis et al., 2019; Sapsford et al., 2025). However, EPs expressed more unanimous interest in using the framework to collect a pupil's perspective on particular situations or experiences. The PTMF posits that everyone should be able to tell their stories without likening certain narratives to symptoms of mental distress, that stories don't need to be neat or verbal, and stories can emerge in many contexts other than therapy (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Harper, 2022). This seemingly aligns with Atkinson and Kenneally's (2021) conceptualisation of "therapeutic EP practice" as broader than prolonged one-to-one interventions. So, whilst the idea of "therapy" seemed to sit uncomfortably for some EPs, the PTMF seemed to be a way that EPs could use their therapeutic skills to draw out

stories and empower CYP (Section 4.1.1 & 4.1.3). This fits with other research where EPs have suggested that some “therapeutic approaches” align with EP practice, even if “therapy” does not (Atkinson et al., 2022; Bradbury, 2023; Kimber, 2024).

5.2.2 Challenge

The *Navigating Professional Identity* theme (Section 4.2.3) highlighted tensions between how individual practitioners perceived the EP role relating to therapeutic and narrative work with CYP. However, one co-author of the PTMF highlights that the framework’s use of narrative differs from traditional ‘therapeutic’ approaches (Harper, 2022). He asserts, “although the framework may be used in therapeutic settings, it is not, strictly speaking, a therapeutic document or tradition” (p.6). Harper states that traditional therapeutic approaches typically regard narratives as personal, verbal accounts that mirror one's mental wellbeing, placing the responsibility on therapists to facilitate the “re-authoring” of stories. This perspective may resonate with participants in the current study who emphasised that they do not see themselves as therapists (WC3 Table 2 Visual) and believed it was outside their role to re-author narratives (WC1 Table 1 Host Summary). This appeared to lead some EPs to question the appropriateness of the PTMF for EP practice. However, the authors of the PTMF explicitly refute this notion (Harper, 2022; Johnstone et al., 2019; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). While therapeutic approaches often encourage individuals to develop new, preferred narratives (Bradbury, 2023; Fogg, 2016), the PTMF challenges this idea of “re-authoring” as “magical voluntarism” (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018, p.83). This concept posits that, despite individual agency, systemic and relational powers inhibit individuals from effortlessly "re-authoring" their stories at will (Smail, 2004). Thus, the PTMF serves as a tool for formulating stories in context rather

than substituting a “bad” narrative with a “better” one (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). This approach may align more closely with EPs' understanding of their role than the notion of “therapeutic work” (Stroud, 2024).

However, regardless of the definition and nature of ‘therapeutic’ work, the practical and ethical concerns raised within the current research remain when undertaking direct work using the PTMF with CYP. EPs felt that with their limited time and resources, unpacking big contextual circumstances with CYP could be unethical (Section 4.2.3) and potentially disempowering (Section 4.2.6). This is consistent with tensions expressed in wider EP literature (Atkinson et al., 2011; Atkinson & Kenneally, 2021; Simpson & Atkinson, 2021; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). It is noteworthy that much of the research using the PTMF in practice is with adult populations, and where it is used therapeutically, the individual’s motivation, consent, and client-therapist relationship were key to the success (Reis et al., 2019; Sapsford, 2021). EPs in this research, therefore, raise an important point when considering the power of referrals and gatekeepers to individual work with CYP in EP practice (Section 4.2.6). Similar to barriers mentioned in forensic literature, it cannot be assumed that individuals will want to engage in PTMF-based work or be able to comprehend contextual factors and concepts within the PTMF (Dean, 2024; Gallagher et al., 2024b; Ramsden, 2019). The work using the PTMF in *Jigsaw* Youth Mental Health (MH) services suggests that CYP can comprehend and understand themselves better through the PTMF (Aherne et al., 2019, 2020). However, there is limited research applying the PTMF directly with CYP and, where it has been applied, there are suggestions that CYP might struggle to comprehend the concepts without significant adaptations (Browne et al., 2024; Ekbäck et al., 2024). This aligns with EPs' concerns in the current study. They

expressed that to maintain ethical practice, the PTMF would need to be adapted and carefully implemented according to the needs of the CYP.

5.2.3 Navigating the Tensions

In the current research, there appeared to be a split over whether there was a 'perceived need' for a framework working directly with CYP. Some held that EPs have 'therapeutic skills' and appeared enthusiastic that frameworks (like the PTMF) could enable them to draw on their varied skillset and work differently (Section 4.1.3). Whilst the PTMF may not be 'strictly therapeutic' (Harper, 2022), participants highlighted that they could use their skills flexibly, and it challenged their ways of working (Section 4.1.1). This aligns with suggestions in wider literature around therapeutic EP practice being varied and flexible (Atkinson & Kenneally, 2021; Fogg, 2016; Hobbs et al., 2012).

Where EPs expressed concerns around working "therapeutically" or "doing therapy", the literature outlined above highlights that the PTMF is not intended to be a therapeutic tool. This highlights the importance of further building EPs' knowledge of the framework to enable decisions about adopting it, the first step in the innovation-decision process (Rogers, 2003). However, EPs in this study also expressed a desire for PTMF-based tools and resources accessible for CYP for them to consider *how* it would be used in practice (Section 4.2.4). There appears to be an interest in adapting the framework for use with CYP through interest groups and ongoing participatory action research (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022). However, in the meantime, for EPs to adopt the framework, they will need to navigate tensions around the definition and practical limitations of their role.

5.3 Adults around a CYP: Is There a Risk of Shifting from Meaning-Making to Meaning-Giving?

5.3.1 Perceived Relevance

Across the WCs, EPs highlighted that the PTMF could be relevant to their work with key adults around CYP, particularly through use in consultations (Section 4.1.4). The PTMF was thought to be a useful tool for supporting group formulation and problem-solving. This aligns with the findings from previous educational and clinical doctoral research studies (Leverington, 2023; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). Co-producing formulations using the PTMF has been suggested to create a shared understanding of a CYP's needs and give a fresh perspective, especially in multi-agency work (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). Research indicates that joint professional meetings are beneficial for developing EPs' formulations in complex casework (Farrell et al., 2006; Stroud, 2024). However, EPs have also been described as 'onward referrers' instead of collaborative workers, implying that effective multi-agency collaboration happens infrequently (Greig et al., 2019). EPs in the current study perceived that the framework could enable them to work together more effectively with adults around a CYP through a shared language and structure for formulating together (Section 4.1.4).

Throughout the WCs, EPs emphasised developing understanding and narratives with adults around a CYP. In forensic literature, the PTMF was deemed most beneficial in bringing understanding around power, which impacted adults' approach to individuals in the system (Ramsden, 2019; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Willmot, 2023). This seemingly positions the PTMF as supportive for individuals working with CYP, potentially aligning with EPs' indirect work (Gutkin & Curtis, 2008; Wagner, 2016) and their focus on

understanding contextual factors (Birch et al., 2015; Bowler et al., 2007; Cameron, 2007). This indicates that the perceived contribution of the framework may not be in delivering an intervention as such, but in shifting perspectives about CYP and what has happened to them.

5.3.2 Challenge

EPs within the current research seemed to present conflicting views on whether a shift in understanding was a sufficient outcome for EP work. One RQ2 theme revealed a perception that the framework lacked clear outcomes or actions for schools and that this was a key element of EP work (Section 4.2.4). This aligns with previous research highlighting the tension of schools and other service users wanting a 'quick fix' and the PTMF being time-consuming (Aherne et al., 2019; Milligan, 2022). Where EPs have applied the framework, research suggests that the end recommendations given by EPs were no different compared to when traditional approaches were used (Stroud, 2024). Nonetheless, actions have been said to emerge from a PTMF-guided conversation naturally and through adapting the PTMF case formulation template (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b) to incorporate an action box (Browne et al., 2024). Within the current research, others highlighted that action plans could be generated from the threats section (Section 4.1.4) or that simply sharing stories could lead to positive therapeutic outcomes and CYP's needs better met (Section 4.1.3). This highlights that adapting the PTMF to be more explicit about actions may support the framework's perceived applicability for EP practice.

Previous research suggested EPs felt that using the PTMF increased their confidence in sharing their formulations in multi-professional meetings (Stroud, 2024). However, EPs

within this study perceived using the framework with others as potentially confusing, complex to explain, and too theoretical (Section 4.2.4). This was likely impacted by EPs' own confidence and understanding of the framework (Section 4.2.2). This highlights a key difference between previous research, where participants had a greater knowledge of the framework. This suggests a need for further training and dissemination of the framework itself if it is to be embedded within EP practice and to build EPs' confidence in using it with parents/carers and other professionals. This reflects the initial 'knowledge' stage of the 'innovation-decision' process (Rogers, 2003).

The current research also highlighted the idea of double hermeneutics as a barrier to using the framework (Section 4.2.5). This represents a novel finding not previously reported in research with EPs. The PTMF has often been used directly with the individual (e.g., Darcy et al., 2022; Reis et al., 2019; Sapsford et al., 2025; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). Yet, EPs highlighted that their role is frequently indirect (e.g., with adults around the CYP), leading to an additional layer of interpreting meaning and, therefore, potential ethical challenges in imposing or misinterpreting meaning.

In some table discussions, EPs emphasised the importance of hearing the voice of the CYP first, to feed back into consultations (e.g., WC1 Table 2 and WC3 Table 2). To an extent, this could help ensure that meaning is derived from the CYP themselves rather than being externally imposed. However, this does not eliminate the hurdle of double hermeneutics, which is arguably an ever-present tension in any EP work. Professionals are always shaping and being shaped by interactions (Burnham, 2005) and need to listen critically and reflexively to avoid imposing meanings (Williams et al., 2016). It could be argued that the PTMF promotes a position of understanding and curiosity through

adopting a critical realist stance (Pilgrim & Cromby, 2020). The authors explicitly highlight that the PTMF does not seek to find the 'objective truth' about an individual's experience (Pilgrim, 2022). Instead, the framework encourages developing understanding (even when narratives are not coherent or whole) and humility in not needing to understand fully to validate someone else's experience (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Harper, 2022).

Some EPs appeared to lean towards rejecting the framework due to potential biases and layers of interpretation required to understand a CYP's meaning. Trying to fully understand someone else's meaning can become an act of control and is not a necessity to develop empathy (Cromby, 2022; Todd, 2003). As highlighted by EPs within this research, the PTMF does not eliminate biases or the potential for misinterpretation. However, it does promote an understanding for adults around CYP that is contextually aware and reflective rather than fixed (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b; Milligan, 2022; Pilgrim & Cromby, 2020). This suggests that double hermeneutics may not be a barrier to using the PTMF, but rather something that the PTMF can enhance EPs' awareness of. However, some EPs in the current study did not appear persuaded of this.

5.3.3 Navigating the Tensions

As EPs often work indirectly (Farrell & Woods, 2015; Gutkin & Curtis, 2008), the current research emphasises the importance of an ethically aware, person-centred approach to EP work. EPs highlighted the valid concern of imposing meanings. EPs can play a unique role in bringing together CYP and adults around them to develop a holistic understanding of problems (Birch & Gulliford, 2023; Cameron, 2007). As such, helping CYP to voice their story and meanings to adults around them can be an important part of EP work (Fogg, 2016; Hobbs et al., 2012; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). The current research suggests that

the PTMF could provide another tool to help EPs co-construct narratives to build understanding and empathy for all service users. Some EPs expressed that this would be a positive outcome of their work, whereas others felt that more than a shift in understanding is needed as an outcome from EP work.

The current research also highlights the importance of using tools like the PTMF carefully, particularly considering potential power and biases. The review of the findings alongside the literature outlined in Section 5.3.2 suggests that the PTMF could be helpful beyond its immediate use within a consultation, by shaping adults' understanding of power and noticing potential biases even if they don't comprehend exact powers/meanings for CYP. This highlights how the PTMF might function as *a Bridge Between Consultation and Intervention* in supporting adults to adopt an open and curious mindset (Akande & Bland, 2023; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023).

Nonetheless, some EPs within the current study perceived challenges around imposing meaning and/or biases if their work did not directly involve the CYP. The PTMF's authors intend that the framework is used collaboratively and reflexively to co-construct meaning and reduce imposing biases (Harper, 2022; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Yet, even if used indirectly, the PTMF encourages critical reflection on one's own biases (Akande & Bland, 2023; Amari, 2023; Browne et al., 2024; Tribe & Marshall, 2024). It also acknowledges that most approaches and assessment tools carry implicit biases (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). Arguably, not using the framework due to the risk of imposing bias could further impede individuals from having the opportunity to tell their story and elevate epistemic injustices (Cromby, 2022; Sewell, 2016). Therefore, whether using the framework directly or not, the PTMF could encourage critical reflection on

whose voice is being heard and encourage EPs to strive for collaborative, co-constructed, and ethical work.

5.4 School Systems: Do EPs Have the Power to Change Understanding of Power?

5.4.1 Perceived Relevance

EPs identified that the PTMF could be beneficial for training and supervision at the school systems level, promoting systemic change by altering staff perceptions of power. This underscores how the PTMF's emphasis on factors beyond the individual may assist EPs in adopting a systemic perspective and applying it in their work (Boyle, 2022; Fox, 2009).

EPs within the current study highlighted a potential advantage in how the PTMF raised awareness of power. This was seen to potentially provide an avenue to bring power into conversations through training, supervision, and everyday EP work. Discussing power operations and broadening the definition and perceptions of power could significantly benefit school systems in shifting their perceptions of CYP and creating more equitable environments (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024). This represents an important finding of the current research, as previous research with EPs demonstrates a limited focus on the systemic potential of using the PTMF in schools (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). The PTMF can help to make sense of power operations within the school systems more widely (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024). The WCs generated suggestions around the PTMF being used to reflect on power in the system in supervisory settings, a tool to audit the functioning of power across whole schools, and to initiate conversations about power. EPs suggested that this could occur through incorporating the model into existing training, explicit

training about the PTMF, or through systemic work with school leaders (Section 4.1.5). This reflects Rogers' (2003) 'innovation-decision process', in that school staff first need to know about the framework and be persuaded of its relevance to begin systemic change. EPs perceived that the PTMF could be a helpful tool to do this, particularly through its focus on power.

One further suggestion for EP practice was using the PTMF as a tool for staff supervision (Section 4.1.5). The PTMF has been used in supervision for psychology practitioners (Akande & Bland, 2023; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Tribe & Marshall, 2024). However, research with LGBTQ+ teachers also highlighted that it is a helpful tool for school staff to make sense of their experiences (Brett et al., 2024). This aligns with the suggestions from EPs within the current study around using the PTMF as a reflective tool for school staff to consider their own lives and professional journeys.

5.4.2 Challenge

There was some disagreement between participants around what sharing the framework could look like. Whilst there was a desire to "give psychology away" (Resnick, 2006), some EPs felt that there needed to be careful consideration in how the framework was presented to school staff. Some suggested that staff should not undertake therapeutic work themselves (Section 4.2.3). Yet, this contrasted with the idea from another WC that the PTMF could be used in a similar format to the ELSA programme, with supervision being offered by EPs (Section 4.1.5). EPs supporting therapeutic work indirectly through supervision has been suggested to overcome some ethical barriers around EP availability and lack of existing relationship (Atkin, 2019; Krause et al., 2020; MacKay & Greig, 2007). However, there is also recognition that EPs can offer unique expertise given their level of

training and experience (Atkinson et al., 2022; Birch & Gulliford, 2023; Cameron, 2007). Either way, there has been caution around the notion of "giving away psychology" in the EP field, highlighting that implementation science denotes more of a need for careful strategic support than haphazard giving (Birch et al., 2015).

EPs appeared to express a dilemma between the desire to enhance skills and develop capacity among school staff to support CYP, and concerns about school staff being overwhelmed and struggling with the psychological concepts in the PTMF (Section 4.2.4). This mirrors barriers in clinical settings, where fast-paced environments and staffing shortages were seen to hinder the PTMF's implementation (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). In education, the marketisation and academisation of schools may pose similar hurdles, as staff's willingness and ability to implement change may be affected by external factors (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024; Brett et al., 2024). Early use of the framework with teachers suggests that they might struggle to adopt a new perspective, due to their own stress and threat narratives (Browne et al., 2024). Perhaps then, the implication aligns with forensic literature, which suggests that systemic change will require investments in structures (e.g., increased staffing and support for staff wellbeing), rather than solely via introducing a new conceptual framework (Ramsden, 2019).

Additionally, some EPs felt that traded systems would inhibit implementation, as they require schools to invest in systemic work and could limit time to disseminate and embed ideas (Section 4.2.6). Although traded systems can enhance the variety of systemic work EPs offer (Lee & Woods, 2017), EPs who attempted to use the framework found these systems limited implementation at systemic levels (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). This may reflect how the EP role is positioned by school staff (Ashton & Roberts, 2007).

However, further research could compare views from services without a traded model to determine if the implementation barrier stems solely from services' traded systems or from broader factors in school systems and perceptions of the EP role.

5.4.3 Navigating the Tensions

Participants acknowledged that structural and epistemic barriers within schools and Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) could impede the implementation of the PTMF within school systemic work (Section 4.2.6). EPs highlighted that schools were not necessarily asking for work aligned with the PTMF and how power operates in schools is nuanced (Section 4.2.6). The PTMF's view of power can juxtapose existing relational powers (Gallagher et al., 2022; Leverington, 2023; Ramsden, 2019; Willmot, 2023) and pose an organisational threat (Omur, 2023; Ramsden, 2019; Ramsden & Beckley, 2022; Travers, 2022). Some EPs appeared to position this as a barrier to the framework being usable in their practice, as traded systems and schools' power of referrals impact commissioning (Section 4.2.6). This perhaps highlights an area where the PTMF could be beneficial in first implicitly shaping EPs' work and increasing awareness of complex interactions of power in schools (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2023, 2024; Young et al., 2019) (Section 4.1.2).

The complexities of school systems and the nuances of power within the system can be positioned as a barrier, however, the PTMF can also shed a unique perspective on systemic functioning. Young et al. (2019) suggest that the complexity of school systems can be reframed as positive communities enriched by diverse perspectives. They argue that a reframing creates an opportunity for EPs to move away from the role of expert diagnosticians and instead act as "co-explorer[s] in a process of meaning-making within

a system" (p.112). Through this, Young speaks of inviting people into the dialogue which gently creates "ripples across the surface" (p.112) and initiates the change process. The PTMF appears to align with this view of systemic change in EP practice. Similar to community MH settings (Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019), there was a perception that subtly challenging narratives about power in schools could evoke changes (Section 4.1.5).

The current research highlights that the PTMF may need to be adapted to translate it to systemic EP work. The PTMF's authors positioned it as a tool that can be used systemically (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Harper, 2022), however, EPs felt it aligned more with one-to-one work and its use more widely could be impeded by its inaccessibility (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.4). If a wider majority choose to adopt the framework in EP practice, further research could seek to operationalise the use of the PTMF at a systemic level in schools and gain service users' views on its usefulness and possible adaptations.

5.5 Wider Systems: Can EPs Influence Ideologies?

5.5.1 Perceived Relevance

The PTMF was highlighted as a tool that enabled EPs to shift dominant discourses, particularly around the medical model and deficit narratives (Section 4.1.6). This was consistent with the use of the PTMF in other psychology disciplines (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Flynn & Polak, 2019; Omur, 2023) and in EP literature (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024). In the current research, EPs expressed that the PTMF might be particularly advantageous in its emphasis on narratives and personal meaning *alongside* labels derived from medical approaches (Section 4.1.6). The PTMF's authors

explicitly acknowledge that the framework can be used alongside current practices (Johnstone et al., 2019), but it is designed as an alternative to psychiatric diagnoses rather than the labels associated with neurodiversity (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018b). EPs felt that the PTMF could be relevant to work around neurodiversity in drawing out 'what happened' before a diagnosis (Section 4.1.6) and in understanding parents' journey through the systems and their responses (Section 4.1.1). This aligns with emerging research applying the PTMF to parents and CYP with additional needs (Akande & Bland, 2023; James et al., 2024; Leverington, 2023). When considering using the PTMF alongside labels, EPs perceived the framework as compatible with both their values and the systems they work within.

The concept of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) underpinned this theme. EPs positioned the PTMF as something that would be supportive in understanding and amplifying narratives of vulnerable groups they work with (Section 4.1.6). This is consistent with other EPs' views that are expressed in the literature; the PTMF is thought to help embed anti-oppressive practice and champion narratives of marginalised individuals (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022). Aligning with some EPs in the current research, wider literature suggests that social justice can be promoted through the EP role by using the PTMF with marginalised individuals to reframe emotional distress as a meaning-based response to perceived threats (Browne et al., 2024; O'Leary, 2024). This can support EPs in aligning with advocacy and social justice values (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019).

The PTMF could be a valuable framework for EPs to enhance EDI efforts within their teams and when engaging with service users. One takeaway from the WC discussions was that

EP teams might utilise frameworks like the PTMF to reflect on their journeys and identify potential biases (Section 4.1.1). Practitioners who have implemented the framework in this manner reported finding it beneficial for understanding diverse populations with experiences distinct from their own, thereby enabling them to embed anti-oppressive practice (Browne et al., 2024; Charura & Al-Murri, 2024; Miller, 2024; O'Leary, 2024; Willmot, 2023). Professional dialogues around power dynamics and meaning in work can be conceptualised as the initial steps in ideological transformation (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022).

EPs within the current research suggested that the PTMF could be used to understand organisational and societal narratives held by communities and groups they work with (Section 4.1.6). Research has highlighted the PTMF as a helpful tool for understanding the experiences of school staff (Brett et al., 2024), CYP in the education system (e.g., Devenney, 2021; Gibson, 2022; O'Leary, 2024) and whole communities (Miller, 2024). In the current study, EPs suggested that hearing narratives and meanings made around significant issues for CYP (e.g., social media and vaping) could better inform education practitioners' decision-making. Research exploring CYP's views around current culture (e.g., perceptions of social media) highlights that this could positively inform EP practice (Foster & Ellis, 2024; Foster, 2023; Gray, 2018; Literat, 2021). Alongside this, there is an argument that, with significant technological shifts in society, educational practitioners need to understand how CYP experience the world and use this to shift practice across education (Höfrová et al., 2024; Huxtable, 2022; Luan et al., 2020; Mishra et al., 2015). EPs in the current study highlighted their role as 'research practitioners', suggesting they could bridge gaps between research and practice. EPs could use their position across

systems to collect PTMF-informed narratives directly from communities or groups of CYP and feed back to school leaders (Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.6). This could shift understanding of CYP through highlighting powers operating for them and lead to wider systemic changes embedding EDI (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024; Browne et al., 2024; Charura & Al-Murri, 2024; Miller, 2024). This could be an approach that EPs seek to trial within practice and an area for further research if EPs were to consider implementation.

5.5.2 Challenge

Some EPs expressed a sense of hopelessness and lack of power to change wider systems and ideologies (Section 4.2.6). This also emerged as a theme in Milligan's (2022) research, which highlighted EP's low sense of 'collective agency' around systemic change (Bandura, 2001). Milligan (2022) hypothesises this could be linked with "the lack of shared definition, mission statement, and clear ontological framework for EP practice" (p.146). However, the current literature review (Section 2.2) suggests this may not be a problem unique to EPs. For example, where community MH advocates and organisations had explicit missions and focus, they still expressed a sense of challenge that wider systems depended heavily on the medical model and changing this felt difficult (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Griffiths, 2019). This was also reflected by those attempting to use the PTMF within clinical settings (Omur, 2023; Travers, 2022). Therefore, the current study further underlines the need for significant ideological shifts in society and wider systems to enable the PTMF to be fully adopted in psychological practice (Beck, 2020; Johnstone et al., 2019; Read & Harper, 2022).

EPs in the current research rarely mentioned explicit work around MH specifically. This could be influenced by the recent introduction of MH support teams in schools,

potentially impacting the nature of EP referrals (Birch & Gulliford, 2023). However, it also may reflect the growing ideology that frames MH as something everyone has, rather than a distinct or clinical category (World Health Organization, 2022), and a focus in EP practice on contextual understanding and adverse experiences over explicit diagnostic labels (Birch et al., 2015; Cameron, 2007). This was also seen in the absence of discussions around the 'general patterns' part of the framework in the current research. Milligan (2022) noted the same finding in her interviews, which she aligned with ontological differences between clinical and educational practice (Moore, 2005; O'Donohue, 2013). The general patterns are currently explicitly focused on psychiatric diagnoses (Johnstone, 2022). This emphasis could shift with the recent development of general patterns more relevant to EP work (e.g., Dudley-Hicks et al., 2024; James et al., 2024). Nonetheless, this highlights that EPs may apply the framework slightly differently from its intended purpose as a paradigm shift away from diagnosis-based understandings of MH (Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018a). EPs seemed most focused on applying it as a practical framework to support systemic shifts, perhaps moving away from the PTMF's conceptual aims.

5.5.3 Navigating the Tensions

EPs in the current research appeared to emphasise their role in facilitating change within wider systems by challenging prominent discourses and ideologies in their everyday work. Unlike previous research with EPs (Milligan, 2022; Stroud, 2024), politics or using the PTMF to influence change at a governmental level was scarcely mentioned in the WCs. The only brief acknowledgement of political/government systems was from WC2, where EPs spoke of the "SEND systems" feeling beyond their influence (Section 4.2.6).

This may reflect a wider notion held by EPs that undervalues their own research skills and potential to affect policy (Kaplan, 2023; Nichols, 2024). It is possible that this also reflects participants' character differences, with "early adopters" stereotypically being more visionary and progressive thinkers (Rogers, 2003). Instead, EPs in the current study perceived the PTMF as relevant to wider systemic work by considering personal narratives alongside medicalised discourses in casework, amplifying marginalised voices, and using the PTMF to understand organisational and societal narratives held within communities they work in (Section 4.1.6). Therefore, EPs seemed to focus on advocating for CYP at a micro-level (Schulze et al., 2019).

However, it should also be acknowledged that EPs felt that the PTMF challenged their ways of working and helped them to reflect on power, sometimes sitting with the discomfort of threat and negative power operations (Section 4.1.1). Encouraging practitioners to move towards difficult conversations could potentially be the first step in ideological change (Ramsden & Beckley, 2022). Other professionals have reflected on how the PTMF motivated them to fight for change by highlighting the power they had in their role (Aherne et al., 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; Enlander et al., 2022; Grant & Gadsby, 2018). Over time, reflecting on the PTMF could encourage EPs to use their role across systems to advocate for social justice at the macro-level (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2017). However, at this point, EPs perceived the PTMF as more relevant to supporting personal reflections and advocacy in everyday work.

5.6 EPs: Who and What Defines the Role?

5.6.1 Perceived Relevance

Across the WCs, EPs drew on various ways the PTMF could be relevant to supporting reflective practice and implicitly shape work with service users. RQ1 theme 1 captured EPs' interest in critically reflecting on their work using the PTMF and a sense of curiosity from learning about a new model (Section 4.1.1). Self-directed learning and reflective practice have been linked together as core components of professional growth (Tarrant, 2013), which can enhance EPs' motivation and self-efficacy (Andrews, 2018). EPs in the current study appeared to view PTMF-informed reflections as supportive for EPs at any career stage, but some noted an emphasis on its importance for Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) in considering alternative perspectives and giving structure to reflections (Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). Emerging literature highlights the potential for wider systemic change through incorporating the PTMF in training CPs (Griffiths & Baty, 2019; Paradiso & Quinlan, 2021) and EPs (Browne et al., 2024). The current research emphasises this alongside the importance of explicit learning opportunities for EPs across their career to encourage curiosity and reflective practice. Whilst time constraints may pose a barrier (Section 4.2.2), some EPs appeared to perceive the learning about the framework as valuable (Section 4.1.1).

A sense of collective identity seemed to drive perceptions of whether EPs would use the PTMF in their practice. Collective identity can be defined as "a shared sense of 'one-ness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences" (Snow, 2001, p.2213). To my knowledge, this was the first study that has explored EPs' views on the PTMF through group discussions. Therefore, it was interesting to note the collective

emphasis on their values (Section 4.1.2), flexible practice, and solution-focused orientation (Section 4.2.1). EPs felt that the PTMF aligned with values, though the collective values were not clearly defined within the host or visual summaries. Instead, the PTMF was likened to approaches they use, implying that the PTMF shared similar underlying values. This aligns with previous researchers' hypotheses and reflections around the PTMF's principles being compatible with EP practice (Browne et al., 2024; Milligan, 2022).

5.6.2 Challenge

Discussions around the lack of evidence base and EPs' confidence in the model seemed to lead to a reluctance to use the PTMF (Section 4.2.2). This contrasted with community MH practitioners expressing a desire to adopt the framework due to its 'strong' and varied evidence base (Aherne et al., 2019; Collins, 2019; Darcy et al., 2022; SHIFT Recovery Community, 2022). However, EPs in the current research highlighted that the lack of examples from other EPSs made implementing the framework feel 'risky' (Section 4.2.2). Using evidence-based strategies to bridge the gap between scientific research and educational practice has been named as part of the unique contribution of EPs (Ashton & Roberts, 2007; Cameron, 2007). Research suggests that EPs feel it is their responsibility to ensure work is meaningful through grounding in research (Farrell et al., 2006) and that the professional frameworks they use maintain scientific rigour (Sedgwick, 2019). However, EPs in this study also highlighted that they don't tend to follow one model prescriptively and often prefer to work flexibly (Section 4.2.1). EPs expressed varied views on whether the PTMF should be used as a flexible, pragmatic tool or to bring greater structure and consistency, particularly in formulation (Section 4.1.2). Some research

suggests that the consistency and structure that the PTMF provides for formulations is a positive contribution (Stroud, 2024) and something that is needed within EP practice (Atkinson et al., 2022).

Simultaneously, the idea that the PTMF would not fit *other people's* conception of the EP role was also perceived as a barrier to using the framework. This was a theme that also emerged from previous research with EPs; the ability to use the PTMF was thought to depend on how service users understood the EP role (Milligan, 2022). As shown in both the current study and Milligan's (2022) research, this is potentially further influenced by traded systems that can elevate service users' power in determining how EP time is used (Section 4.2.6). This highlights an area where EPs may find it beneficial to use the PTMF to reflect on the powers that influence them and their decisions, and the resulting meanings, threats, and strengths.

Though there was perceived value alignment for some EPs, others expressed that the PTMF was not solution-focused enough to align with EP practice. This idea emerged primarily from WC3, perhaps reflecting a strong collective identity within this service around solution-focused practice (Section 4.1.2). Nonetheless, there was a notion across the WCs that the PTMF's focus on negative power operations sat uncomfortably and perhaps brought a different focus to their usual work. In one sense, this could be a unique contribution of the PTMF to EP practice, as negative power operations can only be challenged through increased awareness (Boyle, 2022; Browne et al., 2024). Considering actions that function as an antidote to power can also be a key means of avoiding disempowerment (Browne et al., 2024; Darcy et al., 2022). However, some EPs appeared to hold a positive reframing and solution-focused nature as core to their practice. There

was a sense that opening conversations up to threats and negative power operations felt riskier than using solution-focused approaches and would require more time (Section 4.2.2).

5.6.3 Navigating the Tensions

The focus on the role of the PTMF within EP practice alluded to a wider question of "what is the EP role?". The role for the PTMF could shift and change depending on the answer to this. Throughout the WC discussions, there were hints at both conflicting and evolving professional and collective identities held by EPs. As professions shift and change, their sense of collective professional identities can be threatened (Bayerl et al., 2018). The current thesis has highlighted multiple ways the EP role might be evolving or being challenged, whether through the perceived nature of their work from service users, changing systemic and political landscapes, increasing prevalence of traded systems, and ever-emerging new theoretical frameworks like the PTMF.

Rooted in a contextualist epistemology, it should also be acknowledged that the EP role can shift and change depending on the context. Role identity can be recognised as ever-evolving, constantly shaped by professional learning and workplace environments (Eraut, 1994). So, where EPs face a tension of defining their role and being positioned by others, the use of supervisory relationships, peer support, and reflective opportunities can be key to navigating role ambiguity or conflict in different contexts which they work (Eraut, 1994). Aligned with Rogers' (2003) innovation diffusion theory, the decision to adopt or reject the framework can sit at both an individual and organisational level. The current research suggests that the PTMF does align with the EP role on some levels, but

individual EPs may be persuaded differently in adopting it into practice, depending on how they view the challenges in their contexts.

5.7 Strengths and Limitations of Methodology

The current research sought to consider whether the PTMF can be adopted into EP practice through considering its perceived relevance (RQ1) and challenges to applying it to EP practice (RQ2). A contextualist epistemology and WC methodology has allowed for a broad exploration of EPs' views on the framework but also acknowledges that the application may differ in different contexts. The research has outlined both possibilities and challenges of using the framework, highlighting several factors that may contribute to EPs' decisions to apply the PTMF in their practice. Due to its exploratory nature, the research has evolved but sought to maintain a rigorous approach throughout (Section 3.3.4). The remainder of this section will evaluate the rigour of the study through exploring its strengths and weaknesses, followed by reflections on reflexivity throughout the research.

5.7.1 Evaluation of Participant Recruitment

Recruitment took place through purposive sampling of EPSs within the Midlands. One strength of this research lies in its inclusion of a range of EPs, including those who were not yet familiar with the framework and at various career stages. Previous research on the PTMF in EP practice solely involved individual EPs who were interested in and had begun implementing the framework. Therefore, the involvement of EPSs and those considering the framework for the first time represents a unique contribution of the current research.

Three local authority services were recruited. They were based in three different cities and operated traded service delivery models. This allowed for a relatively homogenous sample and aligned with the contextualist epistemology, emphasising patterns of meaning over generalisable truths (McKenna, 2015). As qualitative contextualist research, the aim was not to gain objective truths, therefore, sample size and generalisability limitations are not considered relevant to this research (Braun & Clarke, 2022). However, aligned with the exploratory goals, further research would be needed to investigate EPs' views on adopting the PTMF in other contexts. For example, the current research does not represent the views and practices of EPs working within rural, private or non-traded services, or those outside of the Midlands.

5.7.2 Evaluation of Research Design

The exploratory sequential design allowed for flexibility in adapting the research according to emerging findings. The initial research proposal had considered implementing and evaluating the framework, however, the exploratory sequential design allowed for adaptation in light of the initial findings. Based on the results of phase one, phase two allowed for deeper exploration of the perceived relevance and challenges to applying the framework aligned with implementation frameworks (Damschroder et al., 2022; Rogers, 2003). This also enabled the creation of 'networks of conversations', a core tenet of the WC approach (Brown & Isaacs, 2005)

Locating the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) session and WC within services' team meeting time allowed for protected time for EPs who chose to engage in the research. However, the period between the CPD and WCs varied significantly, meaning that EPs had differing amounts of time to reflect on the CPD, possibly impacting

the reflections brought to the WC. Employing differing approaches could have contributed to the breadth of insights gathered and captures the realities of real-world research. However, a more consistent method would be needed to strengthen internal reliability.

Content validity was strengthened through developing and reviewing CPD materials with my research supervisor, TEPs and EPs. However, practical limitations meant that the materials were not piloted with a full EP service and whilst EPs had opportunities to discuss and ask questions, there was no measure of how well EPs understood the PTMF before engaging in the WC. There is also a limitation in the CPD being primarily delivered by myself, as my understanding of the framework inevitably developed over the course of the research. These factors could have impacted participants' knowledge of the framework, their contributions to WC conversations, and overall persuasion around the applicability of the PTMF.

Small tweaks to the CPD were also made between the two phases to enable a 'network of conversations' and remain consistent with the WC's relational and dialogic values (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). However, adapting the content could have influenced EPs' understanding of the PTMF and impacted their ability to engage in consistent ways across different WCs. Future research employing a WC methodology could consider alternative ways to create networks of conversations, such as hosting one WC event with multiple EPSs.

5.7.3 Evaluation of World Café Methodology

The participatory nature of the WC methodology (Löhr et al., 2020) allowed for a range of contributions and diverse perspectives to be captured within this research. This aligns with the contextualist epistemology which values socially constructed understanding, shaped by contexts (McKenna, 2015). The iterative nature of the discussions enabled ideas to evolve, added depth and enabled reflections in discussions, which can sometimes be missed in traditional data collection methods (Löhr et al., 2020). This represents a strength of the current research; end discussions highlighted positive experiences of the café environment and discussion opportunities (Appendix 18). The WC is intended to foster a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere where everyone can contribute (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Löhr et al., 2020; McGrath et al., 2023). However, it is still open to conformity bias or dominance effect, where discussions might become characterised by dominant voices.

The current study used the visuals and host summaries as the primary methods of data collection to retain the intended atmosphere of the WC (Kimber, 2024; Segeren, 2019). However, this means that the data largely consisted of hosts' interpretations of discussions. There is a possibility that these are not an accurate summary of the full discussions; hosts' biases and personal meaning-making could have influenced the data collected. For example, not all host summaries completely reflected the content of the visuals, and depending on the role of the host within the service, they sometimes appeared to emphasise different points (e.g., a TEP mentioning the use of the PTMF in training or a Senior EP focusing primarily on service priorities). Some hosts expressed more ease and confidence with the role than others. Future research using the WC

methodology could consider finding a means of recording and analysing the whole discussions without compromising the café-style atmosphere. Training hosts before the WC might also increase role confidence and the credibility of the results.

5.8 Reflexivity

5.8.1 Review of Contextualist Epistemological Position

Aligned with the contextualist epistemology, the 'results' of this study represent my interpretations. The results will inevitably be shaped by my engagement with the research process and data, rather than uncovering a singular, objective truth. Adopting a contextualist epistemology has allowed for a nuanced and flexible understanding of knowledge as socially constructed, dynamic, and situated in specific contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2022; McKenna, 2015). This aligned well with the WC's participant-centred and inclusive approach (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Löhr et al., 2020; McGrath et al., 2023), the research aims, and my personal view of truth.

During the data analysis process, I found it interesting to reflect on the different aspects that each WC emphasised and possible contextual influences behind these. Including factors such as the range of career stages represented within the team, the career stage of the host, and events preceding their participation in the WC. The reflexive diary allowed space for these reflections (e.g., Appendix 14A). Yet, exploring how these factors might affect their willingness to embrace innovations was beyond the current research scope. By adopting a contextualist epistemology, future studies could examine contextual elements within EPSs that may impact the adoption of innovations, like the PTMF.

5.8.2 Review of Reflexivity in Data Analysis

Throughout the data analysis process, I reflected on the challenge of interpreting patterns and meanings already somewhat constructed by EPs through the WC process. I tended to view my role as interpreting and synthesising patterns across the three datasets. However, I became acutely aware of working with the hosts' summary of their interpretations of the dialogue. The meaning was first constructed in conversations, then interpreted by the host, and finally analysed by myself, as the researcher. These layers of meanings are not inherently problematic but pose a risk of distorting or simplifying individual contributions. Using a reflexive journal and constantly re-visiting data to identify patterns across host summaries, visuals, and end discussions (e.g., Appendix 14) was key to maintaining a reflexive approach and considering which voices could have been amplified or lost through layers of interpretation. The flexibility of RTA enabled this by revisiting different phases, rather than following a linear analysis process.

As a TEP, I have felt particularly drawn towards working systemically, and I noticed myself reflecting more and dwelling on emerging themes around the EP role in wider systems. This was where I became aware of potentially imposing patterns/themes not present in the data, and benefited from returning to participants' accounts (Appendices 14F and 14G). Alongside using my reflective journal, I found it helpful to reflect on my views about systemic reforms, social justice, and the EP role with my supervisor. Throughout the process, I have found myself steadily embracing the meandering "adventure" of RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.100) and the idea that a 'knowing' researcher is linked to reflexivity rather than process expertise (Braun & Clarke, 2024a, 2024b).

5.8.3 Personal Reflections on the PTMF

I was initially drawn to the PTMF as a means of embedding narrative approaches in my work with CYP and school staff. The emphasis on social justice, personal meaning-making, and stories reflects my personal and professional values. However, throughout this research, I've felt conflicted about its role within EP practice (e.g., Appendix 14G).

The critical consideration of the EP role that has emerged through this thesis has been valuable in developing my own identity as a (T)EP, away from my previous role in a charity advocating for social change. At times, it was hard to hold this separate from my identity as a researcher. I found research supervision, SPG on placement, and the PTMF national interest group helpful in processing reflections and tensions around the EP role and applying the framework, and to hear alternative viewpoints and experiences of the PTMF in EP practice. Overall, this helped me to approach the research with an open mind, considering both the relevance and challenge in applying the PTMF to EP practice. This is particularly reflected in changing the overall research design, my first proposal perhaps reflected the assumption that it *should* be implemented in EP practice. However, a reflexive and exploratory approach enabled adaptations reflecting Yardley's (2017) principles of sensitivity to context, commitment, transparency, and impact.

5.9 Implications

5.9.1 Contributions of the Current Study

To my knowledge, the current study is the first to explore the use of the PTMF in EP practice with whole EPSs. This contributes to the current evidence base by including a greater range of professionals, from Assistant EPs at the start of their career through to

Principal EPs, as well as the perspectives of those newly engaging with the framework. Furthermore, aligned with research recommendations when considering developing a new evidence base (Damschroder et al., 2022; Rogers, 2003), the current study sought to explore whether the PTMF could be widely adopted in EP practice. Therefore, the current research highlights a novel contribution in exploring both relevance and challenge, as the first step to considering whether the PTMF can be widely implemented in practice.

The narrative literature review also represents a unique contribution by focusing on practitioners' reflections on using the PTMF in practice. This builds on current reviews by including both reflective and empirical research, rather than focusing solely on privileged academic discourses.

This research also contributes to a growing body of research using the WC methodology. The WC is a relatively new research methodology (Section 3.3.2.1) and, to my knowledge, has only been used once in research with EPs (Kimber, 2024). Therefore, the current research provides further evidence for using the WC to encourage a range of contributions, generate rich and varied qualitative data, and to engage a variety of voices in both conversation and research that matters.

5.9.2 Recommendations for EP practice

Due to the practice-based nature of the research questions, practical implications have been considered throughout this chapter. While the current research cannot conclusively determine whether the PTMF should be implemented in EP practice, Table 4 provides a set of reflective questions for EPs. These draw on the literature and the

findings outlined in this chapter to enable critical reflection on the EP role and shape practice in context. As highlighted by Milligan (2022), the PTMF brings tensions in EP practice to the forefront, without necessarily providing the solution. It is hoped that the reflective questions might enable practitioners to critically consider emerging tensions and how the PTMF, or other tools, could support their evolving practice.

Although not explicitly captured within the research questions, EPs reflected on enjoying the WC process and the opportunity for discussions with colleagues (Appendix 18). Therefore, the reflective questions below could be considered individually or as teams/professional groups. The questions have been structured to align with the themes of the research and the organisation of this chapter; however, they may be explored sequentially or approached selectively, depending on the reader's preference.

Table 4: *Reflective questions for EPs arising from discussions around using the PTMF in EP practice*

Area of Practice	Question for reflection
Any work with CYP	• How do I enable the voice of the CYP I work with to be heard? Have I listened to them and their meanings or imposed my own/others' meanings? • How do they feel most comfortable sharing their story?
Direct work with CYP to explore their story (therapeutic or narrative approach)	• Who are the key gatekeepers I need to consult with before, during, and after work with the CYP? Have I agreed on the purpose and nature of the involvement? How has the CYP been involved in decisions and giving consent?

	• What might be the specific practical and ethical challenges in this work? Have I considered how I might overcome these? • What powers or threats might I be experiencing in this? How might my awareness of these shape my approach to this work? • How can I help the CYP to be open about powers and threats in their life?
Consultations and work with adults around the CYP	• What biases or meanings might the adults I'm working with be carrying? Can I create an opportunity to explore and challenge these? • How can I consider my language carefully in interpreting the meaning made by CYP or adults? • What wider contextual factors might be impacting the CYP or adult? How can I broaden their power horizon?
Systemic work with Schools	• Do school staff have the capacity and foundational psychological knowledge to grasp the PTMF? Should I use it implicitly or explicitly? • How could I support staff to reflect on the powers and threats that they experience? • How do I subtly challenge narratives held within the system? Can I do more of this? How can I encourage 'ripples' of change? • How might introducing an alternative narrative threaten the school system or individuals within the system?
Wider Systems	• How do I advocate for marginalised voices in my day-to-day work? Can I use my role to advocate for change at a macro-level? • What narratives and ideologies are held within the communities that I work with? (e.g. geographical

	communities, school year groups, ethnic communities, etc.) Could I have a role in actively hearing the meaning made by individuals within the communities? • What power is held or operated within the different systems I work in? Can I use the PTMF or principles from the PTMF to gently start conversations and/or raise awareness about power?
EPs' reflections on their role	• How can I maintain my professional curiosity and build awareness of new models emerging? How do these challenge the way I currently work? Are there things about my practice that I would like to change? • How can I encourage professional dialogues with colleagues to learn about new ways of working and reflect on our practice? • What are my own values and what collective values do I hold? How do these influence how I work or what models/frameworks I frequently draw on? Do these lead me to bias certain information or voices in my practice? • How do service users seem to position my role? Is this different to how I perceive my role? What meaning might they have made about the EP role or through our interactions? Are there ways in which I can use positive power operations to bring about positive change? • Do I sometimes avoid talking about threats or negative power operations? What might be the outcome of this? • Considering the PTMF, what has happened to you that has shaped you to get to this point as an EP?

5.9.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The current research asked whether the PTMF can be adopted into EP practice. Based on the findings and considering Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory, future research might consider:

- Understanding the relevance and challenge of applying the PTMF in other EP contexts (e.g., non-traded, counties, or private services).
- An action research approach to implementing the PTMF within an EP Service, using implementation frameworks (e.g., Damschroder et al., 2022).
- An explicit exploration of the helping and hindering factors if the PTMF is implemented in EP practice.
- Participatory action research with EPs and/or service users to adapt and embed the PTMF as a tool for EP work.
- Service users' views and perspectives of how the PTMF could be used in EP practice (e.g., school staff, parents, CYP).
- Using the PTMF to understand narratives in communities that EPs work with (e.g., marginalised groups or geographical communities around a school).
- EPs' views on their professional development, the perceived helpfulness of new models, and how they can be effectively embedded within practice.
- The influence of traded systems on the nature of EPs' work and the perceptions of the EP role (both held by EPs and service users).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The research was exploratory and grounded in a contextualist epistemology. The literature review highlighted that the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) has been applied to a range of psychological practices. While it was beneficial to practice in many ways, there were also significant factors that hindered its application (Section 2.2.6). This was echoed by early adopters of the PTMF in Educational Psychology (EP) practice (Section 2.2.5). However, considering the plethora of helping and hindering factors and a contextualist epistemology, it was argued that it cannot be assumed that the PTMF can be applied to EP practice. This was also grounded in Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory, which highlights characteristic differences between early adopters and the early majority when considering the possible implementation of innovations. Based on the five stages of innovation diffusion (Figure 10; p.70), three Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) were given an initial knowledge of the framework. Three World Cafés (WCs) were used to explore the perceived relevance and challenges of adopting the PTMF in EP practice. This is the first known study to explicitly explore whether the PTMF can be applied to EP practice, addressing assumptions made in previous literature. To my knowledge, it is also the first to introduce the PTMF to whole EPSs and gain their views on the relevance and challenges associated with introducing it to EP practice. Therefore, the current study provides unique insights into Educational Psychologists' (EPs') perceived applicability of the framework, as well as challenges to translating it to EP practice.

The findings highlighted a breadth of ways in which the PTMF could be applied to EP work in their own reflective practice, implicit practices, and explicit practice with children and young people (CYP), adults around CYP, school systems, and wider systems. The current

research also went beyond existing literature to explicitly explore the challenges to applying the framework to EP practice, including the perspectives of those new to the framework. The research indicated possible challenges, including: a perceived mismatch between clinical and EP work that may require 'rethinking PTMF' for EP practice; EPs' time, knowledge, and confidence; the need to navigate professional identity, practical and ethical challenges if using the framework 'therapeutically'; questions over whether it is accessible and actionable; the risk of imposing meaning; and epistemic and structural power as barriers to change.

From a contextualist perspective, the choice to adopt the PTMF into EP practice will vary in different contexts. Nonetheless, the current research underscores the significance of the initial 'knowledge' and 'persuasion' stages in Rogers' (2003) innovation-decision process. From an initial knowledge of the framework, EPs identified several areas of potential relevance. However, Chapter Five points out that some perceived challenges might stem from EPs lacking a deeper understanding of the PTMF. Participants also noted that insufficient knowledge and time to develop expertise and confidence are barriers to adopting the PTMF. For EPs aiming to integrate the framework into their practice, dedicating time to deepen their knowledge is crucial.

Adopting the PTMF is also contingent on EPs being meaningfully persuaded of its utility in their professional contexts. The current research highlights a range of factors that may be considered in EPs' decisions to adopt or reject the framework. The study concludes with implications for practice framed as reflective questions for EPs to consider when thinking of adopting and applying the PTMF in their contexts. This seeks to enable EPs to engage critically with the framework, recognising its perceived relevance and potential

challenges. This also aligns with the persuasion stage of Rogers' (2003) innovation-decision process and the contextualist epistemology, acknowledging that informed, context-sensitive reflection is central to the adoption of any innovation. The current research sought to host "conversations that matter" (Brown & Isaacs, 2005) through the WC approach and initiate dialogues around the potential for adopting the PTMF in EP practice. The reflective questions aim to extend the impact of this thesis beyond its academic findings, supporting EPs in navigating the complex realities of practice.

6.1 Dissemination Strategy

One of the strengths of the WC is its ability to establish collective knowledge in the moment and therefore overcome some of the challenges typically associated with the dissemination of research using traditional data collection methods (Schiele et al., 2022). In conducting CPD on the PTMF, establishing networks of conversations, and encouraging professional dialogue reflecting on practice, the dissemination of initial research ideas has been started (Figure 13; p.85). Similarly, I presented early research findings at a British Psychological Society conference for Trainee EPs and have contributed initial thoughts and reflections to the national interest group and my placement's strategic psychology group. These actions have helped to disseminate initial considerations around perceived relevance, challenges, and tensions of applying the PTMF for EPs to consider in their contexts.

I hope to disseminate findings further and continue the conversations started in the WCs. This might involve presenting to EPs within my service as a newly qualified EP, to the other EPSs that participated, and the national interest group. The results may also be published

in a peer-reviewed journal to aid further dissemination. I hope that through continued work with the SPG and national interest group, I can support efforts to adapt the framework for EP practice, aligning with the perceived relevance and challenges raised within this research.

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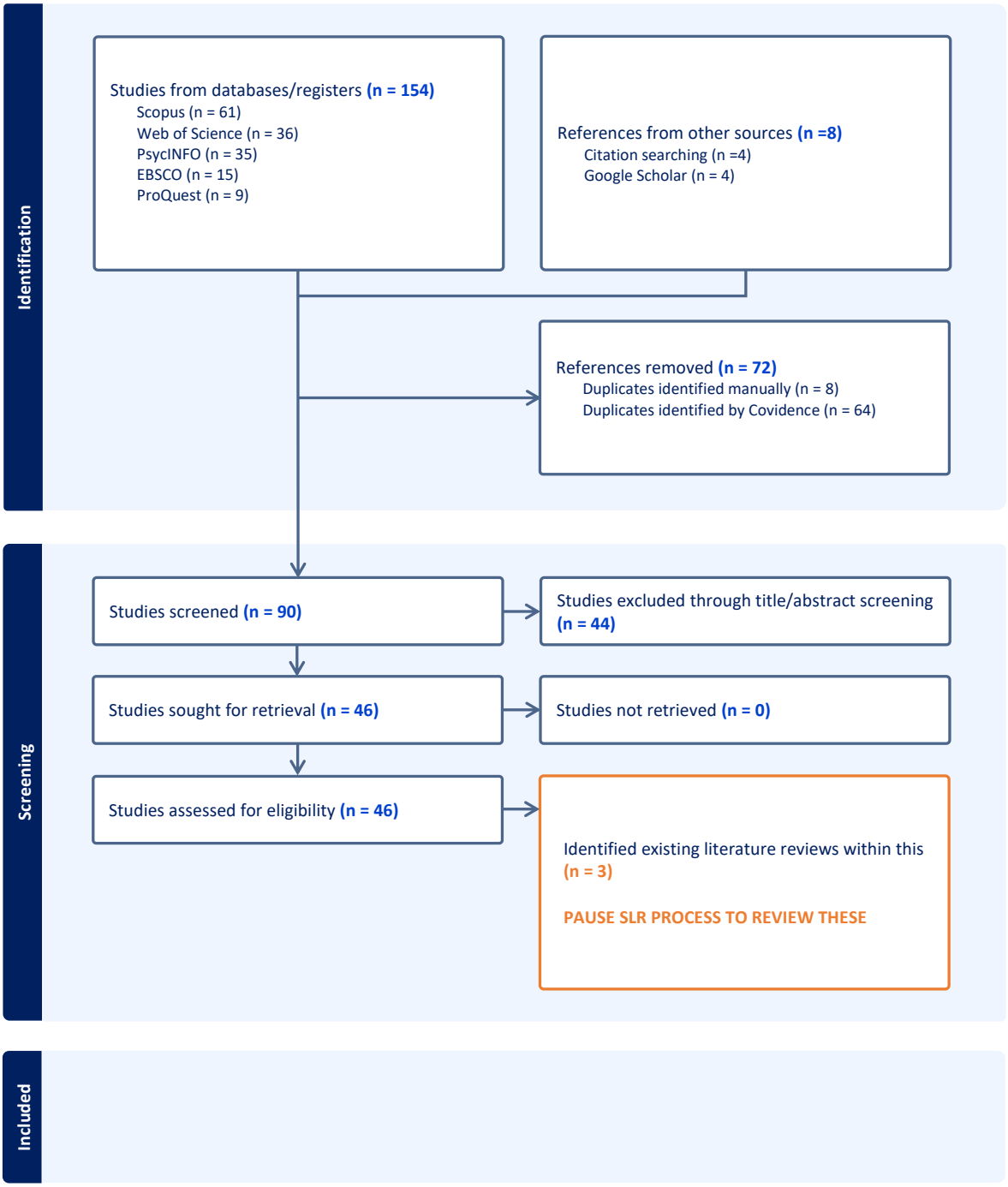
Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Scoping Review

Characteristic	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Literature Type	Empirical Studies (quant or qual) Reflective articles about the use of the PTMF	Clinical guidelines, explanations of PTMF and its concepts	Relevant to its use and outcomes
Publication status	Published and unpublished manuscripts Theses	Conference materials, editorials or blog posts	Quality assurance
Population	Any applied psychological practice/discipline	Application to personal development/issues that are separate to professional practice No references to the author's profession/discipline	To address the research questions fully and understand its use
Use of PTMF in applied psychological practice	Direct and intentional use or application of PTMF to an applied psychological discipline Reflections or empirical data on the use of the PTMF	Superficial mention of PTMF or use as an explanatory tool – not applying to practice Post-hoc application of PTMF or as a framework for lit review Use of the PTMF alongside other concepts/frameworks where the impact of the PTMF cannot be isolated Articles which do not mention its application to applied psychological practice	
Language	English	Not in English Language	Authors' fluency

Search Term: “Power threat meaning framework”

Database	**Specific Databases Searched**	**How**	**Limiters**
EBSCO	Psychology, health, life sciences and education databases	All fields “apply equivalent subjects” expander	2018-2024 English
Web of Science	Core Collection	All fields	2018-2024 English
SCOPUS		Abstract, title, key words (all fields = 567 with irrelevant studies)	2018-2024 English
OVID	APA PsycInfo	“Map term to subject heading”	2018-2024 English
ProQuest	Dissertations and Theses	Anywhere	After 1st Jan 2018 English


Identification
Studies from databases/registers (n = 154)
Scopus (n = 61)
Web of Science (n = 36)
PsycINFO (n = 35)
EBSCO (n = 15)
ProQuest (n = 9)
References from other sources (n =8)
Citation searching (n =4)
Google Scholar (n = 4)
References removed (n = 72)
Duplicates identified manually (n = 8)
Duplicates identified by Covidence (n = 64)
Screening
Studies screened (n = 90)
Studies excluded through title/abstract screening (n = 44)
Studies sought for retrieval (n = 46)
Studies not retrieved (n = 0)
Studies assessed for eligibility (n = 46)
Identified existing literature reviews within this (n = 3)
PAUSE SLR PROCESS TO REVIEW THESE
Included
Included studies ongoing (n = 0)
Studies awaiting classification (n = 0)

Appendix 2: Record of Updated Searches

Date: 2nd April 2025

"Specific databases searched" and "how" were the same as displayed in Appendix 1.

Terms: *"power threat meaning framework" OR "PTMF" OR "PTM Framework"* (aligning with Gallagher et al., 2024a) (see Appendix 3)

Database	Limiters	Number of Studies Generated	Screening	Studies for retrieval for further screening	Outcome
EBSCO	**2024-2025** English	6 studies 4 when duplicates excluded	3 excluded as emerged in original search **1 new relevant study**	Brett, A., Bodfield, K., Culshaw, A., & Johnson, B. (2024). Exploring LGBTQ+ teacher professional identity through the power threat meaning framework. *British Educational Research Journal*, *50*(6), 2920-2936.	**Brett et al. (2024) –** Incorporated into introduction (research using the PTMF rather than application to psychological practice, however, relevant to education)
Web of Science	**2024-2025** English	13 studies 0 duplicates	6 excluded as emerged in original search or searches above 1 excluded – symposium rather than article	Dudley-Hicks, D., James, G., & Morgan, G. (2024). Parenting a child with an intellectual disability: mapping experiences onto the power threat meaning framework. *Disability & Society*, 1-25. James, G., Dudley-Hicks, D., & Morgan, G. (2024). The PTM framework and parents of children with intellectual disability diagnoses: experiences of generating narratives. *Disability & Society*, 1-25.	**Dudley-Hicks et al. (2024) and James et al. (2024) –** Incorporated into introduction (most relevant to general patterns section – research using the PTMF rather than application to psychological practice though they reference implications for practice for professionals generally). **Mulligan & Nash (2024) –** Excluded as this study could not be retrieved beyond the abstract. No response when

			1 excluded as not psychology or related disciplines **4 new relevant studies**	Mulligan, K. and Nash, E. (2024), A preliminary exploration of using the power threat meaning framework with individuals currently serving IPP sentences in custody, *The Journal of Forensic Practice*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi-org.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/JFP-02-2024-0005 Rainey, P., Colbert, S., & McSherry, P. (2025). Representations of Power, Threat and Meaning in Individual Accounts of Psychosis: A Meta-Ethnography of Psychosis Narratives. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 1-24.	requested from NUSearch – reference from the website says "ahead-of-print" possibly still not publicly available? **Rainey et al. (2025) –** A now published part of the 2023 thesis already included in the wider literature within clinical settings. Added as an additional reference to this point.
SCOPUS	**2024-2025** English	14 studies	10 excluded as emerged in original search or searches above 1 excluded as not psychology or related discipline **3 new relevant studies**	Charura, D., & Al-Murri, B. (2024). Racial trauma. In *Reimagining Race in Psychology* (pp. 73-89). Tribe, R., & Marshall, C. (2024). Is there a case for using the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) within clinical supervision?. In *Social Justice, Social Discrimination, and Mental Health* (pp. 187-202). Routledge. Dean, C. (2024). The Power Threat Meaning Framework: Implications for Practice in Preventing Extremist Violence. *Journal for Deradicalization*, (40), 1-38.	**Charura & Al-Murri (2024) –** Included as wider supporting literature. Interesting take on adapting the PTMF template to use therapeutically for racial trauma but it doesn't actually apply it to practice. **Tribe & Marshall (2024) –** Included in clinical settings wider literature **Dean (2024) –** Included: written into the forensic psych section

OVID	**2024-2025** English	11 studies	11 excluded as emerged in original search or searches above		
ProQuest	Last 12 months English	0 studies			
Google Scholar and Citation Searching	**2024-2025**		**4 new relevant studies**	Miller, E. 2024. *Exploring Community Adversity in a Culturally Diverse Inner London Borough: A Thematic Analysis of Professionals' Views in the Context of the Power Threat Meaning Framework*. Prof CP Doc Thesis University of East London School of Psychology https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.8y773 O'Leary, S. 2024. *Promoting the Voices of Children and Young People Who Have Experienced Domestic Abuse*. Prof EP Doc Thesis University of East London School of Psychology https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.8y4ww Browne, L., Foster, B., John, R., & O'Leary, S. (2024). Embedding the Power Threat Meaning Framework to Promote Global Anti-Oppressive Educational Psychology	**Miller (2024):** Included briefly as supporting literature within community MH section – not included as a core article as the participants were health and social care professionals, rather than psychologists. **O'Leary (2024):** Included as a researcher who has used the PTMF in education settings – doesn't specifically apply the PTMF to EP practice. **Browne et al. (2024) and Stroud (2024):** Included, written into the EP practice section

				practice. *Educational Psychology Research and Practice*, *10*(1), 1-12. Stroud, Demi (2024) *'What are EPs'/TEPs' Views and Experiences of Using the Power Threat Meaning Framework During Formulation?': A Reflexive Thematic Analysis Study*. Doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia.	

Appendix 3: Iterative Search Strategy and Results

Date	What	Approach	Outcome
8th April 2024	Initial Scoping Search	Terms: *"Power threat meaning framework"* Outlined in Appendix 1 and Section 2.1.1	90 unique studies found 46 relevant studies
5th April – 9th June 2024	Email updates on the above search	Emails received from Scopus, Web of Science and EBSCO	5 new studies published
5th July 2024	Further systematic search	Same databases and criteria as outlined in Appendix 1 Terms: *"power threat meaning framework" OR "PTMF" OR "PTM Framework"* (aligning with Gallagher et al., 2024a) **Include all studies mentioning the PTMF** – to understand literature which could support the reflective/practice-based literature. **Excluded** articles explaining the PTMF (by original authors/PTMF) and studies not about the PTMF	133 unique studies found 78 relevant studies
5th – 20th July 2024	Citation Searching	A further 4 studies identified through citation searching	**New total: 82 relevant studies** (This was the basis for the literature review, see table below)
July 2024 – April 2025	Email updates and interest groups	I continued to get emails on new research emerging, as outlined above. I also stayed in touch with research through interest groups and general reading around PTMF.	
2nd April 2025	Re-ran systematic searches	See Appendix 2.	**11 additional studies identified as relevant.**

Studies identified as relevant were screened and categorised. This was done from either the title and abstract or the full text. Covidence and Excel were used to support the organisation of the process; the table below shows the overall numbers of studies identified within each area:

Discipline/Topic*	**Number of studies identified (July 2024 searches)**	**Additional April 2025 studies**	**Studies applying the PTMF to applied psychological practice**
Explanatory Texts – introducing PTMF (mostly written by co-authors of the framework)	16	2	
Critiques	2		
Reviews	3	2	
Clinical Psychology (Clinical Settings)	16	2	7
Clinical Diagnosis (theoretical rather than practical application)	14	1	
Mental Health/Community Settings (Clinical Psychologists, Counsellors and other psychology professionals)	9	1	6
Research Purposes (e.g., data analysis/collection)	8	1	
Climate Psychology	4		
Forensic Psychology	10	1	5
Sports Psychology	1		
Social Justice	2		
Social work	1		
Education	3	1	
Educational Psychology	1	2	3

**Some studies are counted within multiple areas (e.g., theses containing both a review and empirical research)*

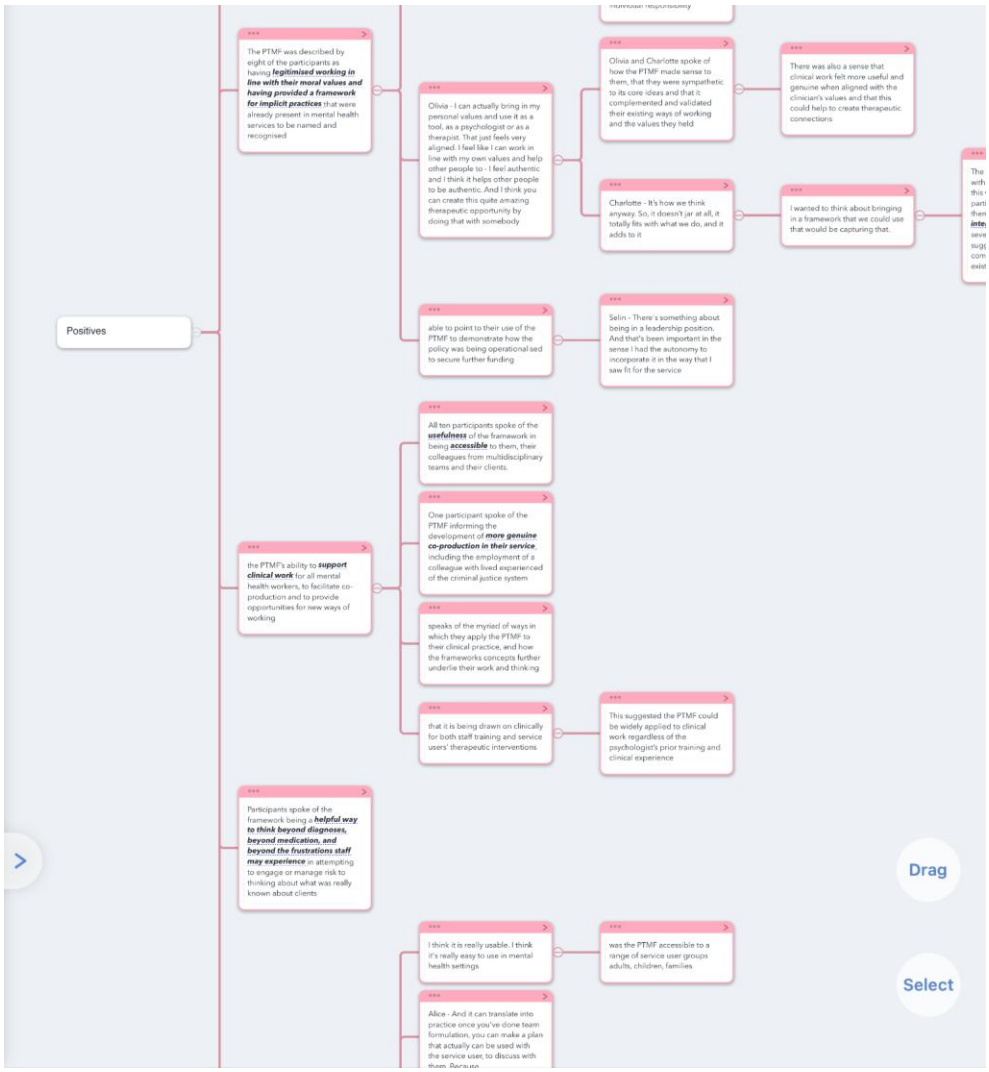
Those highlighted in Blue were identified as applied psychological practices. All other literature was screened and/or read in full and used as supporting literature or referred to in other areas of Chapters 1 and 2.

Appendix 4: Creating Themes for Narrative Literature Review

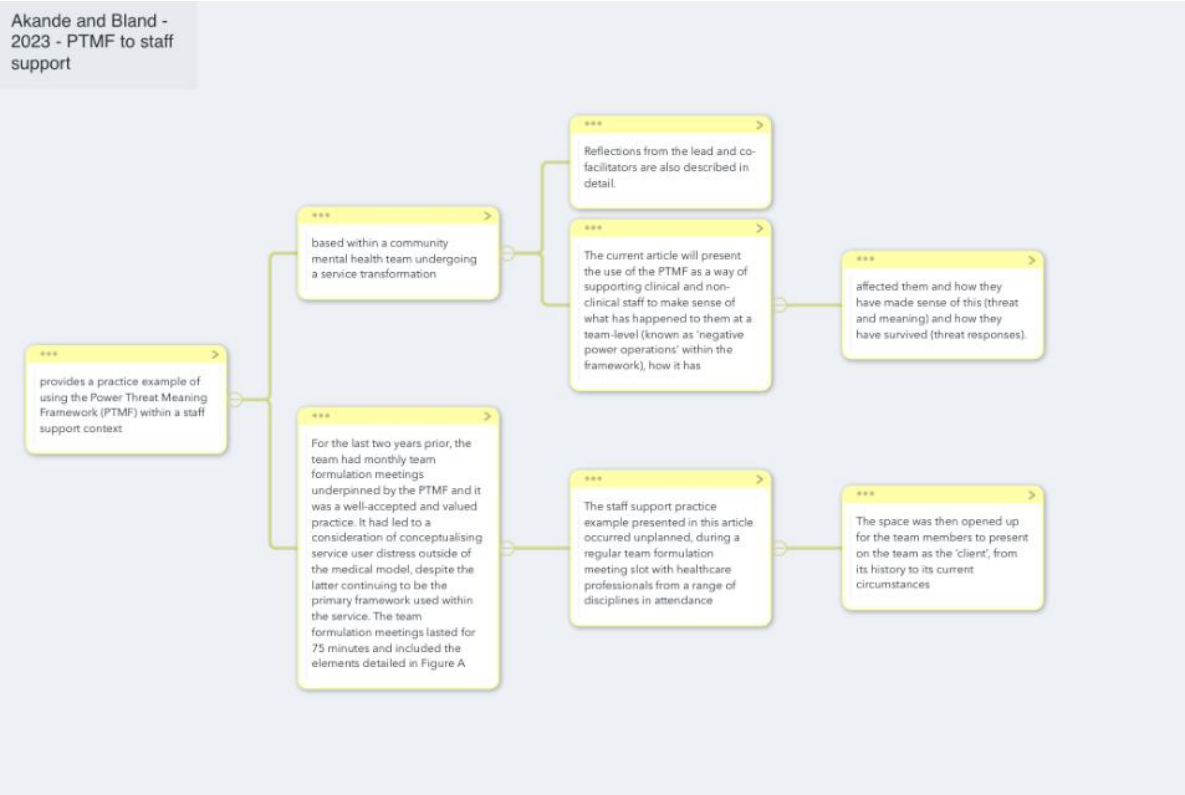
The following steps were followed for each area of applied psychology practice.

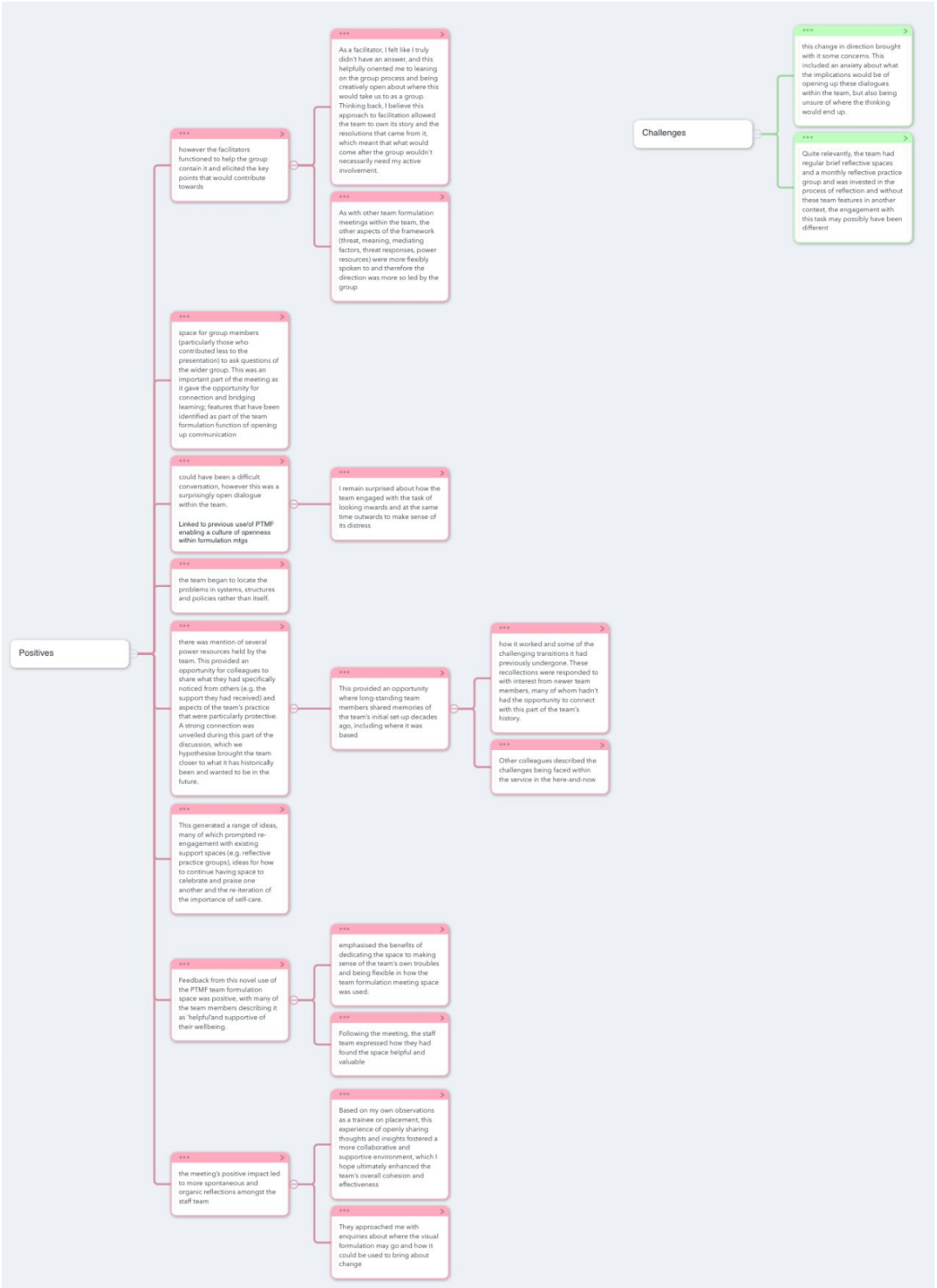
Step 1: Articles were read on the App MarginNote3 – quotes pertinent to the research questions were highlighted and organised into mind maps with like-themes linked together. Separate mind maps were made for each article, with separate colours for contextual information about the study, "positives/helping factors", and "challenges".

Example: Extract from Omur (2023)



Example: Full Mind Map for Akande & Bland (2023)




Positives
however the facilitators functioned to help the group contain it and elicited the key points that would contribute towards
As a facilitator, I felt like I truly didn't have an answer, and this helpfully oriented me to leaning on the group process and being creatively open about where this would take us to as a group. Thinking back, I believe this approach to facilitation allowed the team to own its story and the resolutions that came from it, which meant that what would come after the group wouldn't necessarily need my active involvement.
As with other team formulation meetings within the team, the other aspects of the framework (threat, meaning, mediating factors, threat responses, power resources) were more flexibly spoken to and therefore the direction was more so led by the group
space for group members (particularly those who contributed less to the presentation) to ask questions of the wider group. This was an important part of the meeting as it gave the opportunity for connection and bridging learning; features that have been identified as part of the team formulation function of opening up communication
could have been a difficult conversation, however this was a surprisingly open dialogue within the team.
Linked to previous use/of PTMF enabling a culture of openness within formulation mtgs
I remain surprised about how the team engaged with the task of looking inwards and at the same time outwards to make sense of its distress
the team began to locate the problems in systems, structures and policies rather than itself.
there was mention of several power resources held by the team. This provided an opportunity for colleagues to share what they had specifically noticed from others (e.g. the support they had received) and aspects of the team's practice that were particularly protective. A strong connection was unveiled during this part of the discussion, which we hypothesise brought the team closer to what it has historically been and wanted to be in the future.
This provided an opportunity where long-standing team members shared memories of the team's initial set-up decades ago, including where it was based
how it worked and some of the challenging transitions it had previously undergone. These recollections were responded to with interest from newer team members, many of whom hadn't had the opportunity to connect with this part of the team's history.
Other colleagues described the challenges being faced within the service in the here-and-now
This generated a range of ideas, many of which prompted re-engagement with existing support spaces (e.g. reflective practice groups), ideas for how to continue having space to celebrate and praise one another and the re-iteration of the importance of self-care.
Feedback from this novel use of the PTMF team formulation space was positive, with many of the team members describing it as 'helpful'and supportive of their wellbeing.
emphasised the benefits of dedicating the space to making sense of the team's own troubles and being flexible in how the team formulation meeting space was used.
Following the meeting, the staff team expressed how they had found the space helpful and valuable
the meeting's positive impact led to more spontaneous and organic reflections amongst the staff team
Based on my own observations as a trainee on placement, this experience of openly sharing thoughts and insights fostered a more collaborative and supportive environment, which I hope ultimately enhanced the team's overall cohesion and effectiveness
They approached me with enquiries about where the visual formulation may go and how it could be used to bring about change
Challenges
this change in direction brought with it some concerns. This included an anxiety about what the implications would be of opening up these dialogues within the team, but also being unsure of where the thinking would end up.
Quite relevantly, the team had regular brief reflective spaces and a monthly reflective practice group and was invested in the process of reflection and without these team features in another context, the engagement with this task may possibly have been different

Step 2: All mind maps were exported as Word Documents, giving a list of quotes organised by similar ideas for each article.

Step 3: Taking each article in turn, all the quotes were read through, and themes were identified based on the groupings made on the mind maps. Initial themes were written onto the Venn diagrams (as shown in the Figures 5-8).

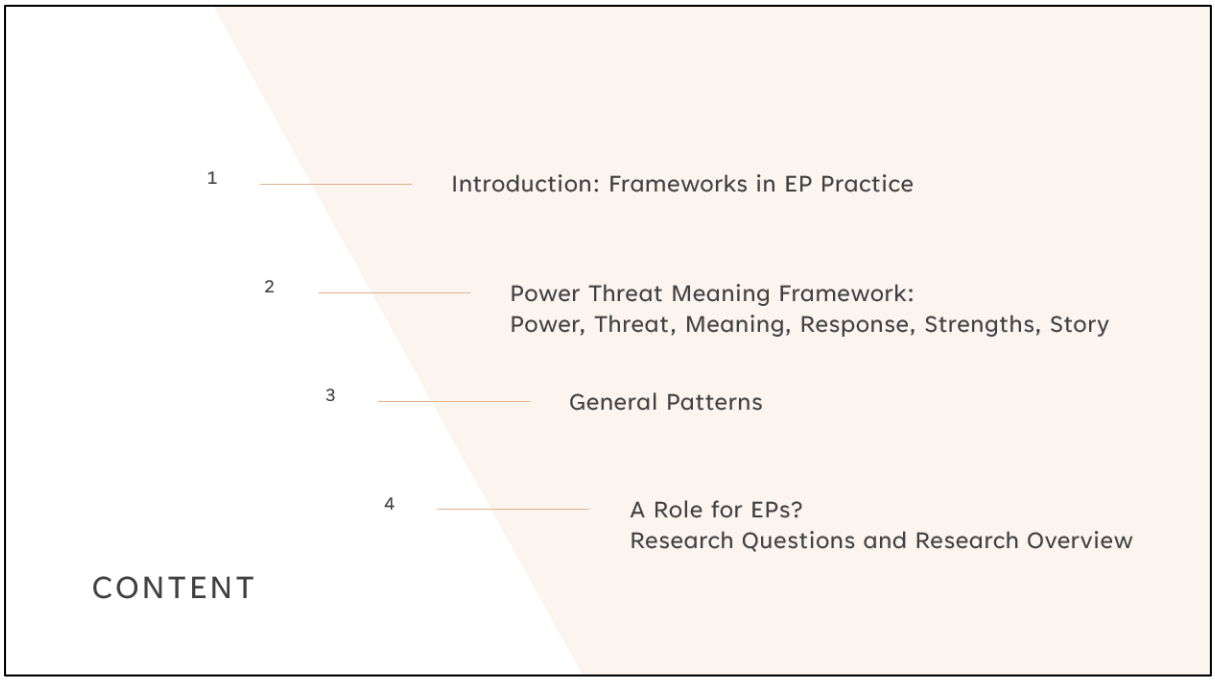
Step 3: Themes were developed, tweaked and refined as the extracted quotes from each article were read. Where similar ideas emerged, this was collated as one theme.

Step 4: During the writing process, all articles were checked to ensure that the diagrams captured the key points.

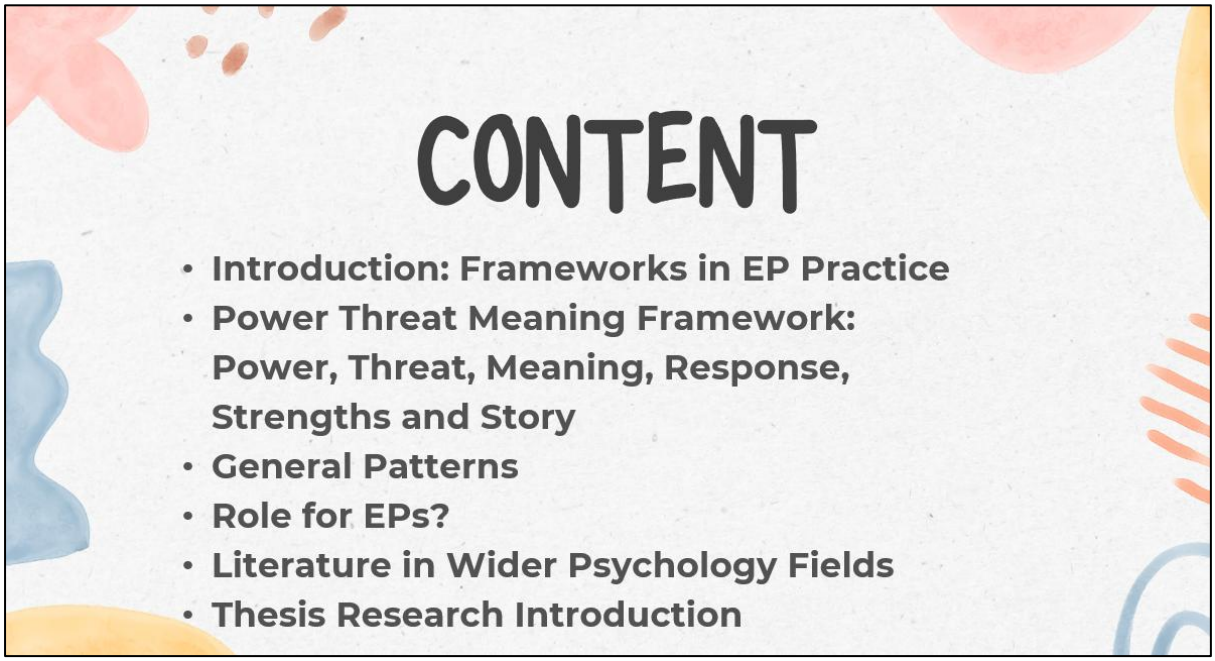
This process was repeated for each Psychology discipline.

Appendix 5: CPD Content

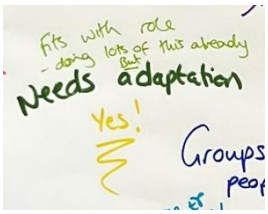
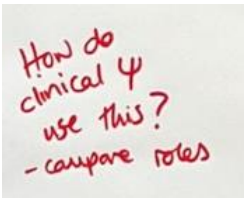
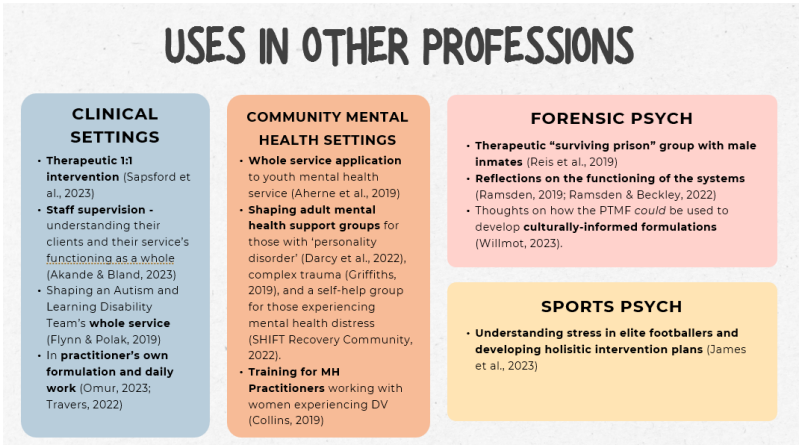
Phase 1:



Phase 2:



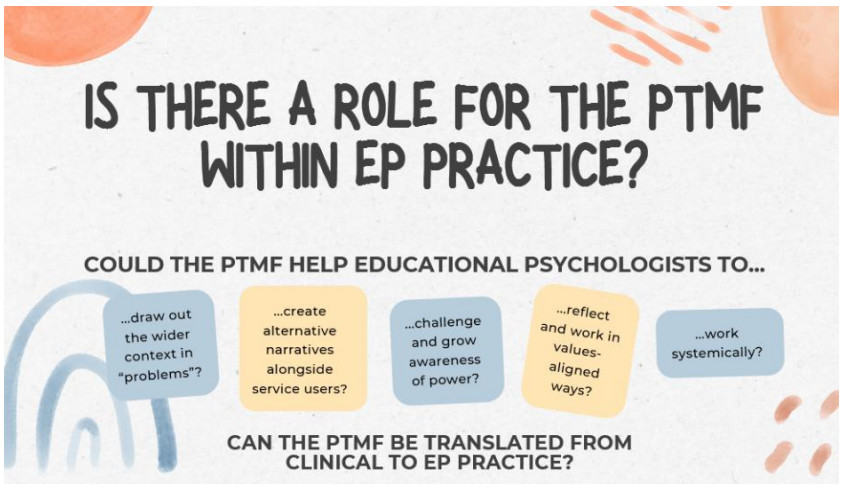
List of Changes in the CPD between Phases 1 and 2, including rationale:

Change	Rationale
Additional section about how the PTMF is used in other psychology professions	I debated including this in Phase 1, however, in discussion with my research supervisor, I chose to leave it out as I didn't want to influence discussions around how it could be used in EP practice or imply that it should. However, this explicitly came up in discussions during the first WC. See extracts from Table 1's visual summary:   This table's discussion seemed to circle around the idea that they liked the framework but needed more information to know *how* to adapt it for EP practice. I felt that by providing further information in the CPD around how other professions use it could add further depth to this discussion and that this provided rationale for including this slide: 
Additional information on the "what is your story?" slide – referring to	The results from EPS 1 focused heavily on the narrative element of the framework and whether or not this fits with the EP role. This was a further comment from Table 1:

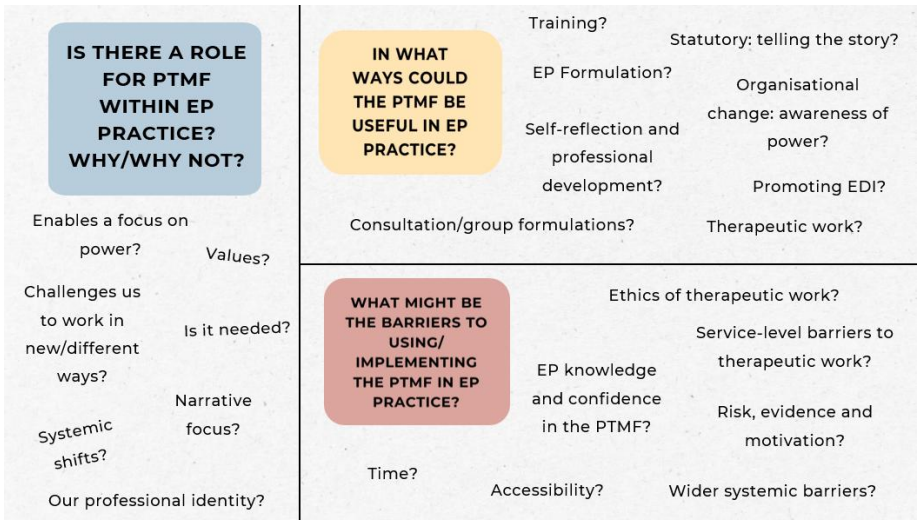
Harper's (2022) paper.	 Harper's paper highlights how the PTMF draws on personal narratives but also is different to narrative psychology in drawing on cultural narratives and using the PTMF as a meta-framework to reframe discourses around distress. Whilst I acknowledged this paper verbally during the CPD for WC1, I chose to explicitly outline this in the next iteration of the CPD to support the above query:  Whilst EPS 1 present some interesting ideas about using the PTMF to explore individual narratives, I wondered whether discussions missed the idea of using the framework in other ways to explore narratives. Incorporating this slide could help to prompt wider discussions and add depth to the conversation that occurred in EPS 1.
Addition of a brief overview of Milligan's (2022) thesis	I added a brief acknowledgement that there is one paper exploring this so far, this was to bridge the gap between the section outlined above and the rationale for the current research. I did not explain the findings in detail, but just that there were both positive outcomes and hurdles expressed by the 7 practitioners already using the framework. Other research regarding the PTMF in EP practice was not available at the time.

Link to previous conversations and contextualise the current WC

I added this slide:



This was taken from my invitation to participate (Appendix 9) and based on the results of the Narrative Literature Review. When presenting this slide, I highlighted early findings from previous WCs that indicated both possible relevance and challenges to each of these areas. This was the next slide which showed the table discussion questions and some of the emerging themes. This was adapted between each WC. This is the slide shown in WC3:



This was highlighted as part of the "conversation" and not the answers. This transitioned into introducing the World Café and the invitation to share their ideas. It was presented to participants that the conversation had started and considered these factors but their WC was about capturing their thoughts and perspectives.

Appendix 6: Extracts from Reflexive Diary about Research Design

01.09.24:

Some possible themes from WC1:

1. Therapeutic work 1:1 (EPs can work therapeutically)
   Barrier: challenges of:- professional identity; service level priorities; and ethics
2. Shaping narratives around the child/YP (effective action/intervention planning; means of focusing on power and its impact; use in group formulation or consultation to reframe narratives)
   Barrier: Is it needed? Do we already do this without the PTMF?
3. Working with systems (training and support systems to support CYP (especially trauma); shaping and reframing narratives within systems/organisations)
   Barrier: Can an 'individual' model be translated to systems?
4. Developing EP/TEPs as practitioners (values; formulation; professional growth)
   Barrier: risks, evidence and motivation to implement the PTMF
5. Overarching barrier: EPs confidence in the PTMF

I'm also feeling better about RTA. I feel like I've kind of had the rite of passage by having the point(s) where I felt really stuck with my data! I've definitely learnt through doing, like Braun and Clarke say! I think these points have enabled me to get to a point that I feel more confident with the data that I have now and the decisions in my research. It feels right to be grounding my research in the emerging findings, based on the exploratory goals – even if this feels daunting!

07.09.24:

I've had to remind myself why I'm not going back to WC1 participants. If I did this would really echo a delphi technique of refining ideas, however, it feels like that is already done somewhat within the world café and communicated within the summaries so I'm not sure I would get any further richness of data. However, my main reasoning is around context, the initial data has opened up questions more broadly around the EP role, whilst I could explore this further with WC1 participants, I wonder how much it is influenced by

the context. I know from placement within the service that it is a very forward-thinking and research-driven service but also a small team. The EPs working here are perhaps not fully representative of "EP practice". There did seem to be differing views between some EPs and I'm interested as to whether this is the same in other teams or there is more consensus on how they work and where the PTMF fits in this. I have approached other EPS's and considered some that are also based in cities but typically deliver different types of work (e.g., more learning cases and report-based). Some are also bigger services that would include a wider range of participants.

13.09.24:

I met online with a fellow TEP today to talk about my analysis so far and my next steps for the WC. I'm feeling really conflicted about how to do it. In some senses, it feels easier and more "rigorous research" to repeat the same process again without any adaptations and drop the phased approach. However, I feel less inclined to do this, it also doesn't feel consistent with the values of the WC approach, exploratory goals, or sequential design which is not sitting comfortably with me. I feel I could get more depth from my data/honour the contexualist standpoint through adapting and being explicit about where each WC sits in the context of my research. It was helpful to acknowledge the emotions and frustration of the research process. I think continuing to immerse myself in the WC literature is going to help this – I picked it for its values-driven approach and I want to maintain a commitment to the "conversations that matter". My design decisions need to reflect these values to maintain quality WC research. With it being such a new methodology, this is also a more daunting prospect than I'd anticipated!

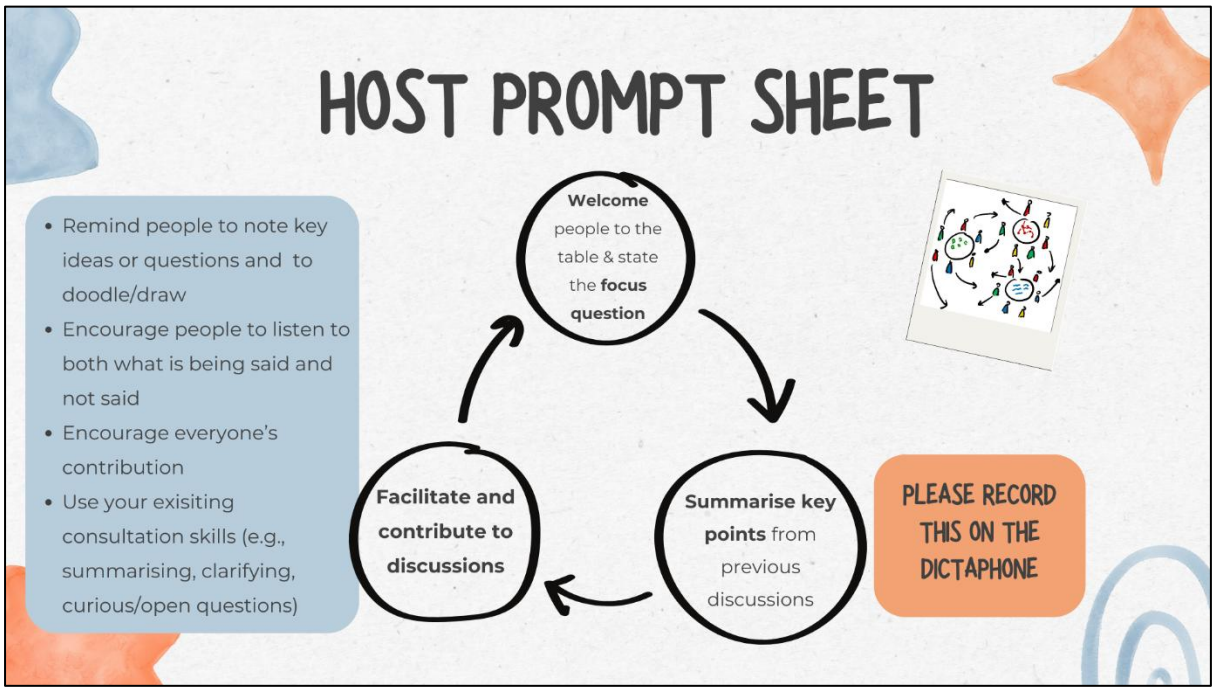
23.09.24:

I've been thinking a lot about the decision for phase 2 and am just reflecting following a research tutorial. I think I feel most comfortable with doing the WC the same as before but just slightly adapting the CPD based on the feedback from WC1. I think this holds the sequential element and aligns with the networking of conversations in WCs but also allows the openness for WC2 to explore other avenues different to WC1. This feels like it reflects the co-inquiry, participatory and dialogic values of the WC.

I feel like it's left me with the 'so what' of my thesis. I would love to get to some implications for service delivery or for EPs to reflect on their role, whether the PTMF could fill some of that I don't know? I was talking with my placement supervisor last week about the gap in services for children who have experienced complex trauma and there was the question over whether it is our role to fill that gap or whether that is something that we

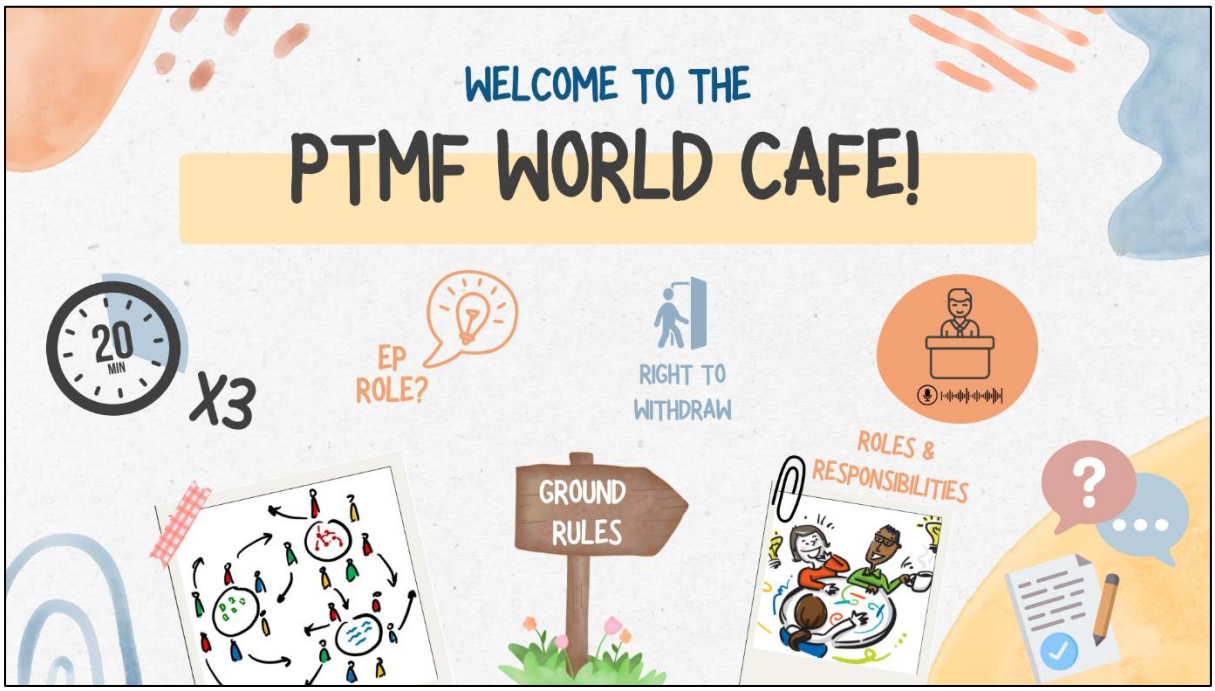
need to sit in the uncomfortableness of. We talked about approaches like DDP for families but is it our role to support that or not? I guess this was interesting in light of my thesis and questioning whether we *should* play a role in these gaps. I think I need to be wary of not imposing an outcome for my thesis but being led by participants and the emerging data. I feel like this was why I chose the WC and felt that contextualism aligned best with my views of truth, so I think this sequential nature can best honour that.

Appendix 7: Host Prompt Sheet



Appendix 8: Welcome and Ground Rules

Welcome Slide:



Ground Rules:

Participants were directed to the graphic below on their tables and given the opportunity to add to or discuss any ground rules they would feel appropriate for the World Café.



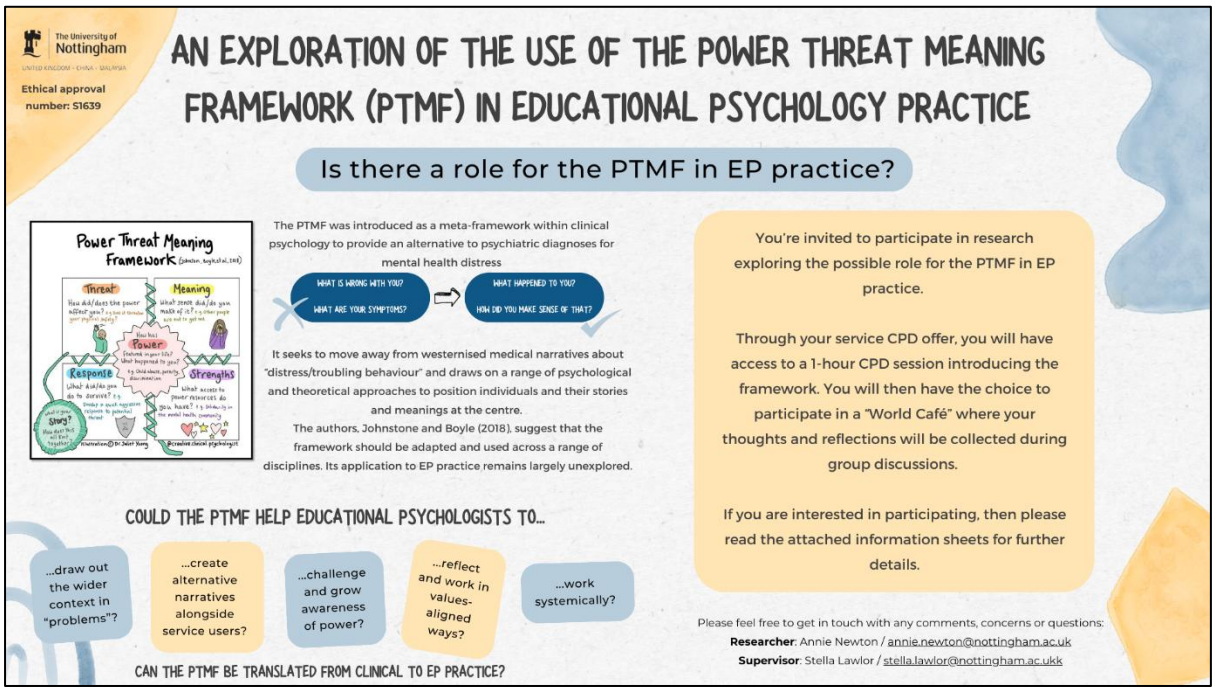
Source:

The World Café Community Foundation. (2023). *Table cards image bank*. The World Café. https://theworldcafe.com/tools-store/hosting-tool-kit/image-bank/table-cards/

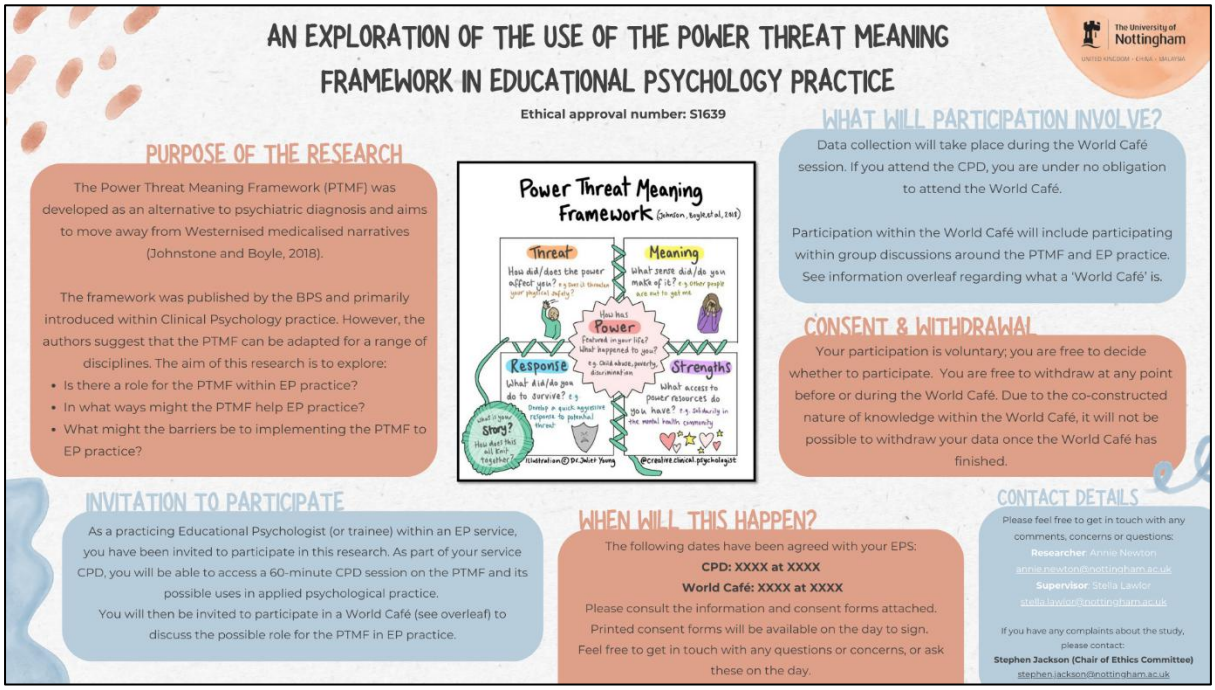
© The World Café Community Foundation. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

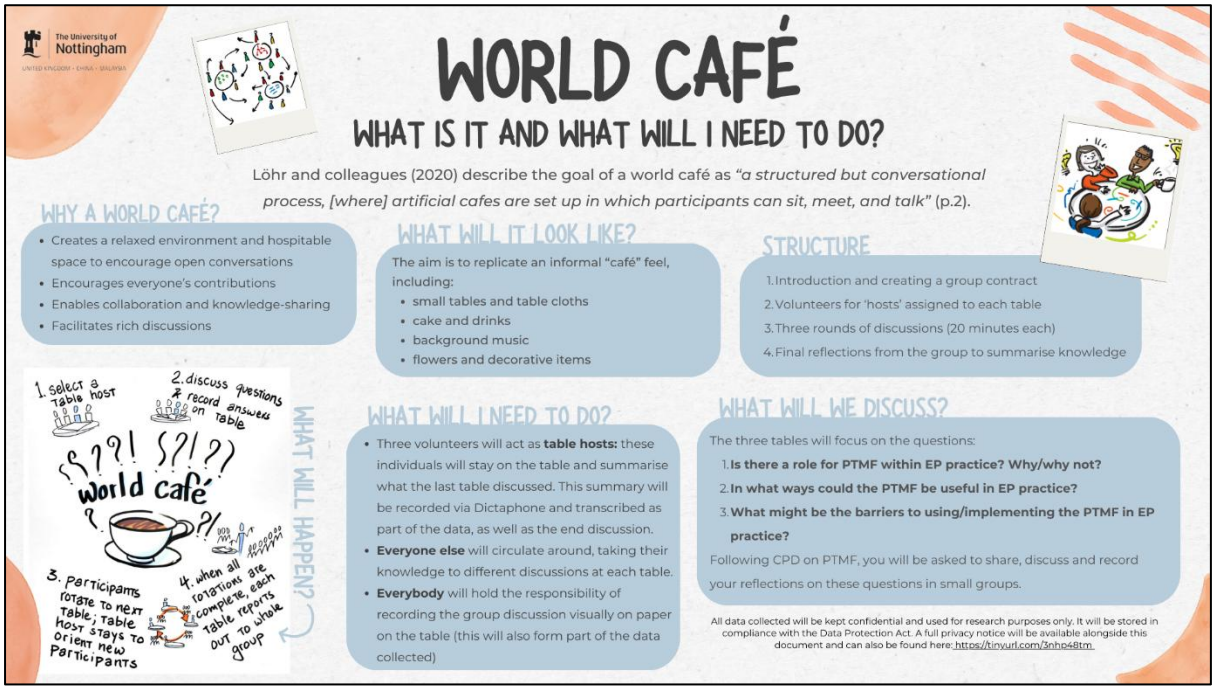
Appendix 9: Information Sheets and Invitation to Participate

Example Invitation:



Example Information Sheets:





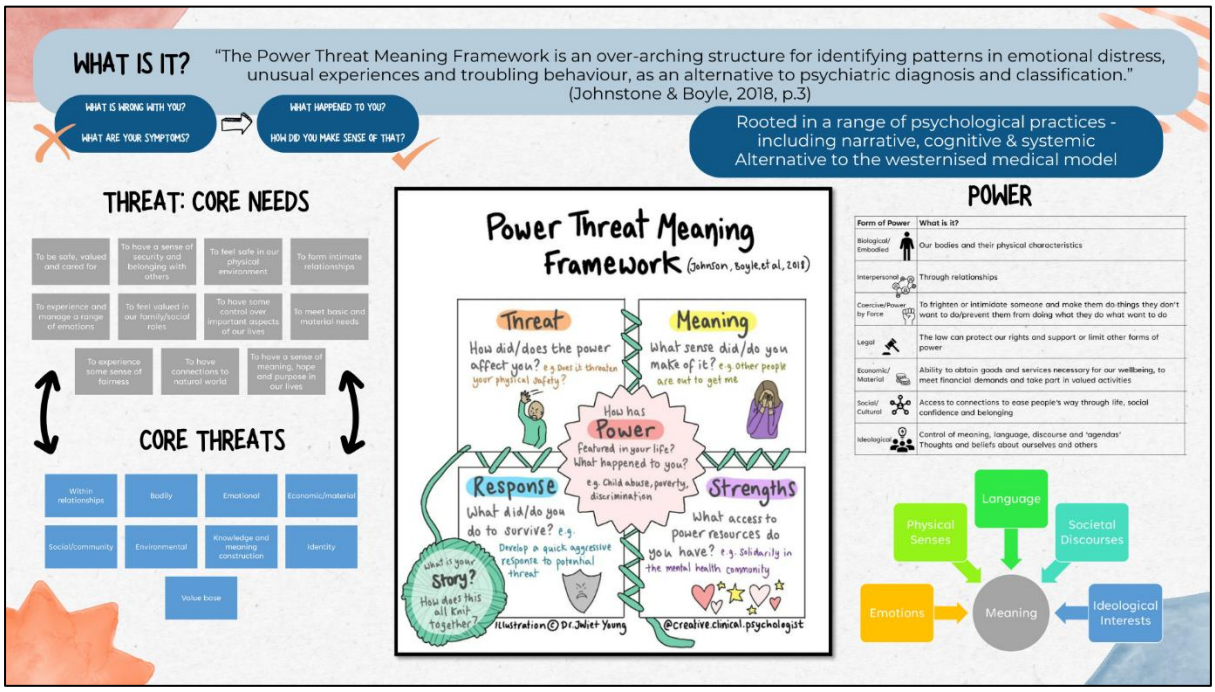
Power Threat Meaning Framework Image Source:

Young, J. (2024). *Power threat and meaning* [Illustration]. The Creative Clinical Psychologist. https://www.patreon.com/posts/power-threat-and-100187590
© Juliet Young. Used with permission under the terms outlined at https://www.julietyoung.co.uk/copyright-permissions

World Café Images:

Villabone. (2019, February 7). *Getting big groups to be creative: Introducing World Café* [Image]. Medium. https://medium.com/@villabone/getting-big-groups-to-be-creative-introducing-world-cafe-d02ceec79651

Appendix 10: PTMF Overview Sheet



Appendix 11: Ethics Board Approval

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

t: +44 (0)115 8467403 or (0)115 9514344

SJ/tp

Ref: **S1602**

Thursday 18th April 2023

Dear Annie Newton & Sarah Godwin

Ethics Committee Review
Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'An exploration of the use of the Power Threat Meaning Framework in Educational Psychology practice'

That proposal has now been reviewed by the Ethics Committee and I am pleased to tell you that your submission has met with the committee's approval.

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research, then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely



Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

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Tuesday 27th August 2024

Ref: S1639 Chair Approval Minor Amendments

Dear Annie Newton & Sarah Godwin

Your name and contact details:- Annie Newton annie.newton@nottingham.ac.uk
Today's date:- 21/08/2024
Title of the new project:- An exploration of the use of the Power Threat Meaning Framework in Educational Psychology practice

Details of the previous study:
Applicant: Annie Newton
Title: An exploration of the use of the Power Threat Meaning Framework in Educational
Psychology practice
Date of approval: 18/04/2024
Reference number (if known): S1602

As Chair of the Ethics Committee I have considered your request and I am happy to grant approval for the following changes:

List of significant changes in the proposed study. This list should include any changes which could potentially impact on ethical risks of the work e.g., moving from student participants to vulnerable adults; use of sensitive stimulus materials; changes in remuneration or consent procedures:

- Instead of conducting phase 2 as planned (questionnaire and interviews with the same participants), I would like to repeat Phase 1 with a different group of Educational Psychologists. This will largely look the same as Phase 1 in the original ethics submission, however, changes will include:
- 1. Recruiting Educational Psychologists and Trainee Educational Psychologists from a different Educational Psychology Service (EPS) (one where the researcher is not currently on placement).
- 2. Adapted access and recruitment letter, recruitment poster, and information sheet to ensure that process is fully understood by participants. The initial phase 1 research was undertaken within an EPS where the researcher is on placement. As outlined in the ethics proposal, a meeting with senior leaders and a team meeting slot were used to introduce the research and access/recruit participants prior to conducting the research, alongside the emails and information sheet. As this may not be possible in a second EPS, the access email and information sheet will be slightly adapted to include an introduction of the researcher and the context of the research already conducted, as well as the existing information about the world café procedure. This would involve using the appended information sheet, rather than the standard form.
- 3. Adapting the CPD delivered at the beginning of the phase to include and build on themes emerging from the data already collected. The CPD will be delivered solely by the

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researcher (in the initial phase 1, this was delivered alongside the EPS' strategic psychology group

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.
Yours sincerely,



Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

Appendix 12: Consent Form

University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

School of Psychology

Consent Form: Phase 2

Title of Project: **An exploration of the use of the Power Threat Meaning Framework in Educational Psychology practice**

Ethics Approval Number: S1639

Researcher: Annie Newton / *Supervisor:* Stella Lawlor

Contact Details: annie.newton@nottingham.ac.uk / stella.lawlor@notingham.ac.uk

Please answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet? YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study? YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)? YES/NO
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study? (at any time during the world café and without giving a reason) YES/NO
- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected. YES/NO
- Do you agree to take part in the study? YES/NO

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 13: Debrief Procedure

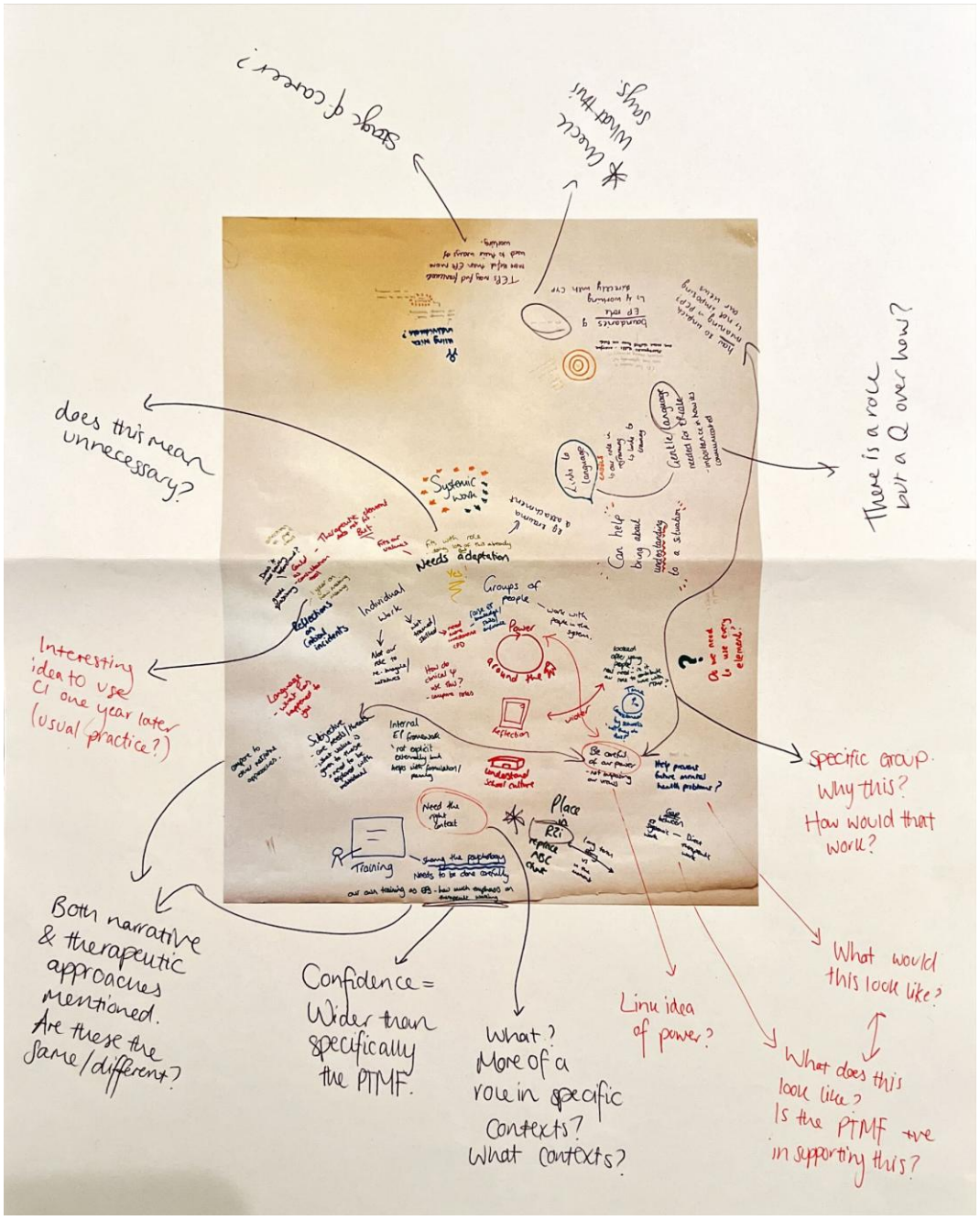
As agreed through the ethical approval process, the following points will be verbally communicated with participants at the end of each WC:

- Thank everyone for participating
- Highlight that sensitive topics may have come up through discussions today
- Encourage all participants to maintain confidentiality and not share details of people's disclosures beyond the discussions if not necessary
- If anyone is particularly concerned or distressed about anything that has come up today, then please contact your supervisor and discuss with them. Further support can be accessed through the service as necessary.
- Opportunity to ask further questions (at that moment, speak to me afterwards, or use mine/my supervisor's contact details from the information sheets on tables)

Appendix 14: Data Analysis Process

Appendix 14A: Stage 1 (Familiarisation)

Extracts from WC 1 Table 1 Host Summary and Visual



RQs → Is there a role for PTMF in EP Practice?
→ How might PTMF be used?
neg
pos

Table 1: Host Summaries

Round 1

H: Lovely, so...is there a role for the PTMF within EP practice? Why and why not? ...so we started by thinking about individual work, systemic work, then with groups of people. So we're saying individual work, it felt problematic, that it felt like it's not our role around re-authoring narratives. We don't necessarily have the training or skills, time or capacity, schools aren't going to pay for that. It doesn't feel ethical to do something very short. But could be interesting.

Narrative work
Not our role to work 1:1 therapeutically
Resource limitations
Ethics

We were saying with groups of people...urm...could work with groups of people, in the system around them. Ermm...we talked about the example of one of our schools...erm...where there's been lots of upheaval and change within the school system and how the staff went on strike. And we were saying actually, you can see how that situation occurred with maybe thinking about this framework.

→ Brings understanding of groups + systems

P1: Ah right, so kind of applying it to the whole school system?

More of a role at whole sch. level

H: Yeah, urm, so thinking about power around the child and getting staff to maybe...so away from the kind of systemic work but thinking about if you were working with staff around a young person, maybe using the framework to think about the young person and doing a bit of reflection to think about the wider...think about using it in terms of the school culture.

Staff to consider power
for reflection on wider factors in PS.
considering culture in school

Then wider systemic work...urm...we thought about is there a place for it within R2i? Whether it is about language and changing the language we ~~use~~, rather than ABC charts is it more around what was the power in the situation? What threats were there? What meaning was made? How did that change? So we were saying it's about being quite conscious of the language and maybe this framework helps us change some of that in some way.

anonymise
Supports existing systemic work
use of the Qs
Personal & change w/i systems language

Someone's already used the power threat meaning in a bit of training, as a way of sharing the psychology, but we need to do it carefully in that people don't think they're able to go and work...go and re-imagine a child's story with them one to one. But maybe think of it as maybe like a framework for them to hold.

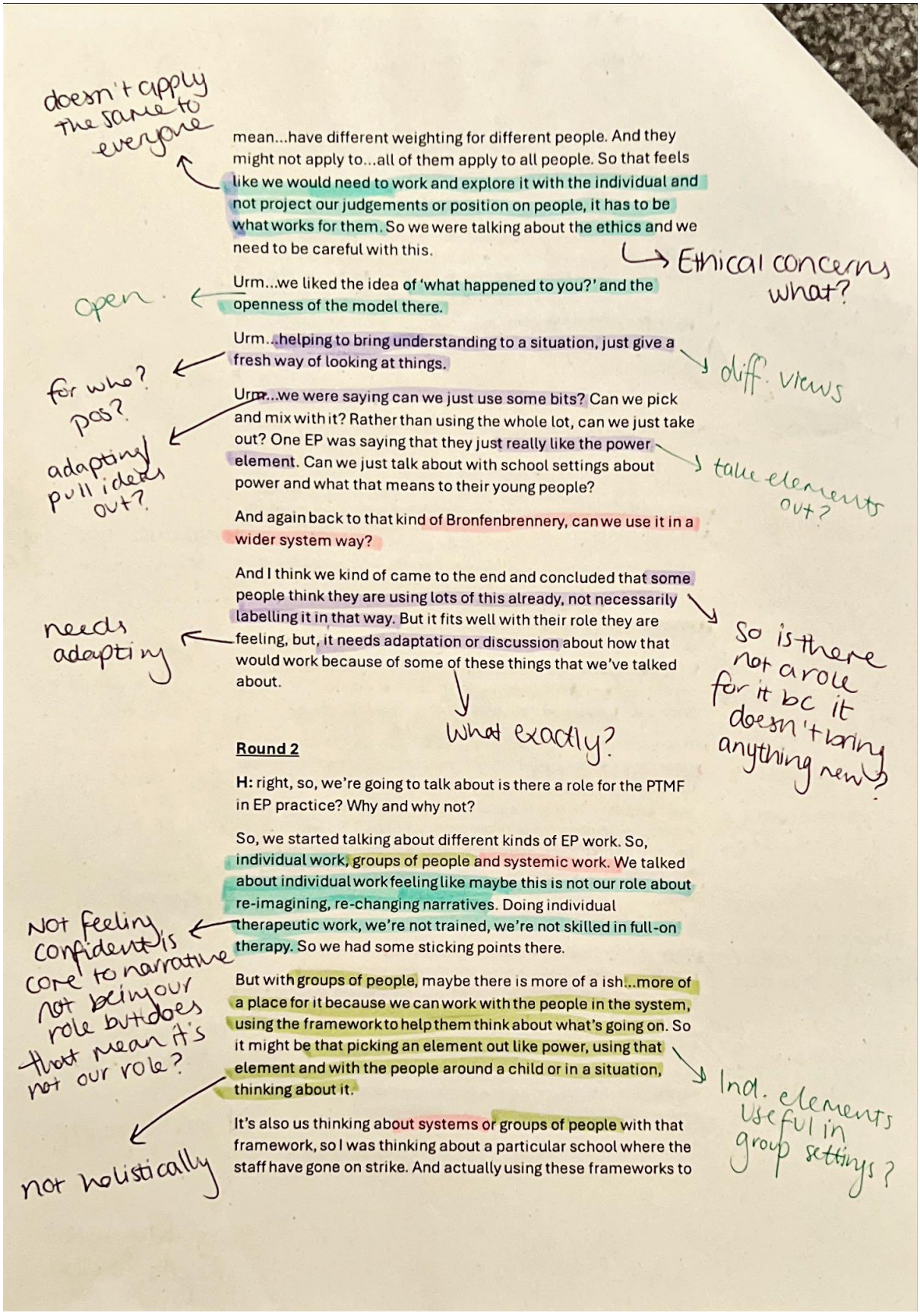
Share as a way of adults understanding
giving/sharing psych
not for use therapeutically

We were thinking about our internal EP framework. That maybe it's not something that we always use or explicitly share with a school, but it might be that it's something that we hold when we're making our formulations, just to help us.

Ind. formulations

We were saying some of this feels maybe potentially subjective, or, urm, the kind of core needs/core threats, some of these things

Subj. framework – needs flexible use?



mean...have different weighting for different people. And they might not apply to...all of them apply to all people. So that feels like we would need to work and explore it with the individual and not project our judgements or position on people, it has to be what works for them. So we were talking about the ethics and we need to be careful with this.

Urm...we liked the idea of 'what happened to you?' and the openness of the model there.

Urm...helping to bring understanding to a situation, just give a fresh way of looking at things.

Urm...we were saying can we just use some bits? Can we pick and mix with it? Rather than using the whole lot, can we just take out? One EP was saying that they just really like the power element. Can we just talk about with school settings about power and what that means to their young people?

And again back to that kind of Bronfenbrennery, can we use it in a wider system way?

And I think we kind of came to the end and concluded that some people think they are using lots of this already, not necessarily labelling it in that way. But it fits well with their role they are feeling, but, it needs adaptation or discussion about how that would work because of some of these things that we've talked about.

Round 2

H: right, so, we're going to talk about is there a role for the PTMF in EP practice? Why and why not?

So, we started talking about different kinds of EP work. So, individual work, groups of people and systemic work. We talked about individual work feeling like maybe this is not our role about re-imagining, re-changing narratives. Doing individual therapeutic work, we're not trained, we're not skilled in full-on therapy. So we had some sticking points there.

But with groups of people, maybe there is more of a ish...more of a place for it because we can work with the people in the system, using the framework to help them think about what's going on. So it might be that picking an element out like power, using that element and with the people around a child or in a situation, thinking about it.

It's also us thinking about systems or groups of people with that framework, so I was thinking about a particular school where the staff have gone on strike. And actually using these frameworks to

Reflexive Diary Extract Following Familiarisation Phase:

I've just finished the familiarisation for WC2. I think it's interesting because they've gone way more conceptual than WC1 – the discussions seem to be way more centred around the concepts of power and medical model, and less on the practicalities of how it's used.

I think this will be interesting to reflect on in my thesis as I'm not sure whether this is a strength or limitation of the use of the WC approach. I would say it seems that there's one idea/main narrative that gets talked about throughout the tables and it's hard to spread ideas beyond that. Whereas with focus groups, as the researcher involved in the discussions, perhaps this would be a strength. I wonder whether this is another limitation of the host role/training – perhaps if this was a primed/trained person, then they could challenge/guide/open discussion further. Or is this not a limitation at all? Would guiding the conversation be less authentic? Perhaps this allows a further insight into the collective knowledge and the ideas most pertinent to the group?

Either way, I've found it interesting doing the familiarisation stage and getting to grips with what WC2 have said. I've naturally already started to compare it in my head. I'm having to work hard to avoid biases, given that I've been on placement in both of these services and know lots about how they work. It's helpful to keep coming back to the data and I think having these annotated transcripts will help me to do that throughout.

I'm anticipating that the combination of semantic/latent coding might be hard as for some data (e.g., an idea on the visual), I don't seem to have much context if the host hasn't discussed it at length in their summary. I think this might make understanding their meaning and interpreting the data a challenge at points!

Appendix 14B: Stage 2 (Initial Coding)

The below shows screenshots of NVivo codes following 3 iterative rounds of coding:

Extract for RQ1

Name	Files	References
Aligns with EP values	5	5
An alternative therapeutic approach (like those EPs already use)	4	6
An explicit formulation tool to support group problem-solving	7	8
An explicit formulation tool within action plans around a CYP	2	3
An internal EP framework - an implicit part of the EP toolbox	0	0
Assistant EPs - more capacity for longer work	2	3
Bring awareness of power to consider how to shift it	4	4
Changing the language EPs use	3	7
ELSA - to train and supervise support staff	2	3
Enables EPs to model different language which reframes away from deficit focus	2	3
EPs as research practitioners - Building practice-based evidence	4	4
EPs have skills to work therapeutically	4	5
EPs using their power to amplify alternative narratives	3	3
Explicit acknowledgment and awareness of power - tool to inform conversations	3	6
For a CYP to understand their own story	3	5
For EPs to 'sit with the uncomfortableness' of negative power operations	5	5
For EPs to use in their own supervision sessions	4	5
For school staff to understand their own story and responses	3	4
Formulation tool within consultation	1	1

Extract for RQ2

Name	Files	References
How do EPs empower in the face of ongoing threats	4	6
Is it needed - what is the PTMF's unique role, are EPs doing it already	5	8
Is it needed - why PTMF over other approaches	2	5
Lack of clear actions & interventions as an outcome of the PTMF	4	7
Lack of practical PTMF tools for direct use	6	7
Lack of practice-based evidence	2	3
Lack of relationship established with EP	3	4
Lack of skills and training for EPs in therapeutic approaches	3	7
Limited evidence base	8	13
Need for psychological knowledge to underpin using the framework	2	4
Percieved power and influence of EPs	2	4
Professional identity - Uncertainty about whether EPs want to work therapeutically	6	12
Risk in implementing a new model	5	8
Systemic constraints and limited ability to change wider structures - potential for disempowerment	6	10
Tension between the PTMF and traditional models - a threat to wider systems	4	8
The nuance of power in school	2	2
Therapeutic work is more costly and impacts EPs availability for other work	1	1
Uncertainty around purpose and when to use the framework	6	10
Unconscious bias around concepts within the framework	3	9

Reflexivity demonstrated through a Selection of Memos recorded on NVivo during Iterative Rounds of Coding

<Memos\\Buy-in (5)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

See memo on tensions code as well.

I was thinking about organisational threat concepts when I read these quotes but I've prompted myself to be led by the data and what the EPs are saying - that could be an underlying reason or overarching theme but I think here, it is primarily about how EPs would get buy-in from other adults to consider this systemic level.
Links to the systemic constraints code also.

<Memos\\Tensions (5)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

See buy-in code also.

Originally, I called this organisational threat but realised that I had grouped in quite a bg range of codes about schools, SEND systems and medical models.I took out ones that actually mapped onto the buy-in or systemic constraints and kept this as more of a code about the tensions between the PTMF and macro systems.

I didn't name it macro systems because I think there's something in this about how those macro systems play out in schools/parents/ideologies etc.

I think it's interesting that this is majority from WC2. The context of this is that all participants had been at a whole SEND team meeting that morning about the systems that they work within. They were talking about this informally prior to the cafe starting and many seemed frustrated about the deficit system - I wonder how much that influenced the reflections that they brought to the WC discussions when considering an alternative to this.

<Memos\\Context note about EPs (3)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

Interesting that 11/16 of these codes are from WC1 - is this reflective of the context and the EPs there being most willing to challenge/grow/change the ways they practice?

I've also caught myself thinking about this code and just gone back through to check that all these quotes do map closely onto this code. I've noticed that I really like this code and this is something that I would love for the PTMF's role in EP practice to be. I need to catch myself and check that these are codes that map closely onto this. I have uncoded a few ideas that I don't think mapped onto here but an idea that I had read into the text. I think this would be something that I could code together down the line but I want this phase to really be the "building blocks" of the analysis and ensure that a code maps a single idea.

<Memos\\knowledge, skills and confidence (5)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

I've just been questioning over whether I need separate codes for "knowledge and skills" and "confidence" for both PTMF and therapeutic. Being led by the data, EPs seem to distinguish confidence

around therapeutic approaches as a distinct thing (the idea that EPs have knowledge/skils but lack confidence) whereas when talking about the PTMF they seem to group these things together indistinguishably. They lack confidence because they lack knowledge/skills in using the framework and vice versa.

E.g., WC3 Table 1 Visual - Evidence base and EP confidence are physically linked/written together

<Memos\\Pereceived power (5)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

I think it's so interesting that these three pieces of data are solely from the visuals and not reflected in hosts summaries. This could mean that they were all added in the final rounded of discussion, but it's interesting that it came up once in each WC and that hosts did not pick up or feel able to talk about this in their summaries. Is this reflective of the difficulty of talking about it as a concept or on some level not wanting to acknowledge that our power as EPs can not be as neutral as we would like and can be a threat to the type of work we want to undertake?

<Memos\\TEPs (3)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

Interesting that the ideas are mostly from a table hosted by a TEP (the only table hosted by a TEP through all 3x WCs) - adds to further reflections in my diary about the impact of the hosts on the data that I have.

<Memos\\Uncomfortableness memo (4)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

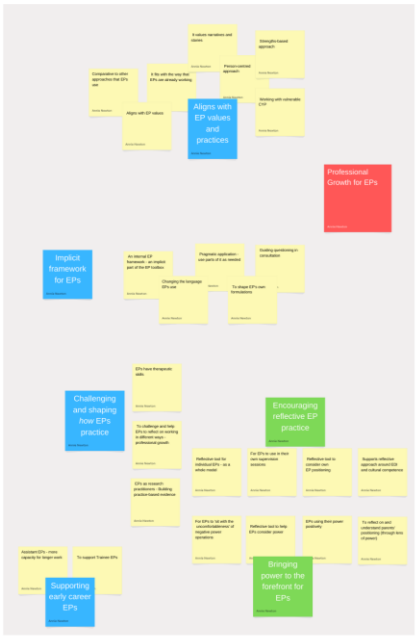
This was originally just part of the 'reflective tool for EPs on power' code but this felt like a distnict thing that there was something uneasy about it. Does this contrast the idea of the PTMF needs to be more solution focused to be able to use it in EP practice? Is it fulfilling a different role to lots of the models ordinarily adopted by EPs?

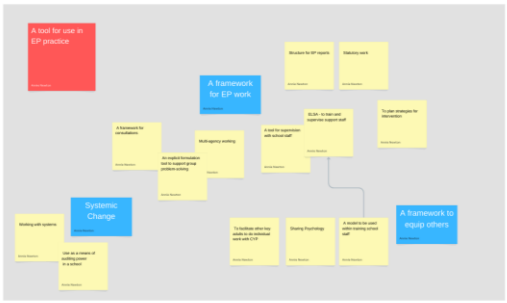
Appendix 14C: Stage 3 (Generating Initial Themes)

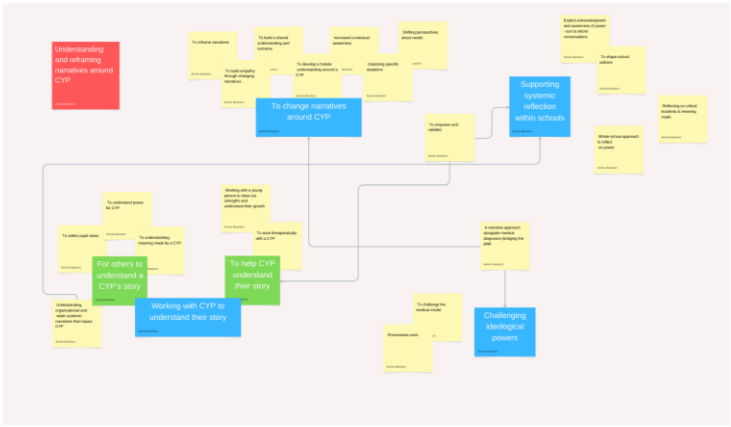
KEY: Red = Themes / Blue & Green = Sub-Themes

A selection of draft analyses have been selected to demonstrate reflexivity and the iterative process undertaken.

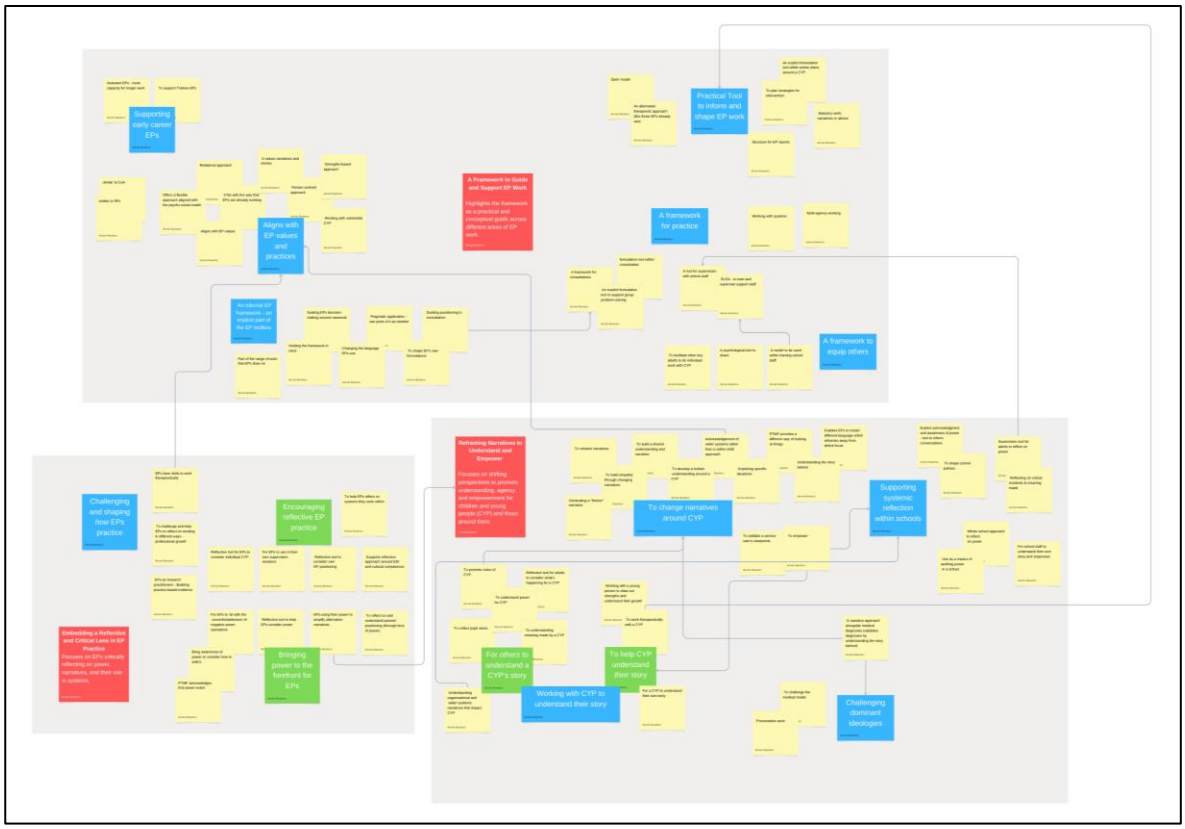
1st Draft of Themes for RQ1



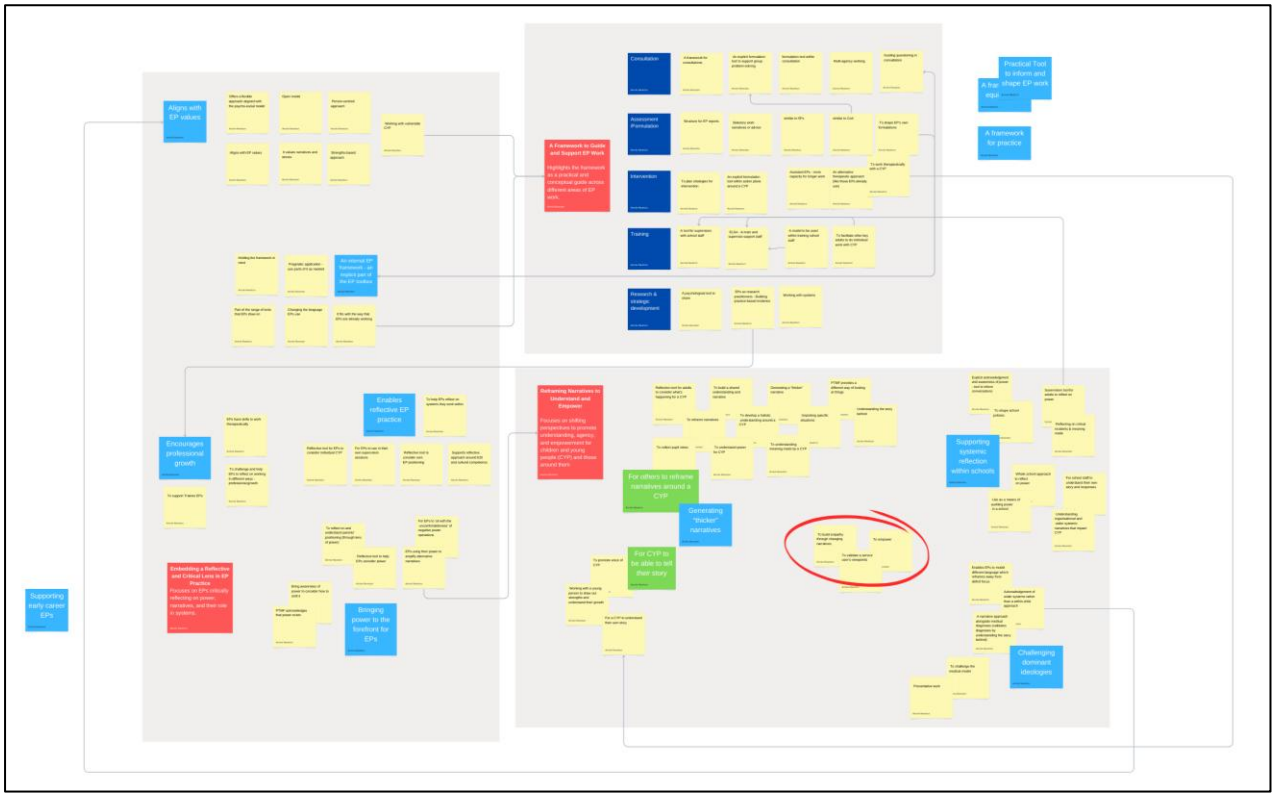




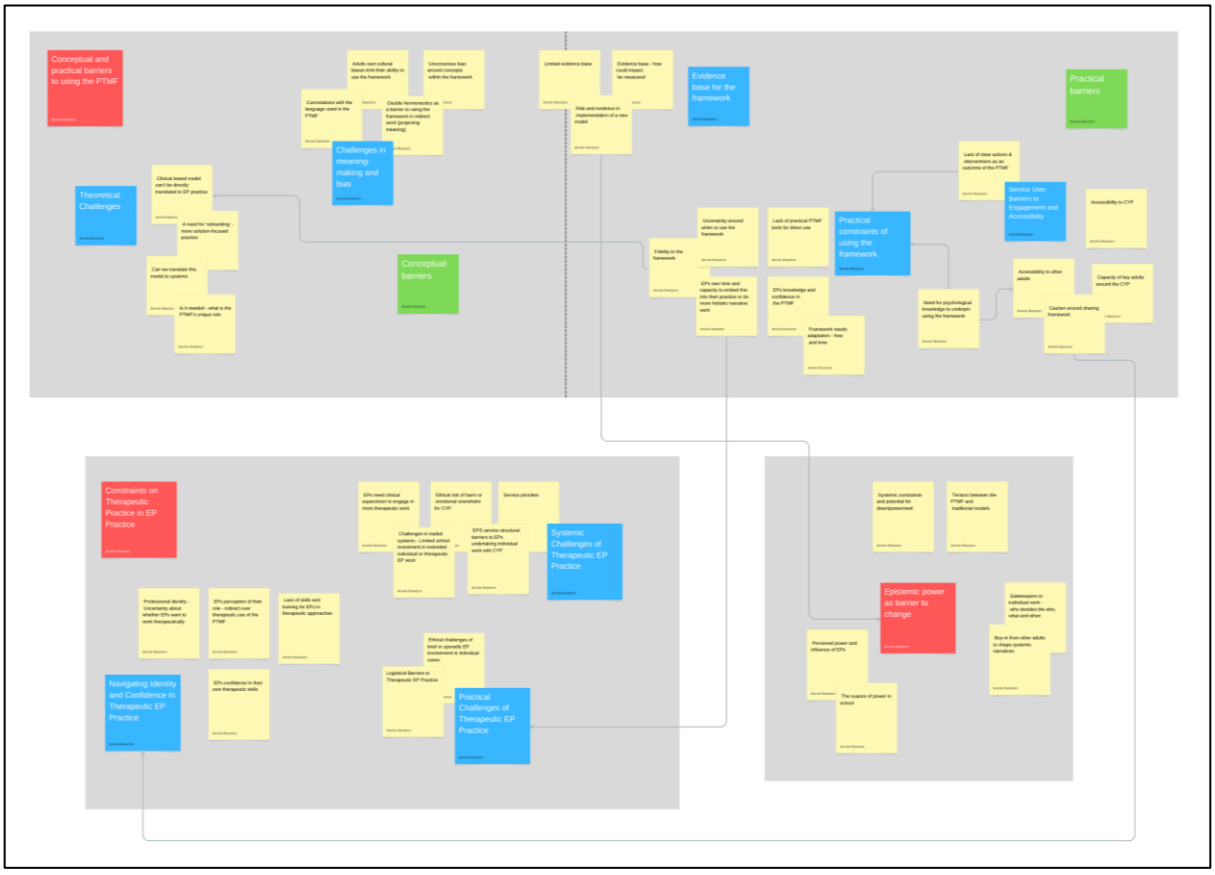
3rd Draft of Themes for RQ1



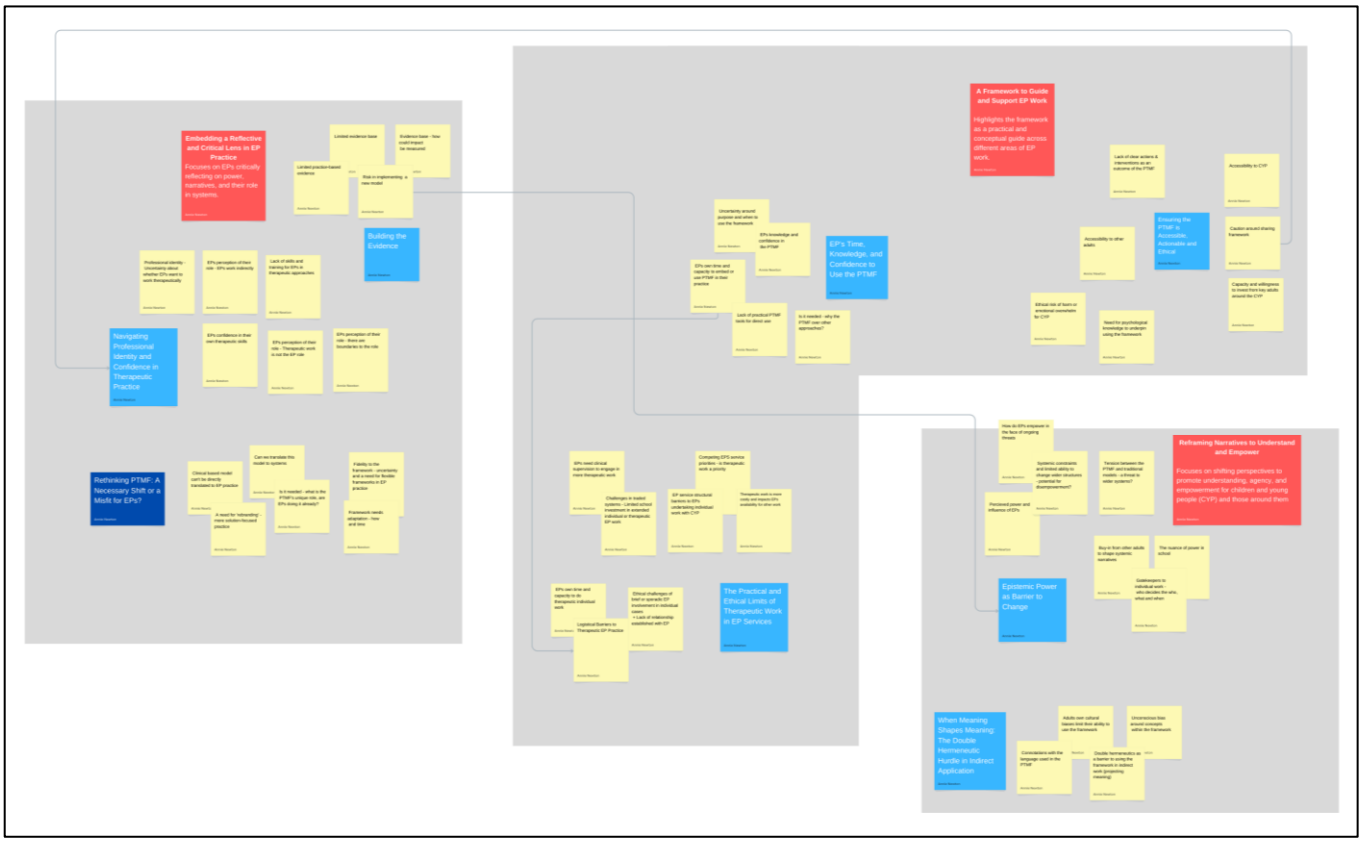
4th Draft of Themes for RQ1



1st Draft of Themes for RQ2



3rd Draft of Themes for RQ2



Reflexive Diary Extract for Stages 2 and 3:

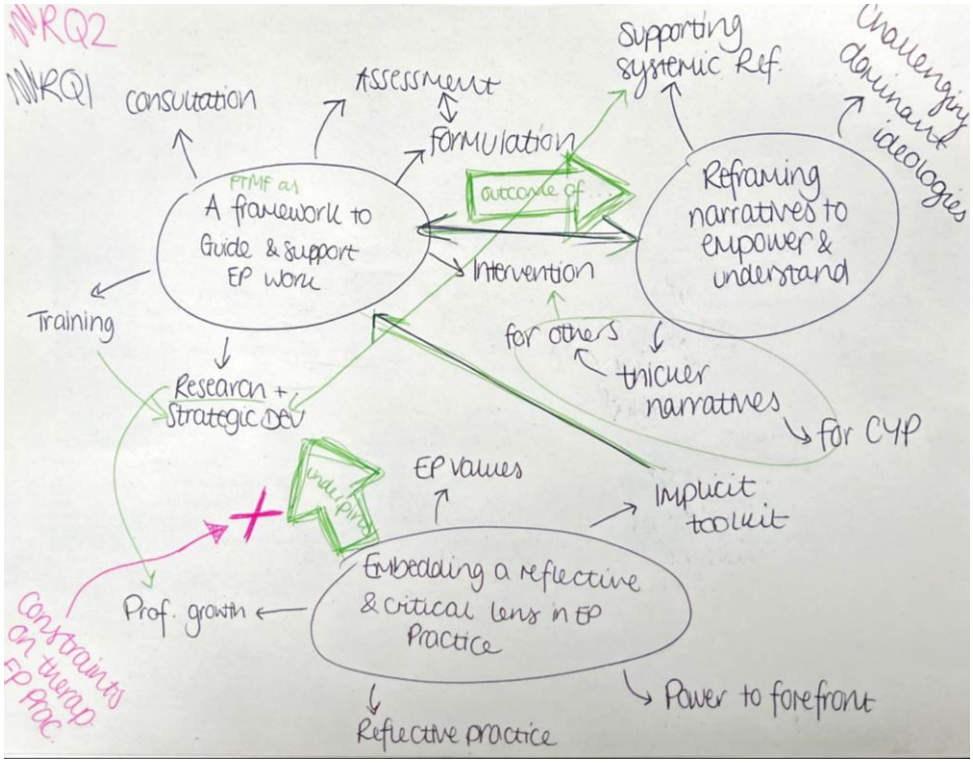
I have just finished an initial attempt at Phases 2 and 3 for RQ1. I found the process of completing the codes time consuming but worthwhile. I used the cluster analysis tool and just manual re-reading of the codes/quotes to work them out. I found that there was a number that I could re-group or uncode. This left me with around 50 codes that I could start organising into themes. I actually kind of liked the reflexive element on this, as going back, re-visiting and changing the codes gave me confidence that I was really getting into the data.

Initially this was a very daunting task! I'm worried that I'm not doing the data justice and not capturing the full data. This feels like a challenge of qualitative as you can never fully capture everything that has been said. I found grouping the initial themes particularly challenging and naming the titles a difficult one. I found the ideas of power and narrative underpinning a lot of it, but it didn't really work to group by these as these are perhaps the underlying themes of the PTMF, rather than the themes which answer my research question. I've liked being able to play around with grouping codes in different ways on the Canva whiteboards though. Personally, I feel this has helped my reflexivity.

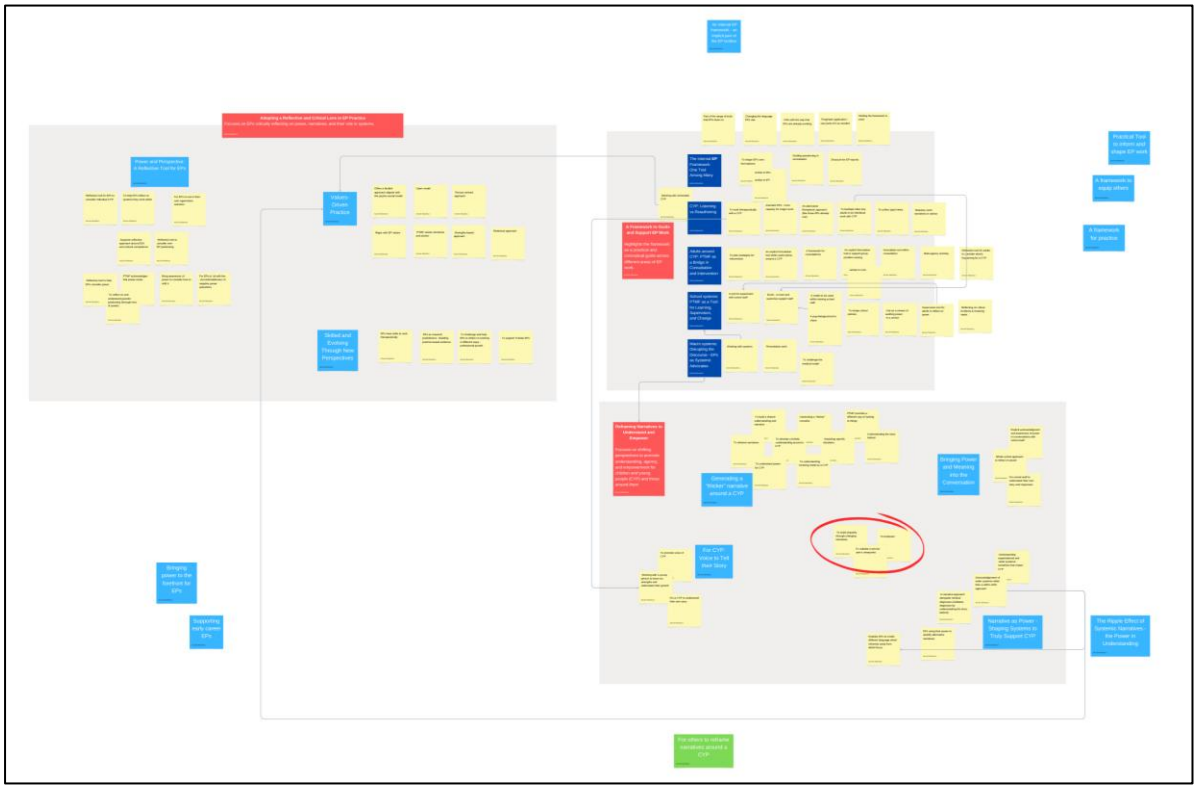
I did find the advice from Braun and Clarke's textbook helpful that at this point you are trying to adequately capture the data, rather than answer the RQ. This was freeing at the start of today as it enabled me to step back and look at the data. I think it will be good to take a break from this dataset and look at RQ2 now, before progressing onto Stage 4 of RTA.

Appendix 14D: Initial Stage 4 (Developing and Reviewing Themes)

Hand-Drawn Thematic Map Considering Interaction of Themes



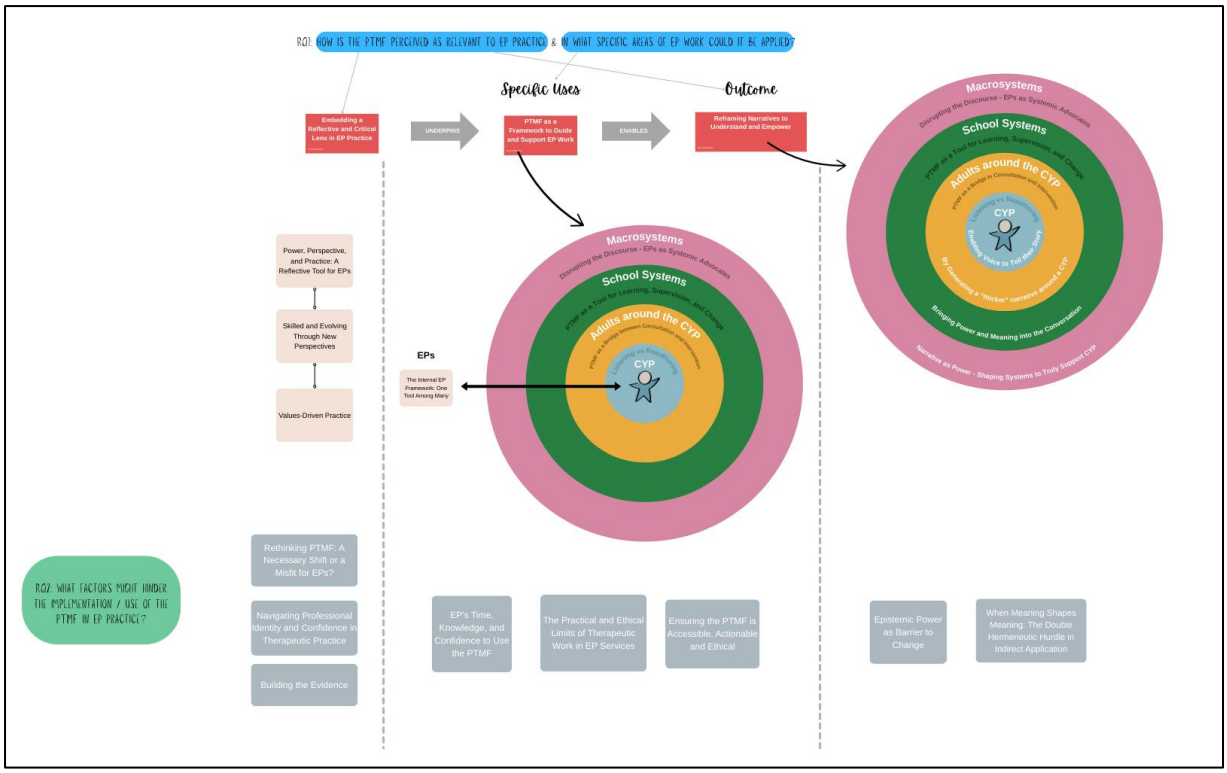
Developed and Reviewed Sub-Themes for RQ1 (7th Draft)



Hand-Drawn Thematic Map Considering Interaction of RQ1/2:

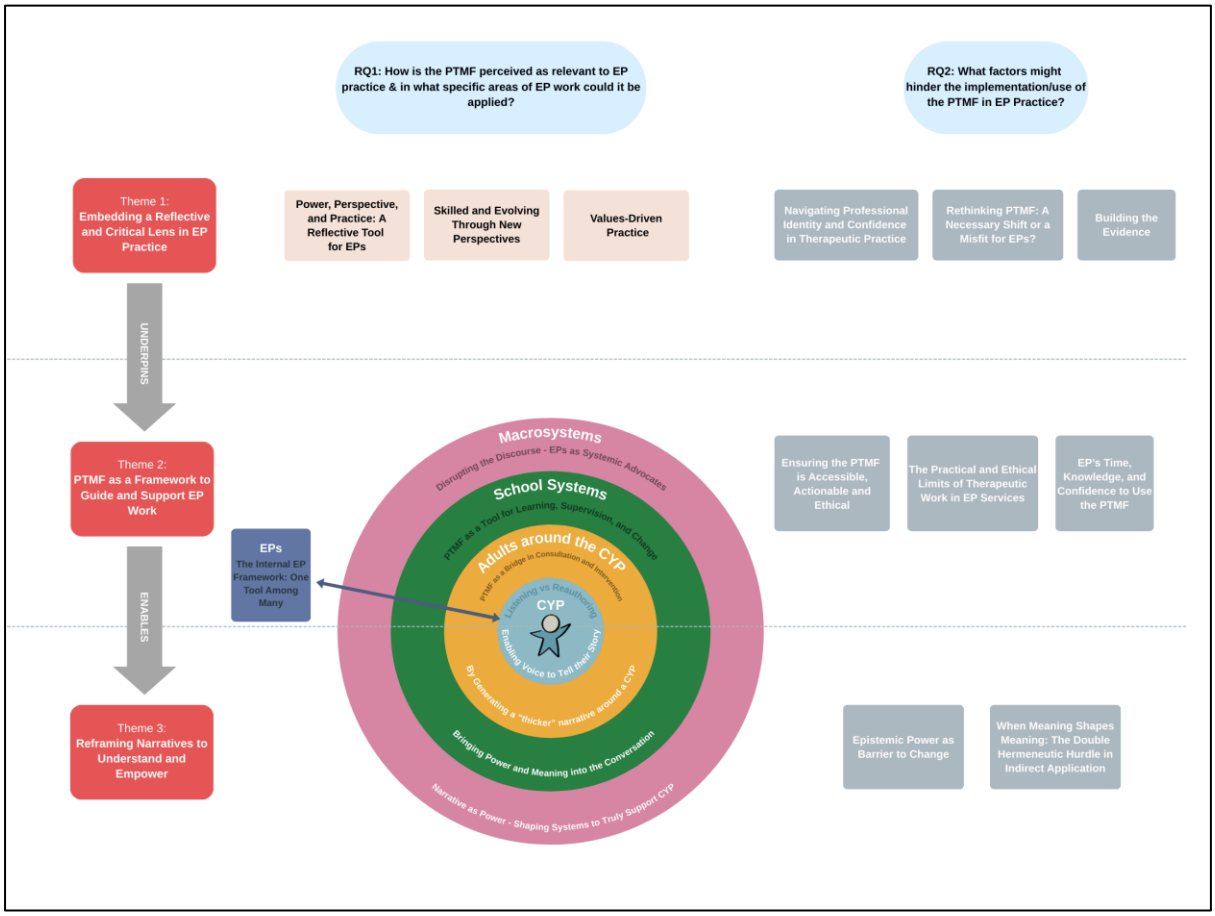


3RD Draft of Merged RQ1/2 Thematic Maps



Appendix 14E: Initial Stage 5 (Refining, Defining and Naming Themes)

Merged RQ1/2 Thematic Map (5th Draft)



Extract considering theme definitions:

Question from Braun & Clarke (2023, p. 98-99)	Theme 1: **Embedding a Reflective and Critical Lens in EP Practice**	Theme 2: **PTMF as a Framework to Guide and Support EP Work**	Theme 3: **Reframing Narratives to Understand and Empower**
Core question: Is this pattern a viable theme? Does it have an identifiable **central organising concept** as well as different manifestations of the idea?	The core thing here is the underpinnings of EP practice – it's about values, reflection and learning but the central concept is EPs developing themselves (before/to underpin direct work with service users)	The central concept here is that the PTMF is a practical guide across different areas of EP work. This is demonstrated across different groupings of people that EPs work with, as well as for EPs themselves when working in practice with service users.	This feels like a core idea around the outcome of the PTMF being narratives reframed at every level. Power and understanding felt really core to this. The implication is that EPs view reframing narratives as relevant to their role.
Can I identify boundaries of this theme? Am I clear about what it includes and excludes? (Hold in mind the analogy of dandelion head)	**Includes**: EPs own identity/role conceptions **Excludes**: EPs actually practicing their role	This is about the ways in which the framework practically supports EP work. It is mostly about the "what" it offers.	This includes anything about how narratives are shaped through using/as an outcome of the PTMF.

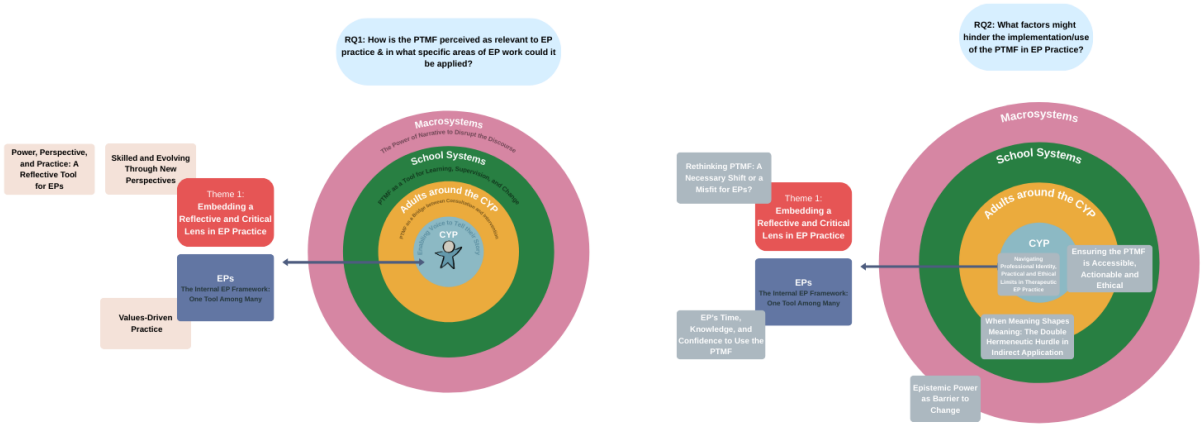
Reflexive Diary Extract for Stages 4-5

Today has felt good! I think the refining and naming themes (transitioning between stages 4 and 5 of RTA) has felt so rewarding. The reflexive element of RTA is hard in the amount of different iterations of things that I've done. I can see why the reflexive part is so important though because I'm at a very different conclusion now to my first iteration. Interestingly, I think my overarching 3 themes have remained consistent but there's been so much between that has changed and lots of reflecting and tweaking on the wording. As time consuming as this has been, I now feel more confident that I could defend my analysis as both an accurate conceptualisation of the data and to provide a strong debate around my research question. I can see the results and discussion parts taking more of a form now.

I do feel tentative about the number of sub-themes that I have. I'm keen to talk this through in a tutorial. I'm holding in mind that I want to accurately tell the story of the data, and I think all my sub-themes are important to that, as well as to answer all elements of the RQs. When I've looked through it, I do think I can spend less time talking about the sub-themes within Theme 2 for RQ1 as this was more about the ideas of "what" – in some senses there is less depth to those sub-themes and that should allow me to really unpack themes 1 and 3 in the rest of the results and the discussion. I did debate removing theme 2 for this reason but I think it still adds such a key thing to the research and EPs views on how it could be used are not explicitly captured anywhere so far in the literature.

Appendix 14F: Returning to Stage 4

New Thematic Map – Including Mapping Old Themes/Sub-Themes



Reflexive Diary Extract for Returning to Stage 4

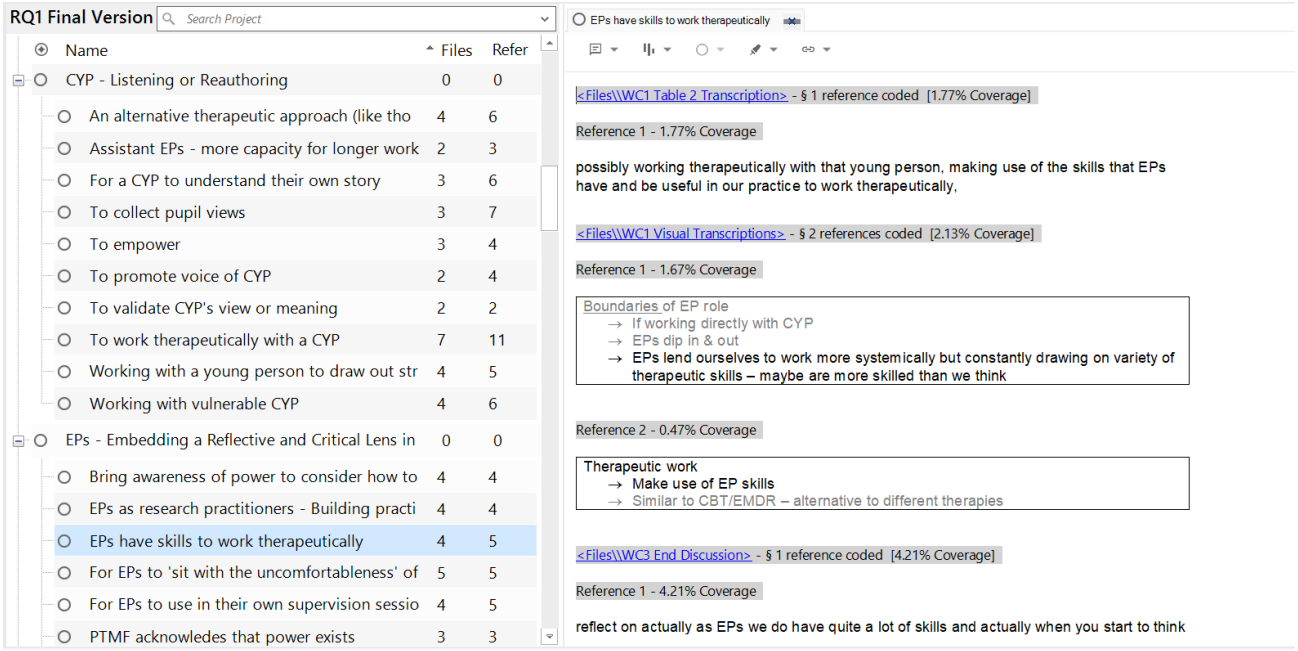
Okay I take back my last entry! I took a bit of a break from my analysis and came back to look at it afresh, as well as starting to progress to phase 6 (write up) but I felt like I had maybe read the pattern into the data more than was there. When I looked at the data for theme 2 and 3, it felt so difficult to split them out. In considering the write up for this, it didn't feel like they were distinct (e.g., at the wider systems level the EP work is to reframe the narrative). I felt like I'd overcomplicated it and when going back to the data, this simpler iteration fit best. This phase was therefore just mapping the old themes onto a new, simpler analysis. I've removed the overarching 3 themes and just got 6 themes (originally conceptualised as sub-themes) for each RQ now. This feels like a better fit with the data that I have.

Appendix 14G: Returning to Stage 5

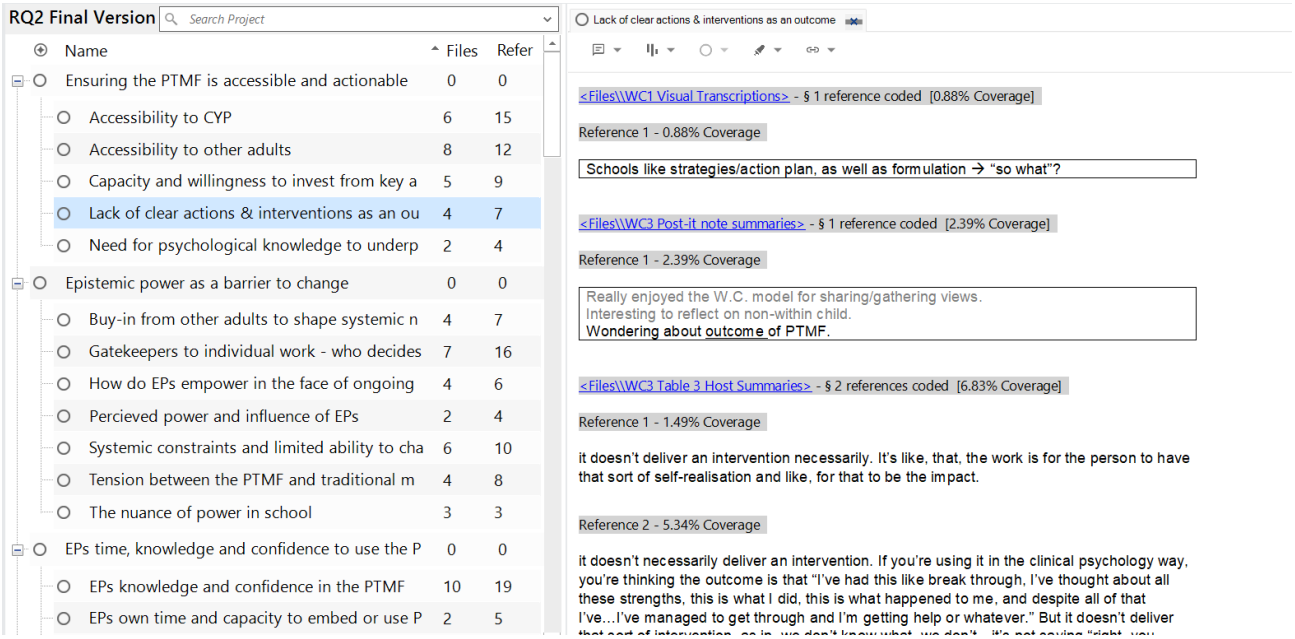
See Figure 16 and Figure 29 for final thematic maps developed within this phase.

NVivo Extracts to demonstrate revisiting the data and ensuring themes accurately captured codes and the original data. These show some examples of data mapping onto a code.

RQ1:



RQ2:



Reflexive Diary Extract for Returning to Stage 5 and Progressing to Stage 6

Putting this back onto NVivo felt positive as I could see the data and how it mapped onto the themes. I wonder if I needed to do this sooner and potentially, I would've changed my mind earlier about the structure of the analysis. However, I had constantly had it open and referring back to it in earlier phases, I wonder if this is just part of the reality of qualitative research!

I think the challenge in the write up is going to be making sure that I represent the themes accurately and both the pros and cons. And, where sometimes contextual information is missing from the host's or visual summaries, not filling in the blanks with my own opinions.

At this point of the research, I'm feeling quite ambivalent towards the PTMF and maybe drawn in by the discussions of the challenges, it can make striving for objectivity harder.

I've found myself questioning why I'm doing research on a framework that may even not be applicable to EP practice. I feel like it's opened my thesis out to wider questions about the EP role which I am finding it more interesting to explore. For me, this feels like a tension in that Braun and Clarke say that it's not about a Q+A style of answering your RQ but being led by what the data says, at the same time, I need to maintain the reflexivity and not read what I want into the data. Recognising this has been important to me and using the diary to process these thoughts has been integral. I've noticed in myself a real rollercoaster of emotions around the use of the PTMF. I anticipated it being a challenge, especially when I was very enthusiastic about the model initially. But I have found the rollercoaster of emotions and feelings towards the PTMF a surprise to myself! I guess in some senses this is helpful with the analysis as I can see both sides of the arguments.

Appendix 15: List of Themes and Codes with Examples of Reflexive Comments

RQ	Theme	Codes	Reflexive Diary Extracts Considering Criteria from Braun & Clarke (2022)*
1	EPs - Embedding a Reflective and Critical Lens in EP Practice	• Bring awareness of power to consider how to shift it • EPs as research practitioners - Building practice-based evidence • EPs have skills to work therapeutically • For EPs to 'sit with the uncomfortableness' of negative power operations • For EPs to use in their own supervision sessions • PTMF acknowledges that power exists • Reflective tool for EPs to consider individual CYP • Reflective tool to consider own EP positioning • Reflective tool to help EPs consider power • Supports reflective approach around EDI and cultural competence • To challenge and help EPs to reflect on working in different ways - professional growth • To help EPs reflect on systems they work within • To reflect on and understand parents' positioning (through lens of power) • To support Trainee EPs	During one of my draft iterations, this was an overarching theme separate to the ones below. Within these codes, I had identified two sub-themes around using it as a reflective tool and using it to help evolve practice and shift their own perspectives, however, I didn't feel there was as much data for the evolving practice to be its own sub-theme. Upon reflection, it felt like the reflection was the central organising concept that all of this hung around. The learning and challenging themselves to work in different ways felt like it was an outworking of this but sat within the same idea. The dandelion analogy was helpful to consider here – I could picture this all clinging onto the idea of reflections (whether around themselves/their professional practice or around power and systems they work within). I debated whether "EPs have skills to work therapeutically" belonged here or in the CYP theme (in visual representations it was often connected). However, when I returned to the data, it was more about EP's reflecting on their own skillset and practice (and seemed to fit with the 'professional growth' code), rather than being about the practical use of those skills with CYP.
1	EPs - The Internal EP Framework:	• Aligns with EP values ○ Person-centred approach	During one draft, 'values-driven practice' had its own sub-theme as EPs drew out the emphasis on the values and, in many iterations, values-driven practice was included in the

	one tool among many	○ Offers a flexible approach aligned with the psycho-social model ○ PTMF values narratives and stories ○ Relational approach ○ Strengths-based approach ○ Open model • Changing the language EPs use • Guiding EPs decision-making around casework • Guiding questioning in consultation • Holding the framework in mind • It fits with the way that EPs are already working ○ Similar to 5Ps ○ Similar to IFF • Part of the range of tools that EPs draw on • Pragmatic application - use parts of it as needed • Structure for EP reports • To shape EP's own formulations	theme above. However, I decided to represent this within this theme in the final iteration as the values feel like a core part of the "Internal EP Framework" and perhaps linked closely to the other ideas represented with the codes. This felt to better represent a theme and give the 'multi-faceted' meaning to the theme that Braun and Clarke talk about. The title of "the Internal EP framework" came from one of the hosts and felt to nicely capture the way in which the PTMF was being used in this theme. Structure for EP reports felt like a controversial one that could be moved to other areas, however, I felt that that didn't sit neatly in any one of the other categories as reports can be written to different service users and for different purposes. Going back to the data, it felt that EPs were referring to it in the "one tool among many" category of something they could draw on to help with structuring reports, so this theme felt a positive fit.
1	CYP – Enabling the Individual to Tell *Their* Story	• An alternative therapeutic approach (like those EPs already use) • Assistant EPs - more capacity for longer work • For a CYP to understand their own story • To collect pupil views • To empower CYP • To promote voice of CYP • To validate CYP's view or meaning • To work therapeutically with a CYP • Working with a young person to draw out strengths and understand their growth • Working with vulnerable CYP	These were organised around the idea of practically how the PTMF could be used with CYP, as well as what it could bring for CYP. Initially I had separated out the how it could be used and the outcomes (promoting/empowering/validating) etc. But it felt like the ideas needed to be considered together to create meaningful data, otherwise there wasn't much to span beyond the core idea of "it could be used in this way with CYP". This was the case for all of the RQ1 themes.
1	Adults around the	• A framework for consultations	I considered naming this theme something like "generating thicker narratives around CYP", as there felt to be a significant

	CYP - PTMF as a Bridge between Consultation and Intervention	• An explicit formulation tool to support group problem-solving • An explicit formulation tool within action plans around a CYP • Enables reflection around narratives within statutory work • Formulation tool within consultation • Generating a 'thicker' narrative • Multi-agency working • PTMF provides a different way of looking at things • Recommend as part of statutory advices • Reflection tool for adults to consider what's happening for a CYP • Similar to Circle of Adults • To build a shared understanding and narrative • To develop a holistic understanding around a CYP • To plan strategies for intervention • To reframe narratives • To understand power for CYP • To understanding meaning made by a CYP • To validate an adults' perspective • Understanding the story behind (for CYP) • Unpicking specific situations	number of codes about the PTMF being a useful tool in shaping adults' narratives they hold about/of a CYP. However, I felt drawn to the analogy of the PTMF being a bridge between consultation and intervention – I like the idea of the PTMF being an intervention just by reframing narratives. I was aware of not reading this idea into the data so revisited the data to ensure that it was reflective of what the data was saying. I felt that this best captured the central idea of this theme as there was a lot of mentions from participants that it felt to fit within their consultation work. This theme could then capture both the how it could be used and the idea of that being an intervention also.
1	School Systems - PTMF as a Tool for Learning, Supervision and Change	Learning: • A psychological tool to share • A model to be used within training school staff • To build on belonging training • Part of whole school relational approaches training	I considered the theme title of 'bringing power and meaning into the conversation' but felt that that could be drawing out or focusing more on ideas that I was drawn to, rather than fully capturing all the codes. The codes seemed to centralise around the idea of using it for training and/or supervision within the school system then on the change that could be brought

		• To build on trauma-informed approaches training • Training in the model as an approach • Training on power Supervision: • ELSA - to train and supervise support staff • A tool for supervision with school staff • For school staff to understand their own story and responses • Reflecting on critical incidents & meaning made • Supervision tool for adults to reflect on power • To facilitate other key adults to do individual work with CYP Change: • Explicit acknowledgment and awareness of power in conversations with school staff • To build empathy through changing narratives • To empower school staff • To shape school policies • Use as a means of auditing power in a school • Whole school approach to reflect on power	about both practically and in knowledge and empathy amongst school staff. I re-visited this data a few times (particularly under the change section) to ensure that quotes within this section was referring more to the whole school system than specific CYP. I debated this around the ideas of facilitating key adults to do the work, but felt this was more about building capacity of staff to do work with multiple young people than referring solely to one-off individual cases.
1	Wider Systems - The Power of Narrative to Disrupt the Discourse	• A narrative approach alongside medical diagnoses (validates diagnoses by understanding the story behind) • Acknowledgement of wider systems rather than a within-child approach • Enables EPs to model different language which reframes away from deficit focus	I found it hardest to name this category. Initially this was named 'macrosystems' but I later reflected on the fact that the theme seemed to include other systems (like communities and neighbourhoods) that are part of other systems in the Bronfenbrenner model.

		• EPs using their power to amplify alternative narratives • Preventative work • To challenge the medical model • Understanding organisational and wider systemic narratives that impact CYP • Working with systems	In my earlier iteration, the idea of "practical use" and "reframing narratives" were two separate themes. However, this was when I realised I was trying to read something into the data that wasn't there as that didn't work at all for this theme. This felt to be one concept because EP's seemed to conceptualise their role at the wider system level as using narratives to reframe dominant ideologies. It was interesting that EPs held less tangible ideas of how they do this but it was more about them being able to influence wider systems by their everyday challenging the ideology.
2	Rethinking the PTMF - a Necessary Shift or a Misfit for EPs?	• A need for 'rebranding' - more solution-focused practice • Can we translate this model to systems • Clinical based model can't be directly translated to EP practice • Fidelity to the framework - uncertainty and a need for flexible frameworks in EP practice • Framework needs adaptation - how and time • Is it needed - what is the PTMF's unique role, are EPs doing it already?	I found this an interesting theme to consider, there was a sense of uncertainty within the data in this theme. It's core idea is almost that it doesn't feel quite right for EPs to just translate a clinical model to their practice but then the data really just left lots of questions around whether this meant we should or shouldn't use it. I found it hard to sit with the uncomfortableness of this a little bit. I think I held these questions myself the more I'd looked into the PTMF but in a sense, as a researcher, I felt the need to come to a nice neat answer. I've grappled with this a lot but felt this was an important part of my research and reflected in my epistemological and methodological choices – in a sense it's down to individual EPs in their contexts to decide this and WCs were used to enable these discussions. Part of the aim of the research was to capture the questions like this as we introduce a new framework into practice.
2	EPs' Time, Knowledge and Confidence	• EPs knowledge and confidence in the PTMF • EPs own time and capacity to embed or use PTMF in their practice • Is it needed - why PTMF over other approaches	Within this theme, the knowledge and confidence code was one of the most frequently occurring so it felt that was important to recognise as a significant barrier. Though there is some nuance to this theme overall, the central concept felt

	to Use the PTMF	• Lack of practical PTMF tools for direct use
		• Uncertainty around purpose and when to use the framework
		• Limited evidence base
		  ○ Evidence base - how could impact be measured
		  ○ Lack of practice-based evidence
		  ○ Risk in implementing a new model
			clear as it was focused on EPs confidence, time and knowledge.

2	Navigating Professional Identity, Practical Challenges, and Ethical Limits in Therapeutic EP Practice	Identity: • EPs confidence in their own therapeutic skills • EPs perception of the role - there are boundaries to the role • EPs perception of their role - EPs work indirectly • EPs perception of their role - Therapeutic work is not the EP role • Professional identity - Uncertainty about whether EPs want to work therapeutically • Lack of skills and training for EPs in therapeutic approaches Practical: • Challenges in traded systems - Limited school investment in extended individual or therapeutic EP work • Competing service priorities for EP Services - is therapeutic work a priority • EP service structural barriers to EPs undertaking individual work with CYP • EPs need clinical supervision to engage in more therapeutic work	Initially I separated out the professional identity as its own theme and grouped the practical and ethical challenges together. However, I decided that they were all centralised around the core theme of challenges to therapeutic work in EP practice and, reflecting on the data, they seemed somewhat intertwined. Though there are practical and ethical barriers, I wondered if these were rooted in the professional identity codes. In that practical barriers in particular could be restructured over time, if EPs perceived working therapeutically as part of their identity. Therefore, it felt right to represent "navigating" these challenges together. I found it interesting to reflect on the use of WCs and a contextualist epistemology when I reached this theme in particular. This really contrasted with some of the ideas in the "reflective and critical lens" theme in RQ1. These EPs seemed to like the idea of being challenged to work in different ways and how there are therapeutic skills as part of the EP training. However, ideas within this theme more contrasted that it wasn't part of their professional identity. It was interesting how the WCs require building collective knowledge but different standpoints are represented within each WC still.

		• EPs own time and capacity to do therapeutic individual work • Therapeutic work is more costly and impacts EPs availability for other work Ethical: • Ethical challenges of brief or sporadic EP involvement in individual cases • Ethical risk of harm or emotional overwhelm for CYP • Lack of relationship established with EP • Caution around sharing framework	
2	Ensuring the PTMF is Accessible and Actionable	• Accessibility to CYP • Accessibility to other adults • Capacity and willingness to invest from key adults around the CYP • Lack of clear actions & interventions as an outcome of the PTMF • Need for psychological knowledge to underpin using the framework	Both accessibility codes were mentioned quite frequently, so again this felt to be a key idea that needed to be represented as a barrier. This was one that had come up in my literature review so I did return to the data several times to ensure that I was being reflexive and not reading a preconceived idea into the data. The actions and outcomes ideas are interesting as this again directly contrasts an idea further up that it can be used to generate an action plan. This seemed to come from one WC who didn't perceive a shifted understanding of the CYP as an outcome of using the framework. It was hard with points like this, where I didn't necessarily agree with participants. It was important to make sure that their ideas were represented still and I was not imposing my own views on the data.
2	When Meaning Shapes Meaning -	• Adults own cultural biases limit their ability to use the framework • Connotations with the language used in the PTMF	I played around with these codes and the data within them for some time. It required me going back to doing some research around terminology to decide if the concept of double hermeneutics, unconscious bias and cultural bias were in fact

	The Double Hermeneutic Hurdle	• Double hermeneutics as a barrier to using the framework in indirect work (projecting meaning) • Unconscious bias around concepts within the framework	separate 'building blocks' (codes). I felt that they, and the participants, were speaking to slightly different things that represented well as a theme. The language code could also have been included in the theme above relating to accessibility, however, it felt that participants were mentioning the connotations in reference to biases/meanings that service users might hold, so I decided to position that code here.
2	Epistemic and Structural Power as a Barrier to Change	Structural: • Systemic constraints and limited ability to change wider structures - potential for disempowerment • Gatekeepers to individual work - who decides the who, what and when • How do EPs empower in the face of ongoing threats Epistemic: • Buy-in from other adults to shape systemic narratives • Perceived power and influence of EPs • The nuance of power in school • Tension between the PTMF and traditional models - a threat to wider systems	I found this the hardest one to ensure that I read solely what the data said and not slip into just talking generally about epistemic power and concepts from the PTMF authors about power as a barrier to change. Re-visiting the journal and reflexive diary entries helped me to do this. Initially I'd labelled this solely as epistemic power but in reflecting on the concept of epistemic power, I felt that there were some nuances to the codes that were better captured by the concept of 'structural' power. As the PTMF author's highlight many operations of power are closely intertwined so I held these concepts fairly lightly when considering this hurdle. I find it interesting to consider the weight that different EPs might give to this as a barrier. I felt like there was a high representation from WC2 and WC3 here who felt more ambivalent towards the PTMF and I wonder whether the bigger power barrier made them feel less like using it in their practice. However, it contrasts with the RQ1 theme of it being something that EPs can challenge through discourse – maybe something for the discussion!

***Key questions to consider when creating themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 98–99)**

1. Core question: Is this pattern a viable theme? **Does it have an identifiable central organising concept as well as different manifestations of the idea?**
2. **Can I identify boundaries of this theme?** Am I clear about what it includes and excludes? (Hold in mind the analogy of dandelion head)
3. **Are there enough (meaningful) data to evidence this theme?** Are there multiple articulations around the core idea? Are they nuanced, complex and diverse? Does this theme feel rich? (Is it a code – only a single-faceted meaning?)
4. **Are the data contained within each theme too diverse and wide-ranging?** Does the theme lack coherence? (Hold in mind the analogy of dandelion head)
5. **Does this theme convey something important?** Does it convey information and interpretation that you judge to be important to the dataset, research question, and wider context? Think of importance vs prevalence – an idea can be common but pretty limited in insight or interest. Does it contribute towards the compelling story that addresses your research question?
6. Additional consideration: Am I trying to massage the data into a pattern that isn't really there? What am I missing or not noticing here?

Appendix 16: Examples of Transcription

Extract from WC1 Table 2 Visual Transcription

Table 2: In what ways could the PTMF be used in EP practice?
Therapeutic work → Make use of EP skills → Similar to CBT/EMDR – alternative to different therapies
Consultation – casework → Unpick young person's story → With key adults → Formulation → Reframing narratives → Challenging medical discourse → Challenging within child → [linking the two points above] shared narratives → Report writing → Guide discussion/questioning [also linked to "power audit tool" and "hold the framework in mind"] → Partial use e.g., using segments in isolation → Adapted use → Graphic (like COA) → Group problem solving? [also linked to "graphic"]
Implicit use? → Hold framework in mind [also linked to "consultation-casework", "formulation" and "guide discussion/questioning"] → Using bits at a time → Q's from framework help shape our language use [also linked to "consultation-casework"] → Filters down to other adults' language use? → Modelling [linked to "reframing narratives"]

Systemic/training

→ Power audit tool
  → Policy reflection
  → [Linked to "guide discussion/questioning"]
→ Organisation narratives e.g. after a critical incident
  → Significant event narratives e.g. Covid
→ TEP/EPs
  → Maintain curiosity + be aware of what's out there [surrounded by small yellow lines]
    → Evolve practice
  → Develop as practitioners
  → Language
→ School staff
  → (build on trauma informed approaches) / belonging
  → [also linked to "language"]
→ Toolkit
  → Are we knowledgeable enough?

Uses

- Direct work with child?
  → Person-centred way of working
  → Avoids assumptions made by staff
    → Speak to child first then adults?
  → [Arrow linking back to "consultation – casework"] Feedback young person's views
- Formulation tool – similar to functional analysis or IFF
  → Particularly as a TEP – mapping
- Auditing tool
- Planning interventions, support + tailored action plans
- Pupil views
- Vulnerable groups e.g. refugees, LAC
- Helping understanding of CYP meaning

Extract from WC3 Table 3 Host Summary (Round 1) Transcription

H3: Right, so my first job as host is that I need to welcome you and focus us on the question. Our question is here, and I think it might be quite useful, because we were saying on this one to think of the barriers within the context of what it might be so where you were XXXX. So like what the applications might be? What might the barriers be to that? So we had a little think about that first.

Urmmm, so we were talking a little bit about that, errr, seeing it as a therapeutic thing that you would do one-to-one with a child and what, well we've assumed that our focus would be on a child at that point. But we thought how would, we thought how would fitting a clinical psychology model into an EP role, like just picking something up and going here we go, we're doing that, without adapting it. We were thinking about that. So then we thought, I mean, it could work better if it was an Assistant EP doing some time limited work with the child. But then also the concept is quite difficult as well. Urmm…so yeah, we thought that might be…but I mean we did think about some of the positives in that it is more holistic than some typical clinical psychology work, so we were looking at that wider thing of it's not as within-child.

And also within that, we thought we don't really have the time to use it. If you were, for an assistant EP it might be possible because they can do sort of more short term, well shorter bits. But in terms of traded work, we're less likely to have time to do it and *enough* time to really explore things with the child.

So then we, urm…errr, yeah…we were thinking about how to adapt it and we'd have to adapt it rather than just, erm, copy it.

WC2 End Summaries from Individual EPs Transcribed

That its good to have time to discuss this as a service to try + make sense of how we could use it as a service tool going forward rather than trying to do it as an individual. However, also brings up how long it would take to come to a consensus about how we might use it coherently + develop tools/interventions that we're happy with and are useful/effective and accepted more widely within schools and our SEND division.
I am interested to look at using the model as a way of developing our consultation model.
I will make a concerted attempt to use the framework in casework. I have understood the model & principles and applied it in the past but will now apply formally.
I find the framework very interesting and I like its emphasis on narrative. I think I need to be more familiar with its structure before I try and apply it.
PTMF • I'd like to think about PTMF in casework particularly with secondary aged pupils • I'd like to think about how to implement these ideas with school colleagues in meetings • Impact of power, threat, meaning on the child.
PTMF as 'a' model rather than 'the' model → pragmatic approach → use bits as fits w/ work
I will take away reflections about how to make the framework accessible to others within my practice.

Extract from WC3 End Discussion Transcription

Researcher: Would anyone mind sharing with the group the one thing that they're taking away? It's a nice way to finish, to hear your reflections on the process or the framework and its use within EP practice.

P1: I have really enjoyed the process…not just for the cake, although it does help! I've enjoyed it because it has enabled opportunities to mix with other people but we're also not fighting for that space to talk, so it's been quite…nice. It's not as *threatening* as it would be

P2: Nice use of the word threat!

P1: I'm empowered!

[everyone laughs]

R: Thank you, thanks for sharing.

P3: I mean it's just nice to have the opportunity to reflect on actually as EPs we do have quite a lot of skills and actually when you start to think about some of that, we already kind of do in our practice. So it's quite nice to just reflect on that…and that positive side of it.

P4: I think with just talking about the process, having started on this table [barriers], I kind of felt I was sort of going backwards, because the first thing I was thinking about was barriers to it, then I went to 'is there actually a role for this?' …so the nature of the

questions and the order in which you do them, I think can be…I don't know whether that just made me think quite negatively about it, as this was my starting point.

P5: I think that's a good point because I think I was always remaining quite positive on this table [uses for PTMF]. So I think when you [P4] came to my table, I was like 'ooh, you've got a different perspective!'

[everyone laughs]

P6: Yeah, I was at that table the whole time [barriers]…I thought to be able to answer that question, you needed to think about this one and think about how to implement it or how we could use it, before thinking about what might the barriers be…but that's wasn't, I don't feel like that was a barrier to…to talking about barriers. But yeah, because it was an interesting discussion as well.

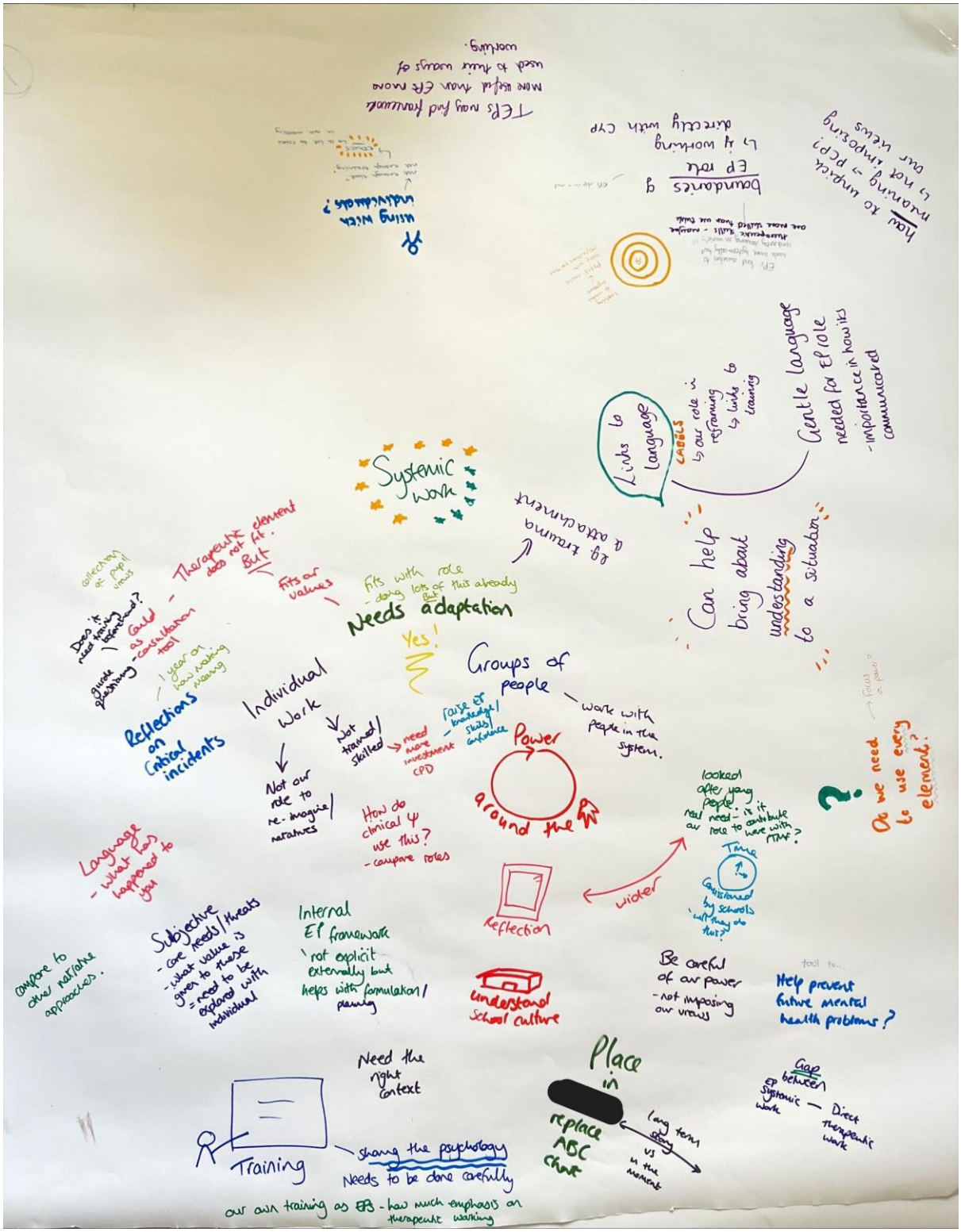
P3: It shows the importance of moving around because our first group was really positive and I think if we'd stayed in that group, this would've been really positive. But I think when that group came, well when [P4] came over!

[Everyone laughs]

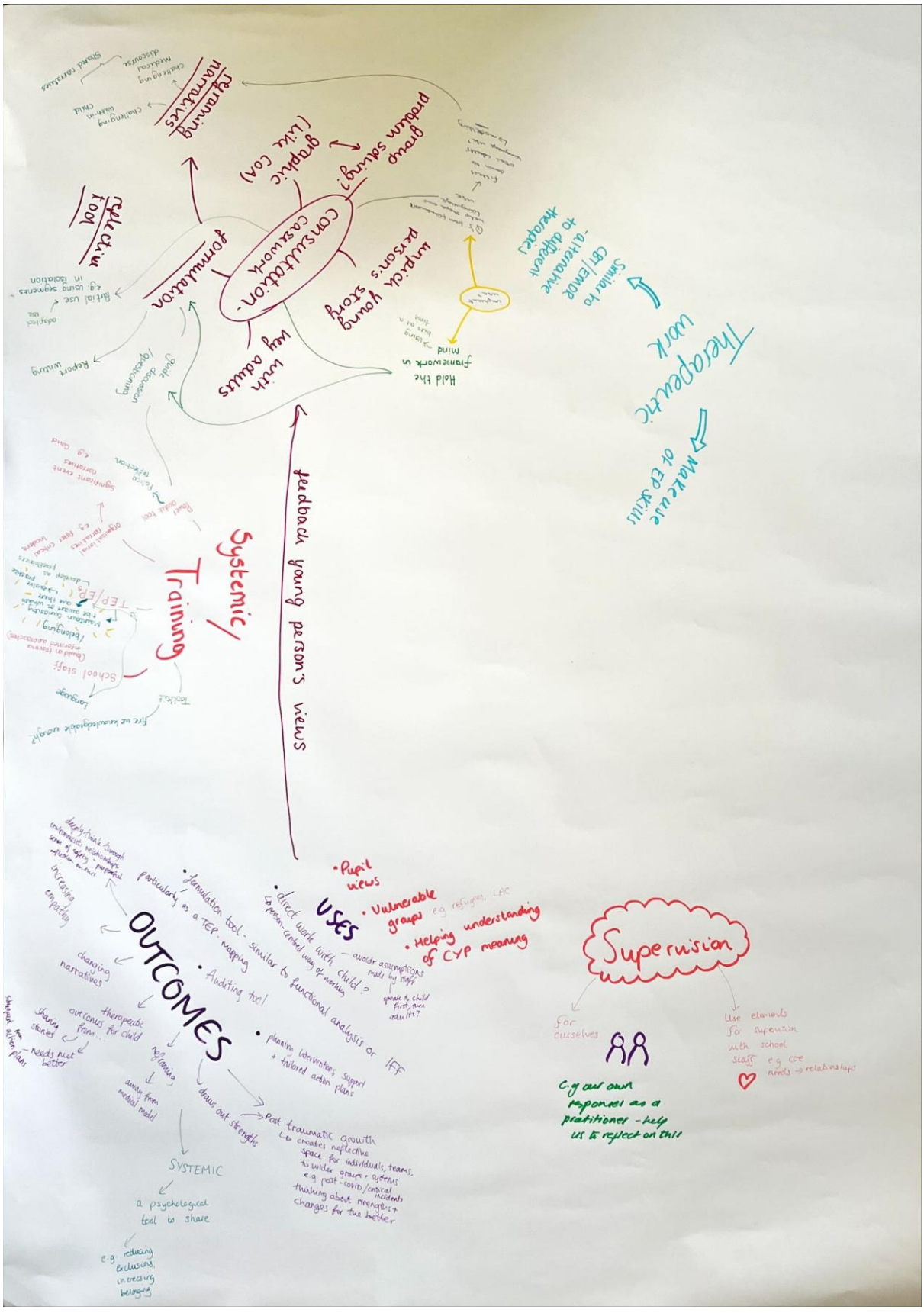
P3: It shifted to NO!

Appendix 17: Visual Summaries of World Café Discussions

Appendix 17A: WC1 Table 1 Visual



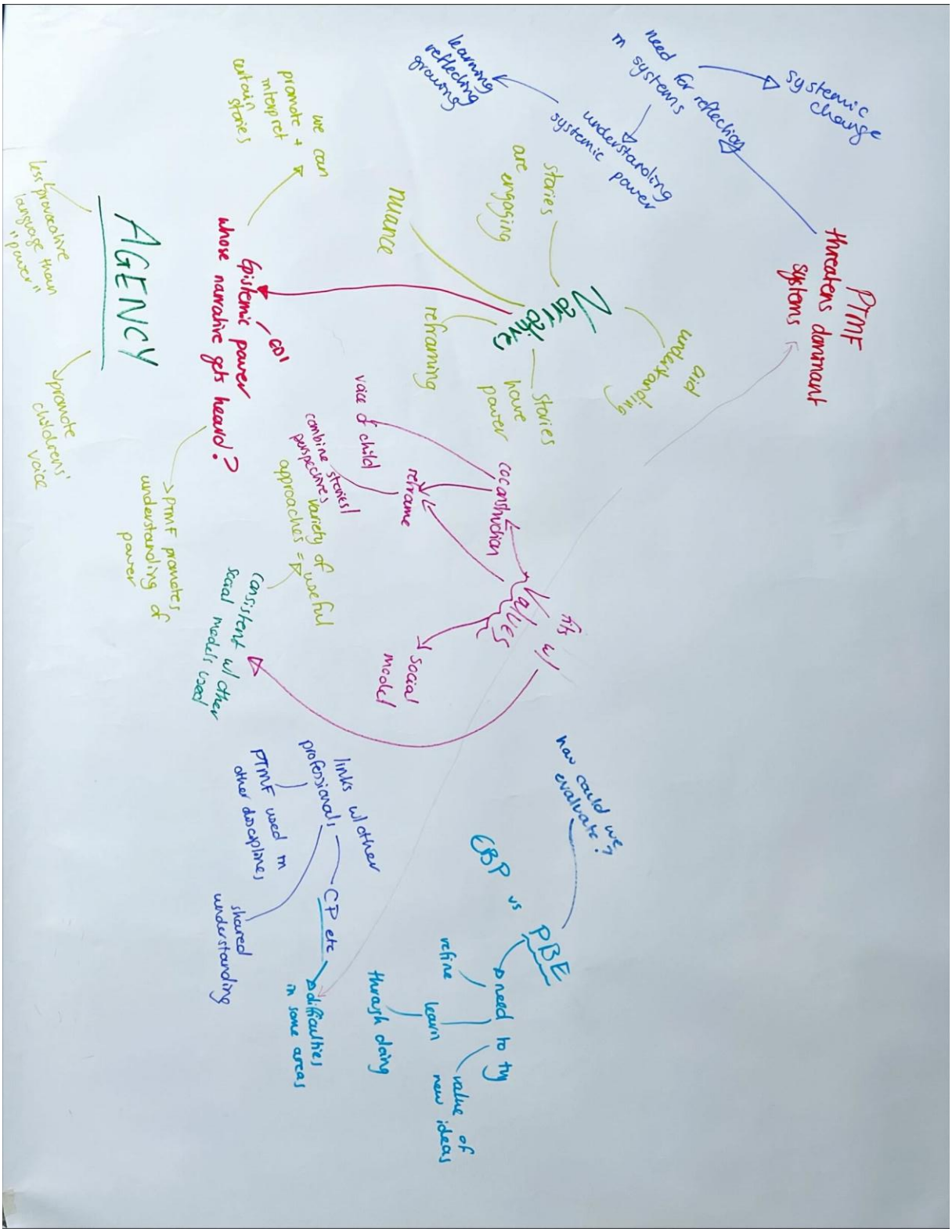
Appendix 17B: WC1 Table 2 Visual



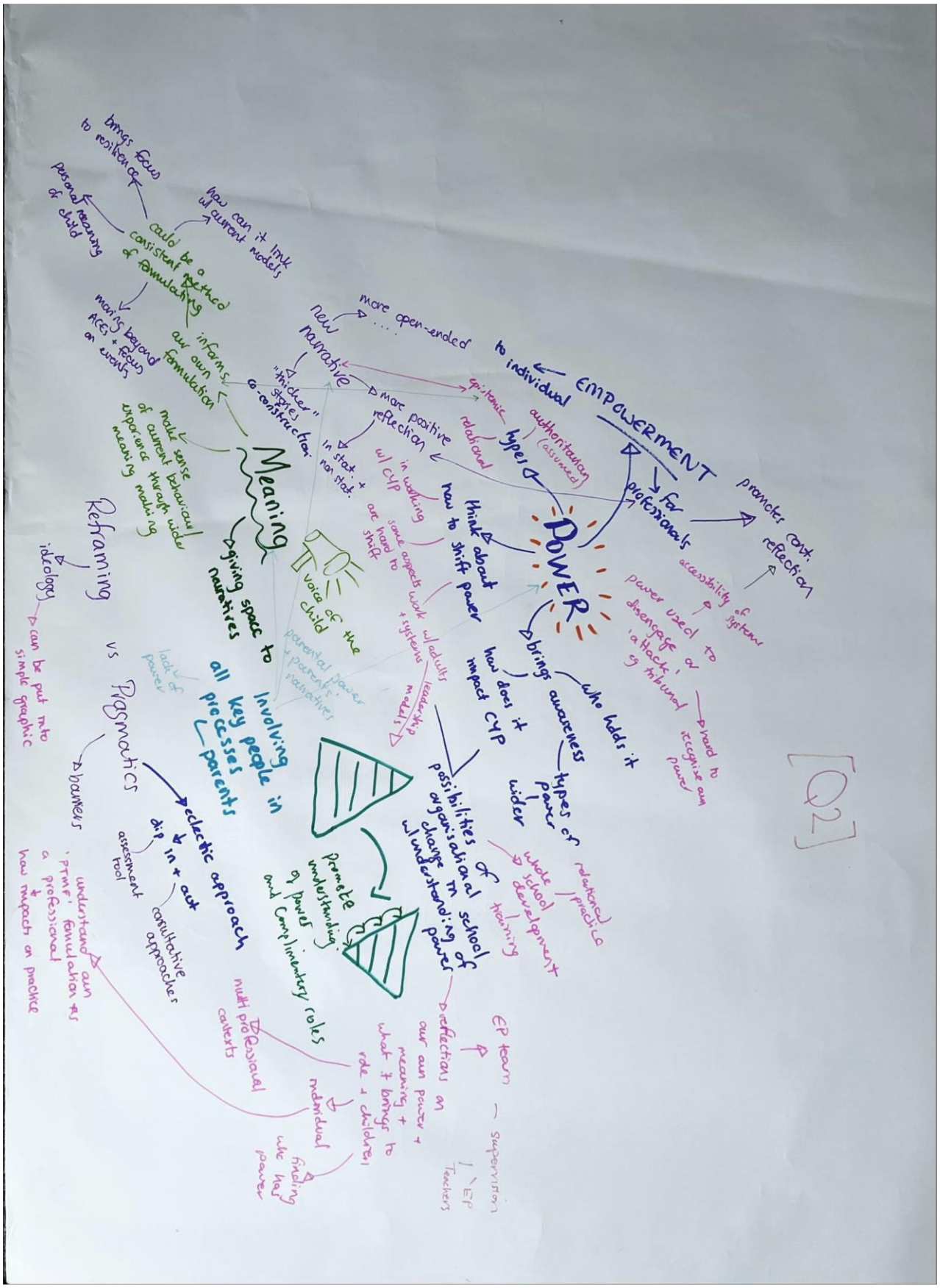
Appendix 17C: WC1 Table 3 Visual



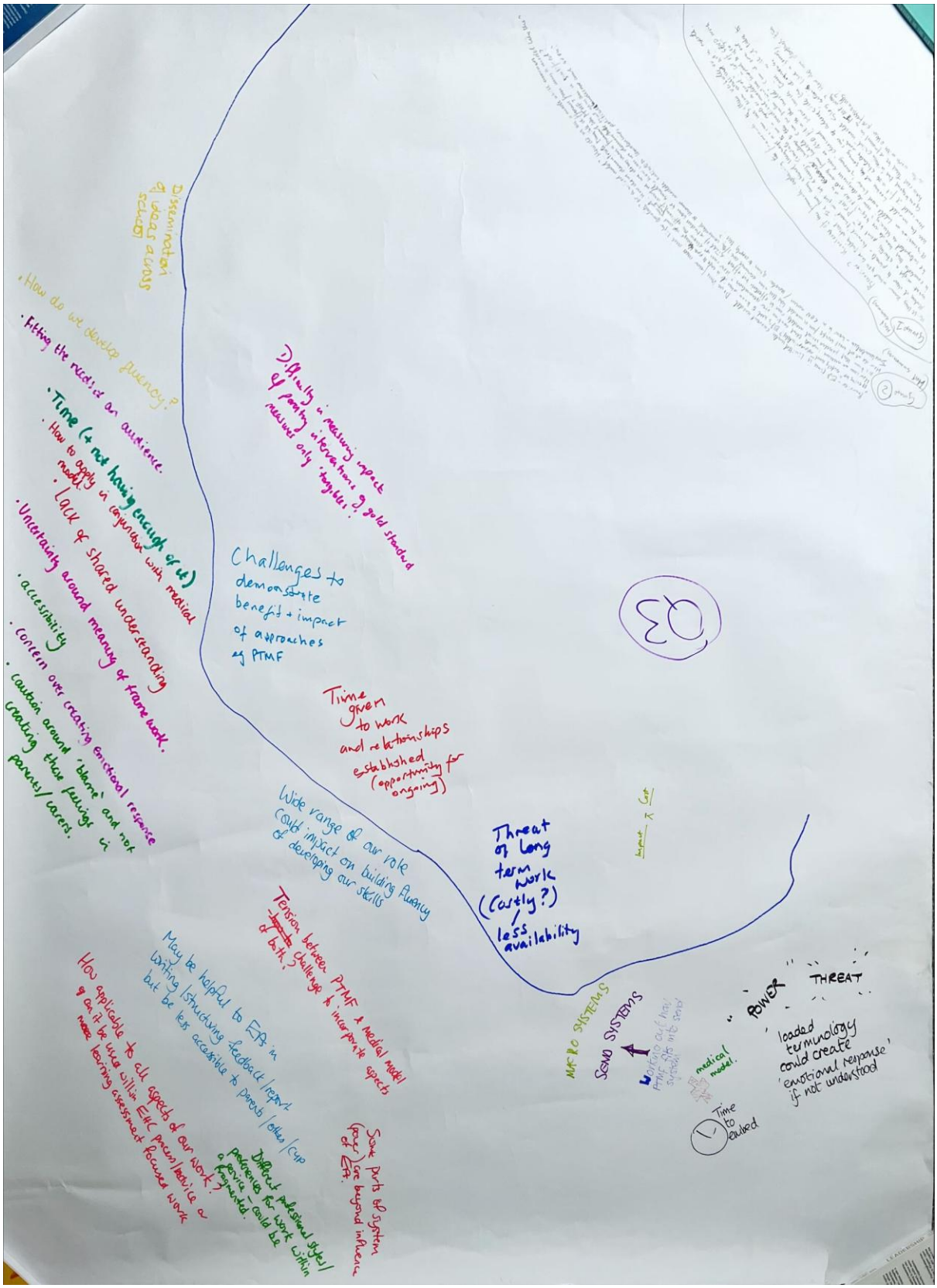
Appendix 17D: WC2 Table 1 Visual



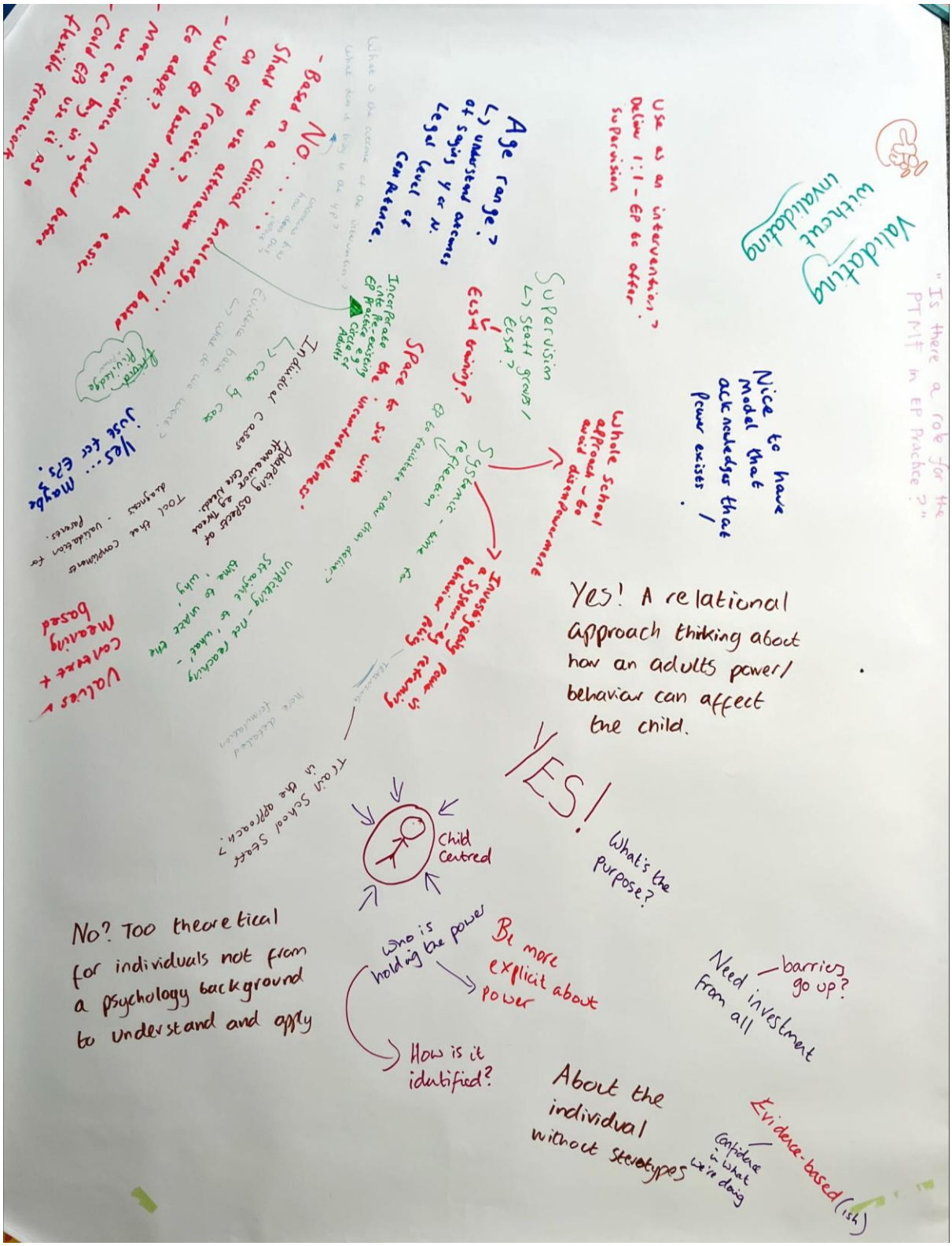
Appendix 17E: WC2 Table 2 Visual



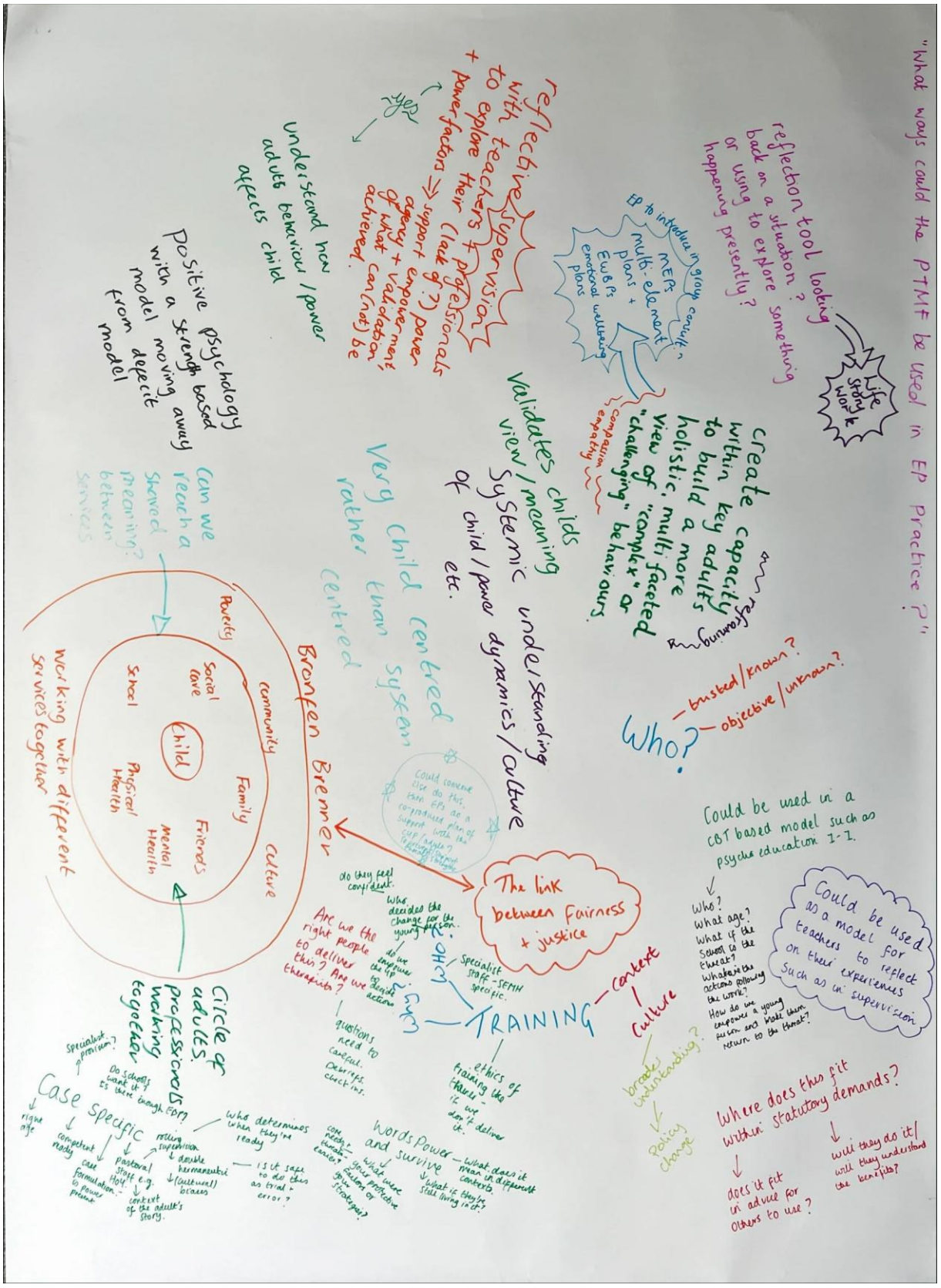
Appendix 17F: WC2 Table 3 Visual



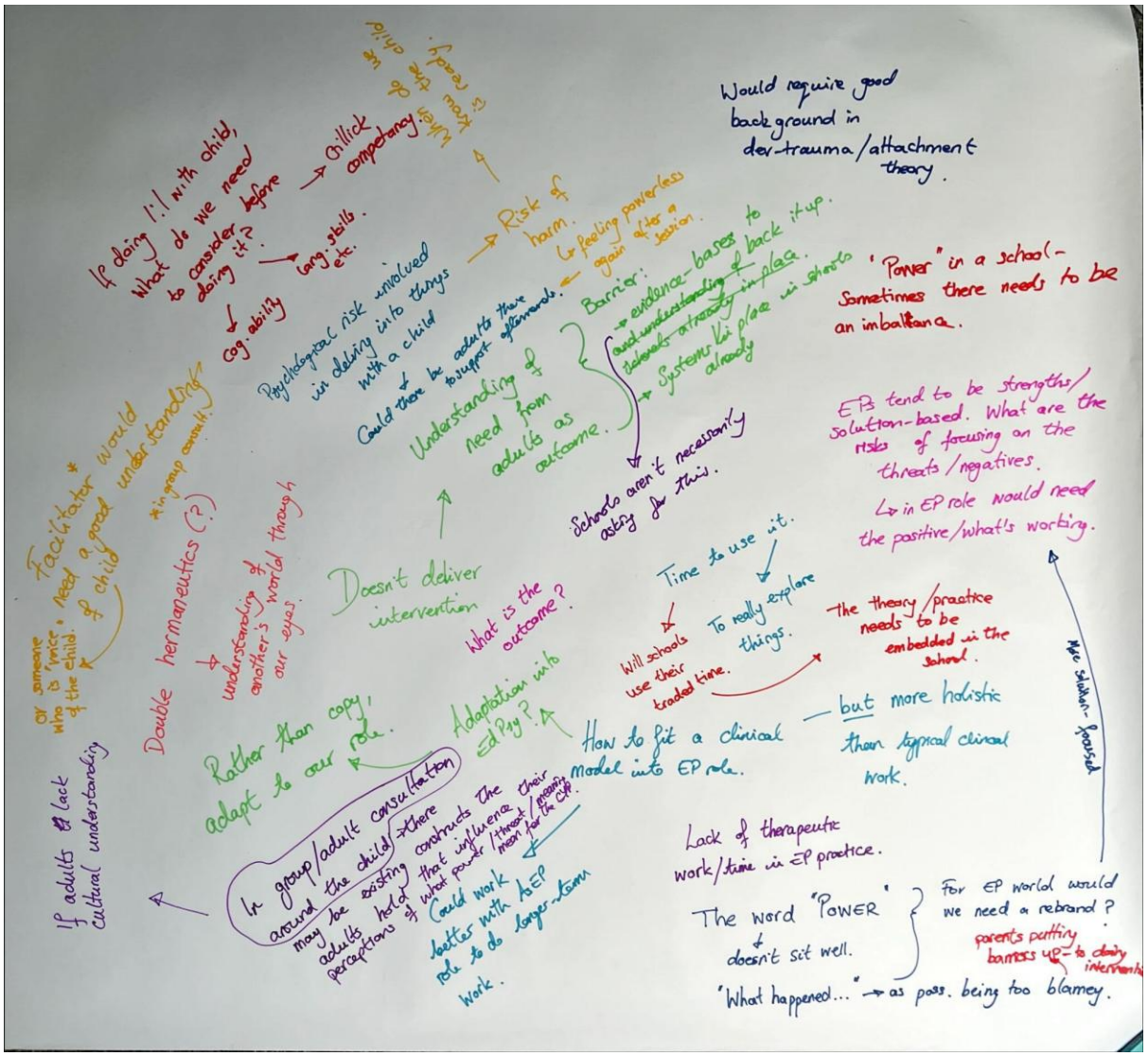
Appendix 17G: WC3 Table 1 Visual



Appendix 17H: WC3 Table 2 Visual



Appendix 17I: WC3 Table 3 Visual



Appendix 18: Extracts from Participants Reflecting on the World Café Process

WC2 End Summaries:

- "That its good to have time to discuss this as a service to try + make sense of how we could use it as a service tool going forward rather than trying to do it as an individual."

WC3 End Discussion:

- "I have really enjoyed the process…not just for the cake, although it does help! I've enjoyed it because it has enabled opportunities to mix with other people but we're also not fighting for that space to talk, so it's been quite…nice. It's not as *threatening* as it would be"
- "I mean it's just nice to have the opportunity to reflect on actually as EPs we do have quite a lot of skills and actually when you start to think about some of that, we already kind of do in our practice. So it's quite nice to just reflect on that…and that positive side of it."
- "I think that's a good point because I think I was always remaining quite positive on this table [uses for PTMF]. So I think when you [P4] came to my table, I was like 'ooh, you've got a different perspective!'"
- "It shows the importance of moving around because our first group was really positive and I think if we'd stayed in that group, this would've been really positive. But I think when that group came, well when [P4] came over!"
- P3: "I guess the person staying kind of holds bits from every group. So even when a group was a bit more negative I found myself kind of still advocating for the 'yes', but then when the next group came, I'd kind of be like 'well the other group said this'. So you have one person who has oversight of the whole thing which helps the process of it."
  P7: "A bit more neutrality I guess in that sense?"