EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE: AN EXPLORATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF STALKING AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF STALKING VICTIMIZATION

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Abstract

This thesis explores the criminal offence of stalking. Chapter One introduces the existing literature on the topic of stalking with reference to males as perpetrators and females as victims. This is by far the most prevalent stalking context (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Chapter Two details a quantitative study examining the effect of relationship type, stalking myth endorsement, and participant gender on victim and perpetrator blame using a cross-sectional experimental design. Results found that relationship type did not impact victim or perpetrator blame. A positive correlation was identified between overall stalking myth endorsement and victim blame and a negative correlation between overall stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame. Furthermore, results revealed that males endorsed significantly more stalking myths than females, although this did not lead to significant differences in victim and perpetrator blaming between the genders. Results are discussed with reference to the implications for training, education, and awareness. Chapter Three critiques the use of the vignette methodology. It was found that vignettes can be highly effective in yielding valid and reliable outcomes, but that several factors must be taken into consideration prior to dissemination. The critique also highlights the need for vignettes to be carefully constructed in order that they meet the aims of the studies they serve. Chapter Four presents a systematic review of eight studies, each identifying potential risk factors for victims of stalking developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. The review identifies a

number of potential risk factors including the ways in which victims cope with their victimisation, victims' perceptions of social support, the severity of stalking, and victims' forgiveness. Outcomes of the review are considered critical in developing interventions for female victims of stalking, or females at risk of stalking victimization, in order to reduce the traumatic impact of stalking perpetration. No such help was offered to or accessed by case study, BB – a female victim of stalking – following her experience of stalking victimization perpetrated by an ex-intimate partner. The effectiveness of a schema-based intervention in addressing some of the symptoms of trauma resulting from stalking victimization is discussed based on a single case study, BB, in Chapter Five. Schema mode therapy appeared to reduce BB's agoraphobia and social isolation, and improve her assertiveness and ability to regulate her emotions. The extent to which BB was made vulnerable to intimate partner violence as a result of her traumatic childhood is explored. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the thesis by discussing the clinical and theoretical implications of the research in Chapters Two to Five, as well as acknowledging its limitations and making considered recommendations for future research.

KEYWORDS: Stalking; Vignettes; Victim Blame; Schema Therapy; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; Stalking Myths

Statement of Authorship

The idea for this thesis was conceived by the author and reflects her interests in the crime of stalking and its consequences.

Please see Appendix A for a poster presentation of the author's Masters thesis which was supervised by Dr Simon Duff and is heavily related to the research in Chapter Three. This poster was presented at the British Psychological Society's Division of Forensic Psychology Annual Conference (Brighton, 2016).

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Chapter One Introduction

Stalking is a term that is at once familiar to our language, and yet viewed as uncommon and mysterious within our culture. It was not until the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 that stalking was formally criminalised in the UK. Prior to 2012, stalkers could only be charged with Harassment offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The Home Office Statistical Bulletin (2011) states that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men will be stalked in their lifetime, although Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service believes these figures to be a "gross underestimation" (Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service, 2018). The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not so much define stalking as it does list a number of behaviours which might be associated with stalking. These behaviours include, but are not limited to: "following a person, contacting or attempting to contact a person by any means, monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication" (see subheading *Definition of Stalking,* CPS, 2018). In order to meet criteria for the higher level 4A offence of stalking, the course of conduct must cause a "fear of violence" or "significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim" (see subheading *Stalking*, CPS, 2018).

That stalking was only recently made a crime in the UK is a reflection of how poorly understood the crime, and the behaviour, motivation, and emotions behind it are. The term stalking is nebulous, and no single description in the literature suffices to cover the gamut of behaviours or motivations involved, or the heterogeneity of victim experiences.

Determining the point at which certain intrusive behaviours evolve into a criminal offence is a matter of perception and degree, which is usually settled through court proceedings, if the case makes it that far. When prosecution begins, a professional and public consensus and understanding of stalking is relied upon as the legal parameters are based upon fallible perceptions. Frequently, instances of stalking that make it to court are couched as 'harassment' or dismissed entirely (HMIC & HMCPSI, 2017). There are myriad behaviours, including those carried out in digital spheres, that can constitute stalking; from multiple small acts which may seem innocuous or even romantic out of context, to outright acts of violence and aggression, death threats and in the most severe cases, murder.

The difficulty in defining clinical and legal parameters for stalking leaves the onus of responsibility in determining criminal culpability to the general public. The lack of understanding in professional spheres appears to be amplified in the public (Scott, Nixon, & Sheridan, 2013). The fact that stalking is not a homogenous crime significantly complicates the task of the juror. Most people lack insight into their own judgement-making processes (Alexander & Becker, 1978) and are informed by popular culture and the media, in which stalkers are typically portrayed as mentally disturbed strangers who stalk high-profile individuals such as celebrities (Spitzberg & Cadiz, 2002). Behaviours of intimate and ex-intimate partners that would constitute stalking within the legal framework are frequently presented as romantic gestures (Schultz,

Moore, and Spitzberg, 2013) or otherwise minimised. Stalking perpetrated by strangers is seen as more threatening and dangerous (Scott, Duff, Sheridan, & Rajakaruna, 2019) than stalking from acquaintances, even though the latter is more likely to result in physical violence (Sheridan and Davies, 2001). In a minority of cases stalkers have gone on to kill their victims because the clinical and legal systems have been unable to manage the case appropriately (Zona, Palarea, & Lane, 1998). A case in point is that of 24-year-old Alice Ruggles who was stalked and murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2016. A domestic homicide review conducted by Gateshead Community Safety Board found a number of failings in how the Police and Army had attempted to safeguard Alice. The review also found that Northumbria Police Force had approached the incident as if it were a case of harassment rather than stalking (BBC News, 2019).

Stalking and the behaviours associated with it can lead victims to experience long-term significant psychological distress (Korkodeilou, 2017). The psychosocial impact of stalking victimisation was only formally recognised in UK law in 2012 with the introduction of Section 4A of the Protection of Freedoms Act. Section 4A was designed to close what the CPS (2018) refer to as the "lacuna" where a stalking perpetrator's behaviour fell short of causing the victim to fear violence, but nonetheless caused 'serious harm and distress.' In other words, a stalking perpetrator does not have to have been physically violent towards their victim for his or her behaviours to constitute stalking in the eyes of the law.

The definitions, prevalence, impact and legislation relating to stalking will now be discussed in greater detail.

Definitions

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the origin of the term "stalk" is middle English and referred to "stealthy movement or following." The word is thought to have been derived from stealcian a corruption of the protogermanic stalkōną meaning "to be stealthy" and stelaną ("to steal"). Since the 16th century the word 'stalker' was used to refer to poachers and prowlers ("Stalk", 2019). The term 'stalking', as it is understood today, was introduced by the media in the twentieth century with reference to the harassment of celebrities by obsessed fans (Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2000; Lawson-Cruttenden, 1996). In fact, the impetus for the criminalisation of stalking in the state of California in 1990, and subsequently all other states in the United States of America within three years, was a number of prominent cases in which celebrities were stalked and murdered (Beagle, 2011). Prior to 2012, perpetrators of stalking and harassment were prosecuted under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. However, there are notable differences between stalking and harassment, with the former identified as an obsession with, or fixation on, the victim which drastically impacts on the perpetrator's day-to-day activities, and the latter as repeated behaviour that does not appear to consume the perpetrator's daily life. Furthermore, victims of harassment are likely to feel oppressed by the perpetrator's behaviour but not necessarily in constant fear or distress because of it, whilst victims of

stalking are likely to be significantly psychologically and emotionally affected by the perpetrator's behaviour, and may be constantly fearful in anticipation of the perpetrator's next intrusion (College of Policing, 2018).

Meloy and Gothard (1995, p. 258) define stalking as "the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety," and Meloy (1998, p. 2) describes stalking as "a crime involving acts of pursuit of an individual over time that are threatening and potentially dangerous." In addition, across the literature stalking is variously referred to as 'obsessional following' (Meloy & Gothard, 1995), 'obsessional harassment' (Rosenfeld, 2000), and 'obsessive relational intrusion' (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2002). These definitions tend to describe the act of stalking and the effects of stalking victimisation, without quite managing to encompass both, leaving significant scope for the reader to make their own interpretations.

The myriad behaviours that can constitute stalking might include, for example, leaving flowers on the target's doorstep, visiting the target at work, or turning up on their doorstep uninvited. While stalking can be broadly characterised as the intentional and repeated following and harassing of a target individual, which induces fear and concern for safety within the victim, it may or may not also include threats of violence or actual violence directed towards the victim (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Tjaden and Thoennes' (1998) definition of stalking is most commonly cited within existing literature. Stalking is sometimes described as a

"constellation" of behaviour, illustrating the complexity of and inherent difficulty in determining the distinct nature of each case (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). UK law makes reference to the "reasonable person" (CPS, 2018) in that juries on stalking cases are instructed to make their judgements based on what a reasonable person might have felt or done in the stalking scenario. However, the way in which different individuals conceptualise what a reasonable person might do or how a reasonable person might feel is likely to vary greatly (Hills & Taplin, 1998). This, alongside the huge variation in stalking cases, is likely to lead to significant challenges in jury decision-making. No amount of detail in an attempt to define stalking could evoke the breadth of stalking behaviours, the manifold reasons for stalking, and the ingenuity employed by stalkers in pursuit of their victims.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) defines stalking perpetrated by a family member or partner as "2 or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, e-mails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, or following or watching by a current or former partner or family member" (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2018). However, this definition is not in line with the legal definition as the offence of stalking does not specifically include being stalked by a current intimate partner (CPS, 2017, para 9.). This gap in the legislation was recently closed with the introduction of the offence

of 'coercive and controlling behaviour' in the UK under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. Under this new law a defendant can be convicted of coercive and controlling behaviour which can include stalking their current intimate partner (see Legislation subheading for further details).

Prevalence

The CSEW (ONS, 2018) estimates that 4.9 million adults in England and Wales will be stalked or criminally harassed in their lifetime. In the year 2017-18, an estimated 904 (4.6%) and 426 (2.4%) men were victims of stalking, making females more than twice as likely to be victims of stalking than males. In the following year, 2018-19, these figures were 871 (4.5%) women and 446 (2.5%) men (ONS, 2018; 2019). The CPS reported that between 2016 and 2017, prosecutions were commenced for 11,889 stalking and harassment offences, and 16,614 breaches of restraining order (CPS, 2017-18). However, because there is overlap between stalking and harassment, and the crime of stalking is relatively new to the UK, police have frequently recorded stalking as harassment (ONS, 2018). Far more harassment than stalking charges have therefore been pursued. Between 2014 and 2015, there were 13 prosecutions for harassment to every one prosecution for stalking (HMIC & HMCPSI, 2017). However, the CPS states that there was a 69% increase in prosecutions commenced for offences of stalking in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17, due to improvements in education and awareness (CPS, 2018; Crown Prosecution Service & National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC),

2018). Young people and women are suggested to be most vulnerable to stalking victimisation (Black et al., 2011; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

Since the inception of anti-stalking legislation in Orange County, California in 1990 estimates for annual prevalence of stalking victimisation have crept up. For example, in the United States, the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice estimated that around 1,006,970 women and 370,992 men were stalked annually in 1998 (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998); in 2009 the Bureau of Justice issued a special report entitled "Stalking Victimization in the United States" estimating that a total of just under 3.4 million (13.9%) people were being stalked annually (Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009); and Breiding (2014) estimated that 7.5 million people had been stalked in 2011. 66.2% of stalking victims reported receiving unwanted telephone calls and text messages, whilst 30.6% received unwanted letters and emails. The majority of victims were stalked for 6 months or less (Baum et al., 2009). The increase in rates of stalking since the introduction of the law in California may be the result of a combination of factors including greater accessibility to others through social media, greater awareness of stalking behaviours leading to increased reporting, improved police recording, and perhaps a lack of effective interventions for perpetrators of stalking, amongst others. Whilst all states and territories in the US are covered by stalking laws, the legal definitions of stalking vary between jurisdictions. For example, some states require that the victim has to have felt frightened by the stalker's behaviour, and others stipulate that a "reasonable person" would have

experienced fear as a result of the stalking. Variation also exists in relation to the level of fear the victim must have experienced, ranging from psychological distress, to fear of death or serious physical harm. The discrepancies in legal definitions present significant difficulties for providing accurate estimates of prevalence in the US.

Meanwhile, in the UK, the prevalence of stalking appeared to be falling until 2016, with figures suggesting a prevalence of 7.8% in 2005 and 3.7% in 2016 (ONS, 2017). However, it should be noted that prior to 2013 the CSEW, from which these statistics have been extracted, is likely to have overestimated stalking prevalence. This is due to a 2013 change in the legal definition to state that stalking behaviours must have occurred on two or more occasions (as opposed to just once) to be classified as stalking, as well as the change in definition relating to the introduction of the crime of coercive and controlling behaviour. A more recent figure indicates that stalking prevalence has risen again to 7.2% between 2017 and 2018 (ONS, 2018). Despite this increase, only 25% of cases where an alleged perpetrator could have been charged actually led to a charge being brought. This is a significant reduction from almost half of all reported stalking offences resulting in a charge in the year 2014-15 (BBC News, 2018a). The Home Office suggests that the rise in recorded stalking offences is indicative of improved police recording and better application of UK stalking laws. However, with victims in the UK still receiving poor responses from the police when they report their stalking

victimisation, it is clear that there is a great deal of work still to do (Taylor-Dunn, Bowen, & Gilchrist, 2018).

Impact

The experience of stalking victimisation has been referred to within the literature as "intimate terrorism" (Laroche, 2005), "psychological terrorism" (Spitzberg, Nicastro, & Cousins, 1998) and "murder in slow motion" (The Observer, 2016). Psychological tax incurred as a result of the specific characteristics of stalking victimisation, including repeated exposure to a stressor, which is unpredictable, and seemingly unending, are great. Deleterious effects on the victim include withdrawal, anxiety, depression, physical health complaints, lack of trust in others, and increased fear (Blaauw, Winkel, Sheridan, Malsch, & Arensman, 2002) Victims of stalking have also been known to change their phone numbers, move house, and drastically reduce or completely abandon social activities (Spitzberg et al., 1998). Furthermore, Hall (1998) discovered that 83% of respondents to a stalking victim survey reported changes in their personalities following stalking victimisation. Some of these changes included being more careful, more easily scared, experiencing increased paranoia, and becoming more aggressive. Findings from Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, and Bartak (2003) suggest that victims of stalking tend to develop maladaptive schema including reduced trust in others, feelings of disaffection and seclusion, and heightened self-blame. The same study notes that victims were highly fearful, and felt a great deal of shame and loss. Davis, Coker, and Sanderson (2002) found that victims in their study

were more likely than non-victims to report use of illicit substances. Finally, Korkodeilou's (2017) qualitative study of 26 victims of stalking suggests they suffered "debilitating disruptions" (p. 22) to their daily routines, for example taking different routes to work and varying their timetables. This study also references financial damage caused by stalking victimisation as a result of taking time off work or changing jobs.

Acquadro Maran and Varetto (2018) found that 22% of domestic stalking victims experienced depression, 63% reported fear, and 70% experienced anxiety/panic attacks. The average length of a domestic stalking period was 16.6 month. By comparison CSEW data (ONS, 2018) indicates that in domestic rape cases 24% experienced depression, 66% reported fear, and 46% experienced anxiety/panic attacks; and in victims of domestic violence (with injury) 53% experience depression, 51% reported fear, and 51% experienced anxiety/panic attacks. Based on a sample of 413 women seeking help for intimate partner abuse Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2008) found that domestic stalking victims were more likely to develop PTSD and depressive symptoms than those who had been subjected to physical violence or sexual coercion. Symptoms included sleep disturbances, self-injury, addiction, physical illness, and eating and digestive effects. Pathé and Mullen (1997) found that 24% of stalking victims considered or attempted suicide at some point in the course of their ordeal. In a study of 201 Dutch stalking victims, Kamphuis and Emmelkamp (2001) found that 59% experienced symptoms which paralleled those of survivors of the 1999 Boeing 737-2D6C crash in

Coventry and the 1988 Lockerbie bombing (Chung, Easthope, Chung, & Clark-Carter, 1999).

The impact stalking has on a victim is influenced by multiple factors including the duration, intensity and severity of the stalking perpetration (Matos, Grangeia, Ferreira, Azevedo, Goncalves, & Sheridan, 2019), co-occurring behaviours of the perpetrator (Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick, 2000), the relationship between the victim and perpetrator (Johnson & Kercher, 2009), and the resilience and other personality factors relating to the victim (Kamphuis et al., 2003). Kamphius et al. (2003) found that PTS symptoms were particularly prominent in individuals who employed passive coping behaviour, such as withdrawal and rumination. In assessing the role of negative cognitions such as self-blame, negative worldviews and negative appraisals of themselves as risk factors for the onset and maintenance of depressive and PTS symptoms, Bailey and Morris (2018) found that more negative cognitions about the world were associated with higher levels of concurrent depressive and PTS symptoms. Negative cognitions about the self were uniquely associated with higher concurrent depressive symptoms, although contrary to expectations self-blame was not significantly associated with depressive or PTS symptoms. Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) suggest that victims of stalking experience more physical, psychological and financial costs when the victim and perpetrator are in an intimate relationship, whilst Baum et al. (2009) examined victims' fear and found that their primary fears are: the unpredictability of the

perpetrator, the possibility of being physically harmed, and the potential that the stalking might never end. A statistics sheet produced by the Office for Victims of Crime (2018) similarly found that the majority (62%) of victims of stalking feared coming to harm, or harm coming to their partner and families, a further 46% feared not knowing what might happen next, and 29% feared that the stalking would never stop. Other fears included death, and loss of freedom.

With the impact of stalking so heterogeneous in nature, it is clear that terms such as 'fear', 'alarm' and 'distress' referred to in stalking legislation are problematic metrics by which to determine a crime and assess the emotional costs to victims. Based on a community sample of 2,719 men and women who completed a five-item Brief Stalking and Harassment Assessment, Logan and Walker (2017) found that 30% of women compared to 12% of men experienced 'extreme fear'. These percentages indicate the existence of a 'gender fear gap' whereby more women than men experience higher levels of fear and increased PTSD symptoms, and feel that their personal characteristics place them at greater risk. The greater proportion of women experiencing extreme fear may be related to the concept of safety efficacy. Women consistently report lower safety efficacy – perceived capacity to effectively manage a threatening scenario – than men (Jackson, 2009; Killias & Clerici, 2000), therefore their tolerance for stalking behaviours is likely to be significantly lower than men's.

In the first study of its kind, Quinn-Evans, Keatley, Arntfield, and Sheridan (2019) used Behavioural Sequence Analysis to identify patterns of victim and perpetrator behaviours in stalking scenarios. Using this technique, the authors found that victims who went to more extreme measures to evade their stalkers (for example, changing address), were unsuccessful in deterring perpetrators who subsequently employed deceptive tactics in order to once again locate their victims. When a perpetrator found their target's new address, they were likely to linger around outside of the victim's house, which was found to be a behavioural precursor to the stalker making an attempt on the victim's life. From this finding it is possible to extrapolate that victims who endeavour to avoid their stalkers may in fact end up aggravating them, resulting in an increased risk of physical harm. One participant in Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, and O'Regan's (1997) study murdered his ex-partner and placed the blame for this on her as she had frustrated him by seeking a restraining order which prohibited him from making contact. In relation to the ultimate consequence of stalking victimisation, McFarlane, Campbell, Wilt, Sachs, Ulrich, and Xu, (1999) found that 76% of victims of femicide (the "murder of women because they are women"; Women's Aid, 2017) were stalked prior to their deaths.

The consequences of stalking are not limited to the victim, but rather can be felt on a much wider scale. Elklit, Vangsgaard, Olsen, and Ali (2019) found that 56% of children – pre-schoolers, schoolchildren, and adolescents – whose parents had been victims of stalking met the criteria

for PTSD. School-aged children were disproportionately affected in comparison to pre-schoolers and adolescents. Sheridan and Davies (2001) found that 53% of ex-intimate partner stalkers threatened third parties associated with the primary target. They also discovered a significant link between threats to third parties and assaults on third parties. IPV, including stalking, can have economic repercussions as a result of absenteeism and resultant lost productivity (Black et al., 2011; Peterson et al., 2018; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007), job disruption and difficulties concentrating (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007) public and private sector outlay (Varcoe et al., 2011), lost taxes, police and law enforcement costs (Access Economics, 2004), and medical care (Modi, Palmer, & Armstrong, 2014). In their summary of the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, Black et al. (2011) report that victims of IPV in the USA are absent from paid work for a total of 8 million days per year. The overall economic cost of stalking of female victims by an intimate partner in the USA in 2005 was estimated to be $438 million (Basile, Swahn, Chen, & Saltzman, 2006). A Home Office report on the economic and social costs of domestic abuse in the UK estimated there were 242,129 domestic stalking victims, which accounted for approximately 7.1% of all victims of domestic abuse (Oliver, Alexander, Roe, & Wlasny, 2019). The combined cost of the physical and emotional harm, lost output, health services and unit costs (total cost of stalking divided by estimated number of stalking victims) of stalking total £7.2 billion.

Legislation

Following the stalking of actress Rebecca Schaeffer for three years, and her subsequent murder in 1989, it was commonly believed that stalking was a crime which only affected celebrities. However, this and other high profile cases, along with pressure from the film industry, led California to pass the first stalking legislation in 1990. Within three years, all 50 US states had passed similar legislation to criminalise stalking (Tjaden, 2003). UK legislature was comparatively slow to catch up, with calls for reform following a succession of cases in which stalkers went on to kill. One of these stalkers was 49-year-old Clifford Mills who stalked his ex-girlfriend Lorna Smith on Facebook before stabbing her to death in February 2011 (BBC News, 2012). Changes in legislation were eventually made in November 2012, with the crime of stalking carrying a maximum sentence of 5 years.

Under the laws of England and Wales victims of stalking are currently safeguarded by the Protection of Freedoms Act (PoF) 2012; in Scotland the Criminal Justice and Licensing (CJL) Act 2010; and in Northern Ireland the Protection from Harassment (PfH) Order 1997. Over the course of the 1990s, the UK, all fifty states in the United States of America, the Federal government, US protectorates Guam and Puerto Rico, Canada, Australia, and several European countries passed legislation criminalising stalking or criminal harassment. While stalking offences in the UK had been prosecuted under the Protection from Harassment Act (PHA) 1997 prior to the insertion of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, victims of stalking

reportedly did not feel they were taken seriously and pushed for stalking to become a criminal offence separate from the offence of Harassment (CPS, 2018). As such, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, s.III implemented two additional offences: Section 2A – 'harassment which involves a course of conduct that amounts to stalking', and Section 4A – stalking which involves either a 'fear of violence', or 'serious alarm or distress'. Examples of behaviour that may constitute stalking include 'following a person', 'loitering' in public or private spaces, 'spying on', monitoring or contacting them 'by any means' and interfering with their property (CPS, 2018). In lieu of a more detailed description of what constitutes stalking, the CPS advises that their list 'is not exhaustive' and places responsibility on the courts to decide whether or not certain acts constitute stalking. If a person is found guilty of stalking then they can be made to pay a fine or sentenced to imprisonment for up to 10 years. Aggravated stalking that causes the victim fear of violence or serious alarm or distress is punishable by up to 5 years in prison. The law specifies that behaviours constituting stalking must have occurred on two or more occasions in order to be considered a course of conduct, although it does not specify how much time can have elapsed between each incidence.

In 2017, a new law which defined and criminalised coercive and controlling behaviour was implemented in the UK. This law was introduced in order to close the gap between stalking taking place between two individuals not currently in an intimate relationship, and coercive and

controlling behaviour which amounts to stalking taking place between two individuals in an ongoing relationship (CPS, 2017). The legislation states that both stalking and coercive and controlling behaviour must involve a 'course of conduct…which causes someone to fear that violence will be used against them on at least two occasions, or which causes them serious alarm or distress to the extent it has a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities'. The behaviours perpetrated by an individual convicted of coercive and controlling behaviour, and those perpetrated by a convicted stalker may be exactly the same. However, if the victim and perpetrator were in an ongoing relationship when the stalking was perpetrated, the perpetrator should be convicted of coercive and controlling behaviour rather than stalking. Where the stalking behaviour continues beyond the relationship termination, a separate offence of stalking may be considered.

In March 2019, a new civil order was introduced in the UK to protect victims of stalking. The Stalking Protection Bill will enable police to apply for Stalking Protection Orders in order for stranger stalking to be tackled more efficiently. These advancements form part of the government's ongoing efforts to confront violence against women and girls. The new orders can be used to enforce restrictions and requirements for perpetrators, and breaches will be considered a criminal offence carrying appropriate penalties. Victims of stalking perpetrated by an individual unknown to them should no longer feel they are solely responsible for maintaining their own safety ("Government backed Stalking Protection Bill

receives Royal Assent", 2019). Government funds have also been directed towards the Multi-Agency Stalking Interventions Programme (MASIP) – a two-year pilot led by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a number of NHS Trusts, and several Constabularies within the UK ("Specialist multi-agency unit to help tackle stalking launched in London", 2018). The MASIP aims to keep victims of stalking safe through the rehabilitation of perpetrators using the expertise of mental health practitioners, police, probation, and nurses. A further £50,000 per year of Home Office funds is also provided to the National Stalking Helpline to help them continue their work with victims of stalking and stalking survivors (womensgrid, 2019).

Despite these positive advances, application of the new laws is frequently coming under scrutiny. In 2014, the ex-boyfriend of 26-year-old nurse Jane Clough was granted bail while facing nine counts of rape and four of assault. He subsequently stalked and murdered her on her way to work. In a BBC news article, Jane's father accused the justice system of letting stalkers off with "a slap on the wrist", commenting that "the courts have got powers under new stalking laws to lock people up for five years and we're just not seeing proper use of these laws at all." However, whilst the perpetrator had a long history of domestic assault, his stalking behaviour does not appear to have been identified and reported to the authorities (BBC News, 2014). In April 2018 the BBC reported on Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne's five year stranger stalking victimization (BBC News, 2018b). Ms Bourne stated that her experience of reporting her ordeal to the police "wasn't really the best" and the case was ultimately

deemed unanswerable by the CPS on the basis of insufficient evidence, despite Ms Bourne having provided five years' worth of evidence. Unfortunately the report does not detail what the evidence consisted of. Following a review, Sussex police and prosecutors were provided with training to raise their awareness of the impacts of stalking victimization. Whilst the BBC reports in the same article that there has since been a 60% rise in the number of stalking cases being "solved", it is unclear how many of these cases are actually taken forward by the CPS. Furthermore, recidivism rates for stalking have been found to be as high as 56% (Eke, Hilton, Meloy, Mohandie, & Williams, 2011), calling into question the efficacy of stalking legislation. This and the aforementioned articles are a worrying indication that eight years on from the criminalization of stalking in the UK there remains a lack of understanding of the crime and associated laws amongst law enforcement officers and in the judicial system.

It is now more important than ever for researchers to dedicate their resources to understanding perceptions of stalking. With the introduction of social media and its recent exponential growth, stalkers have an increasing array of powerful tools for surveillance and terrorism of their targets at their disposal (Messing, Bagwell-Gray, Brown, Kappas, & Durfee, 2020). Even with the multitude of research that has been published since stalking was criminalised in the UK, misperceptions amongst the police and public remain, and there are numerous issues with police reporting. Stalking cases are still frequently recorded

incorrectly as harassment by police leading to skewed statistics and low charging and conviction rates (HMIC & HMCPSI, 2017), and victims of stalking who report to the police feel their reports are responded to poorly (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). Additionally, stranger stalkers are still mistakenly believed to be more dangerous and violent than their familiar stalker counterparts (Scott et al., 2019; Sheridan & Davies, 2001), despite several high-profile cases in which victims have been stalked and then murdered by ex-intimate partners (for example, Alice Ruggles and Shana Grice in 2016, and Michelle Savage in 2018). In-depth investigations that have followed recent cases in the UK, including those named above, have found police management of the cases to be inadequate. In fact, the joint inspection report by HMIC and HMCPSI (2017) looked into 112 recent cases of stalking and found that none were handled appropriately. Almost as concerning are the current estimates of stalker recidivism at around 30-50% (McEwan, Daffern, MacKenzie, & Ogloff, 2017), indicating the need for improved perpetrator interventions.

Amongst all of this, stalking victims are continuing to suffer negative effects comparable to those experienced by survivors of plane crashes and bombings (Chung et al., 1999; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001). Stalking victimisation has been found to result in poor mental and physical health outcomes (Acquadro Maran & Varetto, 2018), substance misuse (Davis et al., 2002), disruption to daily routines (Korkoeilou, 2017), self-harm, sleep disturbance, eating and digestive difficulties (Mechanic et al., 2008), changes in personality (Hall, 1998), heightened

fear and reduced trust in others (Kamphuis et al., 2003), suicidality (Pathé & Mullen, 1997), and significant financial harm (Korkodeilou, 2017), amongst others. There are also those stalking victims who do not survive to tell their tale – those who pay the ultimate price.

Society as a whole is also impacted by a reduction in economic contributions made by victims of stalking due to absenteeism related to their victimisation (Varcoe et al., 2001), lost taxes, policing costs (Access Economics, 2004) and medical care (Modi et al., 2014). In the UK, this amounts to a staggering £7.2 billion. Research is only just beginning to examine the impact of stalking on victims' family members but so far the results are concerning (Elklit et al., 2019).

It is therefore critical that the general public and police have a fuller understanding of stalking including the multiple forms it can take, the patterns of behaviour which should raise red flags, and the impact victimisation can have. Without improvements in training, education and awareness, victims may feel hesitant to report their experiences to the police for fear of not being taken seriously, their experiences will continue to be wrongly labelled as harassment, police will continue to manage cases of stalking inappropriately, and charging and conviction rates will continue to fall. Ultimately, more stalking victims will be murdered at the hands of perpetrators. There appears to be a significant disparity between what is known by researchers in this field, and what is understood by the

general public, indicating the need for the dissemination of up-to-date knowledge via public awareness campaigns.

Structure of thesis

Across six chapters, this thesis examines public perceptions and misperceptions of stalkers and victims of stalking and the factors that influence stalking victimisation and the development of PTSD. Outcomes are discussed with reference to raising public awareness, developing and implementing specialised training for legal and medical professionals, and potential clinical treatment for victims of stalking. Chapters Two to Five consist of a research study, a critique of the vignette methodology, a systematic review, and a case study. The four core chapters of this thesis are presented in a sequence that guides the reader from an empirical research study assessing victim and perpetrator blame in stalking in relation to three independent variables, to a critique of the relevant methodology, to research into factors affecting the development of PTSD in stalking victims, and finally through a clinical case study of a stalking victim. Chapter Six discusses the findings of Chapters Two to Five and their theoretical and practical implications, and limitations, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

This chapter is a quantitative exploration of the impact of relationship type (stranger, acquaintance, friend, ex-intimate, intimate), stalking myth

endorsement, and respondent gender, on victim and perpetrator blame in stalking cases. The following hypotheses are investigated:

- Hypothesis 1: The more intimate the relationship, the more the victim will be blamed.
- Hypothesis 2: The more intimate the relationship, the less the perpetrator will be blamed.
- Hypothesis 3: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with increased victim blame across all relationship types.
- Hypothesis 4: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with decreased perpetrator blame across all relationship types.
- Hypothesis 5: Males, as compared to females, will endorse more stalking myths, and blame the victim more and the perpetrator less.
- Hypothesis 6: Stalking myth endorsement predicts victim and perpetrator blame, respectively, more strongly in males than in females.

This study uses brief textual vignettes to describe hypothetical instances of a male stalking a female, with each of the five vignettes varying in the type of relationship (stranger, acquaintance, friend, ex-intimate partner, intimate partner) portrayed between victim and perpetrator. Responses are scored on the Stalking Myth Scale (Sinclair, 2006) and the Victim Perpetrator Blame Scale (Sleath and Bull, 2010). The overall aim of this chapter is to understand the association between victim-perpetrator relationship type, and victim and perpetrator blame, and further to observe how this association might be impacted by stalking myth

endorsement and respondent gender. Limitations and implications of the study are discussed, and recommendations for future research made.

Chapter Three

This chapter is a critique of the vignette methodology, which is employed extensively in studies of perception, including research relating to perceptions of stalking, for example; Phillips, Quirk, Rosenfeld, and O'Connor (2004), and Chapter Two. Chapter Three aims to answer the following question:

- Does the use of a vignette methodology yield valid and reliable results?

The vignette methodology is used in Chapter Two because it has the capacity to represent believable hypothetical scenarios as stimuli for participant response and discussion (Duff, Hay, Kerry, & Whittam, 2020; Poulou, 2001). Vignettes allow the systematic variation of one or a number of variables and are flexible enough to be used appropriately with many different audiences. Vignettes are carefully devised to portray a scenario or represent a topic of interest and to elicit directed responses from respondents. Although not standardised, since vignettes are typically developed to fulfil the specific aims of a single study, they can be a powerful tool for gauging participants' perceptions of a chosen topic. This chapter explores the psychometric properties of vignettes, including their reliability and validity, and makes recommendations for how they can be developed to yield clinically relevant outcomes.

Chapter Four

This chapter comprises a systematic review of studies which identify potential risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To the best of the author's knowledge this is the only review of its kind to synthesise the existing literature concerned with risk factors for stalking victims developing PTSD. It aims to answer the following question:

- What are the risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD?

Of a total of 2,951 studies initially identified, eight were included in the final review. Despite the small number of included studies, this systematic review provides valuable insight into the roles of coping strategies, stalking severity, social support, protective orders, forgiveness, personality traits, and attachment in the development of symptoms of PTSD following stalking victimisation. It is clear that a great deal more research in this area is necessary; however some tentative conclusions about what increases stalking victims' vulnerability to developing symptoms of PTSD can be drawn. The chapter closes by discussing potential interventions for victims of stalking to reduce the negative impact on stalking victimisation, as well as the need for training and awareness programs for the wider public.

Chapter Five

As yet no specific treatment has been identified for victims of stalking. The heterogeneity of the crime and its impact on victims means an appropriate intervention is likely to require a significantly large and robust evidence base. Following on from the research into PTSD in stalking victims this case study focuses on the efficacy of the schema therapy model in the treatment of BB, an adult female victim of stalking diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, panic disorder, and traits of obsessive compulsive disorder. This chapter poses the question:

- Is schema mode work an effective intervention for a victim of stalking perpetrated by an ex-intimate partner?

From childhood and into adulthood BB has experienced multiple instances of physical and emotional abuse, including stalking by an ex-partner. Maladaptive schemas and coping strategies cause BB difficulties in all areas of her life including in her interpersonal relationships. She struggles with agoraphobia, social isolation, a lack of autonomy, and emotional dysregulation and inhibition. The schema intervention described in this chapter was tailored specifically to meet the needs identified within BB's formulation, and includes techniques such as chair work, imagery, and limited reparenting. Cognitive restructuring techniques successfully aid in BB gaining confidence to attending therapy sessions independently. Overall, the results are encouraging, and throughout the 11 month-long treatment period BB makes considerable progress.

This case is of significance to the thesis as BB exhibits symptoms often observed in stalking victims. The success of schema therapy in treating the symptoms that are most applicable to stalking victims is encouraging, and broader implications of these findings are examined here and in the discussion in Chapter Six.

Chapter Two Stalking: The impact of relational closeness and myth endorsement on blame

Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that the more intimate the relationship between stalking victim and stalking perpetrator, the more the victim will be blamed and the perpetrator exonerated. Both a belief in stalking myths, and the belief in a Just World may explain this phenomenon. This study examines the effect of relationship type (stranger, acquaintance, friend, ex-intimate, intimate), stalking myth endorsement, and participant gender on victim and perpetrator blame using a cross-sectional experimental design (using vignettes) in a sample of 340 participants (280 females) aged between 18-68. The three independent variables were relationship type, stalking myth endorsement, and participant gender, and the two dependent variables were victim blame and perpetrator blame. Non-parametric analyses revealed that relationship type did not impact victim or perpetrator blame (p = .070). There was a positive correlation between overall stalking myth endorsement and victim blame (r = .448, p < .001) and a negative correlation between overall stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame (r = -.361, p < .001). Furthermore, results found that males endorsed significantly more stalking myths than females (p = .007), although this did not translate to significant differences in victim and perpetrator blaming between the genders (p = .610 and .355, respectively). The findings are discussed in relation to the pertinence of stalking myths, the Just World Hypothesis, and implications for awareness raising, education, and specialist training in order to ensure that stalking

perpetration and the aftermath of stalking victimisation are better understood.

Introduction

Overview

Much of the literature relating to stalking has come out of the United States, since stalking was first written into legislation in California 22 years before it became the law in the UK. Since then it has attracted attention from the media, law enforcement and the public both within the US and the UK. Research has frequently focused on stalker typologies (e.g. Boon & Sheridan, 2001; Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, & Williams, 2006; Wright, Burgess, Burgess, Laszlo, McCrary, & Douglas, 1996), behaviours exhibited by stalking perpetrators (e.g. Meloy, 1999; Morrison, 2001), the impact of stalking victimisation (e.g. Dressing, Kuehner, & Gass, 2005; Kuehner, Gass, & Dressing, 2012; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Westrup, Fremouw, Thompson, & Lewis, 1999), and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator (e.g. Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, & Patel, 2003; Sheridan & Lyndon, 2012). Despite the recent interest in stalking and all that it entails, there is still a great deal that researchers and laypeople alike do not understand about the crime of stalking. This lack of understanding is not helped by the heterogeneous nature of stalking and the resulting ambiguity of stalking definitions. The range of behaviours stalking can encompass means that definitions and the legislation are necessarily vague, leaving a lot of scope for individual interpretation. The consequences of this are that all individuals who might be involved in a case of stalking will each have their own understanding of stalking. Individual perceptions of stalking are likely to impact upon how

and when victims seek support, the response they receive, the support they are offered and, the outcomes of stalking cases that reach court.

According to Sheridan's (2005) paper on key findings from the Stalking Survey, 77% of stalking victims experienced at least 100 separate incidents before going to the police (Sheridan, 2005). Even when incidents of stalking are reported, responses vary greatly and are mainly dependent upon the perceived risk posed by the perpetrator (Logan, Walker, Stewart, & Allen, 2006). Perceived risk is influenced by multiple factors, not least the relationship between the victim and perpetrator at the time of the offence. Whilst victims are more likely to be harmed as a result of violence perpetrated by a current or ex-intimate partner stalker (Catalano, Smith, Snyder, & Rand, 2009), stranger and acquaintance stalkers are much more likely to be convicted (Sheridan & Davies, 2001).

Perception Research

There has been an ongoing interest in understanding individuals' perceptions towards particular issues in society, including criminal offenses. How an individual perceives a particular situation will dictate attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as a consequence, including beliefs about who or what is to blame. Blame has been defined as 'a unique moral judgment that is both cognitive and social, regulates social behavior, fundamentally relies on social cognition, and requires warrant.' (Malle, Guglielmo, & Monroe, 2014, p. 1). It is hence a judgement made

by an individual towards a situation, event, person or stimuli in terms of attributing responsibility for a negative outcome.

Correia, Vala, and Aguiar (2001) propose a two-stage theory for how blame is attributed in a situation. The victim's behaviour is initially focused on to provide an explanation for what has occurred. If it is not possible to assign blame to the victim's behaviour, then blame is attributed to the victim's character. This process of apportioning blame allows people to maintain a belief in a just world (BJW; see below). Correia et al. (2001) found that secondary victimisation – in the form of devaluation, blame, avoidance, and minimisation of suffering – and deservedness had a stronger positive correlation when BJW was threatened to a greater extent. In other words, observers were more likely to blame a victim when any alternative attribution of blame would cause a disruption to their belief that bad things only happen to bad people.

Just World Hypothesis

Prior to examining the literature relating to blame, it is important to study the theories that drive the attribution of blame. One of the most prominent of these theories is the Just World Hypothesis (JWH; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). The JWH is a cognitive bias theory which attempts to make sense of individual's fate as a consequence of their behaviour. It is based on the belief that bad things only happen to bad people due to their bad action or characteristics, and therefore that an individual must have

done something to deserve what has happened to them (Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013; Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011). Likewise, just world beliefs also include the idea that good things only happen to good people due to their good actions. Research concerned with the JWH has found evidence to suggest that individuals feel threatened upon identifying that something negative or unjust is happening to an innocent target. In order to maintain their belief in a just and meaningful world, they resort to secondary victimisation, i.e. placing the responsibility for what has occurred on the innocent target so that they are to blame for their own suffering (Mendonça, Gouveia-Pereira, & Miranda, 2016). This cognitive restructuring enables a reduction in feelings of distress caused by the perceived injustice. Whilst the current study is concerned with perceptions of stalking, the JWH has been used to explain patterns of both perception and behaviour in multiple different fields of research. The JWH has been related to engagement in *actual behaviours* (such as bullying, victimisation and aggression) but also to holding *explicit and implicit attitudes* towards people in various situations (such as minority groups, people with illness and victims of crimes), thereby generating blame.

The present study is concerned with measuring blame rather than the JWH, since victim blaming appears to be the tangible and damaging result of general BJW. In order to maintain their BJW, individuals have a tendency to reinterpret situations so that the narrative fits their belief that bad things only happen to bad people, and therefore bad things will

not happen to them. The result of this is that a victim who has had something bad happen to them is often blamed by observers. The just world belief has been described as an "unconscious" bias and is therefore likely to explain instinctive rather than cognisant responses to those situations that activate it (Dalbert, 2001). The JWH is the most cited theory to explain how blame is apportioned within different social contexts and hence literature regarding this theory will be examined.

a. JWH in relation to behaviours

Bègue and Muller (2006) examined the mediating effect of just world beliefs on at-risk youth prone to aggressive reactions to frustration. Using two scales to measure BJW for self, and BJW for others, they found that individuals who reported stronger beliefs in a just world for self, reacted less aggressively to frustrating situations than those who reported less strong beliefs in a just world for self. This is plausible given the fact that they seek to act in ways that are considered good (i.e. not being aggressive) as they believe that good will come in return. The study also implied that there is relevance in distinguishing between BJW for self and BJW for others, as they found that BJW for others did not temper aggressive reactions.

Donat, Umlauft, Dalbert, and Kamble (2012) evaluated the role of BJW in students' engagement in bullying behaviour at school. Their results indicated that participants who more strongly endorsed BJW were less likely to engage in bullying towards others, as this would be seen as going

against their own beliefs – to target an innocent other would go against the idea of a world in which individuals get what they deserve. Donat et al. (2012) describe BJW functioning as an "implicit justice motive" (p. 189) which is negatively associated with unwarranted behaviour towards others. In their attempt to examine the effect of the BJW on individuals' propensity for online shaming, Hou, Jiang, and Wang (2017) found that BJW was positively correlated with online shaming behaviours.

Poverty is another field of research in which the just world hypothesis has been found to impact on attitudes and beliefs. Monteiro (2018) examined the role of BJW on hostile behaviour towards individuals living in poverty. They found that a general BJW positively predicted hostile behaviours towards the poor. Furthermore, they found that participants who were deemed to be of a higher societal class scored higher on a measure of general BJW.

b. JWH in relation to attitudes and blame

The underlying pathways through which the JWH can explain actual deviant behaviour such as aggression and bullying seem to be negative attitudes and attributions of blame or responsibility. The JWH has been studied more extensively in relation to attitudes and blame in several population groups. The majority of research focuses on interpersonal offending (including domestic violence, robbery, child sexual abuse, rape and stalking) but has also examined specific minority groups such as individuals from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, that self-define as

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or other sexual minority (LGBT+), or who are diagnosed with stigmatised or emotionally-laden illnesses.

Braman and Lambert (2001) looked at whether BJW would predict participants' reactions towards an individual suffering with a diagnosis of cancer. Two vignettes were manipulated to suggest either high or low responsibility for developing cancer. The results indicated that participants who believed in a just world to a greater extent blamed the high responsibility cancer sufferer more and the low responsibility cancer sufferer less. Further, Correia and Vala (2003) investigated the effects of a BJW, victim's innocence and persistence of suffering on secondary victimisation of individuals diagnosed with HIV. They found that individuals who believed in a just world to a greater extent judged the victim's situation to be fairer than those participants who scored lower on a measure of BJW.

Individuals' BJW has been found to explain some aspects of racism. Carney and Enos (2015) compared the beliefs in relation to race of conservative individuals to those of liberal individuals. Their findings suggest that conservative's attitudes towards black people are driven by BJW, and that they tend to agree with statements suggesting that if an individual only worked harder they could achieve more, regardless of their ethnicity. Belief in such fallacies commonly manifests in racist attitudes, in particular the rejection of or outright refusal to acknowledge the injustices historically suffered and continuing to be suffered by black people.

Hettinger and Vandello (2014) examined the effect of BJW on support for gay rights in a student and non-student adult sample. The study hypothesised that stronger BJW would negatively predict support for gay rights, and that a belief that LGBT+ discrimination is no longer an issue within American society (labelled 'amnestic heretosexism' by the authors) would mediate this relationship. Their results supported this hypothesis suggesting that a stronger belief in the fairness of the system leads to denial of the existence of discrimination against the LGBT+, and thus reduced support for the legal rights of gay people. In line with this, Thomas, Amburgey, and Ellis (2016) found that participants were more likely to blame a victim of crime who had been perceived by the perpetrator to be transgender as opposed to cisgender, and that BJW was associated with victim blame in the transgender-victim scenario.

Mancini and Pickett (2017) set out to identify the extent to which victims of homicide, burglary and robbery were also perceived by observers to be perpetrators who hold some level of personal responsibility for their victimisation. They propose that the attitude of individuals who perceive a greater victim-offender overlap can be understood within the framework of the JWH, since this perspective maintains the perceiver's sense of control over negative events. They found that participants perceived the greatest victim-offender overlap in homicide cases, indicating a belief that homicide victims, more so than victims of burglaries or robberies, must themselves have been engaged in patterns of risky or offending behaviour. This study also found that a perceived victim-offender overlap

was a strong predictor of victim blaming. An explanation for this is that participants perceive victims who are also offenders to be responsible for their victimisation, therefore making them more culpable than victims who have never been involved in a criminal lifestyle. This viewpoint makes the victim's demise "fairer" in the eyes of respondents and thus allows them to maintain their BJW.

Pinciotti and Orcutt (2017) used a sample of 383 undergraduate students in the USA to examine the moderating influences of social support and BJW on the association between participant gender and victim blaming. They used three hypothetical police interview transcripts relating to a rape between acquaintances. Transcripts were of interviews with the victim, perpetrator, and the victim's friends and sister. Although all participants read the same victim and perpetrator transcripts, they were randomly assigned to different social support conditions: positive support negative support, or neutral support. They found that BJW was a significant predictor of victim blame, more so than gender and social support. Whilst the results of the study are consistent with previous literature, the study is limited in its generalisability to sexual assault between individuals involved in other types of relationships. Additionally, the sample of college students used may not have represented significant diversity – in fact nearly 60% of the sample identified as White.

Russell and Hand's (2017) "rapid review" of 9 studies relating to public attitudes towards rape found that BJW was positively associated with rape

myth acceptance and victim blaming attributions. However, this study is not a full systematic review and therefore is limited in the number of included studies – in particular they did not include grey literature.

Toews, Cummings, and Zagrodney's (2019) qualitative studies examined "mother blame" in child sexual abuse cases. They theorised that observers would refrain from blaming the target of the sexual abuse – the child – for what he or she had experienced, but would instead blame the mother for having allowed the child sexual abuse to occur in order to maintain their BJW. Their studies indicate that observers do identify behaviours exhibited by the mother which could have led to opportunities for the child to have been abused, and that this correlated with increased mother blame. However, there was also some recognition by participants of the ultimate lack of control a mother has over whether or not her child is abused whilst not in her care.

Valor-Segura et al. (2011) examined victim blaming in domestic violence scenarios. The researchers used vignettes which were manipulated to describe different contexts which triggered the violence within an abusive situation between intimate partners (male perpetrator, female victim). The study found that, contrary to the prevailing narrative within the stalking literature, participants did not tend to blame the victim and exonerate the perpetrator except in the condition in which there appeared to be no trigger for the violence. In the no trigger condition, participants were not inclined to give the female victim the benefit of the doubt but

instead looked to the victim as a potential cause of the violence. This suggests that observers were keen to make some kind of justification for the perpetrator's behaviour and the victim's demise, thereby maintaining their BJW.

c. JWH and blame research in relation to stalking

There are currently no studies on stalking perception which involve the BJW as an independent variable. However, many stalking research studies do discuss the JWH as a potential explanation for their findings.

For example, Scott and Sheridan (2011) examine the JWH as a potential explanation for the inconsistencies between perceptions of stalking, and reality. Nine vignettes representing three different relationship types (stranger, acquaintance and ex-partner), as well as varying levels of persistence (low/high) and intent (non-threatening/threatening) were developed. A total of 328 participants were asked to read one vignette each and answer questions relating to their beliefs about the behaviours described within the vignette. The study's outcomes support the JWH as the victim was held less responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour in the stranger compared to the ex-partner condition. However, it is unclear how participants were assigned to conditions and whether or not this was random, leaving results open to potential bias.

A qualitative study examining the effects of gender and prior victim-perpetrator relationship on perceptions of stalking, however, found that assumptions about gender played a greater role in mock jurors' decision-

making processes than any subscriptions to a BJW when the scenario being discussed related to a female stalking a male (Gavin & Scott, 2016). As is frequently the case in the stalking perception literature, Gavin and Scott (2016) manipulated case summaries to describe three different types of relationship between victim and perpetrator; stranger, acquaintance, and ex-partner. Although the study clearly identifies an important nuance in the relationship between gender and stalking perceptions, and is one of few qualitative investigations available in this arena, the sample was made up solely of university students making the findings possibly less generalizable to other populations. Furthermore, with students experiencing higher rates of stalking than the general population (Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan et al., 2003), it is quite possible that some of the participants had experienced stalking victimisation themselves, thus potentially biasing their contributions to mock juror discussions.

The disparity in sentencing of stranger stalkers and intimate or ex-intimate stalkers is likely to be reflective of the mechanisms of the JWH. When individuals hear of a victim's suffering, they tend to identify information that allows them to confirm that the victim 'deserved' it (Culda, Opre, & Dobrin, 2018). Within the legal system this may manifest in biased representation of the victim, and juries and judges passing lighter sentences for, or acquitting altogether, ex-intimate/intimate partner stalkers (Correia et al., 2001; Scott, Gavin, Sleath, & Sheridan, 2013). As a result of these biases, police intervention is deemed

unnecessary by participants when it comes to domestic disputes because both individuals involved are thought to bear some responsibility for the disturbance (Sheridan & Davies, 2001).

Whilst the JWH somewhat explains the underlying mechanisms behind blame, most literature in the stalking context focuses on the blame itself as the outcome. This is plausible as individuals hold just world beliefs subconsciously whilst blame is a conscious and identifiable process. Studies that make up the stalking perception literature are concerned with how various different independent variables, such as the severity of the offence or the genders of those involved, impact on victim blaming tendencies.

The importance of the stalking perception evidence base lies within the notion that anyone could become a victim of stalking, or could be involved in some capacity with a stalking case. Whether a juror on a stalking trial, an informal support to a victimised friend, or a police officer alerted to behaviours that fall within the realm of stalking, it is important that the general population as a whole is fully cognisant of the wide range of behaviours that constitute stalking, as well as the very real dangers of stalking victimisation. Further highlighting the importance of the perception literature, Scott et al. (2014) indicates that perceptions of stalking are not reflective of information gathered through crime surveys. For example, McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie, and Ogloff (2009) reports that ex-intimate partners are the most persistent and dangerous types of

stalkers. However, Scott and Sheridan (2011) find that those same behaviours studied by McEwan et al. (2009) are believed to be more dangerous when perpetrated by a stranger. Research has also found that the victim is often perceived to be more at fault for their victimisation when they had been in a relationship with their stalker, compared to when the stalker was unknown to the victim (Sheridan et al., 2003). In reality, the perpetrator's actions alone lead to stalking, rather than any contribution by the victim. These examples point to inconsistencies between commonly held perceptions of stalking, and the conclusions reached within applied research. These incongruities must be adequately addressed through perception research in order to ensure the wider dissemination of accurate information.

Relationship between victim and perpetrator

The relationship between the victim and perpetrator has been found to impact the resulting victim and perpetrator blame. The existing studies in this area tend to focus on perceptions of stalking using textual vignette methodologies (brief text-based hypothetical scenarios) in order to manipulate the relationship between victim and perpetrator. The three conditions used most frequently are stranger, acquaintance, and ex-intimate partner and the majority of studies have found that respondents (including samples of the general population and police officers) are more likely to label intrusive behaviours as stalking if the perpetrator is a stranger (e.g. White, Longpré, & Stefanska, 2020). Stranger stalkers are

also judged to present a greater danger and necessitate more intervention from law enforcement than ex-intimate partners or acquaintances. For example, Scott et al. (2014) conducted a study which included 1080 participants from across the UK, the USA, and Australia. They found that when the perpetrator was a stranger, participants were more likely to believe police intervention and criminal convictions to be necessary. The same study used a modified version of the Victim Perpetrator Blame Scale (Sleath & Bull, 2010) to assess how responsibility for stalking is attributed. The results suggested that the perpetrator was perceived to be more responsible and the victim less responsible for the stalking when they were portrayed as strangers or acquaintances rather than an ex-partners. These findings are in line with the just world hypothesis, as well as real-world statistics which find that stranger stalkers are more likely to be arrested or convicted than ex-intimate partner stalkers (Harris, 2000). However, Scott et al.'s (2014) sent out their study materials and collected data via an online market research company, therefore it is unclear whether or not the final sample was representative of the wider population. Additionally, they did not account for any other type of victim-perpetrator relationship, for example friends or current intimate partners.

The pattern of arrests and convictions suggested by the current research contradicts studies indicating that strangers are much less likely than ex-intimate partner stalkers to persevere with their stalking behaviour, and are less likely to use violence (McEwan et al., 2009; McEwan, Mullen et

al., 2009; Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2004). Furthermore, stalking between intimate or ex-intimate partners has been found to be the most common stalking scenario (Bjerregaard, 2000; Spitzberg, 2002).

Identifying the different relationship types within which stalking occurs, and understanding the dynamics of these relationships, is critical in order to both evaluate the risk of violence towards the victim, and decipher the motive(s) of the perpetrator (Sheridan & Lyndon, 2012). This information can contribute to the development of stalker typologies (e.g. Mohandie et al., 2006) which are used by police and other agencies to assess risk, as well as to inform changes in policy. However, interpersonal relationships are complex and nuanced, and many are likely to fall outside of these three categories, thereby indicating a significant gap in the perceptions literature.

Weller, Hope and Sheridan (2013) investigated police and laypersons' perceptions of stalking cases when the relationship between victim and perpetrator was manipulated so that the perpetrator was either an ex-intimate partner, a work acquaintance, or a stranger stalker. The two groups were asked questions relating to whether or not the scenario constituted stalking, the severity of the scenario, the likelihood of victim injury, the duration of stalking, the responsibility for the stalking, and whether or not police intervention was felt to be necessary. Both police and lay participants' perceived the stranger stalking scenario to most

represent a case of stalking, thus indicating an impact of relationship type on perceptions of stalking. However, this study was conducted in the UK and therefore results cannot be generalised to other countries. Furthermore, despite a medium effect size, the differences between the means in each relationship type condition in relation to the extent to which the scenario presented constituted a stalking case were very small. Finally, they used a *work* acquaintance condition rather than simply an acquaintance condition. The former provides participants with a more specific context and may therefore alter their perceptions in relation to the outcome variables.

The idea that stalking can occur as a result of having made bad relationship choices has been suggested in Pathé, Mackenzie, and Mullen (2004) study. As in Weller et al. (2013), Pathé et al. (2004) included law enforcement officers as participants, again denoting that police officers are as susceptible to the "just world" bias as laypeople. This is concerning given that victims of stalking are encouraged to report their experiences to the police, and may endure negative treatment as a result of potential victim blaming tendencies. Victims experiencing invalidation following reporting concerning behaviours are unlikely to seek formal support again and the perpetrator's behaviours may escalate unimpeded (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018).

Cass and Rosay (2012) asked college students in the USA to act as police officers and judge how they believed different cases of stalking would be

treated within the criminal justice system. Participants predicted that a case involving an ex-intimate partner of the victim as the perpetrator would be taken less seriously than a case in which the perpetrator was a stranger to the victim. However, this study did not include a measure of seriousness, per se, but rather focused on the perceived necessity of police interventions. It also used a sample of college students which is unlikely to be representative of the general population. Hills and Taplin (1998) manipulated the type of former relationship (stranger, acquaintance, ex-intimate) between victim and perpetrator within vignettes which were written from the perspective of the participant. Their participants judged that they would be more likely to feel afraid and call the police if they were being stalked by a stranger than by a casual acquaintance or ex-intimate partner. The researchers' explanation for this is that strangers' behaviour is felt to be more unpredictable than that of an acquaintance or intimate partner - this phenomenon is known colloquially as 'stranger danger'.

Duff and Scott (2013) found that when they used first-person vignettes in which the participants were required to place themselves in the victim role, participants were more likely to blame themselves for being stalked when the perpetrator was an ex-partner as opposed to a stranger. This finding suggests that the Just World Hypothesis may be applicable to victims of stalking as well as third party observers. Consistent with Hills and Taplin (1998), Sheridan et al. (2003) discovered that the greater the levels of intimacy, the less the scenarios were considered to depict

stalking, the greater the victim responsibility (i.e. the victim was blamed) for the perpetrator's behaviour, the lower the necessity for police involvement, and the lower the likelihood of injury. Their study examined three relationship types: ex-intimate, acquaintance, and stranger. The results demonstrate just how protective a relationship can be of stalking perpetrators.

Duff and Scott (2013) also found that perceptions could be manipulated so that ex-partners were increasingly believed to be as blameworthy as strangers when contextual information about relationship breakdown was provided. It is likely that the contextual details contribute additional information that the perceiver must assimilate in order to ascribe blame to the two parties involved using the same two-step process suggested by Correia et al. (2001).

Stalking myths and gender

Victim blaming is understood to be fuelled by false beliefs relating to the victim and perpetrator (Sinclair, 2012). In the stalking literature, these false beliefs are known as 'stalking myths'. Similar in nature to the better established rape myths, stalking myths are misperceptions which lead an individual to assign disproportionate blame to the victim, exonerate the perpetrator, and minimise the crime (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Consequently, they can be extremely damaging to the legal trajectory of stalking cases, from initial reporting to prosecution. It has been posited that varying attitudes towards stalking account for the greatest variance

in participant judgements (Kamphuis et al., 2005), as some individuals foster a greater tolerance for stalking behaviours and endorse more stalking myths than others (McKeon, McEwan, & Luebbers, 2015; Sinclair, 2012).

Spitzberg and Cadiz (2002) speculate that media portrayals of stalking are to blame for some of these lingering misperceptions, and Lippman's (2018) recent findings lend support to this suggestion. Lippman (2018) exposed participants to a film that portrayed pursuit behaviours in a male perpetrator towards female victim scenario as romantic, a film that portrayed the same behaviours as scary, or a control video which did not portray pursuit behaviours at all. Results found that stalking behaviours which were disguised as romantic gestures led to an increase in stalking-tolerant beliefs. In line with this, in their content analysis of newspaper articles of domestic violence, Bullock and Cubert (2002) found that 47.8% of the reports they analysed alluded to at least one justification for the perpetrator's behaviour. However, Lippman's (2018) all-female sample means that the findings cannot be generalised to the male population, particularly given the gendered nature of stalking and the different portrayed characters that each gender of participant may be more likely to identify with. This study therefore does not allow us to gain a greater understanding of how media representations of stalking impact on the endorsement of stalking myths in men.

In their mock juror study, Dunlap, Lynch, Jewell, Wasarhaley, and Golding (2015) used a structural equation modelling methodology to identify and evaluate the influence of different factors on the jurors' decision-making. The study found that men held more stalking myth-related beliefs and blamed the victim to a greater extent than their female counterparts. Furthermore, those participants who scored higher for stalking myth acceptance also believed the perpetrator to be less dangerous and therefore less guilty. Dunlap et al. (2015) state that "stalking myth acceptance beliefs appear to promote a tolerance for intimate stalking by minimizing its seriousness" (p. 15). However, this 'mock jury' study consisted of a convenience sample of psychology undergraduate students who did not deliberate, thereby reducing the external validity of their findings. In their study, McKeon et al. (2015) found significant discrepancies between males' and females' endorsement scores on the myth 'Stalking is romantic', with males scoring significantly higher than females (i.e. endorsing the myth to a significantly greater extent). This is in line with previous research demonstrating that men more so than women may perceive unsolicited intrusive behaviours as genuine romanticism, although this does not altogether preclude females from holding the same beliefs (Lambert, Smith, Geistman, Cluse-Tolar, & Jiang, 2013).

Views such as "stalking is romantic" are doubtless reinforced by the portrayal of so-called "romanticism" in films, particularly romantic comedies which have a predominantly female audience (British Film

Institute, 2011). This may lead an increasing number of females to accept certain stalking behaviours as "romantic". Lambert et al. (2013) suggest that both men and women feel there is an indistinct boundary between stalking and assertive dating behaviours. It is possible that women in relationships with men have individual thresholds for acceptability of so-called "romantic" behaviours, beyond which they begin to feel fearful or controlled. Their previous experiences in relationships are likely to have some bearing on this. If female victims endorse stalking myths they may be slower or less likely to identify a perpetrator's behaviour as stalking which could lead to a delay in help-seeking behaviours. In her study on the portrayal of stalking in films, Lippman (2018) suggests stalking myth endorsement as a risk factor for female stalking victimisation, and emphasises the need for increased awareness of stalking myths as well as the underlying factors that lead to their development.

In order to measure the extent of individuals' endorsement of stalking myths, Sinclair (2006) developed the Stalking Myth Scale (SMS). The SMS comprises items related to a number of commonly held erroneous beliefs including, for example, that stalking is just an expression of love, that the victim 'asked for it', and that stalking is not actually dangerous. Lippman and Ward (2014) found that higher levels of myth acceptance are linked to more unsolicited pursuit perpetration and victimisation among women as they may be less likely to report it before it becomes serious, and to higher levels of unsolicited pursuit perpetration among men. It has also been established in the rape literature that rape myth

endorsement is strongly associated with increased victim blaming tendencies (e.g. Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Stalking myth endorsement can lead to incidents not being taken as seriously as they deserve to be, which has, in many cases, proven fatal (Zona et al., 1998). In order to address stalking cases appropriately it is important that the research identifies who is most susceptible to endorsing stalking myths, as well as how their endorsement impacts on victim and perpetrator blame.

When considering the impact of gender on different outcome variables in stalking perception research the literature typically considers the gender of the victim and perpetrator in the stalking scenario, and the gender of the 'perceiver' (the study participants who become a third party observer of the stalking scenario described in the study materials). The gender of the hypothetical victim and perpetrator can be systematically varied within study vignettes if this is a variable of interest to investigators. Some studies ask participants to put themselves in the position of the victim or perpetrator, perhaps in an effort to bring about greater emotional engagement than might occur for participants in the observer position.

The majority of stalking research has been conducted using the prototypical male-to-female stalking scenarios (Yanowitz & Yanowitz, 2012). Sinclair (2012) used the male-to-female stalking model to investigate the influences of participant gender and victim/perpetrator gender on stalking myth endorsement for making victim-blaming

attributions. The study found that both victim and participant gender impacted significantly on victim-blaming attributions. Specifically, male perceivers were more likely to blame a female victim, especially when taking the perspective of the perpetrator. McKeon et al. (2015) found that more men than women endorsed the attitude 'victims are to blame' in relation to stalking cases. One explanation for this is that men are less likely to have to be as vigilant as women about, for example, the risks of walking down a street alone at night, as they are statistically more likely to be the perpetrator than the victim of the type of crime which might take place in this setting (Ministry of Justice, 2014). Men may therefore be less able to identify with the victim role than women, or hold a belief that victims should be able to prevent becoming victimised. Shaver's (1970) defensive attribution theory also predicts that women will make judgements in support of victims and find it easier to take the perspective of the victim when the victim is female, whilst men will judge in support of the perpetrator and more easily identify with the role of the perpetrator when the perpetrator is male. According to Shaver's (1970) hypothesis, when an individual is confronted by an ominous situation which they could hypothetically find themselves in they are more likely to identify with the victim who is perceived to be similar to them in some way. This identification may be amplified when the victim shares their gender identity. More lenient justifications are then pursued to realize a positive self- and group image.

Other influences on perceptions of stalking might include a human tendency to focus on overt behaviours rather than more subtle and insipid indicators of stalking perpetration, such as coercion and control which is more likely to occur between intimate partners. Sheridan and Scott (2010) found that their participants use evidence of explicit physical violence to identify stalking to the exclusion of all other markers. However, Sheridan and Scott (2010) used non-specific terminology within their vignettes, for example "verbal abuse" and "physical abuse" which can each describe a wide variety of behaviour rather than a particular action. Participants' notions of what constitutes verbal and physical abuse is likely to have varied significantly and may have been biased by their own experiences of one or both types of abuse. Nevertheless, these findings may have implications for how stalking incidents are perceived by victims, laypeople (i.e. jury members), law enforcement, and judges of the courts which could have serious consequences for victims trying to access support as well as perpetrators receiving appropriate retribution and/or treatment.

Current Study

The present study brings together victim-perpetrator relationship, and myth endorsement to examine the impact of these variables on the extent to which the victim is blamed. As stalking is such a gendered crime, participant gender was taken into account in order to examine the gender differences between perceptions of blame and stalking myth

endorsement. The aim of the study is to extend the research into the association between victim-perpetrator relationship type, myth endorsement, and victim and perpetrator blame, and to identify gender differences in stalking myth endorsement and victim and perpetrator blame.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The more intimate the relationship, the more the victim will be blamed.

Hypothesis 2: The more intimate the relationship, the less the perpetrator will be blamed.

Hypothesis 3: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with increased victim blame across all relationship types.

Hypothesis 4: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with decreased perpetrator blame across all relationship types.

Hypothesis 5: Males, as compared to females, will endorse more stalking myths, and blame the victim more and the perpetrator less.

Hypothesis 6: Stalking myth endorsement predicts victim and perpetrator blame, respectively, more strongly in males than in females.

Method

Study design

This study based on a cross-sectional experimental design as it measured perceptions of stalking at one point in time, exposing participants to different conditions. It has three independent variables: relationship type (with 5 levels: current intimate, former intimate, acquaintance, friend, stranger; as a between-subject factor), stalking myth endorsement, and gender (with 2 levels: females/males). The two dependent variables were perceived blame for the victim and for the perpetrator of stalking. Participants were randomised across the conditions.

Participants

A power analysis was performed for sample size estimation. The power analysis was based on a medium effect size, as a small effect size would not be valuable in the context of this study, whilst hopes of finding large effect sizes within psychological studies are likely to be too ambitious (Cohen, 1988; 1992). A small effect size in this case would likely be of little value as it would mean that even if the differences identified between groups were significant, in clinical, or "real world" terms the differences would be negligible. Duff and Scott (2013) found medium to large effect sizes using one-way ANOVAs to identify significant differences in perceptions of stalking when additional contextual information was provided. They also used the non-parametric alternative to ANOVAs, the Kruskal-Wallis, in order to verify their results as their data violated some

of the assumptions for parametric analyses. For the current study, if α = .05 and power = .80 in an a priori power analysis for an ANOVA, the projected sample size needed with this effect size (GPower 3.1.7) is N = 305.

An opportunity sample of 346 individuals aged 18-68 years was recruited through social media (see Appendix 2.1 for study advertisement) as well as through e-mail and face-to-face communication. The sample comprised of 60 males, 280 females and 6 other gendered individuals (the other gendered individuals were removed prior to analyses as gender-sensitive analyses were part of the hypotheses). Participants completed the study using the Bristol Online Survey software. The study was given ethical approval by the University of Nottingham Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2.2).

Materials

This study used five online questionnaires; each comprised of a vignette, the Stalking Myth Scale (SMS) and the Victim and Perpetrator Blame Scale (VPBS). Each of the five questionnaires presented a vignette belonging to a different condition to reflect 5 different relationship types (see Appendix 2.3). The vignettes had been constructed with the aim of varying as few details as possible between each whilst also ensuring that each conveyed a distinct type of relationship between the two characters.

Vignette: Relationship type

One of five different 300-400 word vignettes was shown to participants, experimentally manipulating the relationship the victim and the perpetrator have: Current Intimate, Former Intimate, Acquaintance, Friends, Stranger.

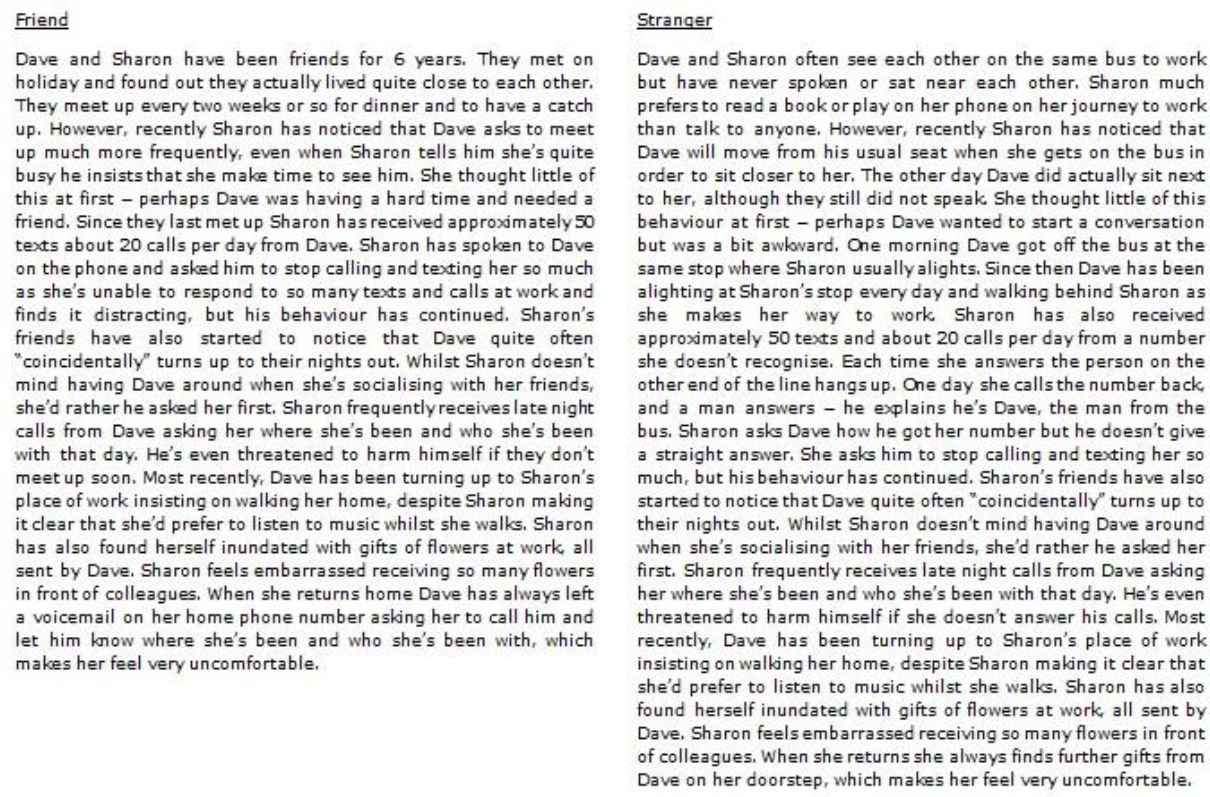
These vignettes explained the ways in which Sharon (victim) and Dave (perpetrator) met, how long they had known each other for (or not, in the case of the Stranger scenario), some of the stalking behaviours Dave displayed, as well as how Dave's behaviours have made Sharon feel. The vignettes differentiated themselves in several ways in order to manipulate the independent variable, as well as to present plausible stalking scenarios. The first few sentences of each vignette set up the ways in which Sharon and Dave know each other or have seen each other in passing.

Figure 2.1 shows two vignette examples for the Friends and the Stranger relationship type. In the Friends scenario Dave and Sharon met on holiday and remained in contact, thereafter engaging in the usual activities two friends might enjoy together. In the Stranger scenario, Dave and Sharon do not know each other; they have only laid eyes on each other on public transport as a result of their commutes being similar.

In the Stranger scenario, two sentences were added in order to introduce the idea that Dave has somehow elicited Sharon's phone number, despite the two having never spoken to each other. This might suggest to the

reader that Dave has gone to some effort to obtain this information through means other than asking Sharon directly. By making phone calls to Sharon, he may be letting her know that he has her number, and this is likely to provoke within her a level of fear and uncertainty.

Stalkers often engage in behaviours such as gift giving, making unsolicited phone calls, and not respecting their target's privacy (Sheridan & Davies, 2001a). The perpetrator may feel the need to maintain control over their target by knowing who they are with and what they are doing at all times. Leaving gifts for the target to find on their doorstep can be a way of communicating to the target that they are being monitored. A stalker who is a friend may be more likely to call their target, simply by virtue of having ready access to the target's contact details. A stalker who is a relative stranger to their target may initially return to places he has previously bumped into or seen his target. In the case of the Stranger stalking scenario, Dave might be perceived as The Incompetent Suitor – someone who is lonely, and desires a date or short-term sexual relationship, whilst in the Friends scenario, Dave might be perceived as The Intimacy Seeking Stalker – someone who is lonely and desires an emotional connection and an intimate relationship (Mullen, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999).



Friend

Dave and Sharon have been friends for 6 years. They met on holiday and found out they actually lived quite close to each other. They meet up every two weeks or so for dinner and to have a catch up. However, recently Sharon has noticed that Dave asks to meet up much more frequently, even when Sharon tells him she's quite busy he insists that she make time to see him. She thought little of this at first – perhaps Dave was having a hard time and needed a friend. Since they last met up Sharon has received approximately 50 texts about 20 calls per day from Dave. Sharon has spoken to Dave on the phone and asked him to stop calling and texting her so much as she's unable to respond to so many texts and calls at work and finds it distracting, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's even threatened to harm himself if they don't meet up soon. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work insisting on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns home Dave has always left a voicemail on her home phone number asking her to call him and let him know where she's been and who she's been with, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Stranger

Dave and Sharon often see each other on the same bus to work but have never spoken or sat near each other. Sharon much prefers to read a book or play on her phone on her journey to work than talk to anyone. However, recently Sharon has noticed that Dave will move from his usual seat when she gets on the bus in order to sit closer to her. The other day Dave did actually sit next to her, although they still did not speak. She thought little of this behaviour at first – perhaps Dave wanted to start a conversation but was a bit awkward. One morning Dave got off the bus at the same stop where Sharon usually alights. Since then Dave has been alighting at Sharon's stop every day and walking behind Sharon as she makes her way to work. Sharon has also received approximately 50 texts and about 20 calls per day from a number she doesn't recognise. Each time she answers the person on the other end of the line hangs up. One day she calls the number back, and a man answers – he explains he's Dave, the man from the bus. Sharon asks Dave how he got her number but he doesn't give a straight answer. She asks him to stop calling and texting her so much, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's even threatened to harm himself if she doesn't answer his calls. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work insisting on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns she always finds further gifts from Dave on her doorstep, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Figure 2.1 Two vignettes as examples for the victim-perpetrator relationship manipulation; Friends scenario (left) and Stranger scenario (right).

Victim and Perpetrator Blame Scale (VPBS)

This 14-item scale was originally developed by Sleath and Bull (2010) to assess attributions of responsibility to victim and perpetrator in rape scenarios. Scott et al. (2014) adapted it to stalking scenarios (see Appendix 2.4) and subjected the scale to a Principal component analysis, which identified two factors: victim responsibility (consisting of 5 items) and perpetrator responsibility (consisting of 4 items). Examples of items from the VPBS are: 'How much do you blame the perpetrator for what happened?' (i.e. perpetrator blame) and 'How much do you consider the situation to be the target's fault?' (i.e. victim blame). One item relating to

target responsibility was removed prior for the purposes of the current study, prior to data collection, as it was not felt to be relevant to the study's hypotheses. Each item is scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely). The reliability analysis indicated Cronbach's alpha level of α=.56 and α=.50 for the victim and perpetrator responsibility sub-scale respectively. Removal of one item from each sub-scale significantly improved both Cronbach's alpha levels. Hence six of the original items were retained for the purposes of the current study: the victim responsibility subscale consisted of 3 items (α= .84), the perpetrator responsibility subscale consisted of 3 items (α= .81). Victim blame was calculated by adding together participant scores on three items of the VPBS. Similarly, perpetrator blame was also calculated by adding together scores on three items of the VPBS; higher values of both indicate stronger blame.

The Stalking Myth Scale (SMS)

Originally conceived by Sinclair (2006), the SMS is used to measure participants' endorsement of stalking myths (see Appendix 2.5). The scale is composed of 21 items (α= .78 in the present study) which participants respond to on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Examples of items from the SMS include: 'People tend to exaggerate how much stalking affects them'. This measure is positively correlated with established measures used to gauge endorsement of interpersonal violence and rape myths, thus evidencing

its convergent validity (Criss & Sinclair, 2005). After relevant reverse scoring, mean scores were computed; higher values indicate higher tendency to endorse stalking myth.

Procedure

The information provided to participants prior to starting the study was purposefully ambiguous and did not mention the word "stalking". This was in an effort to ensure that participant's study responses were not influenced by what they read about the study prior to participating. Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study in the debrief (see Appendix 2.6) which was presented to them at the end of the study.

Specially created social media accounts were used to recruit participants. Giving access to direct links to the study meant that participants retained their anonymity. Each participant was asked to complete the questionnaire in a quiet space with no distractions. The online study began by presenting the participant with an information sheet (see Appendix 2.7) and a consent form (see Appendix 2.8; including information about their right to withdraw from the study at any point). Once informed consent had been attained, participants were randomly allocated to a condition. In order to be randomly allocated the participants were required to click on one of five black outlined squares. Depending on which square the participant clicked on, they were directed to one of five questionnaires, each of which represented a different study condition (exposure to a specific vignette). This method was used to enable the

randomisation of participants into conditions as the Bristol Online Survey web-based survey service (BOS-survey) does not include random participant allocation as a feature. In a new screen, participants were required to enter a code so that their data would be identifiable to them should they wish to withdraw from the study.

Next, the vignette was presented (example shown in Figure 2.1), followed by the VPBS, and on the next page, the SMS. The presentation order was such that participants' responses on the SMS were unlikely to be influenced by their having already responded to the VPBS items. There were five different vignettes, one for each condition of the study. Participants were asked to carefully read the vignette, and then to respond to the questions that followed the vignette.

Questions regarding the participant's demographics (age, gender, relationship status, and occupation) appeared at the end of the questionnaire. The study was advertised to take no more than approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, however no time constraint was imposed. Once completed, the anonymised data were initially stored on the BOS-survey software. When all the data had been collected they were exported to a password-protected folder on the investigator's laptop.

Statistical analyses

All analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 25). Data obtained from individuals who identified themselves as a gender other than male or female were excluded as they are not of interest within the stipulated

hypotheses. The normality of the outcome variables was checked visually using histograms and Q-Q plots and exploring Skewness and Kurtosis values and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. Victim, perpetrator blame and myth endorsement were not-normally distributed (KS test p's < 0.001) and Skewness and Kurtosis values outside the acceptable ranges. Given that the data was not normally distributed, non-parametric analyses were conducted to explore the hypotheses and mean rank values were presented; however, means and standard deviation values were also presented for descriptive purposes and ease of interpretation. Kruskal-Wallis tests explored the impact of relationship type on victim and perpetrator blaming; Spearman's rho correlational analyses explored the relationship between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame; Mann-Whitney U tests explored gender differences in stalking myth endorsement, victim and perpetrator blame. For the purpose of controlling for covariates (Hypothesis 5; hierarchical regression analyses) and to explore interaction effects (Hypothesis 6), linear regression analyses were conducted with victim and perpetrator blame as the outcome variables. These are more robust towards the violation of non-normality; yet, the results should be interpreted with caution due to non-normal distribution of the outcome variables. For all SPSS output, see Appendix 2.9.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 2.1 outlines the participants' characteristics. The majority of participants were between 18-35 years; there were no gender differences in age, $\chi2(3) = 1.24$, $p = 0.744$. The majority of participants (82.1%) were in some sort of relationship (relationship, married, cohabiting) and there were no gender differences, $\chi2(1) = 0.70$, $p = 0.403$. Occupation-wise, the majority of participants (71.2%) were either students or worked within healthcare, public service/charity/social work, or teaching and education. There was a significant gender difference in occupations, $\chi2(4) = 15.57$, $p = .004$. There were significantly more female than male students and more male than female healthcare workers. The full table of all occupation groups can be found in Appendix 2.10

Table 2.1

Participant characteristics.

Characteristics	**Whole sample**	**Gender**		***p* value**
	N = 340	**Males (N=60)**	**Females (N=280)**	
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	
Age (years)				.744
18-26	151 (44.4)	24 (40.0)	127 (45.4)	
27-35	101 (29.7)	18 (30.0)	83 (29.6)	
36-44	35 (10.3)	6 (10.0)	29 (10.4)	
45+	53 (15.6)	12 (20.0)	41 (14.6)	
Relationship status				.403
Single	60 (17.9)	15 (25.0)	84 (30.4)	
Non-single	276 (82.1)	45 (75.0)	192 (69.6)	

Occupation				.004
Student	85 (25.0)	6 (10.0)	79 (28.2)	
Healthcare	71 (20.9)	22 (36.7)	49 (17.5)	
Public service/Charity/Social Work	34 (10.0)	7 (11.7)	27 (9.6)	
Teaching and Education	52 (15.3)	9 (15.0)	43 (15.4)	
Other	98 (28.8)	16 (26.7)	82 (29.3)	

Victim and perpetrator blame by relationship type vignette

Hypothesis 1: The more intimate the relationship, the more the victim will be blamed

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to establish whether the relationship type between the victim and perpetrator impacted on the extent to which the victim was blamed. The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was no statistically significant difference in victim blame between the different relationship types, $\chi^2(4) = 8.668$, $p = .070$. Table 2.2 shows the mean and SD values for victim blame by all five relationship types, with a small tendency for victim blame to be highest in the acquaintance relationship type and lowest in the ex-intimate relationship type.

Table 2.2

Mean (SD)/ Mean rank victim blame scores by relationship type.

Relationship type	**Mean victim blame** M (SD)/ Mean rank
Stranger (N=67)	3.99 (2.05)/ 158.58
Acquaintance (N=67)	4.64 (2.22)/ 195.93

Friend (N=65)	4.08 (1.87)/ 165.54
Ex-intimate (N=72)	3.90 (1.65)/ 159.92
Intimate (N=69)	4.35 (2.36)/ 173.09

Hypothesis 2: The more intimate the relationship, the less the perpetrator will be blamed

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was also no statistically significant difference in perpetrator blame between the different relationship types, $\chi^2(4) = 3.544$, $p = .471$. Table 2.3 shows the mean and SD values for perpetrator blame by all five relationship types.

Table 2.3

Mean (SD)/ Mean rank perpetrator blame scores by relationship type.

Relationship type	**Mean perpetrator blame** M (SD)/ Mean rank
Stranger (N=67)	19.60 (2.18)/ 176.58
Acquaintance (N=67)	19.85 (2.07)/ 185.63
Friend (N=65)	19.38 (2.20)/ 165.88
Ex-intimate (N=72)	18.92 (3.21)/ 162.24
Intimate (N=69)	19.23 (2.35)/ 162.87

Victim and perpetrator blame and stalking myth endorsement

Hypothesis 3: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with increased victim blame across all relationship types

Spearman's rho correlational analyses were conducted to assess the associations between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame. These

analyses were conducted with the overall sample to assess the general association between these two variables. Further, these were conducted by relationship type to explore whether the relationship (strength/ direction/significance) between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame changes within the conditions. Table 2.4 depicts the correlation between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame overall and by relationship type. The analyses indicated that stalking myth endorsement and victim blame were significantly positively correlated within the overall sample, r = .448, p < .001. Respondents who endorsed more stalking myths were more likely to blame the victim to a greater extent. Analysing these associations by relationship type, the associations were similar for all types; slightly stronger in the acquaintance, friend, ex-intimate conditions (rs = .524, .526, .505, all ps < .001, respectively) than in the stranger and intimate conditions (rs = .391, .382, both ps < .01).

Table 2.4

Spearman's rho correlation coefficients between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame.

Variable	**Stalking myth endorsement**
Overall sample (N=340)	.448***
Relationship type	
Stranger (N=67)	.391**
Acquaintance (N=67)	.524***
Friend (N=65)	.526***
Ex-intimate (N=72)	.505***
Intimate (N=69)	.382**

Note. ***p < .001;**p < .01; *p < .05

Hypothesis 4: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with decreased perpetrator blame across all relationship types

Table 2.5 depicts the correlation between stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame overall and by relationship type. The analyses indicated that stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame were significantly negatively correlated within the overall sample, r = -.361, p < .001. Respondents who endorsed more stalking myths were less likely to blame the perpetrator. Analysing these associations by relationship type, the associations were fairly similar among four of the relationship types; strongest in the friend condition (r = -.530, p < .001) and similar strength of associations. In the stranger, ex-intimate and intimate relationship types (rs = -.354, -.404, -.377, all ps < .01, respectively); there was no significant association in the acquaintance condition (r = -.139, p = .262).

Table 2.5

Spearman's rho correlation coefficients between stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame.

Variable	**Stalking myth endorsement**
Overall sample (N=340)	-.361***
Relationship type	
Stranger (N=67)	-.354**
Acquaintance (N=67)	-.139
Friend (N=65)	-.530***
Ex-intimate (N=72)	-.404***
Intimate (N=69)	-.377**

Note. ***p < .001;**p < .01; *p < .05

Gender and victim and perpetrator blame and stalking myth endorsement

Hypothesis 5: Males, as compared to females, will endorse more stalking myths, and blame the victim more and the perpetrator less

Three Mann-Whitney U tests were carried out in order to explore whether males and females differ in their level of stalking myth endorsement, victim and perpetrator blame. The analyses revealed that there was a gender difference in stalking myth endorsement, U = 6531.50, p = .007. Males endorsed more stalking myths (Mean rank = 201.64) compared to females (Mean rank = 163.83). Figure 2.2 depicts the mean stalking myth endorsement by gender (mean values for descriptive purposes). There was no difference in victim blame nor perpetrator blame between males and females, U = 8094.50, p = .610 and U = 7820.50, p = .355, respectively.

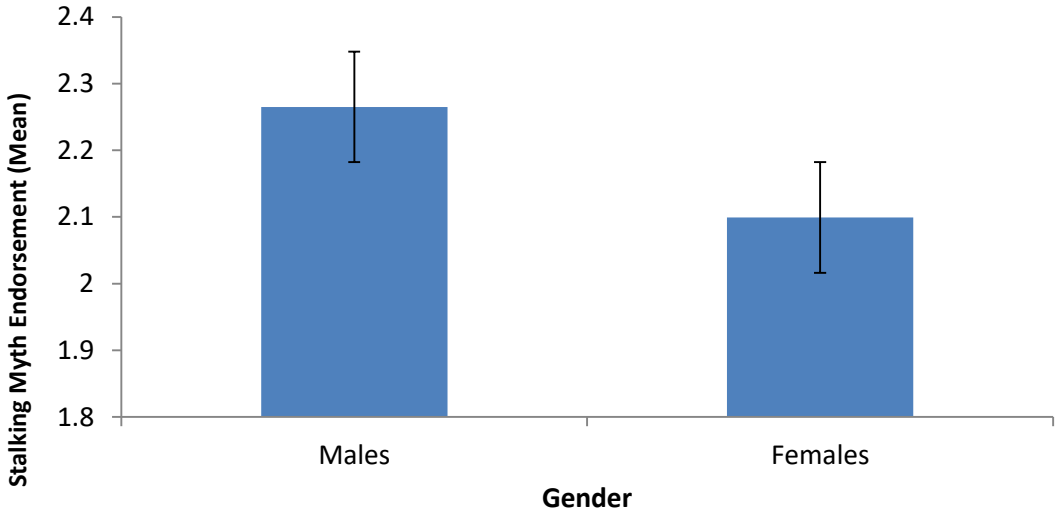


Figure 2.2 Mean stalking myth endorsement by gender (error bars represent standard error of the mean).

Two linear hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to explore whether including stalking myth endorsement as a covariate would potentially change the relationship between gender and victim and perpetrator blame. Model 1 for both victim and perpetrator blame included only gender as a predictor variable and Model 2 included stalking myth endorsement as a covariate. The analyses revealed that for victim blame, Model 1 was not significant, $F(1,338) = 0.107$, $p = .744$ (gender was not a significant predictor of victim blame, $b = -0.095$, $p = .744$). Model 2 was significant, $F(2,337) = 43.175$, $p < .001$, which was driven by the significant prediction of stalking myth endorsement ($b = 1.750$, $p < .001$); yet, gender did not significantly predict victim blame ($b = 0.195$, $p = .458$). Likewise, for perpetrator blame, Model 1 was not significant, $F(1,338) = 0.826$, $p = .364$ (gender was not a significant predictor of perpetrator blame, $b = -0.318$, $p = .364$). Model 2 was significant, $F(2,337) = 18.879$, $p < .001$, which was driven by the significant prediction of stalking myth endorsement ($b = -1.459$, $p < .001$); yet, gender did not significantly predict perpetrator blame ($b = -0.560$, $p = .095$).

Hypothesis 6: Stalking myth endorsement predicts victim and perpetrator blame, respectively, more strongly in males than in females

To explore whether stalking myth endorsement predicts both victim and perpetrator blame more strongly among the gender, two linear regression analyses were conducted with an interaction term (gender x stalking myth

endorsement). The interaction term allows to further explore the effect of myth endorsement on victim/perpetrator blame (which was established to exist) depending on the level of the independent variable, gender. Previous research has established that males endorse more stalking myths and as a result blame the victim more and the perpetrator less than females; hence, there is rationale for exploring gender differences in these relationships. Hypothesis 5 controlled for myth endorsement when exploring the impact of gender on blaming, given the impact of myth endorsement on blaming; however, Hypothesis 6 explores whether the associations between myth endorsement and blaming is differentially strong among men and women. Regression analyses with the interaction term revealed that there was no significant interaction between gender and stalking myth endorsement on either victim or perpetrator blame, b = -0.057, p = .918 and b = -0.460, p = .514, respectively.

Discussion

The current study aimed to extend stalking research into the association between victim-perpetrator relationship type and victim blame, and to examine the contribution of stalking myth endorsement to the variation in victim blame. Gender differences in stalking myth endorsement were also investigated.

The results of the current study showed that there was no significant difference in victim or perpetrator blame between the different relationship types and that respondents who endorsed more stalking

myths blamed the victim significantly more and the perpetrator significantly less than respondents who endorsed fewer myths. This positive correlation between victim blame and myth endorsement was particularly strong in the acquaintance, friend and ex-intimate conditions, whilst the negative correlation between perpetrator blame and myth endorsement was strongest in the friend condition. Males endorsed more stalking myths than females but there was no significant difference in victim or perpetrator blame between males and females.

Relationship type in relation to victim and perpetrator blaming

Results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in victim or perpetrator blaming across relationship types, suggesting that relationship type does not impact victim blaming.

These findings are at odds with previous studies. Existing research finds victims to be blamed significantly more and perpetrators significantly less when the perpetrator and victim are said to be in an intimate or ex-intimate relationship, in comparison to when they are strangers (James & Farnham, 2003; Palarea, Zona, Lane & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Sheridan et al., 2003). However, previous research has not explored five different relationship types, leaving the available literature patchy in its understanding of how these variables apply to relationships falling outside of the stranger, ex-intimate, and intimate classifications.

It is often the case that crimes committed within a domestic relationship are minimized or the blame differently apportioned, in particular when participants have taken the perspective of the perpetrator (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005) but also on occasion by individuals classed as 'informal support' to the victim (Weisz, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Black, 2007; Moe, 2007), and even by the victim herself (Weiss, 2009). An example of this is in the case of intimate partner rape which is perceived by some as less psychologically harmful to the victim than stranger rape (Monson, Byrd, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996; Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993). The JWH (Lerner & Simmons, 1966) is purported to explain this phenomenon as it suggests that everyone has a vested interest in the belief in a just world. In stalking cases this is manifested in victims being blamed more when they are known to their perpetrators as the belief is that the victim must have done something to deserve being stalked, whilst a victim who is a stranger to her perpetrator cannot have done anything prior to being stalked to have deserved her victimization (Sheridan et al., 2003).

Although much of the stalking perception literature relates its findings back to the JWH, there are currently no stalking perception studies that employ a measure of BJW. Future stalking perception research might consider using a measure of BJW in order to better understand how it interacts with other outcome measures of interest.

If the results of previous studies had been replicated, the current study would expect to see victims in the intimate condition blamed the most and perpetrators blamed the least, with victim blame progressively decreasing and perpetrator blame progressively increasing in line with decreasing relationship intimacy. There are several possible explanations as to why the findings are inconsistent with the literature.

Firstly, the vignettes differed in ways other than the intended manipulation. Specifically, in three of the conditions (intimate, ex-intimate, acquaintance), Dave threatens to harm *Sharon*, whilst in the remaining two conditions (friend, stranger), Dave threatens to harm *himself*. Where Dave is threatening to harm Sharon, he is inducing a fear of violence in his victim; one of the main criteria for stalking in UK law (Section 4A of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012; CPS, 2018). Dave threatening to harm himself is unlikely to be perceived to be as threatening as Dave threatening to harm Sharon. Therefore, in the conditions in which Dave is threatening to harm himself, one might expect the victim to be blamed more as the respondent may empathise with the perpetrator, whilst in the conditions in which Dave is threatening to harm Sharon, she is likely to be blamed less as participants may empathise more with her fear. However, the current study found no significant differences in victim or perpetrator blame across the conditions.

On closer exploration of the vignette scenarios it became evident that in the acquaintance vignette, Sharon voluntarily provides her phone number

to Dave and she did not initially explicitly refuse his advances. Sharon's actions in this scenario may have led participants to believe that Sharon failed to be clear with Dave about her intentions and wishes to be left alone. Using this as justification, it is possible that the participants identified some of Sharon's actions to be a cause of Dave's, and therefore placed more blame on the victim and less on the perpetrator. This might explain why there was a tendency for victim blame to be relatively higher in the acquaintance condition as opposed to the intimate condition, as suggested in previous research. These differences introduced into the vignettes could potentially be a major issue in this study and act as confounding variables; it is unknown to what extent these might have affected victim and perpetrator blame. Future research is warranted that carefully controls for the intended manipulation within the relationship type conditions (i.e. omitting the extraneous variables) and includes all five relationship types in order to extend current knowledge within this field of research.

Police and those within the criminal justice system must be careful not to base their decisions too heavily on the type of relationship between the victim and perpetrator. Members of the public should be sure to report stalking behaviour whether or not the relationship between victim and perpetrator falls into one of the categories identified here.

Findings from the current study suggest that neither victims nor perpetrators should expect to be blamed differently depending on their

relationship status. However, existing research suggests the opposite; that victims are more likely to be blamed as relationship intimacy increases, hence the current results should be interpreted with caution, especially considering the significant limitations identified.

Stalking myth endorsement in relation to perpetrator and victim blaming

Analyses revealed that respondents who endorsed more stalking myths were significantly more likely to blame the victim and less likely to blame the perpetrator. This was the case for all relationship types (with the exception that in the acquaintance condition there was no significant association between stalking myth endorsement and perpetrator blame). This finding is consistent with existing research in the fields of both rape and stalking (Grubb & Turner, 2012; Lippman & Ward, 2014; McKeon et al., 2015; Sinclair, 2012; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

The research on stalking myths is currently limited, but they are understood to bias law enforcement and criminal justice systems such that perpetrators are given lighter sentences than stipulated within legal guidelines (Dunlap et al., 2015). The widespread endorsement of stalking myths may be at least partly responsible for the lack of initial reporting to authorities, as well as the poor handling by police of potential stalking cases, and the low conviction rates. Given Kamphuis et al.'s (2005) suggestion that individual attitudes towards stalking make the most significant contribution to variance in judgements, and Lippman and Ward's (2014) finding that increased myth endorsement is associated

with both increased stalking perpetration amongst men and increased victimization amongst women, the positive correlation between myth acceptance and victim blaming identified in the current study is perturbing.

The media appears to have made a significant contribution to the marked societal ambivalence towards stalking, as well as the lack of understanding and awareness. An analysis of 51 films in which stalking was the salient theme found that stalkers were commonly portrayed in films as mentally disturbed strangers, and behaviours which would constitute stalking within the legal framework are depicted as romantic gestures (Schultz et al., 2013). The demonstrations of "romance" might include, but are not limited to, leaving flowers and chocolates on the target's doorstep, throwing stones at the target's window, following the target whilst trying to initiate conversation in public, pursuing the target despite initial rejection, and persistently trying to make phone contact with the target. Taken individually, these acts may seem innocuous however when all enacted within a short space of time they are likely to fall into the legal definition of stalking (CPS, 2018). The news media leads us to believe that stalking victimization is the territory of the rich and famous – the stalking of Hollywood celebrities and other public figures – singer Lily Allen, for example – more readily makes the front pages of the newspapers than the stalking of a member of the general public. It is hardly surprising that with all these external influences, the general public's perceptions are worryingly misinformed (Spitzberg & Cadiz,

2002). A lack of awareness and/or understanding places potential victims of stalking in a position where their disclosures may not be believed or taken seriously, that is if they disclose at all. If an initial disclosure by the victim to an informal support receives a negative response, such as disbelief or minimization, the victim may be dissuaded from seeking help from formal sources. Ultimately, a lack of understanding and a belief in the pervasive misperceptions associated with stalking can cause victims to doubt themselves and their experiences and deter them from seeking help (Sheridan, 2005).

The analyses revealed that the SMS positively correlated with the victim blame scale and negatively correlated with the perpetrator blame scale. This opposite pattern would be expected as victim blame and perpetrator blame somewhat present opposing attributions and hence would negatively correlate (findings that were confirmed in the present study). However, on closer examination of the SMS, it was noted that while it examines the level of myth endorsement it does not distinguish between myths relating to the victim and myths relating to the perpetrator; it incorporates stalking myths which relate to *both* the victim and the perpetrator which might impact relationships with the blame scales (nevertheless, the present findings support that myth endorsement excuses the perpetrator and places further responsibility on the victim). The present study attempted to subdivide the myth endorsement scale using factor analysis, which however did not reveal a clear neat factor solution and hence could not be utilised to distinguish the myth

endorsement aspects in the analyses. Subsequently sub-dividing the two distinct myth endorsement dimensions based on subjective computation of the items did not change the findings between myth endorsement in relation to victim and perpetrator blame. These findings using this specific myth endorsement inventory might need to be interpreted with caution due to the measure's inability to capture the two dimensions: perpetrator-related myths and victim-related myths. In fact, this has been previously criticised by McKeon et al. (2015) who highlighted that the specific myths in the questionnaire are linked to attributions about both perpetrators and victims and hence represent an overall index of "stalking myths". This generates a unidimensional construct whereas the measure potentially consists of multiple dimensions. McKeon (2010) developed the Stalking Related Attitudes Questionnaire (SRAQ) and factor analysis with this questionnaire revealed three underlying stalking-related attitudes named "stalking is not serious", "stalking is romantic", "victims are to blame", from which it is clear that the first two factors are associated with perpetrator-related myth and the latter one with victim-related myth. Future research is warranted that further explores the extent to which myth endorsement might impact victim and perpetrator blame using the specific sub-scales in the respective myth endorsement scale.

Gender and stalking myth endorsement, victim and perpetrator blame.

Analyses indicated that males endorse stalking myths significantly more than females, but that there is no significant difference in the extent to

which males and females blame the victim in the vignettes. It seems likely that this finding reflects the concept of the Stalking Myth Scale as an implicit measure of victim blaming, and the Victim Perpetrator Blame Scale as a more explicit measure. In other words, males appear to believe more misperceptions relating to stalking victims, which should lead them to blame the victim to a greater extent than women (McKeon et al., 2015). The explicit nature of the VPBS which straightforwardly asks participants whether or not they blame the victim may have led to socially desirable responding on the part of male participants. Consequently, their victim blame responses are not in line with the anticipated pattern given their level of myth endorsement. A body of research into how attitudes guide behaviours has revealed that there sometimes exists an inconsistency between implicit beliefs and explicit behaviours (Zanna & Fazio, 1982). According to the Motivation and Opportunity as Determinants model (MODE; Fazio, 1990), measures of implicit attitude assess initial perceptions, whilst measures of explicit attitude assess subsequent, considered, and potentially deliberate perceptions. Hence, implicit measures show better reflections of the actual evaluative components stored in memory. It would be of interest to explore the extent of this discrepancy between implicit and explicit attitudes towards blame in stalking cases and whether there might be potential gender differences in this discrepancy.

Research in the field of sexual offending suggests that individuals who endorse rape myths typically blame the victim of rape to a greater extent

than individuals who dismiss rape myths as just that, i.e. myths (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Grubb & Turner, 2012). However, in the current study when males are asked explicitly whether or not they blame the victim, they may be responding desirably rather than honestly. This may be a result of increased media coverage of cases in which female victims are blamed for being sexually assaulted or otherwise victimised. A prime example of this is the comment made by a police officer which eventually became the catalyst for the SlutWalk Movement. In his address to Law students in 2011, a Toronto policeman stated; "…women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimised". The comment sparked outrage amongst feminists the world over as a result of the message it appeared to be sending – namely, that the responsibility for being the victim of rape falls to the victims as opposed to the rapists. The SlutWalk Movement shed light on a deeply entrenched victim-blaming culture and helped to raise awareness of its wider societal implications. The message that it is wrong to blame victims of crime for their victimisation has since spread through the media and is likely to have altered men's perceptions of what is and what is not acceptable in relation to victim blaming. Numerous similar victim-blaming comments have been made since 2011 – a quick Google of "victim blaming in news media" returns 11.4 billion results (correct as of 27/01/2020) – but these remarks could alternatively be interpreted as poorly worded attempts to suggest that certain contexts are likely to imply vulnerability in a rapist's mind.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations which need to be acknowledged. The differences in the vignettes whereby in some conditions Dave threatened to harm *Sharon* and in others he threatened to harm *himself* may have affected the analysis and outcomes of the study. Participants who were randomly assigned to the intimate, ex-intimate and acquaintance conditions would have read that Dave threatened to harm Sharon, whilst participants in the friend and stranger conditions would have read that Dave threatened to harm himself. In the conditions in which Dave threated to harm Sharon it is likely that participants believed Sharon to be in greater danger of physical violence than the other conditions. This may have lead participants to empathise more so with Sharon, whilst in conditions in which Dave threatens to harm himself, they may have felt more compassion towards Dave and potentially attribute underlying mental health issues. There was lack of a significant difference in victim and perpetrator blaming between the relationship types. No proper analyses were conducted to test for the impact of the threat target (i.e. Sharon vs himself) on blaming, as these were deemed inappropriate due to the deliberate differences in the vignettes (resulting in confounding factors); yet, the findings suggest that differing empathy levels for Sharon and Dave as a result of the different threats made by Dave were not translated into differences in how blame was apportioned. At present there is no evidence to suggest that perpetrators' threats of self-harm impacts the association between relationship types and blame. However, studies have found that overall, victims are blamed more when their

stalker is an ex-intimate partner as opposed to a stranger (e.g. Sheridan et al., 2003). This pattern endures even when the perpetrator is violent towards the victim (Scott, Lloyd, & Gavin, 2010) despite the fact that ex-intimate partners are more likely to be violent towards their victims than former acquaintances or strangers (Sheridan & Davies, 2001). It is possible therefore that the additional information in the vignettes relating to Dave's threats did not impact on the study outcomes and that participants consistently believed Sharon to be less blameworthy than Dave. This finding may indicate that participants in the current study were on the whole less vulnerable to common misperceptions relating to the relationship between victim and perpetrator, simply believing that the victim is never to blame.

An additional limitation was that the acquaintance vignette portrays Sharon as encouraging rather than discouraging Dave's behaviour – she willingly provides him with her phone number when asked and was not explicit about her desire for Dave to leave her alone at the first opportunity. This is different to all other vignettes and might have impacted the results. In a study examining how third-parties apportion blame to a victim and perpetrator in sexual assault scenarios, Perilloux, Duntley, and Buss (2014) found that two of the main reasons participants were motivated to assign blame to the victim were 'victim did not resist enough' and 'victim sent mixed messages'. In the acquaintance condition there was a tendency for the victim to be blamed to a greater extent than in all the other conditions (despite lack of significance); future studies

reducing the impact of possible confounding variables need to be conducted to explore differences in blaming and also to what extent victim behaviour might impact blaming.

Further, several other factors might have impacted participants' perceptions of stalking, such as prior exposure to and experience of stalking – either being a victim or perpetrator themselves or knowing someone who has been. However, whilst common sense dictates that individuals with prior exposure to stalking will perceive stalking differently to individual who have never been previously been exposed to it, Phillips et al. (2004) did not find a relationship between prior experience as a stalking victim and perceptions of stalking. Similar findings have been observed in the sexual assault victimisation literature (e.g. Stockdale, O'Conor, Gutek, & Geer, 2002), indicating that controlling for prior exposure in the current study may not have impacted on the study outcomes, as is likely to have been anticipated.

Finally, the participant gender split in the current study was uneven, with far more females than males, and very few participants who identified as trans/non-binary. However, the finding within the current study that men endorse more stalking myths than women is supported by existing research (Dunlap et al., 2015) indicating that the relatively small number of male participants did not impact on the study outcomes. The other gender-related outcome of the current study was the finding that there was no significant difference between the extent to which males and

females blame the victim. This finding differs to those of existing research which suggests a tendency for men to make judgements in support of the perpetrator (Dunlap, Hodell, Golding, & Wasarhaley, 2012), i.e. blaming the perpetrator less and the victim more. Dunlap et al. (2012) cite the defensive attribution hypothesis (Shaver, 1970) as an explanation for this phenomenon. The findings from the current study were not in line with this hypothesis or the existing research, and this may be due to the uneven participant gender split. Although some inferences can be drawn from the results pertaining to respondent gender, these would need further investigation using a more proportionately gendered sample.

A wider issue with these types of studies is the way in which relationships are categorised. Reasons for categorisation of relationship types are manifold and for the present study included keeping definitions clear, ensuring a replicable methodology, and enabling the use of quantitative analysis techniques. In reality, social relationships are much more complex and therefore more difficult to label than "stranger", "ex-intimate", etcetera. For example, an individual might stay in touch and on good terms with their ex-partner, at which point the ex-partner becomes a friend. With the passage of time and loss of contact their relationship might transform again as they become strangers to each other (Foley & Fraser, 1998; Guerrero & Mongeau, 2008). These complexities are challenging to translate into short text-based vignettes, and therefore relationships within quantitative research are typically categorised as they were in the current study. The need to represent a complex social

scenario within a brief paragraph of text can result in responses which do not reflect real-life decision making since they are founded on very limited, laboratory-based information (Barter & Renold, 1999), hence reducing ecological validity. There are only a small number of stalking studies which do not employ a vignette methodology and whose participants are victims of stalking (Palarea et al., 1999; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Sheridan & Lyndon, 2012). Sheridan and Davies' (2001) study, for example, comprised of 95 predominantly female victims of stalking who were split into three relationship categories – ex-intimates, former acquaintances, strangers – according to their experience of stalking victimisation. They found that stranger stalkers were more likely than any other type of stalker to be convicted of stalking offences, even though ex-intimate partner stalkers were found to be most aggressive, intrusive and threatening, and assaultive of other parties besides their primary target. This study indicates that results from vignette studies can be replicated when participants are victims of stalking. However, further research is necessary to gain a more in-depth understanding of the real world applicability of the findings from vignette studies. Further research could also inform how vignette studies should be designed in future in order to reproduce realistic scenarios as far as possible.

Implications

The findings that stalking myth endorsement is higher amongst men than women, and that myth endorsement influences the extent to which

victims and perpetrators are blamed highlights the need for more, and more effective, awareness campaigns, training and education about stalking and the dangers of it amongst laypeople.

If police officers with prior experience of working on stalking cases still perceive stranger stalker scenarios to be more like "real" stalking than acquaintance or ex-intimate stalker scenarios then it is hardly surprising that misperceptions about stalking are rife amongst the general public (Weller et al., 2012). Logan et al. (2006) found that although over 75% of representatives from the criminal justice system and victim services reported a belief that women in domestically abusive intimate relationships had experienced stalking, less than 40% of the criminal justice representatives and less than 25% of the victim services representatives believed that the women were able recognise the behaviour as stalking. This finding is particularly disturbing in light of research which suggests intimate partner stalking as a risk factor for further assault and fatality (Logan, Shannon, & Walker, 2005).

As detailed earlier, Scott et al. (2013) found that specialist police officers were more likely than non-specialist officers to believe that a hypothetical stalking incident required police intervention. They were also less likely to blame the victim. In this study, specialist officers had served for longer in the police force, had more extensive experience of investigating cases of harassment and had received training in stalking. Although the study does not identify the individual contribution of training to variance in outcome

measures, it indicates that training may play a role in improving understanding of the crime of stalking and thereby reduce the belief in stalking myths. Overall, however, the research to date reports mixed results in relation to the effectiveness of training. Lonsway, Welch, and Fitzgerald (2001) found that the training of police officers working with victims of sexual assault improved behavioural outcomes but did not alter police cognitions or attitudes, whilst Sleath and Bull (2012) found no significant effect of training on police levels of victim blaming. They suggest that the effects of the training program may not have been captured by the outcome measures they used. Conversely, however, Harmon, O'Connor, Forcier, and Collins (2004) found that a day-long anti-stalking training program delivered to individuals working in victims services was of some benefit to the trainees, despite the cohort having a sufficient foundation of knowledge on the subject of stalking prior to the training. This indicates that others with a more limited comprehension stand to gain significantly from similar training.

Other studies have found experience to be a key component in improving knowledge and understanding of stalking. Lynch and Logan (2015) found that police officers with prior experience of working on stalking cases were significantly more likely to recognise the dangerousness of stalking compared to officers with no prior experience, whilst Weller et al. (2012) found that experienced police officers attributed less blame to the victim than officers without prior experience. Despite this, even those officers with experience in Weller et al.'s (2012) study felt the stranger stalker

scenario constituted stalking to a greater extent than the ex-intimate or acquaintance conditions.

Miller's (2001) national review of stalking laws and implementation practices acknowledges that training on stalking amongst police forces in the United States of America is inadequate. Meanwhile, Scott et al. (2010) reference a 'personal communication' with L. Sheridan in May 2010 who reported that training programs are being developed to address pervasive misperceptions about stalking held by police in the UK. However, a recent qualitative study which sought to understand victims' experiences of reporting stalking to the police in the UK found that participants perceived police to have responded inadequately. Participants also reported being made to feel responsible and not being taken seriously (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). The authors call for clarification of UK legislation and for police training to be focused on the psychological impact on the victim as opposed to perpetrators' behaviour.

It is necessary to use the existing research in order to develop training programs which aim to increase knowledge and understanding of stalking and use outcome measures which effectively gauge meaningful shifts in attitude and behaviour. In order for the training to be successful, research into whether beliefs influence behaviour or vice versa may be required. Alongside training for relevant populations (i.e. victim services staff, police, probation, etc.) a widespread public awareness campaign is vital to raise awareness of stalking amongst the general population, many of

whom may already have been or are currently unwittingly victimised or at risk of victimisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study extends the existing literature, examining victim and perpetrator blame as well as stalking myth endorsement and the impact of respondent gender within five different relationship types. Some of the findings, including the effects of myth endorsement on victim and perpetrator blame, and the significant finding that men endorse more stalking myths than women, were concurrent with previous research whilst others, including the non-significance of victim and perpetrator blame across different relationship conditions, were not. Overall, there are some notable limitations to the study such as the sample's uneven gender split, potential confounding variables introduced into the vignettes, and not controlling for participants' prior exposure to or experience of stalking. Future research is warranted which further expands our understanding of the perceptions of stalking. Finally, the real world implications of the study lie within targeting education, training, and awareness campaigns as a means of increasing knowledge and understanding of stalking, both within police forces in the UK as well as amongst the general public.

Chapter Three The Vignette Methodology: A Critique

Abstract

The aim of this critique is to closely examine the effectiveness of the vignette methodology, as used in numerous previous stalking research, in yielding valid and reliable results in studies of perception. The construction of vignettes is considered in terms of their internal, external, and construct validity, as well as their reliability, relevance to the research topic and demographics of the target respondents. Several strengths of vignettes are identified, including their potential to reduce social desirability bias, good flexibility in relation to manipulating research variables, an ability to maintain adequate internal and external validity contemporaneously, and an ability to take multiple different forms in order to suit their intended purpose. Disadvantages of using this methodology are also acknowledged, and include the lack of evidence on which to comment on the reliability of vignettes and the potential for researchers to exploit the capacity for vignettes to accommodate multiple interacting variables. Additionally, as vignettes are not standardized research tools they can be poorly constructed and this may impact on the entire research study within which they are used. It is concluded that when constructed and applied effectively, vignettes can yield meaningful outcomes which have shaped and will continue to shape our understanding of the social world.

Introduction

Vignettes are a research method often used in psychological and sociological research. They typically present hypothetical but realistic scenarios which are used as stimuli for participant responses and discussion. Hughes and Huby (2002, p. 37) state that

> *Vignettes refer to text, images or other forms of stimuli to which research participants are asked to respond.*

Echoing Hughes and Huby (2002), Poulou (2001, p. 52) defines vignettes as

> *…short descriptions of hypothetical persons or situations which contain the information necessary for the respondents to base their judgements upon.*

Aguinis and Bradley (2014) state that there are two main types of experimental vignette – so called 'paper people studies' in which (i) participants read performance vignettes and then appraise the performance of the hypothetical character in the vignettes and (ii) those in which participants directly or indirectly observe the behaviours, rather than reading about them, and rate accordingly. The latter is commonly applied to research in the field of marketing as vignettes are used to capture the impact of the independent variable(s) on participants' implicit judgements and decision-making processes (Grønhøj & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Alexander and Becker (1978) suggest the use of vignettes as a more valid and reliable measure of individuals' opinions than questions

commonly found in opinion surveys. Through the use of paper people vignettes as stimuli materials, participants' perceptions, beliefs, values and impressions can be elicited (Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000). Vignettes need to be carefully devised to portray a scenario or represent a topic of interest and to elicit directed responses from respondents. The research concerned with stalking to date has typically made use of vignettes which take the form of brief paragraphs describing hypothetical stalking scenarios.

Finch (1987), who used vignettes in a study of perceptions of relationships between adult kin, noted that by giving each participant the same limited contextual information vignettes enable the comparability of their responses. Initially, vignettes were confined to particular domains of experimental social psychological research, principally mock jury decision-making studies (Visher, 1987). However, over the years the use of vignettes as an investigative method has branched out into many different fields of enquiry, for example physical health (Fetting, Siminoff, Piantadosi, Abeloff, Damron, & Sarsfield, 1990; Hughes, 1998), business, marketing and economics (Wason, Polonsky, & Hyman, 2002), sociology and social policy (Rooks, Raub, Selten, & Tazelaar, 2000), criminology (Eifler, 2007), social and experimental psychology (French, Sutton, Marteau, & Kinmonth, 2004), and education and school psychology (Baudson & Preckel, 2013).

This review examines the use of vignettes in both qualitative and quantitative empirical research and seeks to answer the question: does the use of a vignette methodology yield valid and reliable results? The vignette methodology will be critiqued according to its applicability to studies of perception, its scientific properties, and the ability of vignette studies to yield valid outcome data.

Social desirability

Unlike self-report or interview-based studies, vignettes allow researchers to negate the social desirability effect frequently observed when participants are asked to directly report their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours (Beck, 2010). Subsequently, vignettes are theorised to be particularly useful in addressing sensitive topics, such as health problems in the elderly (Brondani, MacEntee, Bryant, & O'Neill, 2008), coping strategies used by carers of the elderly (Rahman, 1996), and children's perspectives on foster care (McAuley, 1996).

In a study of attitudes towards capital punishment for juvenile offenders, Cochran, Boots and Heide (2003) found that their study generated different results when participants were asked for their own views, compared to when they were asked to respond to the same questions following presentation of a vignette detailing the prisoner's offence and other background information. Using the latter method, participants were less likely to support the death penalty. Cochran et al. (2003) hypothesised that this was because they had been privy to the

circumstantial context of the offender. In contrast, the direct questions relating to attitude could not provide this context and thus did not account for some of the factors which may underlie a person's support of capital punishment. In this particular case it would seem that a contributory factor to reducing potential social desirability effects appears to be the extent to which the respondent has empathy for the offender. Without the context there is likely to be a greater emotional distance between the respondent and the topic of interest, and hence under these conditions the death penalty is supported. The participant is more likely to disclose their real attitudes and beliefs towards the vignette under the guise of basing their opinions entirely on the hypothetical vignette narrative. Asking a respondent directly for their own views on a sensitive subject may feel unnecessarily personal and could lead to the subject believing they will be judged. Alexander and Becker (1978) argue that, at any rate, the majority of people lack insight into their own judgement-making process.

However, Chung and Monroe (2003) examined social desirability bias in relation to ethical decision-making by accountants. Participants were presented with five different vignettes describing business decisions of varying ethical correctness. Results found that participants responded in a more socially desirable way when the vignette described a more unethical scenario, though this may well just be a response to the variance in ethical practice rather than social desirability at play. However, if social desirability bias is indeed a factor in the participants' decision-making, the

study indicates that use of the vignette methodology does not entirely eradicate the effects of social desirability. On the other hand, alternative methodologies, such as focus groups and interviews, are likely to engender much greater social desirability effects as a result of social pressures and group processes (Hollander, 2004).

In light of Chung and Monroe's (2003) findings, it is possible that studies examining such an emotionally evocative topic as stalking could engender a similar difficulty in response bias. Studies such as Sheridan and Scott (2010) examine the effects of verbal and then physical abuse couched within stalking vignettes on participants' perceptions of seriousness, responsibility, and consequences in stalking situations. They found that, contrary to the large proportion of existing literature, participants judged the victim only minimally responsible when verbal or physical abuse was a feature of their victimisation, regardless of the type of relationship between victim and perpetrator. These findings could indicate that the increasing seriousness of the stalking scenarios described lead participants to respond in more socially desirable ways. Furthermore, participants in all three of Sheridan and Scott's (2010) studies read the vignettes and completed the study questionnaires whilst amongst others – either in a city centre park or following a university lecture – perhaps leading them to feel a greater social pressure in their responses. Many similar studies – including the research described in chapter two – are now disseminated via the internet which enables participants to respond

in their own time and away from others who may impact on their responses (e.g. Scott et al., 2010).

Construction of vignettes

The construction of a vignette involves careful consideration of their internal, external, and construct validity, their reliability, their relevance to the research topic of interest, and the demographics of the target respondents in the research encounter. These criteria will now be explored.

Internal validity

Vignettes are not a standardised research method, since each vignette is created specifically to satisfy the aims of one or a small number of studies. However, tests of validity can help to ensure that their construction is sound and appropriate to the purpose of the study or studies concerned.

The internal validity of vignettes refers to the extent to which their content represents the research topics in question (Gould, 1996). Internal validity has been explicitly considered in the development and construction of vignettes (Gould, 1996; Lanza & Carifio, 1992), and criticism has been directed at research papers which fail to address it. The composition of vignettes is typically informed by existing literature and previous research within the field of interest (Cheek & Jones, 2003; Levkoff & Wetle, 1989), as well as the personal and professional

experiences of the researchers, and of real-life case studies (Spratt, 2001; Scott & Rosenberg, 1998; Wilson & While, 1998; Rahman, 1996).

Vignettes are often piloted prior to their inclusion within research studies to help ensure internal validity. Sheridan et al. (2003), Scott and Gavin (2011), and Scott and Sheridan (2011), to name a few, have run pilot studies on their vignettes, and their scales, prior to presenting them to the experimental sample. The piloting process usually entails allowing an independent group of participants, drawn from a similar population from which the final sample will itself be drawn, but who will not partake in the final study, to identify any discrepancies or need for clarity in the vignettes or scales being used. Sheridan et al. (2003) used a group of 22 students to pilot their study materials, which included vignettes describing stalking scenarios, and did not find any unexpected results. Nor did the participants raise any issues with the stimulus materials. The materials used in the empirical research in chapter two were not piloted and this led to a lack of internal validity within the vignettes and likely affected the findings. Researchers are often so close to the studies they conduct that no matter how many times they read over their own materials, there may be areas of confusion or confounding variables that do not get spotted. Piloting of materials serves to counter this undesirable possibility.

Focus groups have also been used to evaluate the validity of vignettes (McKeganey, Abel, Taylor, Frischer, Goldberg, & Green, 1995; Kalafat, Elias, & Gara, 1993), however not in the stalking perception literature to

date. Focus groups are likely to require a greater investment of time and finances in comparison to pilot studies, and may produce more-than-sufficient data to assess the validity of a set of vignettes.

Both processes described above can serve to strengthen the internal validity of vignettes, particularly when the research area in question requires the scenarios to closely depict reality (Gould, 1996; Flaskerud, 1979). However, vignettes which for, perhaps, ethical reasons must simulate unlikely hypothetical scenarios may necessarily lack internal validity, demonstrating that the internal validity of vignettes is contingent on their focus.

One of the biggest advantages of vignettes is their ability to accommodate systematic variation of one or a number of research variables – something which is not possible in, for example, observational studies (Carlson & Morrison, 2009). However, if researchers over-exploit this flexibility they may compromise the internal validity of the vignette(s). Lapatin et al. (2012) examined the use of the vignette methodology in their study of mental health services disparities. They subjected their vignettes to a lengthy development process in which they were scrutinised by several different professionals before being tested for reliability. Overall, their vignettes were well received, with both parents and healthcare providers feeling that the vignettes related to their experiences, although some healthcare providers commented that the vignettes were lacking in clinical detail. Evans et al. (2015) recommend

initially constructing a large number of "draft" vignettes, and selecting the best of these to submit to a panel of experts for review and rating. Once the experts have finalised the vignettes, Evans et al. (2015) suggest conducting individual pilot tests on each.

Whilst Lapatin et al. (2012) encourage researchers to adopt a meticulous multi-phasic approach to vignette development, constraints on resources (temporal and financial, in particular) may make this an overly ambitious aspiration, rather than a realistic one. Phillips et al. (2004), for example, provide a very sparse account of how they developed their vignettes in a study of students' perceptions of stalking. Scott and Sheridan (2011) similarly provide scant detail in relation to the construction of the vignettes used in their study on the influence of conduct severity and victim-perpetrator relationship on perceptions of stalking, although unlike Phillips et al. (2004), they did pilot their materials.

External validity

The external validity of vignettes refers to the extent to which inferences made from vignette-based studies can be generalised to other populations and/or situations.

Aguinis and Bradley (2014) suggest that experimental designs often forfeit external validity in order to boost internal validity. This trade-off between internal and external validity poses a dilemma for researchers – whether to use an experimental design and forego generalisability of their findings, or to apply a non-experimental design that can exploit external

validity but cannot necessarily infer causality. Aguinis and Bradley (2014) propose experimental vignette methodology as a possible solution to this quandary. They suggest that vignettes both enhance realism within the experimental paradigm, whilst also allowing control and manipulation of the experimental variables. The result of this is that internal and external validity may be strengthened simultaneously (Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010).

Contrarily, in their study comparing vignette and conjoint survey experiments against real-world behaviour, Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto (2015) found that the paired conjoint design produced responses which most accurately reflected participants' real-life behaviour. The stimuli for the study were immigrant profiles originally used in a naturalization referendum in Switzerland and participants had to either accept or reject the immigrant's hypothetical application. Immigrants' profiles were presented as either a single profile vignette (a profile of a single immigrant presented as a short paragraph), paired profiles vignette (two immigrants are presented in a short paragraph and participants have to accept or reject each applicant), single profile conjoint (one immigrant profile is presented in a curriculum vitae-type table format), paired profiles conjoint (two immigrant profiles presented adjacent to each other in a table format), and paired profiles conjoint forced choice (similar to the paired profiles conjoint condition but participants are forced to choose one of the two immigrants presented for naturalization). Their results revealed that, of the five different experimental designs, the single-profile vignettes – the most widely used

factorial survey design in the social sciences – performed worst in relation to the behavioural benchmark. Hainmueller et al. (2015) suggest their results indicate that "experimental designs need to be carefully crafted to motivate respondents to seriously engage with hypothetical choice tasks to mimic the incentives that they face when making the same choices in the real world" (p. 2400).

External validity of vignettes is a salient issue within the stalking perception research. Particularly since stalking is a real world issue and policy makers often look to the evidence base to inform new legal guidelines. In their study on stalking perceptions, Duff and Scott (2013) queried the ability of their brief vignettes to convey fully the experience of stalking victimisation, in particular their capacity to communicate the emotions involved in a real stalking scenario. This is likely to be a difficulty frequently encountered by researchers using text-based vignettes within their studies as reading words on a page is not the same tangible, emotionally intense experience as actually being a participant in or witness to the scenarios described. Scott and Sheridan (2011) similarly raise vignette realism as an important consideration, stating that "a lack of experimental realism and corresponding emotional involvement allows participants to respond in accordance with 'conventional norms' rather than their initial thoughts (Lerner, 2003; Lerner & Miller, 1978)". The idea that vignettes may engage participants in a way that draws out existing stereotypes rather than original thought requires further examination.

An additional limitation with regards to the external validity of vignettes is the potential for ambiguity when participants are required to make decisions based on incomplete hypothetical information (Alexander & Becker, 1978). In a study on critical care decision making (Thompson, Barbour, & Schwartz, 2003) participants were required to make judgements having been presented with only limited information. Thompson et al. (2003) coined this the "*it depends*" response. In relation to critical care decisions specifically, Thompson et al. (2003) note that vignettes cannot fully communicate the multiple facets involved in real world critical care decisions, since any decisions made by professionals in this arena are commonly influenced by input from several sources of information.

The same limitation applies within the stalking perception research, wherein it is often impossible to convey the full contextual details of the stalking situation and therefore participants are required to make decisions based on very limited information. It is likely that the addition of further details – details which may be readily available and apparent in a real-life stalking situation – relating to the context of the situation described in the vignette, might alter participants' responses. This is likely to be particularly true when studies – for example, Weller et al. (2012) and the research in chapter two – systematically manipulate their vignettes to represent different types of interpersonal relationships. Relationships, especially those of friends, ex-partners, and current

partners, are highly nuanced and comprised of complex interpersonal history that cannot be fully conveyed to a reader in a few sentences.

However, it is advantageous for vignettes to be kept brief and clear since they must be understood and interpreted in a similar way by a diverse audience; Walker (2014) states that "subtlety is out of place in experimental design" (p. 131). In this vein, it would be unrealistic and counterproductive for researchers to include information within their vignettes that is not vital to produce the intended manipulations. Mutz (2011) suggests that researchers should strike a balance between ensuring the treatment is easily absorbed and processed by respondents, and making the manipulations overtly evident so as to unwittingly draw participants' attention to the study's purpose.

Construct Validity

The ability to draw valid causal inferences from a research study is known as construct validity.

Evans et al. (2015) report that the systematic variation of salient factors within vignettes allows for relatively rigorous causal inferences to be elicited in relation to multiple interactions between factors. However, the construct validity of a research design or measure can be compromised when extraneous variables impact upon the treatment variables, such that it is impossible to deduce whether or not an effect is present as a result of the variables of interest. The construct validity of a vignette can also be threatened if it is written in such a way that it does not measure

the intended theoretical concepts. This was the case within the empirical research in Chapter Two. Although the vignettes were written in such a way that the independent variable of interest – the relationship between victim and perpetrator – was manipulated to convey five different types of relationship, they were also varied in other, unintentional ways leading to the introduction of potential confounds. For example, in the 'intimate' relationship condition, Dave (perpetrator) threatens to knock Sharon's (victim) teeth out, whilst in the 'ex-intimate' and 'acquaintance' conditions Dave threatens Sharon with non-specific harm. Additionally, in the 'stranger' and 'friend' conditions, rather than threatening to harm Sharon, Dave threatens to harm himself. The differing threats of harm are highly likely to have affected responses to the questions relating to responsibility and stalking myth endorsement that followed the vignettes. Piloting the vignettes first may have served to alert the author to these between-vignette discrepancies so that they could have been amended.

Sheridan et al.'s (2003) vignettes are an example of good construct validity as their six vignettes each differ by only one brief sentence (and the genders of the characters) in order to accommodate the intended manipulations (genders of victim and perpetrator and relationship between victim and perpetrator). This means that there is minimal scope for the introduction of potential confounding variables. Changing only one sentence in each of a group of vignettes may not be possible when there is a need to systematically manipulate more than one or two variables, however. Researchers should consider the extent to which they may

compromise construct validity by trying to systematically manipulate too many variables.

Lanza and Carifio (1992) assessed the construct validity of their patient assault vignettes by asking a 12-strong panel of experts to evaluate them. The researchers split construct validity into two separate notions: convergence and discriminability. Convergence is the idea that different methods of measuring a given paradigm generate comparable results. Discriminability is a description of the ability to empirically distinguish between the construct being measured, and other similar constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Lanza and Carifio (1992) asked the 12 panelists a set of questions regarding, for example, the plausibility of the vignettes, and to rate the vignettes using items from the Overt Aggression Scale (OAS; Yudofsky, Silver, Jackson, Endicott, & Williams, 1986). An interrater reliability coefficient was then calculated for the global classification of the vignettes, which found a high degree of convergence among the panel members. Furthermore, the researchers found that the ability of panellists to discriminate vignette versions using items from the OAS supported the results of the global assessment.

These studies illustrate that vignettes can have good construct validity but must be closely evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Reliability

As vignettes are usually created to fulfil the aims of a single research project, reliability is difficult, and sometimes impossible to gauge. In light of this, Chambers and Craig (1998) advocate for further exploration of the reliability and validity of existing vignettes by applying these to appropriate studies in the future, rather than constructing new ones without establishing whether or not they are valid or reliable. "Recycling" vignettes is likely to have advantages and disadvantages. For example, reusing a vignette which has already been established as reliable and valid is advantageous because its psychometric properties make it more dependable than a vignette of unknown psychometric quantity, but reusing a vignette for this reason rather than prioritising its appropriateness for the study may preclude it from being wholly applicable to the study in question.

Dennison (2007) conducted a vignette study on identifying when "normal" relationship behaviours cross over into behaviours which may be perceived as stalking, and when to intervene. Dennison (2007) reported that the vignette methodology used, though appropriate for the study, meant that any findings could not be directly compared with those yielded by other studies. This is a common difficulty in vignette research, since vignettes are not standardised in the way that psychometric measures, for example, usually are. Dennison (2007) recommends that vignettes be published by their authors so that discrepancies and similarities in

findings can be understood in the context of the materials used. Some studies, for example Phillips et al. (2004), Scott and Sheridan (2011), and Scott et al. (2019), do now publish their vignettes – or at least a sample of the vignettes they've used – which provides opportunity to scrutinize their methodology more closely.

Research topics, participants, and presentation method

The research area of interest impacts upon decisions made in the development of the vignettes to be used. Vignettes are typically word-based, but can also take the form of films, live role plays performed in the presence of participants, audio, and spoken word, or a combination of any of the above. Word-based vignettes can range from short sentences to lengthy extended narratives, whilst visual vignettes tend to take the form of static or moving images. Each method of delivery has its own benefits and limitations, for example visual vignettes may be more suited than word-based vignettes to a study comprising young or multi-lingual participants, whilst they may be less appropriate to studies examining sensitive subject matters.

It has been suggested that written vignettes inflict lower cognitive demands on participants in comparison to performance vignettes (Kinicki, Hom, Trost, & Wade, 1995). Whilst textual vignettes are largely processed in the mind, vignettes taking a visual form place a lighter load on the brain's cognitive capacity. Vignettes presented as moving images or a live performance provide more visual and non-visual cues and

therefore may convey greater meaning in comparison to textual vignettes owing to their innate complexity. Hughes and Huby (2004) point out that more subjective topics, such as perceptions of pain, may be better explored through the use of visual imagery such as photographs and painting.

Tailoring the vignette for the specific participant group(s) to be studied is critical for the research to yield valid data (Hainmueller et al., 2015). For instance, using lengthy word-based vignettes for a study intending to elicit perceptions of young participants is unlikely to generate valid results since children experience a higher cognitive load than adults (Gathercole, Pickering, Ambridge, & Wearing, 2004). In other words, a child's cognitive ability to process and manipulate information is limited by its pre-mature working memory. Taking this into account, McAuley (1996) was able to gain greater insight into the beliefs of her young participants by combining the use of vignettes with multiple other research techniques – including games and response cards – in her study on children's perceptions of foster care.

Barter and Renold (2000) took a different approach, using only written narratives but adapting them for use with younger children and adolescents. Their "child-friendly" vignettes were just over 150 words long, whilst the narratives presented to adolescent participants were between 200 and 300 words in length. Studies requiring responses from more niche populations, such as an autistic (Murdock, Ganz, & Crittendon,

2013) participant group, may have to identify individual needs and adapt their materials accordingly. The more appropriately adapted the vignettes are to their target population the greater the likelihood that the study will yield valid outcomes.

Sleed, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon, and Baxter (2002) compared a written vignette methodology to a video vignette methodology to establish whether both would yield similar responses to questions relating to date rape. They found a significant difference between responses to the written and video vignettes on one condition in which both victim and perpetrator were shown to be or described as intoxicated. In this condition of the study, participants who had read, as opposed to viewed, the vignette were more likely to blame the victim and less likely to identify the situation as "rape". The author's explanation for this is that when participants are reading a vignette they tend to fill in any details which may not be included. However, the video vignette does not allow for individual interpretation of events and therefore participants are less able to apply their own stereotypes to the characters or context. Participants who had received the written vignette in this case may have imposed their own preconceived ideas about a woman's drunken behaviour to the scenario, thereby overstating the female's loss of control and flirtatiousness that intoxication can bring about, and blaming the victim more. An alternative explanation is that the video vignette may have depicted more graphically the emotional impact of the assault on the

female, leading the video vignette participants to feel a greater empathy for the victim and blame the victim less.

No existing stalking perception studies have made use of visual vignettes. It would be interesting to compare the use of written to visual vignettes – perhaps in the form of a short clip of a stalking scenario playing out – particularly in relation to ecological validity. Duff and Scott (2013) suggest that there are limitations to the extent to which brief vignettes can "convey the experience of being stalked" (p. 7). It is possible that visual stimuli could depict stalking in a more realistic way, preventing observers from filling in the gaps with their own assumptions and perceptions. Visual vignettes might more accurately communicate to participants the seriousness of the offence, whilst also allowing greater generalisability of outcomes. It may be time to try something new in this area of research.

Discussion

The aim of this critique was to evaluate the effectiveness of the vignette methodology to yield valid and reliable data.

In relation to socially desirable responding, vignettes provide an advantage over, for example, interview-based studies, in that they allow for emotional distance between the research area of interest and the respondent. As evidenced by Boots, Cochrane, and Heide's (2003) study of capital punishment, participants respond in a more socially desirable

way when asked for their own views as opposed to indirectly reporting their views based on the contextual information provided by the vignette. However, Chung & Monroe's (2003) study of ethical decision making in accountancy found that vignettes are not entirely exempt from the social desirability bias. Therefore, response bias may be an important consideration in the evaluation of research data derived from vignette studies. Where and under what social contexts participants complete questionnaires may also be relevant in considering how to reduce social desirability bias. Emotive topics such as blame within the context of stalking may elicit different responses in situations which are felt to be socially pressured, or in which the participants feel under scrutiny. Participants recruited for the research in chapter two were sent links to an online survey which they could complete in their own time rather than in a laboratory under the gaze of the researcher. This, as well as the anonymity provided by the internet, would hopefully have reduced social desirability bias in responses.

One of the reasons the vignette methodology is such a popular method within the social sciences is because of its ability to systematically vary a number of research variables whilst holding others constant, without compromising its internal validity. This clearly provides great flexibility for researchers as it allows multiple concepts and their interactions to be measured simultaneously. Although there is room for over-exploitation of this flexibility, a priori assessments such as piloting and focus groups (e.g. McKeganey et al., 1995) have been used to prevent this. Whilst this

appears to be common practice within the stalking research, a lack of piloting was a short-coming of the study described in chapter two and led to confounding variables being left in the vignettes.

Aguinis and Bradley (2014) suggest that the vignette methodology negates the trade-off between internal and external validity commonly found in experimental designs because they provide realism whilst also allowing manipulation of the experimental variables. In this sense they can exploit both internal and external validity, rather than enhancing one to the detriment of the other. On the other hand, Hainmueller et al. (2015) argue that vignettes are not the panacea of research validity, since they found that a conjoint survey methodology, as opposed to a vignette methodology, stimulated responses which most closely matched real-world behaviour. Thompson et al. (2003) provides further clout to this argument, suggesting that participants of vignette studies are required to make decisions based on vignettes which lack sufficient contextual detail. However, Thompson et al. (2003) were interested in critical care decisions – a specific area of medical research, and one which, in real life, would require input from multi-disciplinary teams. It could be considered unrealistic to expect relevant outcome data from a vignette study in which the vignettes cannot reflect reality. Perhaps further research is required here to find a way of incorporating input from others into vignettes. In relation to stalking research, authors must walk a fine line between providing sufficient detail for participants to make informed decisions, whilst ensuring the vignette is clear and accessible,

but without being leading or enabling participants to infer the purpose of the study.

In terms of the construct validity of vignettes, Evans et al. (2015) highlight that the ability to systematically manipulate experimental variables within vignettes enables strong causal inferences about participants' responses to be drawn from the numerous interactions between factors. However, construct validity can be jeopardised if a vignette is poorly constructed, incorporating extraneous variables which make it difficult to eventually tease apart the effects of the experimental variables, and the effects of the extraneous variables. Lanza and Carifio (1992) demonstrate that procedures such as piloting and evaluation of the vignettes by external experts should serve as a means of identifying and removing extraneous variables prior to dissemination of the study, thus improving construct validity.

Reliability of vignettes, as previously stated, is difficult to ascertain. Future researchers should ensure that they publish their study vignettes in order to enable comparison of results from other studies, and to encourage the reuse of existing vignettes so that their reliability can be established.

Vignettes can take many different forms to suit a wide variety of participant populations and research topics. Whilst a study of perceptions of pain might benefit from being explored through paintings and photographs (Bendelow, 1993), a study of children's perceptions of foster

care (McAuley, 1996) is likely to necessitate a more interactive vignette methodology. Sleed et al.'s (2002) comparison of written and video vignettes on date rape found that whilst video vignettes appeared to present a more realistic scenario and provided greater context, written vignettes were much more fiscally frugal and were not influenced by external factors, such as acting skills or the physical environment used in the video vignettes. The extent to which researchers adapt their vignettes to the needs of their target audience is dependent upon many factors, including resources, demographics of the study sample, and scope of the research. A large number of studies used to identify perceptions of stalking use vignette methodologies, perhaps to avoid using mock juries which Wiener, Krauss, and Lieberman (2011) argue are likely to make very different decisions to real juries whose decision-making is constrained by strict court procedure and standards of evidence. Researchers interested in perceptions of stalking could try using audio-visual vignettes and compare responses to text-based vignette studies. It is possible that responses to audio-visual vignettes will more closely reflect real-world decision making as a result of the non-verbal cues available to observers.

Overall, this critique suggests that researchers should reflect more openly on their use of vignettes, ensuring transparency for their readers. Although it is a cheap, time-efficient means of conducting research, important questions remain about whether decisions made based on vignettes truly reflect real-world decisions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst vignettes are very effective in tackling certain research questions, it is important to appreciate that no one research method can authentically mirror the reality of human life. Each research method applied to an empirical study provides only one way of understanding the complexity of the social world.

As Denzin (1978, p.292-293) poignantly states:

> *…each method implies a different line of action toward reality – and hence each will reveal different aspects of it, much like a kaleidoscope, depending on the angle at which it is held, will reveal different colors and configurations of objects to the viewer. Methods are like the kaleidoscope: depending on how they are approached, held, and acted toward, different observations will be revealed.*

Decisions to use specific research methodologies, particularly vignettes, are led by the research questions, topics, and participants, alongside other influences that shape research designs. Vignettes provide one meaningful way of exploring those facets of people's lives that researchers of social science strive to understand and discover more about.

Chapter Four Risk Factors for Female Victims of Stalking Developing Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Systematic Review

Abstract

Objective: Stalking is a serious offence which can have highly deleterious effects on its victims, including symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This review evaluated studies which identified potential mediators in the relationship between stalking and PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking. The objective of this review was to identify specific risk factors for victims of stalking developing PTSD symptoms.

Method: Systematic searches were carried out using five online databases (Medline, EMBASE, PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, and Joanna Briggs Institute). Additional sources of literature included e-theses portals, reference lists, and experts in the relevant field of research. Inclusion criteria were developed and applied. Initial searches identified 2,951 potentially relevant papers. 117 duplicate articles were removed and 2,810 articles were excluded based on their titles or abstracts. 24 articles were read in full and assessed using the PICO criteria. After 14 papers were rejected, the inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied to the remaining 10 and they were assessed using the quality assessment and data extraction tools. Two articles were removed due to poor quality. In total eight studies were included in this systematic review.

Results: Risk factors relating to stalking perpetration and victim characteristics were identified. Increased duration, frequency, multiplicity, threats, violence, severity, unforgiveness (holding a grudge and feeling revengeful), strategic responding, lower openness to experience, self-

blame, rumination, refocus on planning, catastrophizing, and passive, behavioural and avoidance coping were all risk factors which were found to increase victims' vulnerability to developing PTSD symptoms.

Conclusions: Proactive and reactive interventions for victims of stalking and individuals at risk of stalking victimization targeting those identified risk factors are indicated. Further and more robust research is necessary to explore and challenge the findings currently available, and to identify any additional risk factors, as well as protective factors, which mediate the relationship between stalking and PTSD symptoms.

KEYWORDS: Stalking; Female; Systematic Review; Individual Vulnerability; Risk Factors.

Introduction

Inter-Personal Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

The Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), formed in 2004 as part of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH), defines inter-personal violence (IPV) as:

> *…violence between individuals…subdivided into family and intimate partner violence and community violence. The former category includes child maltreatment; intimate partner violence; and elder abuse, while the latter is broken down into acquaintance and stranger violence and includes youth violence; assault by strangers; violence related to property crimes; and violence in workplaces and other institutions.* (WHO, 2004)

Interpersonal violence is widely recognised as a global health issue. Violence of varying degrees of severity is a risk factor for serious physical and mental health problems, and social difficulties. Whilst more men are victims of homicide than women, women, children and the elderly report experiencing an increased prevalence of non-fatal violence including physical, sexual and psychological abuse in comparison to men (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). The Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that male intimate or ex-intimate partners are the most common perpetrators of violence against women (Marques, 2018). Krug et al.'s (2002) world report on violence and health reveals

that one in three women has been the victim of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. In the US, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) found that close to 25% of their female participants disclosed having been raped or physically assaulted by either a current or former intimate partner in their lifetime. This figure allowed Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) to estimate that 1.5 million women are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner every year in the US. Most women will be victimized more than once. Meanwhile, in the UK, figures from 2017-2018 estimate that 7.9%, or approximately 1.3 million, of adult women experienced domestic abuse (ONS, 2018). The ONS data is taken from the CSEW which encompasses partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault, and stalking (non-stranger stalking) within its definition of domestic abuse.

The Impact of Victimization

The consequences of violent victimization are far-reaching and can lead, albeit indirectly, to premature death (Campbell, 2002). Victims of violence experience multiple physical and psychological difficulties, with the latter resulting in victims' use of unhealthy or dangerous behaviours – such as smoking, substance abuse, alcohol consumption, and unsafe sex – as a means of coping (Krug et al., 2002). The implications of this should be of great concern, considering the significant costs not just to the individual but also to society in terms of healthcare expenditure and reduced economic contributions (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003).

Although research has suggested that the probability of a woman being violent in a relationship is similar to that of a man (Ben-David, 1993), women have been reported to experience more adverse consequences, including major depression, PTSD, and increased prevalence of physical illness, as a result of being the victims of violence (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997). The majority of research within the field of IPV is therefore concerned with women as victims, and has found IPV to be related to a number of mental health complaints, including generalised anxiety disorder, depression, suicidal ideation and attempts, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic attacks, flashbacks, hypervigilance, distrust, powerlessness, interpersonal sensitivity, and feeling detached from others (Baum et al., 2009; Brewster, 1998; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Cox & Speziale, 2009; Dillon, Hussain, Loxton, & Rahman, 2013; Edwards & Gidycz, 2014; Finch, 2001; Nicolaidis & Touhouliotis, 2006; National Union of Students (NUS), 2016; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2005; Sheridan, Davies, & Boon, 2001).

Hall (1998) suggests that victims' personalities become altered in response to their experiences of victimization. Changes include being more easily startled or frightened, more introverted, more aggressive, and more careful. Bjerregaard (2000) and Maple, Short, and Brown (2011) speak of the high levels of psychological distress that perpetrators bring about in their victims. The threat of violence, unpredictability of perpetrators' intrusions into the victims' lives, and an overall loss of any

sense of control by the victim combine to cause significant negative effects on victims' mental wellbeing (Davis et al., 2002).

However, the effects of trauma are not all negative. There is a growing body of research investigating the potential for traumatic events to be the catalyst for psychological growth and resilience. In their qualitative analysis of 37 battered women, Anderson, Renner, and Danis (2012) found that increasing resilience and negative trauma symptoms are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can occur in symphony following traumatic experiences, with some of their participants presenting with subclinical trauma symptoms as well as resilience. Some of the key elements in reducing risk of trauma symptoms and increasing resilience were identified and included developing support systems, making use of available resources and accessing spiritual and informal support.

Stalking

Stalking, physical assault, sexual violence and psychological abuse are all sub-categories of intimate partner violence and often co-occur. Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) report that nearly 5% of the 8000 women and 0.6% of the same number of men surveyed reported stalking victimization perpetrated by an intimate or ex-intimate partner. In the UK, figures from the CSEW suggest that 5.4% of women and 2.6% of men were stalked in the past year (ONS, 2018).

Since stalking was criminalised in the US, initially, and much later in England and Wales in 2012, a large proportion of the research has focused

on identifying the potential psychological impact of stalking victimization. Kamphuis and Emmelkamp (2001) found that the level of trauma symptoms associated with stalking victimization is higher than those reported by victims of repeated bank robbery, traffic accidents, and battery (Brom, Kleber, & Hofman, 1993; Brom, Kleber, & Defares, 1989; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 1998) as measured by responses on the Impact of Events Scale (Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979). In their study on the impact of stalking victimization on females, Pathé and Mullen (1997) found that 37% of their sample met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD. More recent research conducted by Dardis, Amoroso, and Iverson (2017) found that female veterans who had experienced intimate partner violence and stalking perpetrated by an intimate partner were 2.5 times more likely to experience symptoms of PTSD than those participants who experienced intimate partner violence alone. The research to date heavily supports a significant link between stalking and symptoms of PTSD and this link, as well as potential mediating factors, will now be explored further.

The Link Between Stalking and PTSD

It is reported that upwards of 40% of help-seeking victims of stalking present with significant levels of PTSD symptoms (Vitanza, Vogel, & Marshall, 1995; Vogel & Marshall, 2001; Woods & Campbell, 1993). The victim samples in these studies have generally been recruited by victim services, mental health clinics, and other self-referrals. When community samples have been assessed using the Diagnostic Manual for Mental

Disorders (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association) participants have been found to have poorer post-trauma mental health in relation to the prevalence of comorbid mental disorders than non-victims (Dressing et al., 2005). Rates of PTSD within general population samples are reported to be between 33 and 58%; similar to rates reported within help-seeking samples (Astin, Lawrence, & Foy, 1993, Astin, Ogland-Hand, Coleman, & Foy, 1995; Houskamp & Foy, 1991). However, little is known about the risk factors for the development of stalking-related PTSD symptoms, and why some victims may develop PTSD, whilst others do not.

Within the minimal primary research that exists in this area, several factors which may make significant contributions to the development, or lack thereof, of PTSD symptoms in victims of violence have been identified. These include: good social support, counselling, religious beliefs, higher education, higher income, and current employment (Astin et al., 1993; Mertin & Mohr, 2001; O'Keefe, 1998; Saunders, 1994; Vogel & Marshall, 2001).

Vogel and Marshall (2001) assessed the relationship between poverty status and education of 836 community-based female participants' experience of partner abuse victimization, and PTSD symptoms using structured interviews. They found that women with high scores on the Crime Related PTSD scale (CR-PTSD; Saunders et al., 1990) were poorer than those who scored lower on the CR-PTSD. Discontinuation of the violence has also been associated with fewer PTSD symptoms. O'Keefe

(1998) found an inverse relationship between time since cohabiting with an abusive partner, and current PTSD symptoms, such that as the former increases, the latter diminishes. Furthermore, Woods (2000) found that nearly 60% of women currently being abused, but only 21.9% of women who have previously been abused, experience symptoms of PTSD, indicating that symptoms may reduce over time.

Dohrenwend's (1998) adversity-distress model states that the higher the dose of exposure to trauma, the stronger the psychological response. However, Blaauw et al. (2002) found that in some cases, victims who had experienced persistent and severe stalking developed very little psychopathology, whilst others were exposed to relatively minor stalking and went on to develop numerous psychological symptoms. Only 9% of variance in the level of distress was accounted for by stalking features in this study. Therefore, the adversity-distress model could not explain all their results.

Some researchers have argued that the severity of the traumas may be less important than individual differences in response to these events when it comes to predicting symptoms of PTSD (Bowman, 1997). Indeed, Bowman (1997) suggested that dynamic factors such as social support, higher income, and education may protect an individual against PTSD. Static factors, such as gender, upbringing, and previous victimization, may also contribute risk factors for PTSD, but are, bar gender, impossible to alter. Norris (1992) found that when men and women were exposed to

the same traumas (including physical and sexual violence, robbery, tragic death, vehicle crash, combat, fire, severe weather events and other natural or manmade disasters), women were twice as likely as men to develop PTSD, indicating that being female is in itself a risk factor for developing PTSD.

Bowman's (1997) vulnerability-distress model may be more likely to hold the key to the great variability in individual psychological responses to traumatic life events. Bowman (1997) writes;

> *People respond to acute events with great individual variability which arises mostly from individual differences in long-standing qualities…When both event and pre-event individual difference factors are included in studying post-event responses, individual differences account for more of the variance in response than event features do.* (p. 135)

Applying the vulnerability-distress model to the research on mental health outcomes of stalking victims (and victims of other traumatic life events) indicates that proactive pre-event interventions focused on enhancing coping skills and resilience are more likely to yield therapeutic outcomes than therapies which concentrate solely on the details of the stalking. However, further research is necessary to lend weight to this proposal (Blaauw et al., 2002) and to identify the most helpful post-event interventions to reduce psychological symptoms resulting from stalking victimization.

Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski and Kremers (2007) measured the cognitive coping strategies of a sample of 47 stalking victims using the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2001). This study found that a greater number of symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD were reported by victims who blamed themselves more for the stalking. A similar outcome was found for those victims who ruminated more about their experience, those who catastophized to a greater extent, and those who thought more about how to manage the stalking. Overall, therefore, Kraaij et al. (2007) suggest that these thinking styles are likely to have detrimental effects on victims of stalking. A possible explanation for forward thinking having a negative impact is that although victims are considering steps to take to resolve the stalking, their ideas may not transpire. Consequently, the victim's distress is likely to increase rather than decrease, as might be expected. Thoits (1995) also proposes that attempting to resolve situations which are out of our control may bring about greater emotional distress.

Purcell, Pathé, Baksheev, MacKinnon, and Mullen (2012) found that victims who used avoidance as a means of coping, including escape and distraction behaviours, were significantly more likely to score higher on measures of symptomatology indicative of PTSD than participants who used cognitive coping processes. This finding concurs with cognitive processing theories of trauma (Creamer, Burgess, & Pattison, 1992; Halligan, Michael, Clark, & Ehlers, 2003) which propose that traumatised

individuals must engage emotionally with troubling recollections or events in order to reduce their significance, and hence begin the recovery process. Furthermore, Kamphuis et al. (2003) found that passive coping strategies significantly predicted higher scores on the Impact of Events Scale (IES).

Objectives

The objective of this review is to gain a greater understanding of why some female victims of stalking are more likely to develop symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder following stalking victimization, whilst others appear not to. The goal is for the findings to contribute to the development of an effective intervention for victims of stalking. To the best of the author's knowledge, there are no existing systematic reviews on this topic.

Review question

What are the risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD?

Method

Scoping

A scoping search was conducted for initial identification of relevant studies, to locate any existing systematic reviews within this area of research, and to establish the viability of the current review. This was done using the same keywords across a range of electronic databases –

PsychINFO, Joanna Briggs, Medline, and Google Scholar – although mesh terms/search syntax were adapted in accordance with the requirements of specific databases. Boolean search terms were used where appropriate. The scoping search used the following search terms:

stalking, risk factors, PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, female victims, male perpetrators

No existing systematic reviews were identified, indicating a gap in the research. The rationale for conducting this review is to identify how potential interventions can be developed to reduce the negative psychological impact of stalking on female victims. Existing primary research studies which identify risk factors for stalking victims developing PTSD symptoms were found, suggesting availability of a research base on which to conduct a systematic review.

The main search strategy involved an electronic search of five databases including Medline, EMBASE, PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, and Joanna Briggs Institute. Two ethesis portals; Nottingham E-thesis, and Birmingham E-thesis were also searched. These databases were chosen as the scoping search revealed that they were most likely to yield the largest number of relevant studies. The reference lists of the key papers and relevant reviews were hand searched. Seven experts in this field of research were contacted to request unpublished literature and current studies. Experts were identified from their published papers, following the first set of searches. No restrictions on publication date, language, or

country of origin were made, although any significant changes in legislation through the years would have been important to take into account in terms of their effect on the research. If any research had been found in different languages significant efforts would have been made to translate them into English. When the final studies were identified, the legal definitions of stalking within the countries represented were found and compared. The legal definition of stalking varies across American states, but for the purposes of this review the U.S. National Institute of Justice's definition was utilised. This definition describes stalking as a repeated act (usually two or more times) of following or other harassing behaviour which incites fear in the victim. The search strategy was designed to access both published and unpublished – or "grey" – literature.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Studies

Primary research, cohort, cross-sectional, and case control studies were included, whilst case studies and reviews were excluded. Randomised controlled trials, whilst considered the gold standard of study design, do not exist within this field of research and thus none were included in this review. Table 4.1 details the PICO and the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this systematic review.

Table 4.1

PICO inclusion and exclusion criteria for the first stage of screening

	Inclusion	**Exclusion**
Population	Female Adult (18+ years) Victim of stalking	Male Under 18 years of age Not a victim of stalking History of PTSD symptomatology prior to stalking victimization
Exposure	Symptoms of PTSD	
Comparator	No symptoms of PTSD No comparator	
Outcome	Risk factors relating to victim characteristics and features of stalking	
Study Design	Cohort Cross-sectional Case-control	Case studies Reviews Quasi-Experimental

Participants

Studies were included if their sample consisted of adult female (age 18+) victims of stalking who had either been referred, self-referred, or recruited from the community. Stalking victimization had to be self-reported, measured with a psychometric measure, or identified through official records. This review will include studies which use a definition of stalking that includes the following features:

(1) A course of conduct targeted at one individual

(2) Involving visual or physical proximity, attempted communication or threats of any kind, or all of these in combination

(3) Causes the target to be fearful

(4) Behaviours as described in (2) must have occurred on two or more occasions

Participants with a history of PTSD symptomatology prior to being stalked were excluded. However, participants who have previously been diagnosed with other major mental health disorders (e.g. depression, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, etc.) were included.

Intervention/Exposure

The exposure in this review was symptoms of PTSD. This must have been measured by a standardised psychometric or self-report measure.

Comparator

The comparator was no symptoms of PTSD or no comparator.

Outcome measures

The outcomes were risk factors for developing symptoms of PTSD. These factors could relate to either the victim characteristics or features of the stalking incident.

Sources of Literature

Five electronic databases – PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, Joanna Briggs Institute, EMBASE, and Ovid MEDLINE – were searched on 12/06/17.

Authors were contacted when their studies could not be accessed by the author of the current systematic review in any other way. Reference lists were hand searched, and efforts were made to identify "grey" literature by searching Birmingham and Nottingham eTheses portals, The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Women's Aid, Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service, and the National Stalking Advocacy Service websites.

Search methods for identification of studies

The search terms used for PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, Joanna Briggs Institute, EMBASE, and Ovid MEDLINE are as follows:

1. (victim* OR surviv* OR suffer* OR abus* OR casual*).mp.
2. (PTSD OR post-traumatic stress disorder OR posttraumatic stress disorder OR post traumatic stress OR post-traumatic stress OR posttraumatic stress OR traumatic stress or trauma*).mp.
3. (risk* OR risk factor OR risk-factor OR vulnerab* OR suscept* OR predispo* OR pre-dispo* OR character* OR resili*).mp.
4. (stalk* OR obsess* harass* OR unwanted pursuit OR ORI OR obsess* relat* intrus* OR obsess* intrus* OR relation* pursuit OR persistent pursuit OR pursu* OR stealth*).mp.
5. 1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 4

Data Collection and Analysis

Sorting Process

The sorting process is detailed in a flow diagram in Figure 4.1.

Initial electronic database searches identified 2,951 potentially relevant papers. A further 36 papers were identified through manual searching of reference lists, grey literature searches, and contacting experts. The de-duplication process reduced this number to 2,834, and 2,810 articles were excluded based on their titles or abstracts. The remaining 24 papers were read in full and assessed using the PICO criteria. 14 papers were rejected at this stage (see Table 4.2 for details). The remaining 10 articles were assessed using the inclusion/exclusion criteria, as well as the quality assessment and data extraction forms. Two of these articles were excluded as a result of poor quality, leaving eight studies for inclusion in the current systematic review. Whilst a larger number of included studies may have lent this review greater credibility, the author felt it was justified to continue with the review for the following reasons:

- Stalking was first criminalised in the USA in 1990. This means that the scientific literature on stalking dates back at least 29 years. The author believes that a review of this topic was necessary both to acquire an overview of the current evidence base, and to raise awareness of a limited evidence base, should this be found.
- The most highly regarded source of systematic reviews, the Cochrane Collaboration, conducts systematic reviews with no

included studies. These are known as "empty reviews" and are said to provide direction for future research (Yaffe, Montgomery, Hopewell, & Shepard, 2012). Yaffe et al. (2012) found that in The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR), the largest library of systematic reviews in the world, 376 out of a total of 4,320 (8.7%) studies were empty reviews. The Cochrane Collaboration's "empty reviews" indicate that systematic reviews can make valuable contributions to our understanding of particular topics and highlight the need for additional research whether they comprise of zero included studies or are more substantial.

- Having reviewed the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this systematic review, the author does not feel that these are unnecessarily stringent or conservative, but that they in fact allow for a wide range of potential research papers to have been included, had they existed. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the current paper were drawn directly from the PICO.

Table 4.3 details the samples, study designs, and measures used in the included studies.

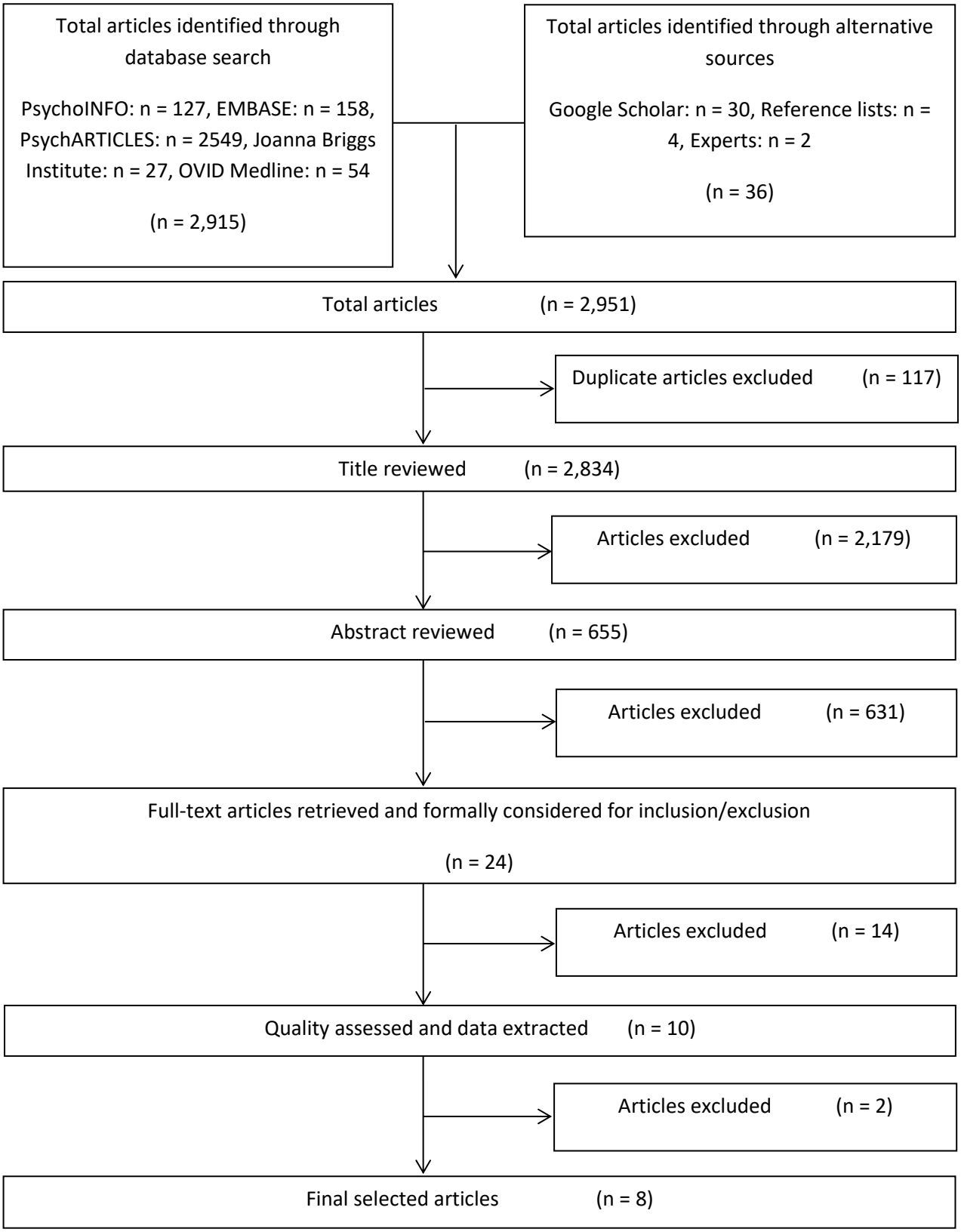


Figure 4.1 The sorting process which identified studies to be included in the current systematic review.

Table 4.2

Excluded studies and reasons for exclusion

Authors	**Title**	**Reason for exclusion**
Arias & Pape (1999)	Psychological Abuse: Implications for Adjustment and Commitment to Leave Violent Partners	General physical and psychological abuse – not specific to stalking
Brewster (2002)	Trauma Symptoms of Former Intimate Stalking Victims	Poor quality – missing information (consistency of administration unclear, no explanation of how missing data was addressed, withdrawals and drop-outs not reported, no description of efforts to minimise bias)
Coker, Weston, Creson, Justice, & Blakeney (2005)	PTSD Symptoms Among Men and Women Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: The Role of Risk and Protective Factors	No specific measure of PTSD Mixed IPV, i.e. different forms of IPV not separated at analysis
Cuevas, Bell, & Sabina (2014)	Victimization, Psychological Distress, and Help-Seeking: Disentangling the Relationship for Latina Victims	Mixed IPV, i.e. different forms of IPV not separated at analysis
Hellmuth, Jaquier, Overstreet, Swan, & Sullivan (2014)	The mediating role of avoidance coping between IPV victimization, mental health, and substance abuse among women experiencing bidirectional IPV	Mixed IPV, i.e. different forms of IPV not separated at analysis
Iverson, McLaughlin, Gerber, Dick,	Exposure to Interpersonal Violence and Its Associations	No identification of risk/vulnerability factors mediating relationship between

Smith, Bell, Cook, & Mitchell (2013)	With Psychiatric Morbidity in a U.S. National Sample: A Gender Comparison	stalking and development of PTS symptoms

Authors	**Title**	**Reason for exclusion**
Kamphuis & Emmelkamp (2001)	Traumatic Distress Among Support-Seeking Female Victims of Stalking	Do not identify any mediating factors between stalking and PTS symptoms
Lacey, McPherson, Samuel, Sears, & Head (2013)	The Impact of Different Types of Intimate Partner Violence on the Mental and Physical Health of Women in Different Ethnic Groups	No specific measure of PTSD
Mechanic, Weaver, & Resick (2008)	Mental Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Abuse: A Multidimensional Assessment of Four Different Forms of Abuse	No identification of risk/vulnerability factors mediating relationship between stalking and development of PTS symptoms
Mengo, Small, & Black (2017)	Intimate Partner Violence and Women's Mental Health: The Mediating Role of Coping Strategies Among Women Seeking Help From the Police	No specific measure of PTSD
Nguyen, Spitzberg, & Lee (2012)	Coping With Obsessive Relational Intrusion and Stalking: The Role of Social Support and Coping Strategies	No specific measure of PTSD
Pathé & Mullen (1997)	The impact of stalkers on their victims	Used non-standardised self-report outcome measure Poor quality

Authors	Title	Reason for exclusion
Spitzberg, Nicastro, & Cousins (1998)	Exploring the interactional phenomenon of stalking and obsessive relational intrusion	No specific measure of PTSD
Wong, Fong, Choi, Tiwari, Chan, & Logan (2016)	Problem-Focused Coping Mediates the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Mental Health Among Chinese Women	No specific measure of PTSD

Table 4.3

Demographics of included studies and summaries of findings

Authors	**N**	**Age (range, mean, or distribution)**	**Sampling method and population**	**Study Design**	**Comparator**	**PTSD Measure**	**Outcome of interest**
Baldry, Cinquegrana, Regalia, & Crapolicchio (2017)	120	20-73 (M = 39, SD = 9.66)	Random/self-selected sample of stalking victims who obtained a protective order	Cross-sectional	No comparator	Trauma Screening Questionnaire	Impact of forgiveness on PTSD symptoms
Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson (2004)	380	M = 39.6 years	Stratified sample of women who reported any violence by their current spouse or partner in the larger NVAWS survey	Cross-sectional	No comparator	Impact of Events Scale-Revised	Impact of experiencing several different types of violence alongside stalking on PTSD symptoms
Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, & Bartak	131	18-42 (M = 21, SD = 4.23)	Self-selected sample of women from	Cross-sectional	Female undergraduate psychology	Impact of Events Scale (Dutch	Impact of types of coping response and NEO Five-

(2003)			the Dutch 'Stichting Anti-Stalking' Foundation		students	adaptation)	Factor psychosocial variables on PTSD symptoms
Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski, & Kremers (2007)	47	22-56 (M = 36, SD = 9.36)	Self-selected sample of female victims of stalking	Cross-sectional	No comparator	Impact of Events Scale	Impact of victim coping variables on PTSD symptoms
Logan & Cole (2007)	662	18+ years or 17 and emancipated	Convenience sample of women who had obtained a protective order against a male intimate partner	Cohort	No comparator	Questions adapted from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule	Impact of duration of stalking on PTSD symptoms
Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick (2000)	65	19-59 (M = 35, SD = 7.9)	Stratified self-selected and random sample of "relentlessly stalked" and "infrequently stalked" women drawn from a	Case-control	No comparator	The Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale	Impact of stalking incident frequency on PTSD symptoms

			larger pool of battered women				
Purcell, Pathé, Baksheev, MacKinnon, & Mullen (2012)	236	18+ (28% aged 18-35)	Random/self-selected sample of Australian adults on the electoral roll	Cross-sectional	No comparator	Impact of Events Scale	Impact of individual vulnerability factors and victimization factors on PTSD symptoms
Sandberg, Suess, & Heaton (2010)	224	18-56 (M = 21.73, SD = 5.89)	Random/self-selected sample of women enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses in a medium-sized state university	Cross-sectional	No comparator	PTSD Checklist (PCL-C)	Impact of attachment style on PTSD symptoms

Quality Assessment

Included studies were quality assessed using the quality assessment tool developed for this specific review (see Appendix 4.1) and based on the Effective Public Health Practice Project quality assessment tool (Effective Public Health Practice Project, 1998). The quality assessment criteria were applied to each included paper to examine their risk of bias which could impact upon the outcome of the current review (see Table 4.4).

Studies were scored according to their quality, with a score of two for meeting all criteria, a score of one for meeting some of the criteria, and a score of zero for not meeting any of the specified criteria. The scores were summed and percentages calculated. Any studies which fell below a minimum of 65% were excluded from the study.

20% of the included studies were quality assessed by an independent assessor in order to ensure an acceptable level of validity and reliability for this review.

The assessor was a fellow Forensic Psychology Doctoral student who had just completed her own systematic review and was therefore familiar with the quality assessment process. Inter-rater agreement was calculated as 0.73 which suggests substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Table 4.4

Risk of bias for each included study

Study	Summary of Limitations					
	Small sample size	**Drop-outs not reported**	**Self-selected sample**	**Tools not shown to be valid**	**No explanation of management of missing data**	**Confidence intervals not 95% or not specified**
Baldry, Cinquegrana, Regalia, & Crapolicchio (2017)			●	●	●	●
Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson (2004)					●	●
Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, & Bartak (2003)			●		●	●
Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski, & Kremers (2007)	●	●	●		●	●

Study	Drop-outs not reported	Self-selected sample	Tools not shown to be valid	No explanation of management of missing data	Confidence intervals not 95% or not specified	Small sample size
Logan & Cole (2007)				●		●
Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick (2000)	●		●		●	●
Purcell, Pathé, Baksheev, MacKinnon, & Mullen (2012)			●		●	
Sandberg, Suess, & Heaton (2010)			●			

Data Extraction and Management

Data extraction was carried out by two independent reviewers (the same reviewers who conducted the quality assessment) using a pro-forma based on the CRD Report's guidelines (Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, 2009). Participants' demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, as well as study methodology, outcome measures and types of statistical analyses was extracted. The data extraction form can be found in Appendix 4.2. Table 4.5 shows the measures used, outcomes and key statistical findings for each of the included studies.

Table 4.5

Measures, outcome and key statistical findings for the included studies

Authors	Measures	Outcome	Significant findings
Baldry, Cinquegrana, Regalia, & Crapolicchio (2017)	- Trauma Screening Questionnaire - Stalking (THreat Assessment of Intimate Stalking) - Forgiveness (Marital Offence Forgiveness Scale) - Trait Forgiveness Scale - Severity of stalking - Previous violence in relationships - Breaching the PO - Overall well-being (General Health Questionnaire)	Unforgiveness was associated with increased reported PTSD symptoms. Positive forgiveness did not contribute to lower levels of PTSD.	Significant positive correlations between intimate partner stalking and PTSD symptoms (indirect stalking, r = 0.26, direct stalking, r = 0.28), PTSD symptoms and severity of intimate partner stalking (r = 0.25), PTSD symptoms and revenge (r = 0.26), and PTSD and grudge-holding (r = 0.48).
Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson (2004)	- Impact of Events Scale-Revised - Physical violence - Sexual violence - Psychological violence - Stalking	Experiencing more than one type of violence alongside stalking increases the risk of PTSD symptoms	Physical (r = .38), sexual (r = .22) and psychological (r = .52) violence all significantly associated with PTSD symptoms. Stalking significantly associated with PTSD symptoms (r = .28). Stalking significantly

			associated with physical (r = .44), sexual (r = .33) and psychological (r = .23) violence.
Authors	**Measures**	**Outcome**	**Significant findings**
Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, & Bartak (2003)	- Impact of Events Scale (Dutch adaptation) - Cognitive and affective correlates of trauma (The Traumatic Constellation Identification Scale) - Stalking history (Stalking Inventory) - Personality factors (NEO Five-Factor Inventory) - Coping Response (Utrecht Coping List) - Satisfaction with social support (Social Support Inventory)	Both features of the stalking perpetration, and person-related psychological variables of the victim were predictive of PTSD symptoms. Passive coping and lower openness to experience are associated with higher PTSD symptoms.	Stalking violence (β = .32) and duration (β = .17) significantly associated with variations in PTSD symptoms. Passive coping (β = .18) and lower openness to experience (β = -.23) associated with higher PTSD symptoms.
Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski, & Kremers (2007)	- Impact of Events Scale - Cognitive Coping Strategies - Depressive and anxiety symptoms	Victims who self-blame more for the stalking, ruminated more on the stalking experience, catastrophized, or considered what steps to	Significant associations between self-blame and PTSD (r = .45 for intrusion and r = .43 for avoidance), rumination and PTSD (r = .72 for

	- Severity of stalking	take and how to manage the stalking reported higher symptoms of PTSD.	intrusion and r = .43 for avoidance), refocus planning and PTSD (r = .50 for intrusion and .61 for avoidance), and catastrophizing and PTSD (r = .50 for intrusion).

Authors	**Measures**	**Outcome**	**Significant findings**
Logan & Cole (2007)	- Questions adapted from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (PTSD measure) - Stalking - Psychological, physical and sexual victimization - Sexual coercion - Depression/PTSD - Substance use - Protective Order violations	Duration of stalking is a good predictor of PTSD symptomatology. Women who continued to be stalked after the PO was in place reported more PTSD symptoms than women whose stalking ceased following the PO.	Baseline: women in the stalking after the PO group reported a greater number of PTSD symptoms compared to women in the no stalking after the PO group (r = .13). Follow-up: significantly more women who were subjected to stalking after the PO was in place reported any PTSD symptoms and reported more PTSD symptoms than the group who were not stalked after the PO (r = .18). Stalking duration accounted for 42.9% of variance in number of PTSD symptoms at follow-

			up. Number of months perpetrator stalked victim was significantly positively correlated with number of PTSD symptoms at follow-up.
Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick (2000)	- The Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale - Stalking Behaviour Checklist - Standardised Battering Interview - Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory-Abbreviated Version - Revised Conflict Tactic Scale-2 - Beck Depression Inventory	Individuals who were relentlessly stalked experienced increased rates of PTSD in comparison to individuals who were infrequently stalked	More strategic responding was associated with greater symptoms of PTSD (r = .42) for infrequently stalked women. Psychological abuse was more strongly associated with increased PTSD symptoms within the infrequently stalked than the relentlessly stalked battered women: emotional verbal (r = .44; r = .27), dominance/isolation (r = .45; r = .31) Increased frequency and multiplicity of stalking events significantly associated with higher number of PTSD symptoms.

Authors	Measures	Outcome	Significant findings
Purcell, Pathé, Baksheev, MacKinnon, & Mullen (2012)	- Impact of Events Scale - Social support - Adverse life events - Coping style (Billings & Moos, 1981)	Individual vulnerability factors and victimization factors were associated with higher levels of PTSD symptomatology. Specifically, having been subjected to threats was a strong predictor of PTSD.	Being subjected to threats increased likelihood of developing PTSD symptoms by 4.93 times controlling for all other factors in model. Odds of reaching the threshold score on the IES increased by 1.23 times for each 10% increase in behavioural coping score. Odds of reaching the threshold score on the IES increased by 1.35 for each 10% increase in avoidance coping score.
Sandberg, Suess, & Heaton (2010)	- PTSD Checklist - Traumatic Life Events Questionnaire - Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory	Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance do not significantly mediate the relationship between stalking and development of PTSD symptoms.	Other accidents (r = .14), witnessing severe assault (r = .18), threat of death or serious bodily harm (r = .25), intimate partner violence (r = .29), adolescent or adult sexual victimization (r = .27) and stalking (r = .25) associated with PTSD. No significant association between stalking and adult attachment style.

Assessment of Risk of Bias

Eligible studies were reviewed for their risk of bias by the same two independent assessors who had carried out the quality assessment and data extraction processes in order to ensure reliable assessment (see Table 4.4).

Publication bias, a phenomenon which means that studies with non-significant findings are often not published, is likely to have had an effect as all the studies included in this review have at least one significant finding (Dwan et al., 2008).

Findings

Findings from the included studies were analysed and resulting themes identified. Each theme is related to the extent to which it impacts upon a stalking victim's likelihood of experiencing symptoms of PTSD both during and after the victimization has taken place. A synthesis of the findings will be explored under the Discussion subheading.

Coping Strategies

The ways in which victims try to cope with stalking victimization can vary widely. Whilst the intention is to improve their circumstances by reducing potential negative effects on their emotional and physical wellbeing, different coping styles can have varying levels of success in this regard (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

Four of the included studies investigate the coping strategies of female victims of stalking and how these might mediate their experiences of symptoms of PTSD. Purcell et al.'s (2012) final sample consisted of 236 respondents who reported having been the victims of prolonged stalking that had caused them to feel fearful. This study used the Billings and Moos (1981) scale which sub-divides coping into three categories; active-cognitive (e.g. considering how to problem-solve), active-behavioural (e.g. speaking to a trusted person about the problem), and avoidance (e.g. trying to improve the situation by over-eating). Participants were asked to identify a crisis they have recently experienced and then rate how they coped. Symptoms of PTSD were measured using the Impact of Events Scale (IES; Horowitz et al., 1979). Purcell et al. (2012) found avoidance coping to be significantly associated with higher odds of meeting caseness on the IES.

Mechanic et al.'s (2000) study consisted of two groups; infrequently stalked women (ISW), and relentlessly stalked women (RSW). The groups are distinguished by the number and severity of stalking behaviours experienced by participants in the past year (RSW had to have experienced four or more episodes of minor violence and two incidents of severe violence). Mechanic et al. (2000) refer to 'strategic responses' which they state might include calling a hotline, seeking out counselling/therapy, contacting the police, pursuing an order of protection, contacting shelter medical care, or the clergy. Most, if not all, of these actions would be likely to fall under Billings and Moos' (1981)

active-behavioural coping category. Unlike the other studies mentioned under this subheading, Mechanic et al. (2000) employed the Posttraumtic Diagnostic Scale (PDS; Foa, Cashman, Jaycox, & Perry, 1997) as their PTSD outcome measure and found that increased strategic coping led to increased PTSD symptomatology in the ISW but not the RSW.

Kraaij et al. (2007) measured cognitive, as opposed to behavioural, coping strategies including rumination, refocus on planning, catastrophizing, self-blame, acceptance, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, putting into perspective, and other-blame using the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski et al., 2002; Garnefski et al., 2001). When controlling for stalking severity, Kraaij et al.'s (2007) outcomes indicate a significantly positive relationship between passive coping styles – rumination, self-blame, refocus on planning, and catastrophizing – and intrusive/avoidance symptoms of PTSD, as measured by the IES. Kraaij et al. (2007) employed the IES adapted for Dutch participants in order to garner data on victims' PTSD symptoms (Brom & Kleber, 1985).

Meanwhile, Kamphuis et al. (2003) used the Utrecht Coping List (UCL; Schreurs, van de Willige, Tellegen, & Brosschot, 1988) to identify victims' passive coping, expressive support-seeking coping, and active coping efforts. Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) findings are congruent with Kraaij et al.'s (2007) in that they found a passive coping style to be significantly positively related to increased PTSD symptoms in stalking victims. Kraaij

et al. (2007) suggest that thinking of potential solutions does not necessarily lead to any action, and therefore the victims' psychological symptoms are likely to persist.

From these studies it appears that passive and cognitive coping strategies alone are significantly likely to do more psychological harm than good. However, results from Purcell et al. (2012) and Mechanic et al. (2000) indicate that behavioural coping may have a similar effect. As well as measuring avoidance coping, Purcell et al. (2012) found a weak association between behavioural coping and increased likelihood of higher PTSD symptoms on the IES whilst Mechanic et al.'s (2000) 'infrequently stalked' (ISW) sample of women experienced increased PTSD symptoms when they responded strategically to the stalking. Mechanic et al.'s (2000) 'relentlessly stalked women' (RSW), on the other hand, were not found to suffer with increased PTSD symptoms as a consequence of responding strategically.

Severity of Stalking

Stalking, like most other offenses, is heterogeneous in nature. How stalking manifests can vary widely in frequency, intensity, duration, and range. The following five studies investigated the extent to which different aspects of stalking severity impact on psychological outcomes for victims.

Kraaij et al. (2007) assessed stalking severity using a checklist of eight questions – victims were asked to respond yes or no to having been exposed to particular stalking behaviours, such as destruction or theft of

property, sexual assault, and physical assault. They found that stalking severity measured in this way was significantly correlated with intrusive symptoms of PTSD but not with avoidance symptoms.

Kamphuis et al. (2003) devised a 21-item questionnaire which measured selected indices of stalking severity, including stalking violence, range, and duration. They found that all the indices of stalking severity were significantly associated with variations in post-traumatic stress symptoms, with stalking violence being the most strongly associated variable.

Mechanic et al.'s (2000) measure of stalking severity was predominantly concerned with the frequency and severity of physical assault and injury. Their participants formed two groups: 'infrequently stalked women' and 'relentlessly stalked women', based on the number of stalking episodes they had experienced, as well as the array of behaviours they had been exposed to. Those women who reported relentless stalking were found to experience increased symptoms of PTSD, although PTSD-related impairment was identified as high among both groups of victims. This indicates that victims who have experienced more severe stalking – in this study defined as greater frequency and multiplicity of stalking behaviours – are more likely to experience increased symptoms of PTSD.

Baldry et al. (2017) measured stalking severity using two items asking participants about increasing intensity and frequency of stalking behaviours. Both items were scored on a 5-point scale from 1 ('not at all') to 5 ('a lot'). Using a three-step hierarchical regression model, Baldry et

al. (2017) found severity to contribute significantly to the variance in victims' PTSD symptoms.

Logan and Cole's (2007) study suggests duration of stalking as a significant predictor of the development of PTSD symptoms. This was the only included study to measure outcomes at two time-points – baseline and 1 year follow-up – and to use a cohort study design. Amongst a sample of women who had received protective orders against their violent partners outcomes relating to victims' mental health, features of the stalking, and the victims' perceptions of stalking were measured (they measured other outcome variables that are not relevant to this review and therefore will not be detailed). Multivariate regression analyses controlling for confounding variables found that duration of stalking accounted for 42.9% of the variance in the number of PTSD symptoms at follow-up, controlling for PTSD symptoms at baseline, and a number of other variables. Duration of stalking victimization and number of PTSD symptoms were significantly positively related at follow-up.

The outcomes of these five studies indicate that stalking severity – as defined as increased frequency, range, level of violence, and intensity in stalking behaviours, and increased duration of stalking victimisation – is significantly positively correlated with the development of PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking.

Social Support

It is tempting, perhaps even instinctive, to assume that for individuals who are in the grips of a potentially traumatic experience, reaching out to those closest to them for support would improve or at least stabilise their emotional wellbeing. Anderson et al.'s (2012) qualitative study on the role of social and spiritual support for victims of domestic abuse found that social support was pivotal to their participants' recovery and resilience. Sylaska and Edwards (2014) similarly found that positive social reactions were related to improved mental health in victims of interpersonal violence. Two of the studies included in this review examined the role of social support in mediating the negative effects of stalking victimization.

Kamphuis et al. (2003) measured satisfaction with social support by splitting the concept into satisfaction with various aspects of social support, including emotional support, informative support, social companionship, and instrumental support. The study did not find a significant correlation between satisfaction with social support and PTSD.

Purcell et al. (2012) asked two questions of participants in order to measure their perceptions of their social support; "do you have someone with whom you can discuss your troubles?" and "who is your main source of support?". They did not find social support to be a significant predictor of scoring higher than their threshold score for 'caseness' on the IES. In other words, the presence or absence of social support did not correlate significantly with the presence or absence of PTSD symptoms.

The results from these studies indicate that social support – whether present or absent – does not significantly mediate the relationship between stalking and symptoms of PTSD experienced by the victim.

Protective Orders

In the UK, protective orders (POs) are issued by the courts. They place restrictions on an individual to prevent their target/victim from being harmed or harassed. POs can be issued even if a court of law found the alleged perpetrator not guilty. Although POs vary between judiciaries within different countries, they generally serve the purpose of protecting a victim from harm where there has been previous alleged domestic violence, harassment, or stalking perpetration by another individual. One of the included studies identifies the extent to which protective orders impact upon victims' experiences of PTSD symptoms.

Baldry et al. (2017) took a dichotomous measure of whether or not, according to their sample of victims, the perpetrators had breached the PO with participants responding either 'yes' or 'no'. Using hierarchical regressions they found that breaching of the PO did not significantly account for variance in the relationship between intimate partner stalking and PTSD symptoms.

Logan and Cole (2007) used a similar measure of PO breaches, asking their 662 participants – all of whom had obtained POs against a male intimate partner – whether their ex-intimate partner had violated the PO, and if so, how many times. At the 1 year follow-up point, participants

were asked how safe they felt from the perpetrator, and how effective they felt the PO had been for them. Results found that women who were stalked after the PO had been implemented reported significantly more symptoms of PTSD than women who were not stalked after the PO. PTSD was measured using questions adapted from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS; Robins, Helzer, Croughan, & Ratcliff, 1981).

Forgiveness

Numerous studies, including Fincham, Hall, and Beach's (2006) study on forgiveness in marriage, find that forgiveness of an individual who has caused us harm leads to improved overall health. As might be expected, therefore, actively negative emotional responses to traumatic experiences have been found to be positively related to symptoms of PTSD (Kunst, Winkel, & Bogaerts, 2011). Of the studies included in this systematic review, one employed measures of state and trait forgiveness to examine forgiveness as a potential mediator in the relationship between stalking victimization and trauma symptoms.

Baldry et al. (2017) measured forgiveness using the Marital Offence Forgiveness Scale (MOFS; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2009) which assesses both forgiveness (benevolence) and unforgiveness (vengefulness, grudge-holding, avoidance). They also used the Trait Forgiveness Scale (TFS; Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001) to measure victims' general disposition to forgive interpersonal misdemeanours. Baldry et al. (2017) did not find that victims' forgiveness

was significantly correlated with symptoms of PTSD. They did find, however, that two dimensions of unforgiveness – revenge and grudge-holding – were significantly positively correlated with symptoms of PTSD. In a hierarchical regression analysis, dispositional forgiveness, benevolence, avoidance, revenge and grudge significantly increased the total variance in the model. Revenge and grudge were found to be statistically significant within this step.

Personality Traits

It is understood that not all victims of stalking go on to develop symptoms of PTSD. The impact of different traumatic experiences varies greatly between individuals based on a multiplicity of factors, including personality traits. One of the aims of Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) study was to identify specific psychological variables that make a stalking victim more vulnerable to developing symptoms of PTSD.

Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) study comprised a sample of 131 female victims of post-intimate stalking from the Dutch 'Stichting Anti-Stalking' group (StAS; Anti-Stalking Foundation). Participants were given Meloy and Gothard's (1995) definition of stalking and their inclusion in the study was based upon a positive response to the definition provided and to having experienced repeated stalking behaviours. This study also included a control comparison group of female undergraduate psychology students. Kamphuis et al. (2003) measured personality factors using the Dutch version of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae,

1992) which identifies five personality traits – neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Stepwise regression analysis investigated the impact of stalking violence, range and duration, and the influence of individual coping styles and personality factors on traumatic symptomatology. Of the five personality factors measured, Kamphuis et al. (2003) found that only lower openness to experience was significantly positively related to increased PTSD symptoms in stalking victims.

Attachment

The role that a stalker's attachment style plays in the perpetration of stalking has been widely researched (e.g. Patton, Nobles, & Fox, 2010). However, much less researched is the potential for victims' attachment styles to influence their trauma symptoms following experiences of stalking victimization. One of the included studies aims to examine the role of attachment in the development of PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking.

Sandberg et al. (2010) used a sample of 224 college women enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses who each completed an anonymous questionnaire in college classrooms. Participants' traumatic life events, experiences in close relationships (i.e. attachment patterns), and PTSD symptoms were measured. Bivariate correlations were calculated and multiple linear regressions were used to compute path coefficients to test for statistical mediation between variables. The study did not find a

significant mediation effect of adult attachment between stalking and PTSD symptoms.

Discussion

The included studies will now be discussed in greater detail, categorised by potential risk factor, starting with the risk factor supported by the greatest evidence, and working down to those risk factors only investigated by a single included study.

Coping Strategies

The included studies investigate the influence of several different types of coping in response to stalking victimization. The studies each have slightly different labels for the various types of responses including; active-cognitive, active-behavioural, avoidance coping, strategic responding, cognitive coping, passive coping, expressive support-seeking coping, behavioural coping, and active coping. Overall the coping responses appear to fall into one of four categories – active, passive, cognitive, or behavioural, or a combination of active/passive, and cognitive/behavioural. Cognitive coping refers to thought processes such as rumination, self-blame, perspective-taking and acceptance. Behavioural coping involves the victim taking some physical action as a means of coping, such as talking to a friend about the problem, or reporting it to the police. Active responding appears to be similar to behavioural in that it entails the victim being proactive in trying to improve the problem but could include, for example, thinking about

problem-solving, whilst passive or avoidant responding can include the victim trying to improve their circumstances by, for example, over-eating or self-isolating. In order to make these categories clearer it is necessary for researchers to maintain consistency in their terminology and include comprehensive descriptions of how each coping style manifests.

In contrast to Bowman's (1997) vulnerability-distress model, the included studies indicate that none of the coping strategies measured reduce the likelihood of the victim suffering PTSD-type symptoms. The Mechanic et al. (2000) study finds that ISW responding strategically to stalking victimization experience increased PTSD symptoms whilst the RSW responding in a similar manner do not suffer increased PTSD symptoms. Mechanic et al. (2000, p. 2) define 'strategic responding' as "those behaviors battered women deploy to respond to, cope with, or merely survive the abuse directed toward them" (Dutton, 1993; 1996). This result seems contrary to what might be expected in light of a dose-response relationship between stalking and PTSD symptoms. The idea that taking positive steps to problem-solve leads to a deterioration in psychological symptoms is also unusual given a general assumption that contacting the police or seeking out therapy, for example, are likely to improve a stalking victimization scenario.

In reference to the finding that strategic coping does not have a significant effect in either direction on trauma symptoms in RSW, it may be that this group are experiencing such severe symptoms of PTSD that

they are unable to affect any positive change just using strategic coping mechanisms, or that they simply do not have the emotional resources to deploy coping strategies, so preoccupied are they with the trauma. ISW, on the other hand, are less likely to have reached the same threshold of PTSD symptomatology. Trying to cope by strategic means appears to have worsened their symptoms. This may be a result of being retraumatised from having to engage with the trauma, or frustration arising out of having employed coping strategies to ameliorate their circumstances, and finding that they have not worked. This latter explanation may also remain true for a lack of effectiveness of passive and cognitive coping strategies identified in Kamphuis et al. (2003) and Kraaij et al. (2007). Furthermore, it is worth noting that thinking of potential solutions does not necessarily lead to any action, and therefore the victims' psychological symptoms are likely to persist.

A further finding by Mechanic et al. (2000) was that the RSW were able to access help at increased rates compared to the ISW. However, whilst the difference between the help-seeking behaviour means is reported to be significant, there is only a discrepancy of 0.8 between the two means of this variable. This raises questions regarding the clinical meaningfulness of the outcomes, as well as the different ways in which RSW may be seeking help in comparison to the ISW. The findings indicate that RSW are in some way more effective at getting responses to fewer help-seeking behaviours. It is possible that because they are *relentlessly* stalked as opposed to *infrequently* stalked, they garner more attention or

efforts to help despite engaging in less help-seeking. These results must be interpreted with caution given the small sample size and the cross-sectional study design.

Avoidance coping, measured by Purcell et al. (2012) is an attempt by the victim to ignore their difficult circumstances. This method of coping precludes the victim from making any proactive attempts to better the situation they find themselves in, and is found by Purcell et al. (2012) to make them more prone to symptoms of PTSD. Avoidance coping, despite the label, is unlikely to allow the victim to avoid thoughts about their stalking victimisation. Avoidance could instead lead to rumination and other unhelpful thinking patterns, thereby bringing about a greater number of PTSD symptoms (Birrer & Michael, 2011; Michael, Halligan, Clark, & Ehlers, 2007). Additionally, cognitive processing theories of trauma posit that improvement in levels of distress following a traumatic event require the individual to engage emotionally with the distressing memories to reduce their impact (e.g. Foa, Steketee, & Olasov Rothbaum, 1989).

Severity

Stalking severity is defined operationally within the included studies as the number of different behaviours victims were exposed to (Kraaij et al., 2007), the level of violence, range, and duration of stalking behaviours (Kamphuis et al., 2003, Logan & Cole, 2007), the frequency and multiplicity of stalking behaviours (Mechanic et al., 2000), and the

intensity and frequency of stalking behaviours (Baldry et al., 2017). All of the included studies found significant outcomes between their severity variables of interest, and the psychological outcomes of their participants. This outcome is congruent with Dohrenwend's (1998) adversity-distress model which proposes that an increase in adversity leads to a proportional increase in distress. However, the different ways in which severity has been defined between the studies makes drawing meaningful conclusions a tricky task. Those aspects of stalking severity that are measured by only one study each are; level of violence, duration of stalking, and stalking intensity. The difficulty lies in the ambiguity of terms such as "intensity", as well as the huge variation in behaviours that stalkers might engage in.

What is clear from these studies is that the more severe the acts or threats of violence victims are exposed to, the more symptoms of PTSD they are likely to experience. Salcioglu, Urhan, Pirinccioglu and Aydin (2017) suggest anticipatory fear and helplessness as potential mediators in the relationship between domestic violence (DV) and victims' symptoms of PTSD and depression. They found both to be significant predictors of victims developing the psychological symptoms associated with depression and PTSD. Stalking victimisation, like domestic violence victimisation, involves a significant loss of control and predictability over one's life, leading to increased levels of fear and helplessness. This might explain why those participants exposed to increased violence as part of

their stalking victimisation were at greater risk of developing symptoms of PTSD.

Kraaij et al.'s (2007) finding that increased stalking severity is significantly positively correlated with intrusive symptoms of PTSD but not avoidance symptoms is worth examining in future research. The authors themselves make no comment on this finding and there is no existing research which aims to identify why individuals experience different proportions of the symptom clusters that make up a PTSD diagnosis. There are likely to be multiple biological, psychological, and environment factors impacting on an individual's experience of PTSD, and having a greater understanding of these could lead to more effective treatment strategies.

Logan and Cole (2007) provide the only study to use a longitudinal design to measure the impact of stalking duration on victims' psychological outcomes, finding duration to be a significant predictor of PTSD symptoms. However, the very nature of their sample indicates that the level of stalking severity participants were experiencing was significantly high for a judge to grant them protective orders (PO). This sample is therefore likely to represent only victims of severe stalking, and victims who had enough awareness of the potential dangers of their situations that they felt it necessary to obtain a PO (Logan et al., 2005).

Mechanic et al. (2000) also opened their study up to a potential for reduced heterogeneity of sample by omitting participants who scored in

the "middle third" of the distribution, i.e. fell in the gap between those classified as infrequently stalked, and those within the relentlessly stalked group.

As with the other included studies, readers should interpret Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) results with caution as they used a self-selected sample of female victims who were seeking support. Kamphuis et al., (2003) note this as a limitation owing to their estimation that the levels of distress experienced by this sample are likely to be skewed towards the more severe end of the scale. Though it cannot be confirmed or refuted, from the sparse detail provided, if this was indeed the case, it would significantly limit the generalizability of the results. A further limitation is the study's low response rate of 43%. Kelley, Clark, Brown, and Sitzia (2003) suggest a guideline for optimal response rate of 65% for self-completion postal questionnaires (the survey type employed by Kamphuis et al., 2003). Low response rates can cause a number of methodological problems including lower statistical power, biased outcomes, and lower credibility (Van Horn, Green, & Martinussen, 2009).

Overall, a synthesis of the findings from the five relevant included studies provisionally indicates that a significant positive correlation exists between stalking severity and symptoms of PTSD. However, this synthesis serves to highlight the need for greater consistency in operational definitions of stalking severity. Repetitions of existing studies, perhaps using a standardised measure of stalking severity that combines

all existing facets of severity, are necessary to ensure reliability and comparability across outcomes.

Social Support

Social support was not found to be significantly related to symptoms of PTSD in victims of stalking. Kamphuis et al. (2003) did find, however, a negative correlation between duration of stalking and satisfaction with social support. This latter finding perhaps indicates that the longer the stalking victimisation continues, the less the victim finds their support networks to be accessible or understanding about their emotional needs. It is possible that because of the ways in which stalking manifests, particularly stalking that does not escalate over time or does not involve physical violence, friends and family become accustomed and thus less alarmed by what the victim tells them. Whereas in cases of IPV, victims may have physical evidence of their victimisation to display to their friends and family, stalking victims may not. In a study by Sheridan and Scott (2010) participants were found to use overt physical markers above all other indicators in order to recognize stalking, placing stalking victims at a potential disadvantage where informal help-seeking is concerned. The study does not provide mean responses on the social support scale, and therefore it cannot be identified whether or not victims felt supported by their social networks to begin with. However, the suggestion that they become less satisfied with their social support over time may have implications for how victims choose to cope with their circumstances,

feasibly deciding to self-isolate or seek support through more formal routes, such as the police.

It is important to note that although Kamphuis et al. (2003) used the psychometrically sound Social Support Inventory (SSI; Timmerman, Emanuels-Zuurveen, & Emmelkamp, 2000) scale to measure satisfaction with social support, they chose not to split scoring into the subscales within the measure. The SSI is comprised of four subscales; emotional support, informative support, social companionship, and instrumental support. Kamphuis et al. (2003) calculated one total score for each participant. In doing this, the study may have lost some intricacies that SSI has the capacity to capture.

The findings of Purcell et al. (2012) concurred with those of Kamphuis et al. (2003), although they used only two questions to gather information about victims' social support.

These results may initially appear somewhat surprising, particularly in light of the fact that research proposing the contrary exists. Coker, Smith, Thompson, McKeown, and Betha (2002) investigated intimate partner violence, as opposed to stalking specifically, and found that social support was linked to significantly reduced risk of poor perceived mental health, including symptoms of PTSD. Coker et al. (2002) suggest that the type of social support offered to a victim is an important factor in determining mental health outcomes. They state that more than merely

talking to a friend or confidante about the victimisation, the confidante must be "emotionally supportive" (p. 473).

From the data collected by Purcell et al. (2012) and Kamphuis et al. (2003) we cannot establish whether the types of responses victims were receiving from their trusted confidantes were emotionally supportive. This might explain the lack of a significant correlation between the two variables of interest in both studies. Additionally, Andrews, Brewin, and Rose's (2003) study on gender, PTSD and victims of violence found that negative responses from trusted others had a more significant impact than positive responses. Simply put, this means that a small number of negative responses can increase the number of PTSD symptoms a victim experiences to a greater extent than the same number of positive responses can reduce the number of existing PTSD symptoms. Whilst neither Andrews et al. (2003) nor Coker et al. (2002) examined stalking victimisation specifically, research on interpersonal and intimate partner violence provides a close comparison.

It is possible that even if a victim of stalking receives positive responses from trusted others, this may not be sufficient in all cases to improve poor psychological health. More intensive, psychologically-based interventions are likely to be necessary to treat symptoms of PTSD, particularly if they are severe.

Protective Orders

The study by Baldry et al. (2017) examining a potential correlation between PO breaches and symptoms of PTSD did not find PO breaches to significantly account for variance in PTSD symptoms. Baldry et al. (2017) used a very simplified measure of whether or not perpetrators of stalking had breached the PO. Their single, dichotomous, self-report question may have led to inconsistencies as a result of potential disparities between what victims consider to be a breach. The study does not specify for the participants what would classify as a breach, and this might also differ between individual POs. It is worth noting that POs are likely to be sought out by those victims who are experiencing severe stalking victimisation (Ptacek, 1999) and who may therefore already have developed significant symptoms of PTSD, long before any potential breach. The victim's PTSD might be so severe that a PO breach serves only to maintain the ongoing symptoms rather than causing increased symptomatology. Furthermore, even when a PO has been issued, the victim has no assurances that the perpetrator will not continue to stalk her, and she may remain as fearful as she was prior to the PO. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that Baldry et al. (2017) does not find a link between PO breaches and symptoms of PTSD.

Conversely, however, the participants who had had their POs breached in Logan and Cole's (2007) study reported significantly more PTSD symptoms than those participants whose POs had not been breached. The

study found that participants who were stalked after the PO was issued, continued to be stalked for an average of 8 months after the PO. Studies suggest that PTSD symptoms increase as duration of stalking victimisation increases, even after controlling for reported PTSD symptoms at baseline (e.g. Kamphuis et al., 2003). Thus, the duration of stalking that Logan and Cole's (2007) participants had to endure is likely to have contributed to their increased PTSD symptoms at follow-up, more so than a PO breach per se. Furthermore, participants whose POs were breached reported higher levels of violence, threats, and control by the perpetrator at baseline than those participants whose stalking victimisation ceased following the PO. Higher levels of violence have been found to lead to significantly higher levels of PTSD symptomatology in victims of intimate partner violence (Vogel & Marshall, 2001). From this study it is possible to state that whilst there is a significant association between PO breaches and PTSD symptoms, it appears to be the risk factors associated with PO breaches which cause PTSD symptoms to increase, rather than the PO breaches themselves.

Whilst the two studies discussed here contradict each other in outcomes, it should be noted that Logan and Cole (2007) use a longitudinal cohort design, capturing data of a causal nature from 662 participants at two time-points, whilst Baldry et al. (2017) use a case-control design to collect data from 120 participants at one point in time. In the latter study neither a causal link nor causal direction can be identified between the variables. As a result, Logan and Cole's (2007) study employs higher

levels of evidence than Baldry et al. (2017) and therefore more credence should be given to their findings.

Forgiveness, Personality Traits, and Attachment

Baldry et al. (2017) did not find a significant relationship between forgiveness and symptoms of PTSD, but they did find a significant relationship between two aspects of unforgiveness – revenge and grudge – and symptoms of PTSD. In fact, overall frequency of 'benevolence' – as measured by the Marital Offence Forgiveness Scale (MOFS; Paleari et al., 2009) – was low, indicating that victims of intimate partner stalking (IPS) are not disposed to feelings of compassion towards their perpetrators. Although forgiveness and its potential impact on wellbeing have been widely studied (e.g. McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997), Baldry et al. (2017) appears to be the first to have tried to identify a potential relationship between forgiveness and mental health outcomes in victims of stalking.

The finding that unforgiveness has a deleterious effect on victims' mental health is in line with existing literature. In a sample of 235 Dutch victims of intimate partner violence, Kunst (2011) found that PTSD symptom severity was significantly correlated with feelings of revenge. Similarly, Orth, Montada, and Maercker (2006) identified a significant relationship between revenge and PTSD symptoms which was moderated by the length of time that had elapsed since the end of the victimisation. It is possible that ill feelings towards one's perpetrator maintain the existing

symptoms of PTSD by bringing about rumination and other cognitive coping strategies which have been found to correlate significantly with symptoms of PTSD (e.g. Purcell et al., 2012).

The finding that forgiveness is not significantly positively associated with symptoms of PTSD is inconsistent with current research. In a study of forgiveness as a potential mediator between traumatic interpersonal events and PTSD, Orcutt, Pickett, and Pope (2005) found that amongst their sample of 229 undergraduate students, those who reported to be more forgiving experienced significantly more symptoms of PTSD than those who were lower in forgiveness. In their systematic review of forgiveness in PTSD following man-made traumatic events, Cerci and Colucci (2018) found that only one of their thirteen included studies did not report a significant correlation between forgiveness and PTSD symptoms. The remaining twelve studies found that participants who reported higher forgiveness levels scored lower on the measure of PTSD-related symptoms.

Kamphuis et al. (2003) found that in victims of stalking, only those participants who scored lower on the personality construct 'openness to experience' correlated significantly with symptoms of PTSD. This either implies that those participants who scored higher on the IES did so because their personalities are such that they are less open to experience, or that some individuals were affected so significantly by the stalking

victimisation that it caused their personalities to be altered such that they became less open to experience.

As a result of this study's cross-sectional design, the direction of causation cannot be identified. However, the same study found that openness to experience and duration of stalking were negatively correlated, indicating that the longer the duration of stalking, the greater the possibility of changes in the victims' personalities. Additionally, the participants' response profiles on the Traumatic Constellation Identification Scale (TCIS; Dansky, Roth, & Kronenberger, 1990) support the theory that victims of stalking experience fundamental changes in their schema related to being stalked. The schema modifications correspond with a self-reported more cautious and restrained personality and lifestyle. Finally, in both Kamphuis et al. (2003) and in existing literature, victims of stalking commonly report personality changes causing them to become hypervigilant and less inclined to trust others (Hall, 1998). If the direction of effect is indeed that stalking causes changes in personality, it is interesting to note that higher scores for neuroticism were not correlated with PTSD in Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) study given the facets of personality that characterise this trait; anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, depression, and loneliness. The same goes for lower scores on extraversion and agreeableness. These unexpected discrepancies require further research to draw together any firm conclusions.

Sandberg et al. (2010), along with a large base of existing evidence, suggest that adult attachment styles mediate the link between interpersonal trauma and PTSD. They included stalking in their definition of interpersonal trauma, with the aim of identifying whether attachment plays a role in mediating the relationship between stalking and PTSD. Whilst stalking was significantly associated with PTSD, neither anxiety attachment nor avoidance attachment mediated the relationship. There are several reasons this might have occurred. Firstly, participants in this study were university students who, according to the authors, are unlikely to have experienced extreme trauma or abuse. It may be that victims' attachment styles are not affected by stalking unless it is severe and prolonged. Secondly, whether or not participants had been victims of stalking and other traumatic events was determined by asking how many times they had experienced each traumatic event from a list of traumatic events. None of the details of reported stalking events, such as severity, duration, or frequency, were collected. Further research is necessary to establish whether a similar study with a more stringent methodology would have the same outcome. Given Kamphuis et al.'s (2003) finding that stalking has the capacity to change fundamental aspects of victims' personalities; it would make sense that stalking might also affect victims' attachment styles. Aside from a recent study by Wolf, Løkkegaard, and Elklit (2018), Sandberg et al. (2010), and one other study (Dutton & Winstead, 2006), the existing research has concentrated singularly on attachment styles of stalking perpetrators. Wolf et al. (2018) explored

attachment insecurity in mothers who have been stalked by their children's fathers and found that the mothers reported increased attachment insecurity following their victimisation, in comparison to before they were in a relationship with their stalker. Attachment insecurity was also found to be the strongest predictor of emotional suffering. Several studies have found a strong link between insecure attachment and exposure to trauma, diminished capacity to cope with stressful events, and subsequently greater risk for poor mental health outcomes (Armour, Elklit, & Shevlin, 2011; Lowell, Renk, & Adgate, 2014) yet so far the research is severely lacking when it comes to victims' attachment styles and their psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that despite attachment patterns remaining more or less unchanged for the duration of a person's life, they can be influenced by events that call into question an individual's prevailing relationship schemas (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Methodological Considerations

Search Strategy

This appears to be the first systematic review of risk factors of female victims of stalking developing PTSD symptoms.

The choice of databases used for searches is likely to have limited the number of studies identified for inclusion. However, the databases used were found to be most appropriate in their scope for the purposes of this review.

Study Design

Bias was difficult to minimise due to the cross-sectional study design used most frequently within this area of research. There are several disadvantages of cross-sectional research including finding associations between variables based on correlation rather than causation, difficulties controlling for confounders, over-reliance on self-report measures (although this is impossible to avoid when measuring stalking and PTSD), making observations at one point in time, a susceptibility to bias due to low response and misclassification due to recall bias. This puts almost all the included studies at high risk of bias.

Response Rates and Confidence Intervals

Response rates and confidence intervals reported by the included studies varied.

Only two studies (Sandberg et al., 2010 and Purcell et al., 2012) reported their confidence intervals which were both 95% (see Table 4.6). Confidence intervals enable conclusions to be drawn about the statistical credibility and clinical applicability of the study findings. Therefore, when they are not reported we may struggle to come to conclusions about the wider clinical implications of the reported results, and we cannot know the range within which the true value of the mean exists.

Two of the studies (Kamphuis et al., 2003 and Sandberg et al., 2007) had very low response rates of 43 and 39% respectively (see Table 4.6). This

increases their risk of bias as the final sample may differ from the individuals who eventually did not consent to participate. For example, the final sample may have been more willing to disclose information about their victimization experiences, they may have been victims whilst the others did not self-identify as such, or they may have been more severely stalked, than the group who did not participate.

Table 4.6

Details of the response rates and confidence intervals of included studies

Study	**Response Rate (%)**	**Confidence Intervals 95%?**
Baldry, Cinquegrana, Regalia, & Crapolicchio (2017)	Unknown	Unknown
Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson (2004)	72	Unknown
Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, & Bartak (2003)	43	Unknown
Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski, & Kremers (2007)	70	Unknown
Logan & Cole (2007)	70	Unknown
Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick (2000)	Sample taken from larger NVAWS sample	Unknown
Purcell, Pathé, Baksheev, MacKinnon, & Mullen (2012)	61	Yes
Sandberg, Suess, & Heaton (2010)	39	Yes

Measures of PTSD

All but one (Logan & Cole, 2007) of the studies used self-report measures of PTSD. This increases the risk of bias as self-report measures can be compromised by demand characteristics, participants' willingness to disclose trauma and its symptoms, recency of traumatic event, acquiescence bias (the tendency to respond affirmatively), and social desirability bias.

Finally, the self-report scales used are not intended to be used as diagnostic tools. They are able to assess subjective distress and make provisional diagnoses. If the goal was to confirm clinical diagnoses, additional standardised assessments would be required.

Generalisability

The number of participants in the included studies ranged from 47 to 662, with a mean of 233. Whether the studies sample sizes are large enough is unclear as none of the studies detail power analyses. Power analyses are used to determine the sample size necessary for a study to detect a pre-specified effect size with a pre-specified degree of confidence. Convenience sampling and self-selected participation, often from places victims had sought help (e.g. courts, battered women's shelters, etc.) are a potential risk of bias, especially given that none of the included studies were able to compare their final sample to the individuals who chose not to participate. Help-seeking samples are likely to possess some qualities that non-help-seeking stalking victims may not, for example awareness of

the dangers of stalking victimization, and the initiative to seek formal help. Furthermore, it is possible that victims who sought help had experienced more severe stalking than non-help-seeking victims, particularly in the samples of women who had sought and received POs, simply by virtue of the fact that a judge felt the level of danger to the victim to be high enough to endorse a PO. Finally, only Kamphuis et al. (2003) used a control sample which consisted of female undergraduate students, some of whom had experienced physical or sexual violence. It is surprising that only one of the included studies used a control group, and though the remaining studies do not identify this omission as problematic, it is likely to limit the credibility of their outcomes as there is no baseline with which to make comparisons.

The approximate participant age range across studies is 18-73 with an approximate mean of 31. These figures are approximate as neither Logan and Cole (2007) nor Basile et al. (2004) provide an age range, and Purcell et al. (2012) does not provide a mean age. The wide age range allows good generalizability of outcomes to the adult stalking victim population. Purcell et al. (2012) note that just under a third of their sample was aged 18-35 which might limit the generalizability of their results to the older adult population, although they do not provide all the necessary information to confirm this.

Review Limitations

The first notable limitation of the current review is the lack of studies within this field of research. One possible explanation for this is that stalking is a relatively new area of research, especially in England and Wales where it was only criminalised in 2012. Furthermore, it would be extremely challenging – perhaps even impossible, to measure or control for all possible mediators in the relationship between stalking and PTSD. Cross-sectional research can only conclude that there are correlations between potential mediators, therefore we cannot say for certain that a particular risk factor is the cause of a stalking victim's PTSD symptoms, nor the direction of effect. This places limits on the clinical relevance of the outcomes of the included studies. However, the information they yield is a good basis on which to start developing provisional interventions for female victims of stalking, as well as females at risk of stalking victimization.

A further limitation is that some authors were contacted regarding the details of their studies, or in order to obtain copies of their studies which were otherwise unavailable. Whilst some authors responded and kindly sent the requested information, others who did not respond were not able to be followed up. This means that there may be existing studies which would meet the inclusion criteria for this review but were not included.

Finally, there was variability within the included studies in the perpetrator's relationship to the victim – some were ex-intimate partners,

some were current partners, some were dating partners, some were unknown to the victims, and some were unspecified. This is likely to have reduced the comparability of the results between studies, and decreases the generalizability of the outcomes to other relationship types.

Conclusions

This systematic review relates to the risk factors for female victims of stalking developing PTSD symptoms. It is followed in the next chapter by a closely-linked case study of a female victim of stalking who was suffering with symptoms of PTSD, including social withdrawal, fearfulness, and panic attacks. The case study brings to life the impact of stalking victimization, with the intervention being implemented post-event and focusing largely on the client's trauma symptoms.

Risk factors for victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD were:

- Severity of stalking
- Unforgiveness (holding a grudge/feeling revengeful)
- Strategic responding
- Passive coping
- Behavioural coping
- Avoidance coping
- Lower openness to experience
- Self-blame
- Rumination
- Refocus on planning

- Catastrophizing

Many of the risk factors identified in this review are dynamic and therefore modifiable, indicating that an effective intervention could significantly reduce the risks of stalking victims developing PTSD symptoms or at least ameliorate the symptoms once they are established. Preventative measures including longer sentences for stalking perpetrators, and investment in training and awareness for the general public on what stalking is, how to identify it, and where and how to seek help might deter potential perpetrators, and encourage and enable victims to seek help earlier.

In order to prevent women from becoming victims of violence it may be important to introduce educational violence-reduction programs within primary schools. For example, the Incredible Years program which targets children's social and emotional skills was found to reduce conduct problems and increase social competence in a sample of 1768 US primary school children (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008). A 2-year follow-up study of the Incredible Years program by Reid, Webster-Stratton, and Hammond (2003) found that 75% of children were functioning within the normal range at follow-up. This does not necessarily mean that outcomes are maintained into adulthood, but overall results of school-based violence prevention programs are promising.

The findings of the current review also point towards aspects of stalking perpetration which should be addressed as a priority through interventions with perpetrators or those at risk of becoming perpetrators (i.e. men already perpetrating other types of violence against a partner or ex-partner).

Future Research

It is clear from the current systematic review that further research is necessary in this area. The small number of included studies and the high potential for bias within those indicates a significant gap in the research when it comes to risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD. In order for firmer conclusions to be drawn, longitudinal studies would be necessary to establish causation and direction of causation. Additionally, studies whose participants are non-help seeking victims of stalking would improve the generalisability of the outcomes to a wider population. Non-help seeking victims are also likely to represent a broader spectrum of stalking experiences, particularly in terms of severity.

Finally, the use of standardised measures of stalking victimisation, PTSD, and potential risk factors across all studies would facilitate comparability across outcomes, making future systematic reviews more informative and results more conducive to meta-analyses.

Chapter Five Being a female victim of stalking: A case study

Abstract

This case study formed part of recommended treatment for BB – a 37 year old female victim of stalking perpetrated by an ex-intimate partner. BB also had diagnoses of borderline personality disorder, traits of obsessive compulsive disorder, and panic disorder. A number of BB's difficulties were believed to be associated both directly and indirectly with her experiences of stalking and violence in intimate relationships. Driven by referral, assessment and formulation, this report details a schema-focused intervention which was tailored to BB's particular difficulties. The focus of the work was on addressing her severe agoraphobia likely resulting from experiences of intimate partner violence, emotional dysregulation, and early childhood trauma through the use of chair work, imagery and limited reparenting. Overall, BB attended the majority of appointments offered and contributed to her therapy. Progress was observed throughout the intervention. The final outcome measures were recorded at 6-months into treatment as BB did not complete the measures again following the end of treatment. The 6-month measures showed improvement in some areas of difficulty, including emotional inhibition, social isolation, and subjugation of needs. Potential iatrogenic effects were also noted and discussed. Observed changes were small but indicated greater insight into the impact of past traumas on her attachment patterns and involvement in abusive relationships, as well as a new-found assertiveness and an ability to notice and label her emotional experiences.

Further research is required to draw any firm conclusions about the therapeutic effects of schema mode therapy with victims of stalking

Please note: consent was obtained from BB and the evidence is held at the relevant service.

Introduction

BB is a 37 year old female with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), Panic Disorder, and traits of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). She was born to heroin-addicted parents, and was brought up by them until she was aged 5. At this point she was removed from her parents' care by her paternal grandparents, who raised her until she eventually moved back in with her father as a teenager. BB was then neglected and physically abused by her father, who was still addicted to heroin at the time of their cohabiting. When she was 18 father and daughter had an altercation and BB was asked to leave the house. At age 36 and following a period of homelessness, stalking, and domestic violence victimization, BB was referred to the Personality Disorder Service by the Mental Health Liaison Team at Accident & Emergency (A&E) and was initially assessed by us in October 2015. On assessment she described feeling anxious and depressed much of the time. Her anxiety was characterised by daily panic attacks and obsessive behaviour including cleaning and hair pulling. She described often experiencing flashbacks of traumatic events which had occurred in her recent and distant past. BB reported having negative thoughts about herself (e.g. "I don't fit in"/ "I don't like myself"/"I have nothing or no one"), and was believed to meet criteria for a diagnosis of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). Furthermore, she reported being relatively socially isolated, and corroborative documentation noted multiple physical complaints including experiencing on-going pain due to a past assault. BB suggested that her

intense fear of others was affecting her ability to go out alone and lead a normal life.

The stalking BB experienced was perpetrated by her most recent ex-intimate partner who had also been physically violent towards BB.

Some of the behaviours he engaged in were:

- Waiting for her outside her flat
- Approaching her in public
- Sending her hundreds of text messages on a daily basis
- Threatening her with violence
- Monitoring her behaviour and her social media accounts
- Turning up unannounced at her at workplace

Although this is not an exhaustive list it details behaviours which, when taken together, would qualify as stalking according to section 2A and 4A of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (UK). The ex-partner's actions left BB feeling extremely fearful of going out into the community and therefore severely limited her freedom. The threats of violence and unpredictable nature of the ex-partner's behaviour meant she tended to self-isolate in order to feel safe. The stalking behaviour commenced in the context of BB ending the relationship after a final, serious assault which reportedly left BB's face unrecognisable. Research has found relationship break-ups to be a particularly risky time in the context of stalking,

especially when the break-up sufferer has an anxious attachment to the break-up initiator (Davis, Ace, & Andra, 2006). Davis et al. (2006) found that feelings of anger and jealousy triggered by the breakup of a relationship, in which the break-up sufferer was anxiously attached to the break-up initiator, were directly predictive of pursuit behaviours and aggression.

Referral and Assessment

Referral process

BB was referred to the specialist therapies team at the PD service following presentation at an A&E Department with deep lacerations to her wrist and expressing suicidal ideation. She was assessed by the Mental Health Liaison Team in A&E, who felt she had personality disturbances which warranted further assessment and treatment.

Psychosocial Background

This information was gathered by the therapist from documentation on the electronic records system about BB, and was later corroborated by BB herself.

BB is a 37 year old woman of English and Sri Lankan heritage who lives alone in a one-bed flat. She has two older half siblings and a small but supportive friendship group. Throughout her early childhood BB's parents were addicted to heroin. She described her father as loud, competitive and violent towards both herself and her mother, causing BB to feel

frightened and unsafe at home. She recalled going out with her mother to buy drugs and often went hungry as there was little money for anything besides. Her mother had anorexia and frequently told BB that she was fat. BB had regular contact with her extended family as a child and young person, but she had always found these interactions to be negative as they would make intentionally hurtful comments about her physical appearance, leading her to feel very self-conscious and unattractive.

At the age of five BB was removed from her parents' care by the police and taken to live with her grandparents who she described as strict but warm. She remembered trying to suffocate herself as a child in the context of being removed from her home. Although her living conditions were greatly improved and some emotional needs met whilst staying with her grandparents, she began to feel as though she did not fit in. This experience was replicated at school where she was bullied. BB left her grandparents to live with her father when she was fourteen years old. She believes that he took her into his custody for financial benefit, as he was otherwise negligent when it came to her care. Her mother, whom she did not want to maintain contact with, would often call her and lie about having serious medical conditions in order to manipulate BB into continued contact. BB began drinking excessive amounts of alcohol around this time, truanting from school and having friendships with older teenagers. She reported that this was a result of her father providing her with drugs and alcohol.

BB left school without any qualifications and began working as a hairdresser. As a young adult she engaged in sexually promiscuous behavior, i.e. having impulsive sex with men she had just met in pubs and bars, and went out drinking frequently. Her father asked her to leave home when she was eighteen following an incident with her father's girlfriend and she became homeless for a period. BB began using illicit drugs and had to terminate a pregnancy. She had three serious relationships with men who were all addicted to substances and both emotionally and physically abusive. In 2012 she was stalked and seriously assaulted by an ex-boyfriend. Just prior to this BB's grandmother, who had raised her, died which was highly distressing for BB. She described feeling abandoned once again.

On initial assessment, it became clear that BB was petrified of being outside of her flat. She required several calls and encouragement to attend the assessment appointment at the service. During the assessment BB appeared to be very changeable in mood depending on what was being asked about or discussed. The function of her different moods seemed to be protective, with BB becoming defensive, tearful, or angry at the slightest hint of challenge. BB spoke in some detail about having been stalked and physically assaulted by her ex-partner and the impact this had had on her, including triggering memories of her father and the abuse she had suffered as a child. An initial formulation of BB suggested that her traumatic childhood and subsequent personality difficulties had not only made her vulnerable to abuse in her adult life, but

had also exacerbated the impact of the ex-partner abuse.

Presenting Problem(s)

- Socially isolated
- Agoraphobic
- Highly self-critical
- Difficulty forming and maintaining healthy intimate relationships
- Intense feelings of shame
- Impulsive and risky behaviour, including sexual promiscuity
- Drinking and using illicit substances
- Difficulty identifying own needs and expressing these effectively to others
- Fear of coming to harm from others
- Low self-esteem
- Self-harming behaviour/suicidal ideation & behaviour

Predisposing Factors

- Heroin-addicted parents
- Neglect
- Brought up by strict grandparents
- Death of grandmother
- Witnessed domestic violence
- Victim of domestic violence, incl. serious physical assault, emotional abuse and stalking
- Bullied
- Not "fitting in"
- Being the butt of jokes about her physical appearance from family members
- Abandoned by mother
- Violent and aggressive father

Precipitating Factors

- Having to leave her father's house as a young teenager
- Drinking alcohol and using illicit substances
- Contact with Mum

- Intimate relationships with unreliable men
- Impulsive/risky sexual behaviour
- Intense emotions
- Dissociation

Protective Factors

- Has continually engaged appropriately with mental health services
- Able to manage finances and maintain accommodation
- Sensitive to others' feelings
- Close friends
- Close with Dad and younger brother

Perpetuating Factors

- Rumination
- Negative self-talk
- Not leaving the house alone
- Death of grandmother
- Difficulty getting needs met or asserting self
- Low self-esteem

Figure 5.1 BB's formulation set out in the 5 Ps format.

Formulation

The 5 Ps approach was used to formulate BB's difficulties. This approach is comprehensive, identifying both current and historical distal and proximal factors which are likely to have impacted upon, or continue to impact upon, a client's presentation. An additional benefit of the 5 Ps

formulation is that it is simple enough to share with the service user. In this case, both the mode map and the 5 Ps formulation were shared with BB.

The main issues BB presented with included suicidal ideation, risky behaviour, low self-esteem, and agoraphobia (Figure 5.1). She experienced changeable mood states characterised by high levels of anxiety, avoidance, fear of going out, low mood and irritation.

It is likely that BB's experiences of witnessing domestic violence and receiving inconsistent, emotionally neglectful and physically abusive parental care caused her to develop an anxious insecure attachment style, and to be highly sensitive to feelings of anxiety and fearful of potential abandonment. Her sense of vulnerability and defectiveness were likely to have developed through significant events in her childhood including being bullied throughout school, being removed from her parents' care at age 5, never meeting her grandparents' high expectations, and being physically abused by her father. These occurrences, alongside her mother's ongoing manipulation and deceit are likely to have instilled in BB an intrinsic sense that her needs were not valid and that she did not deserve to be cared for or nurtured. In order to cope with the invalidating environment BB likely cut off from her own needs and emotions, finding it more adaptive to surrender to the needs of others and accept their abuse. A lack of emotional containment in childhood meant that BB had a very low tolerance for distressing

emotional states and used learned methods of coping such as avoidance, substance use and alcohol consumption to regulate her moods. The relief these strategies provided was likely temporary as she would soon start to berate herself for not coping more effectively. However, the short-lived relief she experienced was enough to reinforce the unhelpful coping strategies making it more likely that BB would repeat these behaviours.

In her adulthood BB's strong desire to be loved and cared for, as evidenced by her persistence in seeking out intimate partners, meant she was drawn to physically and emotionally abusive and controlling relationships. She is also likely to have learned from a young age that violence and emotional abuse are acceptable and proportionate responses to challenge within relationships. Love and care had become associated with physical abuse in relation to her dad, and BB appeared to be constantly attempting to meet her unmet childhood needs for boundaries and care. All the physical abuse directed towards BB, as well as the stalking victimization meant she developed an extreme fear of the outside world, perceiving it to be inhospitable and dangerous.

Rejection by potential intimate partners became so intolerable for BB that she would often retaliate or self-soothe by having impulsive sex with unknown men she met in a pub. She would quickly develop feelings for these men because she perceived them to be showing her love and affection, but they would inevitably leave her, and the cycle would become self-perpetuating.

Following a team discussion of BB's presentation and presenting difficulties, schema therapy (ST) was determined to be the most appropriate intervention to address BB's maladaptive and temperamental mood states, some of which were likely to have been caused or exacerbated by her stalking victimization.

The aims of a ST intervention with BB were in line with her therapeutic goals to:

- Build up her independence and build upon her strengths by enabling her to recognise her autonomy, and increase her self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourage her to identify and express her needs effectively and to be assertive rather than submissive.
- Help her to manage her agoraphobic anxieties to stop her self-isolating.
- Develop a secure attachment with the therapist, from which she could start to try new ways of managing difficult or unsettling situations.

Schema Therapy

ST was developed in 1994 by Jeffrey Young in order to treat individuals believed to have symptoms which were resistant to the more traditional cognitive therapeutic approaches favoured previously. Kellogg and Young (2006, p. 445) state that ST "draws on the cognitive-behavioral,

attachment, psychodynamic, and emotion-focused traditions and conceptualizes patients who have borderline personality disorder as being under the sway of five modes or aspects of the self". NICE Guidelines recommend a minimum 18-month duration schema-focused intervention as an effective treatment for community mental health patients diagnosed with BPD (Ali & Findlay, 2016). Since its conception ST has attracted a great deal of research interest and now has a large evidence base, including numerous randomised controlled trials (e.g. Bamelis, Evers, Spinhoven, & Arntz, 2014) and systematic reviews (e.g. Masley, Gillanders, Simpson, & Taylor, 2012). The current evidence base is strongly in favour of the use of ST with both clinical (e.g. Jacob & Arntz, 2013) and forensic populations (e.g. Bernstein, Nijman, Karos, Keulen-de Vos, de Vogel, & Lucker, 2012). Masley et al. (2012) include four studies examining the effectiveness of ST in the treatment of BPD in their systematic review. Whilst ST was found to yield positive outcomes in treating the symptoms of BPD as compared to treatment as usual (Farrell, Shaw, & Webber, 2009) and transference-focused therapy (Giesen-Bloo et al., 2006), it is important to note that ST was compared to treatments which were unmatched in frequency, intensity, and structure of delivery. Additional research using a comparison intervention which matches ST as closely as possible in terms of frequency, intensity, and structure would help to establish ST as the mechanism of positive change. Taylor, Bee, and Haddock (2017) conducted a systematic review to identify whether ST changes schemas and whether this equates to changes in symptoms in

personality disorders and other mental health diagnoses. Following a systematic review of 12 studies, Taylor et al. (2017) found that existing studies yielded evidence in favour of ST leading to schema and symptom change in personality disorder. However, of the 12 included studies, only one was a randomised trial, three were case series, and the remainder were open trials. The study concluded that there is a clear lack of high-quality evidence to substantiate the claim that schema change is the mechanism of action of ST. A systematic review carried out by Sempertegui, Karreman, Arntz, and Becker (2013) similarly finds that although the existing ST literature is promising, the evidence base is small and lacking in quality.

This change-focused model is likely to be most effective when delivered by a trained and experienced clinician to clients with Axis II diagnoses, particularly those with personality-based psychopathology. The author and therapist was a Trainee Psychologist receiving weekly supervision from an experienced ST accredited counselling psychologist.

A 'mode map' is the schema equivalent of a formulation and should be developed collaboratively with the client. The mode map allows both therapist and client to 'map out' the client's inner thoughts and feelings, offering a greater understanding of their emotional and behavioural responses to particular situations. The therapist's role is to enable the client to rearrange their internal world using several different techniques ascribed to ST. These include: limited reparenting, experiential imagery,

chair work, psychoeducation, and behavioural pattern breaking (Kellogg & Young, 2006). Only the techniques which were incorporated into the intervention with BB will be detailed further.

Early maladaptive schemas (EMS), commonly described as filters through which we perceive the world, were initially conceptualised by Young, Klosko, and Weishaar in 2003. There are currently 18 identified EMS and these are the foundations upon which ST was developed. Schemas develop in childhood when we start to internalise our experiences of the environment around us. What we internalise dictates how we come to understand ourselves and our relationships with others. The majority of the general population will identify with only a few schemas, but individuals with personality disorder, and in particular those with borderline personality disorder often endorse the majority, if not all of the 18 EMS (Lobbestael, Van Vreeswijk, & Arntz, 2008). To work with so many schemas can become daunting and unmanageable.

In order to make the task more practicable, ST with clients with severe borderline personality disorder can take the form of schema mode therapy (SMT) (Young, 2000, 2001a; Young et al., 2003). This modified version of ST conceptualises groups of schemas into 'modes' and supports the client and therapist to simultaneously hold several schemas in mind (Masley et al., 2012). A mode is described by Young et al. (2003, p. 40) as 'a facet of the self…that has not been fully integrated with other facets'. Individuals who have grown up in validating environments are

believed to have modes – perhaps referred to as 'moods' in common parlance – which are well integrated, such that transitions between them are continuous and moderate (Bamber, 2004). Conversely, individuals diagnosed with BPD experience much more abrupt "flipping" between their modes wherein one mode becomes quickly dominant, and the others are subdued.

SMT comprises several different mechanisms of change which are explored further below.

Limited Reparenting

Limited reparenting is a therapeutic technique or stance which sets ST apart from other change-focused therapies, such as DBT or MBT, and was developed from the understanding that individuals with BPD did not have their core needs – safety, belonging, autonomy, self-appreciation, self-expression, and realistic limits – met as children. In SMT the therapist-client relationship is positioned to counteract and try to repair some of the deficits resulting from this lack of nurturance in childhood (Kellogg & Young, 2006). Individuals with BPD often present as much younger than their years, having had their emotional development stunted in one way or another, and their ability to function as "healthy adults" is therefore limited.

To continue their emotional growth into healthy, functional adults, an individual with BPD must first be provided with a safe space in which they can develop as a healthy child. This space is developed through the

therapist's expressions of validation, empathy and warmth, and encourages the client to become gradually more vulnerable. The secure nature of the attachment between the client and the therapist is critical to ensuring that any change-focused interventions are effective. Spinhoven, Giesen-Bloo, van Dyck, Kooiman, and Arntz (2007) compared ST – an intervention which actively encourages a strong attachment between the patient and the therapist – to Transference-Focused Psychotherapy (TFP) – a treatment modality which considers a positive and supportive attachment between the patient and therapist to be counterproductive. The study used a randomised two-group design and found that the positive therapeutic rapport consciously and effort-fully formed during ST leads to reduced premature termination of treatment rates in comparison to TFP. Additionally, a positive therapeutic alliance was found to be an effective mechanism for eventual change in borderline personality traits. However, it must be noted that eight participants, all who had been assigned to the TFP group, terminated treatment prematurely, resulting in an under-powered study. Consequently, mediational analyses could not be performed to establish the therapeutic alliance as the direct cause of enhanced efficacy of SFT in comparison to TFP.

Limited reparenting can also occur through the use of particular tools available to the therapist, for example it would not be unusual or contraindicated by the ST model for the therapist to call or email the client during the week to check in and see how they are. Other techniques include the therapist recording themselves on the client's mobile phone

reading a flashcard aloud, and the use of transitional objects to repair a rupture, mark a significant achievement, or when there is going to be a break in therapy (Young, 2000). Most important to note is that limited reparenting is not a one-off, one-time intervention in ST – it is a general stance held by the therapist throughout the therapeutic process.

Imagery and Chair Work

Imagery and chair work are two experiential techniques used in ST to aid the initial gathering of information from the client, and eventually to effect change in relation to the client's unhelpful modes (Kellogg & Young, 2006). During imagery clients are asked to conjure up moderately distressing memories, or memories evoked by a current emotion (the latter is known as an 'emotion bridge'). The therapist ensures they are immersed in the image by asking for descriptions of the environment such as who is with the client in the image, what the client can see, smell, hear etc. These images not only help the therapist to understand the client's early experiences, they also provide an opportunity for the therapist to enter the image, with the client's permission, and model a healthy adult. The healthy adult protects and supports the client's vulnerable child in the image, standing up to the punitive critic(s) and eventually taking the vulnerable child "away from" the distressing situation by way of imagination. One of the goals of imagery is for the client to become their own healthy adults in distressing images. This is likely to be a lengthy process during which the client learns that they can be their own source

of safety and comfort, and can stand up to the punitive critic without the therapist's help.

Chair work, also known as "dialogues", enables the client to externalise their modes. This particular technique is derived from Gestalt theory (Greenberg & Webster, 1982) and aims to reconcile two opposing parts of oneself. Gestalt theory posits that a resolution can be achieved through the synthesis of the opposing parts, finally arriving at a new set of responses to situations. In ST this applies to the process of mode integration. During chair work exercises several empty chairs or other objects may be used to represent different modes. The therapist is able to simultaneously nurture the vulnerable child and stand up for the client against the externalised representation of the punitive critic, and the client observes the therapist modelling these healthy adult responses. The client also has the opportunity in chair work to directly confront the punitive critic, if they feel comfortable enough to do so.

Weertman and Arntz (2007) conducted a study with 21 participants diagnosed with various personality disorders. Individuals with a diagnosis of BPD were excluded to (1) reduce the chances of the therapists having to manage crisis situations during the 24 total sessions and (2) avoid the undue stress that the authors anticipated 24 sessions focused on distressing childhood memories may have on individuals with BPD. The study took the form of a cross-over trial in which patients received one of two treatment packages using experiential techniques including role-play

and imagery rescripting. One treatment package focused first on the present and then on the past, and the other addressed the past before the present. The study found that the experiential techniques were as effective in the short term as CBT techniques which focus primarily on the present only. However, the cross-over design used meant that the individual impact of each of the two phases of treatment – past focus and present focus – could not be identified. In other words, the positive outcome could not be attributed solely to the experiential techniques employed in the 'past' phase of the treatment package. It is also not known whether these outcomes would generalise to individuals diagnosed with BPD. Further research is necessary to establish the clinical efficacy of experiential techniques alone on individuals with a diagnosis of BPD. It is possible that their effectiveness is optimised when used in combination with other therapeutic techniques.

This case study seeks to answer the question: Is schema mode work an effective intervention for a victim of stalking perpetrated by an ex-intimate partner?

Outcome Measures

Schema Mode Inventory

The Schema Mode Inventory (SMI; Young, Arntz, Atkinson, Lobbestael, Weishaar, van Vreeswijk, & Klokman, 2007) is a 124-item scale measuring 16 different schema modes. Responses are recorded on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 ('never or almost never') to 6 ('all of the

time'). Overall mode scores are calculated as a mean of the responses to items relating to each mode. The overall scores fall between 1 (Very Low) and 6 (Severe) with the Happy Child and Health Adult schemas reverse scored so that 6 = Very Low and 1 = Severe. The SMI norms are based on a general population sample and therefore BB's scores would be expected to be higher than the means. BB completed the SMI at two time-points – the start of therapy and the 6-month 'mid-point' of therapy (see Appendix 5.1 for SMI norms). Unfortunately, she did not complete the final measures despite multiple reminders. Participants must read statements which describe facets of an individual's personality such as 'my anger gets out of control' and 'I'm lazy'. This outcome measure was used as it was part of the Patient Owned Database (POD) system which was being implemented by the service at the time BB was a service user. However, it also provided helpful information on BB's most prominent modes in order to guide the intervention.

Lobbestael, van Vreeswijk, Spinhoven, Schouten, and Arntz's (2010) study on the psychometric properties of the SMI established that all subscales have good internal consistencies with a mean of α = .87. The test-retest reliability of the modes are satisfactory, ranging from .65 to .92, with significant *p* values and a mean of .84 (Lobbestael et al., 2010). The same study found moderate construct validity for the SMI. Research therefore suggests that the SMI is both a valid and reliable psychometric assessment of schema modes.

Young Schema Questionnaire – Short Form 1st Edition

The Young Schema Questionnaire – Short Form 1st Edition (YSQ-S1; Young & Brown, 1994) is a 75-item scale which aims to identify EMS. The items consist of statements such as 'I find myself clinging to people I'm close to, because I'm afraid they'll leave me' and 'I'm unworthy of the love, attention, and respect of others'. Participants' responses are recorded on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 ('completely untrue of me') to 6 ('describes me perfectly'). Again, this measure was used by the POD system, although was perhaps less useful than the SMI as individuals with severe BPD tend to endorse almost all the schemas measured by the YSQ-S1 – as BB did.

In relation to its psychometric properties, Waller, Meyer and Ohanian (2001) report an adequate reliability of α = .96 in a sample of eating disordered females, whilst Kriston, Schäfer, Jacob, Härter and Hölzel (2013) found that 17 of the 18 subscales had a reliability of α > .70 for their sample of psychiatric inpatients with a range of Axis I and II diagnoses, including BPD. The "Entitlement/Grandiosity" scale fell just short of Nunnally's (1978) rule of thumb at α = .67. Rijkeboer and van den Bergh (2006) found higher internal consistency values in the clinical sample than the non-clinical sample which reflects the original purpose of the measure. Studies of the validity of the YSQ-SF using factorial loadings found that 14 of the 18 items exceeded the .40 criteria indicating satisfactory factorial validity.

There are currently no norms for the YSQ-SF. Scores are interpreted in relation to the highest possible score for each scale (see Appendix 5.2 for a copy of the YSQ-S1) which is 30.

Intervention

Based on BB's formulation and her goals, the ST intervention consisted of the following elements:

1. Assessment imagery – introducing the imagery technique as an assessment tool.
2. Psychoeducation – some didactic teaching on the schema model.
3. Mode map – developing a visual mode map and using this to help BB understand her own patterns of responding and behaviours.
4. Chair work – using dialogues to externalize the punitive and demanding critics and reduce their power. This was in line with BB's goal of being more confident and able to manage daily stressors.
5. Imagery – using imagery to soothe the vulnerable child and grow the healthy adult. This was with the goal of helping BB to grow her healthy adult and increase her self-confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy. Imagery was also implemented in order to develop and model a healthy therapeutic relationship between BB and the therapist, thereby modeling a healthy relationship.
6. Interpersonal effectiveness – teaching skills to express needs effectively and become more assertive, in line with BB's goals of

being able to express her needs and assert them appropriately, and to help her form healthy relationships outside of therapy.

A total of 39 appointments were offered, of which BB attended 29. Each session lasted 60 minutes. The initial 4-5 sessions were an opportunity to introduce BB to the schema mode model, and to gather information about her background, as well as her current difficulties.

The first several weeks of the intervention took the form of an extended assessment wherein the therapist had the opportunity to learn more about the client, her current difficulties, and any unhelpful patterns of behaviour. Imagery was used at this stage to take BB back to memories of her past which elicited particular emotions. Assessment imagery was also used at the start of therapy to create an imagined "safe place" for BB to return to when an image started to feel threatening. BB was asked to close her eyes and imagine a place where she felt entirely safe and comfortable. She chose her flat, and wanted some of her closest friends and her beloved cat to be in the safe place with her.

The psychoeducation intervention began with an explanation of ST and what it entails, followed by a demonstration of how the modes work using chairs. The chairs in the therapy room were arranged in such a way as to demonstrate how the vulnerable child is unable to get its needs met and so the angry child might speak on its behalf and may get some of the vulnerable child's needs met, although not consistently. The coping modes then develop to help the vulnerable child to survive and

sometimes even thrive in spite of it not having had its needs met. It was explained to BB that different coping modes become dominant depending on the situation, and they can rapidly switch in and out of dominance and passivity. The psychoeducation phase of therapy is important in ensuring the client is fully "signed up" to the therapeutic model, and to begin collaborative working.

The mode map (Figure 5.2) provided a visual representation of BB's inner world, and a type of accessible formulation which both BB and the therapist could refer to as necessary. It separated different groups of modes and indicated links between certain modes where one might trigger another into dominance, for example. BB found the mode map particularly useful when her responses to a situation she had come across could be mapped out as in Figure 5.3.

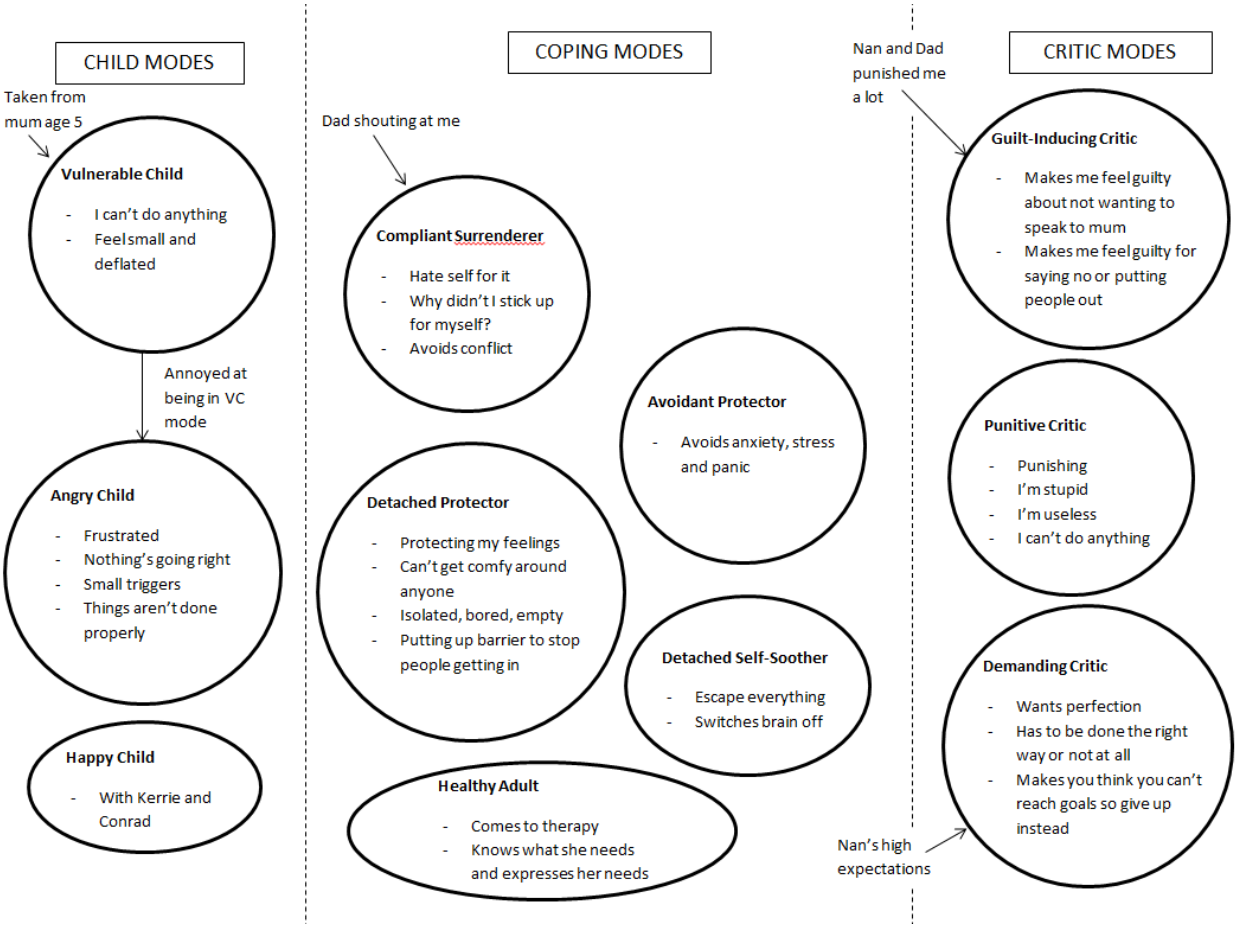


Figure 5.2 BB's mode map.

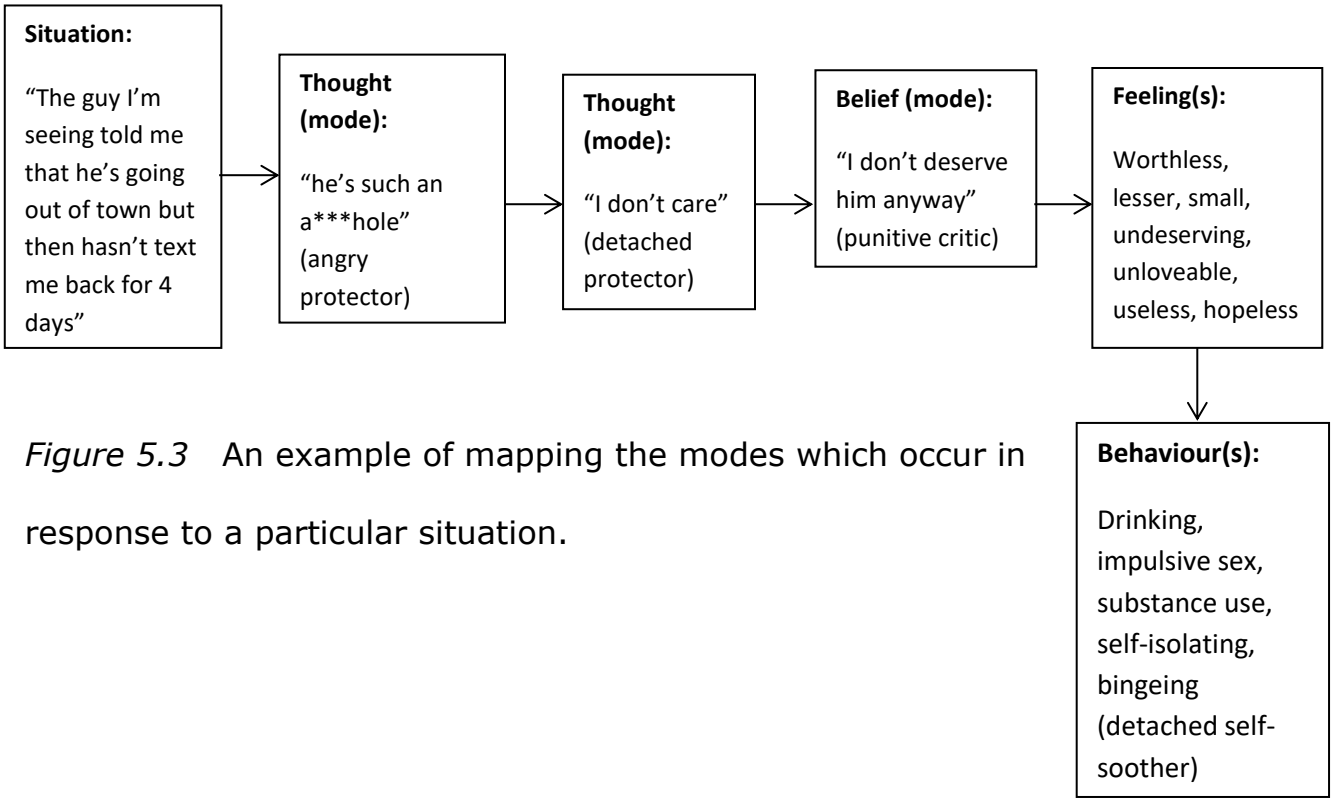


Figure 5.3 An example of mapping the modes which occur in response to a particular situation.

The mode map was also validating for BB because it included her theories, where she had them, as to why these modes might have developed in the first place.

Chair work was interspersed throughout BB's therapy – at any point that her punitive critic was becoming especially powerful the therapist would pull her chair up next to BB, and place an empty chair in front of both of them. The empty chair was representative of the punitive critic, and the continued use of this method reinforced to BB that the punitive critic was a separate entity to her, and something which she could slowly overpower. Initially BB was loath to speak directly to the punitive critic, perhaps for fear of the potential backlash. However, eventually she began to say a few words to the punitive critic – quietly at first, and then more loudly. For example:

Therapist: Is there anything you'd like to say to the critic?

BB: I want to tell it to give me a break and leave me alone.

Therapist: Ok, so tell it. I'm here to stand up for you and protect you if the critic answers back.

BB: Ok. Leave me alone. Give me a break.

Therapist: Little bit louder.

BB: [louder] Leave me alone!! Give me a break!!

Therapist: Well done! One more time, louder still.

BB: [even louder] LEAVE ME ALONE! GIVE ME A BREAK!!

Therapist: Amazing, you did so well. Is the critic saying anything back or has it gone quiet?

BB: It’s not saying anything right now.

Depending on how the punitive critic responded to BB's words, BB and the therapist would either continue the exercise or place the PC chair outside the room to represent a power imbalance between BB and the punitive critic. The chair work helped to increase BB’s self-confidence and sense of self-worth. She felt more able to tune out the punitive voice which often stopped her from functioning on a day-to-day basis.

Imagery was often introduced during sessions using an 'emotion bridge'. If BB was feeling a particular emotion in the room, the therapist would ask her to close her eyes and let her mind float back to a time in her childhood when she felt the same emotion. Once BB had settled upon an image the therapist would ask her to describe what was happening in it, who was there, if there were any other feelings coming up. If BB started to feel unsafe in the image the therapist would ask BB if she could enter the image and help her. The therapist would then protect BB in the image by standing up to the punitive critic, telling the adults in the image that they were hurting her, or anything else to make BB feel that she had someone caring for her and her needs. At other times, the therapist would enter the image and provide reparative messages, such as "you're a wonderful girl and you don't deserve to be treated like this...these

people aren't looking after you in the way you need but I am going to care for you and make sure you're not treated like this anymore". This continually strengthened the therapeutic rapport between BB and the therapist, thereby modelling a healthy attachment.

One of BB's goals was to be able to tell people what she wanted rather than always going along with what others want (the compliant surrenderer mode). Psychoeducation on interpersonal effectiveness skills and role play were used as interventions for this particular mode. The DEAR MAN GIVE FAST (see Glossary) skills taken from dialectic behavioural therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993) were practiced through role play, and BB was provided with homework to keep the skills fresh in her mind. She reported back when she'd applied them, and had at times done so to good effect.

Results

BB made good progress in terms of her understanding of the thought and behaviour patterns she struggled with. The author can only report on her 6 month outcome measures as BB did not complete the final measures, despite being reminded on a number of occasions following the end of treatment. Although the NICE Guidelines recommend 18 months of schema intervention for BPD, the service was functioning within a context of significant NHS budget cuts and the offering of ST was therefore limited to 12 months, service-wide. The Trainee Forensic Psychologist who delivered BB's treatment was only in this training post for 12 months and

therefore BB's intervention was reduced to 11 months due to the Trainee's induction period. The Trainee raised this as a potential ethical dilemma and queried whether BB would be able to complete her treatment with another clinician. Unfortunately due to the high levels of demand for the service this could not be accommodated. The reduced length of intervention is likely to have had an impact on the clinical outcomes as it reduces the time available to the client to develop a secure attachment to the therapist. Furthermore, clients with BPD often experience significant interpersonal difficulties – BB certainly did. They are therefore likely to find developing the strong therapeutic relationship necessary to effect change in a short space of time and in unfamiliar circumstances particularly challenging. Clinically relevant changes in BB were identified through a combination of outcome measures, observations, and discussions in clinical supervision.

SMI

Table 5.1

BB's pre- and mid-intervention SMI scores

Date	Vulnerable Child	Angry Child	Enraged Child	Impulsive Child	Undisciplined Child	Happy Child	Compliant Surrenderer	Detached Self-Soother	Self-Aggrandizer	Bully and Attack Mode	Punitive Critic	Demanding Critic	Healthy Adult
18/11/16	5.8**	3.8*	2.6 *	5**	4.83**	1.1**	5.29**	4.5**	3[M]	3.11*	4.5**	4.6*	2[S]
06/06/17	5.4**	4.5**	2.7 *	5.33**	4.83**	1.4**	5.29**	4.5**	2.8[A]	2.78*	4.7**	4.6 *	2.3[S]

*** indicates 'Very High' score based on norms* * *indicates 'High' score based on norms*

[M] indicates 'Moderate score based on norms *[A] indicates 'Average' score based on norms*

[S] indicates 'Severe' score based on norms

BB's scores on the SMI suggest some positive changes have occurred within the first 6 months of therapy (Table 5.1). For the purposes of this case study, "positive change" refers to decreases in scores on all scales of the SMI bar the happy child and healthy adult scales which would ideally increase following a therapeutic intervention. The healthy adult mode score increased indicating a greater level of BB's understanding of her own needs. The angry child and enraged child have also both increased. Whilst for some clients this would be a negative shift, through clinical supervision this was identified as a positive change for BB as she initially had huge difficulty expressing any sort of anger. BB's vulnerable child score decreased, which suggests that all the nurturing and limited reparenting which forms the basis of the schema model are effective in offsetting some of the deficits in the client's childhood experience of being parented. Finally, it is worth noting that the punitive critic mode score increased marginally. This may be a result of movement within the other modes and the punitive critic overcompensating in order to return the other modes to their base levels. Alternatively, it is possible that the intervention caused some iatrogenesis to occur which manifested in BB as a more intense punitive critic mode. The punitive critic mode continued to be addressed following these 6 month outcome measures. Iatrogenesis is a well-established phenomenon, particularly in the psychotherapeutic treatment of individuals with BPD due to their mentalising deficits (Fonagy & Bateman, 2006). When considering the overarching aims of SMT – to grow the healthy adult, reduce the punitive critic, and nurture the

vulnerable child – the SMI outcomes suggest that two out of three of these aims have been achieved.

YSQ-S1

Table 5.2

BB's pre- and mid-intervention YSQ-S1 Scores

Date	Emotional Deprivation (ED)	Abandonment (AB)	Mistrust/Abuse (MA)	Social Isolation (SI)	Defectiveness/Shame (DS)	Failure (FA)	Dependence/Incompetence (DI)	Vulnerability to Harm & Illness (VH)	Enmeshment (EM)	Subjugation (SJ)	Self-Sacrifice (SS)	Emotional Inhibition (EI)	Unrelenting Standards (US)	Entitlement (ET)	Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline (ISC)
25/11/2016	28	27	27	29	30	30	27	28	21	26	24	25	23	13	25
04/06/2017	25	24	26	25	28	30	24	28	22	27	23	23	25	20	30

BB's 6 month scores on the YSQ-S1 are mixed (Table 5.2), but there are certainly some positive developments. All the schemas associated with a lack of a secure attachment (emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation) appear to have decreased. This is likely a result of the secure therapeutic relationship which was built up between BB and the therapist over time. The dependence/incompetence schema shows a reduction suggesting that the secure attachment did not reinforce any dependence but instead helped BB to feel more competent. One of the indicators of a secure attachment in infancy is the infant's confidence in the attachment figure's consistency as a safe base from

which they can explore the world. The more secure the attachment the more likely the infant is to stray from the "base" safe in the knowledge that the attachment figure will be there to provide safety and reassurance on their return (Bowlby, 2012, p. 11). This may be what happened in BB's case – she felt secure in the knowledge that the attachment figure (the therapist, in this case) would still be there to return to when she left to explore on her own, and the more she saw that she could manage her life independently, the more confident she became in her own competence.

BB's emotional inhibition also reduced which fits with the therapist's observation that she became much better able to acknowledge, label, connect with and express her emotions following 6 months of ST. BB's entitlement schema also increased markedly. This is at odds with the increased score on the punitive critic subscale of the SMI, as BB's punitive critic constantly put her down and made her feel worthless and certainly not entitled to love or care. Given our understanding that individuals with BPD are prone to rapid mode flipping, one possible explanation for this discrepancy is that BB was completing the baseline and 6-month outcome measures whilst in different modes, causing anomalous differences in her scores on particular subscales. Alternatively, the schema techniques used throughout the intervention may have instilled in BB a sense of entitlement beyond what might be necessary to achieve an appropriate level of self-worth.

The reduction in emotional inhibition may have left BB feeling a number of difficult emotions, and could explain her increased score on the insufficient self-control/self-discipline schema. Just beyond the mid-point of therapy BB started to have more impulsive sex and was putting herself in more risky situations (detached self-stimulator mode). When this was reflected back to BB, it became apparent that part of the function of this behaviour was to escape some of the new emotions. One of the perils of any intervention, but particularly with individuals diagnosed with a PD, is the potential for therapy to have a negative effect. The increase in BB's risky behaviour could indicate a level of iatrogenesis. In order to try and minimise the risk of iatrogenesis the therapist did her best to elicit from BB when she was finding the work overwhelming or triggering. Efforts were also made to identify particularly triggering points of discussion so as to limit these, especially when BB was already feeling vulnerable or more highly sensitised. Additionally, work addressing BB's traumatic experiences was taken at her pace and only once a strong therapeutic rapport had developed.

Observations

From observing BB in sessions it appeared that she had become much more comfortable with the therapist in the room. Her insight improved significantly and she was able to recognise her different modes and the responses these brought about. With a great deal of patience and limited reparenting, BB slowly became less anxious in the sessions. Furthermore,

she was able to attend the building alone rather than being brought from home by a friend. This marked a huge improvement in BB's agoraphobia which had come about as a result of being stalked by an ex-partner. There were some discrepancies noted between BB's outcome measures and her presentation. For example, BB's score on the entitlement subscale of the YSQ-S1 increased from 13 to 20, but the therapist did not observe any behavioural manifestations of this. The discrepancies between observations and outcome measures suggest that there are limitations to schema mode therapy as an intervention for individuals with BPD and stalking victimisation. There may also be limitations to measuring human behaviour quantitatively.

Discussion

BB was referred to the service following presentation at A&E in the midst of a mental health crisis. Her childhood had been characterised by emotional and physical abuse, and this pattern had extended into her adult life through domestic assault victimization and stalking by an ex-partner. Following a team discussion of BB's formulation she was allocated to individual ST to address the behavioural patterns causing her difficulties in her interpersonal relationships and other life domains.

Due to the nature of the service there was no scope to establish whether progress was maintained beyond the treatment period. However, there is strong evidence to suggest there have been no further referrals to mental health services since BB was discharged. As a result of the time-limited

treatment, BB and the therapist were able to target some but not all of BB's difficulties.

BB made some progress during the 11 month-long SMT intervention. She struggled a great deal to leave her flat alone as a result of intense fearfulness of the outside world having been the victim of stalking by an ex-intimate partner. BB was initially attending sessions escorted by a female friend who would collect her from home, then wait in reception whilst she had her session, and walk her home again. Once the therapeutic rapport was built up the therapist was able to use a cognitive restructuring intervention involving looking at the evidence for and against her beliefs that the outside world is dangerous. The punitive critic, which had developed through years of internalised negative messages, was making her feel vulnerable and helpless and stopping her from grasping any sense of autonomy, was also tackled through a chair work intervention. BB slowly began experimenting with coming to her sessions alone and was eventually able to do so on a weekly basis.

The ST model's emphasis on the therapeutic relationship meant that there was space for BB to develop a secure attachment, although this could have been developed further if the intervention had lasted the recommended 18 months. The secure therapeutic alliance enabled her to try out new responses and behaviours outside of therapy, in the same way that infants use their parents as a "secure base" from which to explore the world around them (Ainsworth, 1963). A safe attachment to a

'healthy adult' figure was likely to have felt novel and possibly disconcerting to BB who had never experienced this previously. The therapist made sure to consistently validate her thoughts and feelings as part of the limited reparenting approach in order to help BB learn to trust her own internal experiences. A distinct distrust of one's own perceptions, emotions and experiences is common in individuals who have grown up in invalidating environments. In their study on childhood maltreatment and acceptance of violence, Ponce, Williams, and Allen (2004) discuss the constructivist self-development theory (CSDT; McCann & Pearlman, 1990a) which posits that experiencing trauma is likely to result in 'disturbances of…trust, the expectancy that one can rely on one's own judgments and perceptions' (p. 99). Ponce at al. (2004) further state that individuals with disrupted schemas might be more likely to accept violence in their intimate relationships, which appears to be relevant in BB's case.

Not only did BB experience an abusive and invalidating childhood at the hands of her parents and carers, similar patterns continued to unfold in her adult life in the form of domestic abuse and intimate partner stalking. A number of studies support the theory that childhood maltreatment is significantly associated with IPV revictimization in adulthood (Desai, Arias, Thompson, & Basile, 2002; Widom, Czaja, & Dutton, 2008; Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006; Renner & Slack, 2006). In a study specific to stalking victimisation, Fox, Gover and Kaukinen (2009) found that childhood abuse significantly increases the

risk of stalking victimization in adult men and women. Fox et al. (2009) cited self-control theory – a proposition that individuals who display lower self-control (e.g. impulsivity, risk seeking) are at increased risk of revictimisation (Schreck, Stewart, & Fisher, 2006) – as a possible explanation for this. Ménard and Pincus (2014) measured borderline personality traits and abuse in childhood amongst a sample of college students to identify whether or not they influence vulnerability to stalking victimisation. They found that childhood sexual abuse and borderline personality traits contributed significantly to variance in stalking victimisation in both men and women. Although BB did not disclose any sexual abuse in her childhood, Herman's (1992) model of trauma suggests that any significant traumatic experience in childhood is likely to lead to symptoms which result in the individual's risk of revictimisation being increased. An alternative explanation for these findings is that individuals who witness and/or experience violence from a young age are more likely to accept it as the normal response in conflict situations as adults, and so they tolerate it in their intimate relationships (Akers & Sellers 2009). BB both witnessed and experienced physical and emotional abuse as a child. Finally, Gay, Harding, Jackson, Burns, and Baker (2013) found the disconnection/rejection schema – i.e. believing that others will not fulfil one's emotional needs – to be a significant mediator in the relationship between childhood emotional abuse and IPV victimization in adulthood. Whilst Gay et al. (2013) does not split IPV into subcategories of violence (i.e. stalking is not specifically mentioned), it can be inferred

that BB's insecure attachment style made her more vulnerable to later IPV victimisation.

The experiential techniques – chair work and imagery – provided opportunities for BB and the therapist to explore some of the childhood experiences which had had the most significant impact on her, and to repair the negative messages she had internalised from these. Imagery proved to be especially effective as it simultaneously allowed the therapist to model a healthy adult approach to difficult situations, which, with some guidance, BB was able to start applying outside of imagery. Through imagery BB and the therapist targeted her feelings of defectiveness and beliefs that she was unwanted and unloveable which had kept her in abusive relationships. These were the messages she had internalised from a young age when her core need for love and affection were overlooked by her caregivers.

The chair work was used to confront BB's strong punitive critic which gave her messages such as "you're worthless", "you're useless" and "you can't do anything right". When the therapist initially confronted the punitive critic on BB's behalf, BB was fearful of what might happen. However, with patience, validation, and further practice she was eventually able to speak directly to the punitive critic herself. Having done this several times, BB reported feeling empowered and more in control of this malevolent voice. Standing up to the punitive critic also enabled BB to address her agoraphobic anxieties since the punitive critic was constantly telling her

she wouldn't be safe outside her flat. And indeed one of the most significant changes in BB during therapy was her ability to leave her flat by herself.

Somewhat conversely, the outcome measures indicated a potential iatrogenic effect with regards to the punitive critic mode. It is possible that the punitive critic mode was triggered as a result of shifts in other modes and therefore did not reduce in strength over time. However, given that some of the other observed changes were not captured by the outcome measures, it is conceivable that BB was completing the outcome measures whilst in different modes each time, impacting on the reliability of the outcomes. BB's score on the Entitlement schema increased substantially but no representative changes in behaviour were observed. These unexpected discrepancies raise questions about the ability of psychometric assessments to accurately quantify human behaviour, particularly in individuals whose dispositions are understood to be extremely changeable, distinctive, and context-dependent. Additionally, whilst Taylor et al.'s (2017) systematic review on ST supported the theory behind the mechanisms of action of ST with regards to personality disorder, their review was based predominantly on case series and open trials. Further randomised controlled trials are called for to provide more substantial evidence in support of the theory that ST leads to changes in EMS, which in turn lead to changes in symptoms. Without more rigorous evidence we cannot yet state with conviction that ST has a predictable

and repeatable therapeutic impact on the symptoms of BPD and the negative psychological impact of stalking victimisation.

It may be that further work with the punitive critic and interpersonal effectiveness would have helped to ensure that the observed changes were represented in the outcome measures, and would be maintained in the longer-term. It is also important to note, however, that due to the nature of personality disturbances, substantial shifts in a client's psychopathology may only occur following a considerably long period of intervention. Additionally, the client's motivation and capacity to build insight and implement changes can have a significant impact on therapeutic outcomes. BB was able to implement changes but her motivation dwindled at times throughout the intervention which is likely to have hindered her progress to an extent.

If the work described in this case study were to be repeated, the therapist would make certain changes including providing the client with homework on a consistent weekly basis in order to reinforce new behaviours or cognitions, developing a more rigid session structure which would accommodate time for homework feedback, and perhaps administering more targeted outcome measures, such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), on a more frequent basis, i.e. every 3 months, to identify any small shifts in functioning (Andreu et al., 2008) and adjust on-going therapy as necessary. One of the limitations of the outcome measures used here, in particular the YSQ-S1, is their potential lack of

sensitivity to small but clinically relevant changes in a client's functioning which can provide useful information for practitioners (Oei & Baranoff, 2007).

This case study has demonstrated the use of complex experiential and cognitive techniques to treat the trauma symptoms and personality disturbances experienced by a female victim of stalking presenting a risk to self. Chapter Three identified that the victim is often blamed to a greater extent when she has been or remains in a relationship with the perpetrator in comparison to when the victim and perpetrator are strangers. BB had been in a relationship with her stalking perpetrator but had not sought help despite feeling fearful and having her freedom significantly limited as a result of his behaviour. It is possible that she felt it unnecessary to report the stalking to the authorities as she knew her perpetrator and was prone to self-blame. Additionally, due to her very traumatic child- and adult-hood, BB found it difficult to trust her own instincts and emotions and this is likely to have contributed to a lack of help-seeking behaviours. The systematic review in Chapter Four revealed that individual vulnerability factors such as self-blame, passive coping, and catastrophizing can increase a female victim's propensity to develop PTSD symptoms. BB's case study illustrates how these risk factors can lead to a multiplicity of trauma symptoms. BB became withdrawn and isolated feeling that the outside world was hostile and dangerous, and she felt irritable and dysthymic. She drew attention from mental health services when she became a risk to herself through self-harm and

expressions of suicidal ideation. BB's intervention was drawn from her formulation and entailed the use of schema techniques including imagery, chair work, and limited reparenting to try to address her agoraphobia, lack of confidence and assertiveness, and interpersonal difficulties arising from stalking victimization and personality disturbances. The intervention was tailored to best address BB's difficulties as identified within her formulation, and had limited but notable success in making observed and quantifiable improvements in a number of those areas targeted.

Glossary

BPD: Borderline Personality Disorder

DBT: Dialectic Behavioural Therapy

DEAR: Objective effectiveness

- Describe the problem factually and without judgment
- Express your feelings about the problem. Emphasize "I feel" instead of "You make me feel" statements
- Assert yourself by stating exactly what it is you want as simply and clearly as possible
- Reinforce getting what you want by describing why the other person would benefit from helping you

MAN: Objective effectiveness

- Mindful attention to own biases, intense feelings, invalidating others/self & urges to engage in problematic actions.
- Appear Confident by using eye contact skillfully, paying attention to body language, and tone of voice
- Negotiate terms by being willing to make a compromise, having a plan B ready to offer as an alternative

GIVE: Relationship effectiveness

- Gentle manner even if you are angry. Strive to treat people with a degree of respect that reflects kindness

- Interested in others points. Pay attention to others ideas and show you are listening by nodding, eye contact, etc.
- Validate others thoughts/feelings/statement. Reflect back what others say without parroting & check facts
- Easy Manner in communicating. Maintain awareness to body posture; tone, volume and speed of voice; and smile

FAST: Self-respect effectiveness

- Fair in interpretations/negotiations. Strive to come to solutions that are mutually beneficial and ethical
- Apologies (no Apologies) Do not apologize for disagreeing if doing so contradicts your values.
- Stick to values by figuring out what your personal values are and not giving them up to appease others.
- Truthful communication, striving for honesty and authenticity in what and how you communicate with others.

(All DEAR MAN GIVE FAST skill explanations from Linehan, 2014)

EMS: Early Maladaptive Schemas

IPV: Inter-Personal Violence

MBT: Mentalization-Based Therapy

SCID-V: Structured Clinical Interview for DSM 5

SMI: Schema Mode Inventory

SMT: Schema Mode Therapy

ST: Schema Therapy

YSQ-SF: Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form

Chapter Six Discussion

This thesis aimed to investigate the crime of stalking perpetrated by males against female victims. Each chapter served to enhance our understanding of how stalking is perceived, its impact on victims and the methods currently used to research it. Taken together, the thesis provides both a synthesis and an extension of the existing research and uses the findings to identify aspects of stalking which require further investigation.

Recent research, as well as anecdotal evidence, suggests that there is an immediate need to raise awareness of stalking among the general public and to implement compulsory training for professionals including, for example, victim services staff, police officers, judges, and others involved in the criminal justice system (HMIC & HMCPSI, 2017; Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). Greater awareness of stalking and adequate specialist training should help to ensure that any risk factors for victimisation and perpetration are identified early, that stalking behaviours are recognised and responded to appropriately, and that the legal trajectories of stalking cases are congruent with the gravity of this offence. In addition to raising awareness and developing effective training, future research should start to focus on the conception of interventions for both victims and perpetrators. Even with adequate training and awareness, stalking perpetration will continue to be a concern in our societies. It is of great importance, therefore, that effective interventions for stalking victims and perpetrators are developed and rigorously reviewed to remain in line with the evidence base.

Chapter Two of this thesis presented a primary research study on the impact of the victim-perpetrator relationship, stalking myth endorsement, and respondent gender on victim and perpetrator blame. Chapter Three critiqued the use of the vignette methodology in studies of stalking perception. Chapter Four was a systematic review of the risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD. Finally, Chapter Five detailed a Schema Mode intervention in the case of BB whose complex history included having been stalked by an ex-intimate partner.

The following hypotheses and research questions were explored:

Chapter Two Hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: The more intimate the relationship, the more the victim will be blamed.
- Hypothesis 2: The more intimate the relationship, the less the perpetrator will be blamed.
- Hypothesis 3: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with increased victim blame across all relationship types.
- Hypothesis 4: Greater stalking myth endorsement is associated with decreased perpetrator blame across all relationship types.
- Hypothesis 5: Males, as compared to females, will endorse more stalking myths, and blame the victim more and the perpetrator less.
- Hypothesis 6: Stalking myth endorsement predicts victim and perpetrator blame, respectively, more strongly in males than in females.

Chapter Three:

- Does the use of a vignette methodology in research relating to stalking yield valid and reliable results?

Chapter Four:

- What are the risk factors for female victims of stalking developing symptoms of PTSD?

Chapter Five:

- Is schema mode work an effective intervention for a victim of stalking perpetrated by an ex-intimate partner?

Brief summaries of the findings from each chapter will now be presented, followed by a further discussion of these findings, their relation to the current literature, and the clinical implications that can be drawn from this thesis.

Summary of Findings

Chapter Two

The aim of this chapter was to extend the research into the association between victim-perpetrator relationship type and victim blame, and to examine how stalking myth endorsement and gender of participant might influence this association. The significant findings suggest that respondents who endorsed more stalking myths also blamed the victim to a greater extent and the perpetrator to a lesser extent than participants

who endorsed fewer stalking myths. Men were also found to endorse significantly more stalking myths than women, but this was not found to impact significantly on the extent to which male and female respondents blamed the victim or perpetrator. The study did not find a significant difference in victim or perpetrator blame between the relationship types.

Chapter Three

As vignettes were applied in Chapter Two, it was felt relevant to examine the efficacy of vignettes in research more generally. The aim of this critique was to examine whether vignettes are used appropriately within stalking perception research to yield valid and reliable data, to understand their ecological validity, and to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses to this method.

Chapter Four

The aim of this systematic review was to identify risk factors which may mediate the association between stalking perpetration and PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking. Of the 2,951 studies identified during an initial search, a total of eight studies were included in the final review.

Once the data had been extracted and analysed, themes pertaining to risk factors were identified in the included studies, these were; coping strategies, severity of stalking, social support, protective orders, forgiveness, personality traits, and attachment.

None of the coping strategies studied were found to have a significantly positive impact on victims' symptoms of PTSD – some were, in fact, found to worsen psychological symptoms.

In line with Dohrenwend's (1998) adversity-distress model, stalking severity was found to correlate positively with PTSD symptoms. The findings highlight the importance of a sound understanding of the risk factors for stalking as well as an ability to identify stalking behaviours as early as possible.

Satisfaction with social support was found to correlate negatively with duration of stalking, indicating that as stalking progressed, social support was felt by victims to be increasingly lacking (Kamphuis et al., 2003). With duration of stalking found to correlate positively with symptoms of PTSD (Kamphuis et al., 2003; Logan & Cole, 2007), results indicated that as duration of stalking increases, PTSD symptoms increase, and perceived adequacy of social support wanes.

There were mixed findings in relation to PO breaches. Baldry et al., 2017 found that PO breaches were not found to be significantly associated with symptoms of PTSD whilst Logan and Cole (2007) found that PO breaches were significantly associated with increased symptoms of PTSD. Importantly, neither study defined what constituted a breach, and thus relied on subjective self-reports of their participants.

Baldry et al. (2017) found that unforgiveness – specifically, feeling revengeful and holding a grudge – correlated positively with symptoms of

PTSD, indicating that victims who harbour negative emotions towards their stalking perpetrators are likely to experience increased symptoms of PTSD. Forgiveness was not found to be significantly associated with PTSD symptoms. That the majority of the studies included in Cerci and Colucci's (2018) systematic review find increased forgiveness to be associated with fewer symptoms of PTSD is perhaps the most compelling evidence in this area of research to date.

Stalking victims who scored lower on the personality construct 'lower openness to experience' were found to score higher on a measure of PTSD symptoms (Kamphuis et al., 2003). There were no other significant correlations between other facets of the Big Five personality traits and PTSD in victims of stalking.

Finally, Sandberg et al.'s (2010) study did not find a significant relationship between adult attachment styles and PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking.

Overall, the systematic review points towards a number of risk factors relating to both the victim themselves, and to the features of the stalking situation, for the development of PTSD symptoms.

Chapter Five

The aim of this case study was to investigate the effectiveness of schema mode therapy as a psychological intervention for a victim of stalking and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) sufferer, BB. The research to date

supports ST as an effective, evidence-based, treatment for BPD (Taylor et al., 2017) although there is currently no research examining the effectiveness of schema therapy when applied to victims of stalking specifically.

Results from the two outcome measures used (the YSQ-S1 and the SMI) were mixed, with some scales showing improvements, some remaining the same, and others indicating deterioration. Most significantly, BB's healthy adult score increased and her vulnerable child score decreased. These shifts suggest that BB's inner child was effectively nurtured throughout the intervention which enabled her to begin developing her healthy adult. Conversely, the punitive critic mode increased in strength, indicating a level of iatrogenesis.

Despite some positive outcomes from BB's ST intervention, there is not enough definitive evidence to suggest that schema therapy either directly improves or exacerbates the detrimental effects of stalking victimisation. This is primarily because the symptoms of BB's BPD diagnosis, and the symptoms resulting from her experience of stalking victimisation would be impossible to tease apart and the likelihood of overlap is high.

Thesis Implications

The body of research within this thesis contributes to a broader understanding of stalking perceptions, as well as the significant effects stalking can have upon its targets. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are outlined below.

Results from the empirical research within this thesis contradicted the Just World Hypothesis (Lerner & Simmons, 1966) which would have predicted that victim blame would be positively associated, and perpetrator blame negatively associated, with victim-perpetrator intimacy. The JWH suggests that all individuals hold a belief in a just world wherein everyone gets what they deserve. In other words, a victim who is known to her perpetrator must have done something to warrant being stalked, and therefore finds herself more blamed for the stalking than her stranger stalking victim counterparts. A default belief in a just world is likely to have significant implications within applied contexts as it serves to bias individuals towards victim blaming (Strömwall et al., 2012). It is critical, therefore, that the general public are aware of this tendency so that action can be taken to counter it.

The finding that there is no significant difference between the extent to which males and females blame the victim and perpetrator contradicts the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970). This theory would anticipate finding that male perceivers blame the victim more and the perpetrator less than female perceivers as a result of males identifying more so with the perpetrator role and females with the victim role (Dunlap et al., 2012). However, males were found to endorse more stalking myths than females, suggesting that the defensive attribution theory held to some extent because stalking myths tend to lead those who endorse them to blame the victim to a greater extent whilst exonerating the perpetrator (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

The findings within this thesis suggest that there are still major issues with how well stalking is understood and, consequently, how it is perceived by the general public. Dunlap et al. (2015) found that frequently, both rape and stalking myths bias criminal justice systems resulting in a lighter sentence than is stipulated within legal guidelines. Research published as recently as 2018 suggests that victims have experienced inadequate police responses to their reports of stalking (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). The media and a lack of sufficient training and awareness appear to have contributed to the many myths that continue to be perpetuated by society as a whole (British Film Institute, 2011; Lippman, 2018; Schultz et al., 2013). The general public must be better informed of what stalking is and how to recognise the signs in case they find themselves in a position where they believe they are being stalked, if a friend or family member reports their stalking victimisation to them, or if they become a jury member on a stalking case. Targeted educational campaigns, such as the #LetsTalkStalking campaign run by Staffordshire Police in 2019 should be emulated by police forces across the UK and abroad (Owen, 2019). Additionally, police and other professionals coming into contact with stalking victims on a regular basis require up-to-date training on stalking legislation and how to respond effectively to victims when they decide to report. Some studies have found positive behavioural outcomes following training (e.g. Scott et al., 2013), whilst others have not (e.g. Sleath & Bull, 2012), and the majority of existing research does not detail the contents of the training. Lynch and Logan's (2015) findings

suggest that the behaviours and attitudes of police officers and other professionals may be more likely to be positively affected by direct experience of stalking cases. Perhaps a combination of training and education, as well as on-the-job exposure to stalking cases, is most likely to lead to positive outcomes.

The critique of the vignette methodology suggests ways in which vignettes used in stalking research can be developed to yield valid and reliable data. Piloting of vignettes prior to their use in empirical research is one way to achieve this. Whilst carrying out the critique it became clear that certain conditions for effective outcomes from vignette studies had not been met within the empirical research in chapter two. Having gained a fresh perspective following the critique, the author would have attempted to pilot the vignettes prior to using them within the study. Piloting would have helped to ensure internal validity within the vignettes i.e. that they were perceived to depict stalking scenarios and were similar to each other but for the intended relationship manipulation. Alternatively, the author might have chosen to use existing vignettes which had already been piloted for validity. Recycling vignettes within different studies allows their reliability to be established. Finally, the author would have been more explicit and transparent in their reporting about how the vignettes were developed. Without this evidence it can be difficult for readers to make their own assessments of vignette validity.

Overall, the critique emphasises two things; the necessity of forethought in the development of vignettes, and the need for researchers to be more reflective about their use of this methodology. Without taking a number of factors into consideration prior to the dissemination of the vignettes, the resulting data may be compromised. Future research could make use of different types of vignettes, such as audio-visual ones, to see how responses to these compare with the traditional text-based descriptions of stalking scenarios.

There are multiple practical and policy implications that can be drawn from the systematic review of risk factors for stalking victims developing symptoms of PTSD. Primarily these relate to the type of support available to victims of stalking in order to reduce the likelihood of them developing symptoms of PTSD, or experiencing further deterioration in their existing symptoms. Others lead logically to the conclusion that there is a critical need to develop interventions for perpetrators of stalking to limit potential damage and reduce rates of stalking recidivism.

One of the factors identified to be significantly positively associated with PTSD within the systematic review – lower openness to experience – is likely to be a highly stable trait that may be very difficult to alter, thus leaving victims with this trait more vulnerable to developing PTSD symptoms. From this systematic review it is not possible to make clinically tested directive suggestions about how best to support victims of stalking. However, it is clear that some form of intensive support is critical

in ensuring that the psychological consequences suffered by the victim are not suffered alone or left to deteriorate unchecked. A return to their pre-morbid functioning may only be possible through intensive counselling or psychotherapy, likely extending far beyond the duration of the stalking itself (Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2001). This form of support may help to reduce the feelings of anger and vengefulness associated with 'unforgiveness' within Baldry et al.'s (2017) study. Ulloa and Hammett (2015) suggest that feelings of anger held by the victim maintain their emotional tie to the perpetrator, leading to declining psychological wellbeing. Alternatively, it is possible that a restorative justice approach to some stalking offences could assist the victim in reducing those persistent negative feelings towards the perpetrator, thereby enabling the victim to return to pre-morbid functioning. The toxic combination of a loss of any sense of control, threats of violence, and the unpredictability of perpetrators' intrusions into the victims' lives suggests that victims of stalking are likely to be left feeling entirely disempowered (Davis et al. 2002). The finding that passive coping strategies lead to adverse psychological outcomes (Kamphuis et al., 2003) indicates that the use of techniques to improve victims' self-efficacy may lead to favourable results.

Effective interventions should also be identified for perpetrators of stalking either to curtail their behaviour, if it is ongoing, or, if it has ceased, to ensure that they do not repeat their offending behaviours with other victims. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is campaigning for the

development of more stalking-specific treatment programmes for perpetrators both in and out of custody. They argue that the domestic violence-focused interventions currently in use throughout the UK are unsuitable for the majority of stalkers, especially when the victim and perpetrator have never been in an intimate relationship ("Stalking perpetrator intervention", n.d.). To this end, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, alongside Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust, is currently piloting a two-year Multi-Agency Stalking Intervention Programme (MASIP) within NHS Trusts and Constabularies across the UK. MASIP will focus primarily on the mental health difficulties associated with stalking perpetration, as well as assessing risk and supporting perpetrators to desist in their behaviour using a multi-agency approach ("Multi Agency Stalking Intervention Programme (MASIP)", n.d.). If reviews of this programme find it to be successful, it may be implemented on a wider scale ("Specialist multi-agency unit to help tackle stalking launched in London", 2018).

The finding that duration and severity of stalking behaviours correlate positively with symptoms of PTSD indicates the need for more proactive interventions on the part of the police in order to reduce perpetrators' access to their victims as early as possible. Whilst traditional protective orders may be effective in deterring a particular subset of stalkers – those who are less persistent and exhibit stalking behaviours less frequently, for example – studies have found that they are less effective overall for victims of stalking as compared to victims of other interpersonal offences

(Logan & Walker, 2010). Policies relating to protective orders for victims of stalking specifically have been recently revised to enable police to apply to magistrates' courts for Stalking Protection Orders (SPO) to be put in place (CPS, 2020). As yet there is very little research evaluating the effectiveness of the new Stalking Protection Orders, however the consideration of stalking victims separately from victims of other interpersonal offences is clearly warranted on the basis that stalking is associated with ongoing violence (Logan & Walker, 2009a) and homicide (McFarlane, Campbell, & Watson, 2002). The newly introduced SPOs may serve to validate the experiences of stalking victims, giving them a greater profile within the justice system and demonstrating their valid entitlements to justice and protective actions. Feeling validated by the state is also likely to have a positive effect on victims' mental health, which is often uniquely impacted by their experiences of stalking victimisation (Logan & Cole, 2007; Logan et al., 2006).

The systematic review found that informal support feels insufficient for victims the longer the stalking continues due to worsening of their mental health symptoms. Increased public awareness of stalking, as well as education about the psychological effects of victimisation, are likely to lead to advances in the support that family, friends, and other informal support networks can offer to victims of stalking who report their experiences within these spheres. Additionally, systemic interventions involving the victim's family and friends could empower and upskill these networks to improve the level of support they provide. Had these

interventions been offered in the case of a victim such as BB, her family and friends might have been better placed to support her through the ordeal.

Stalking severity as a risk factor for victims experiencing symptoms of PTSD created a link between the outcomes of the systematic review and the case study. BB's stalker was an ex-partner who had been physically abusive in the past, and continued to make threats of violence beyond the termination of their relationship. The stalking victimisation left her socially isolated, fearful of the outside world, unable to trust others, highly anxious, and irritable. Whilst she was not assessed for or diagnosed with PTSD, many of these symptoms would fit the diagnostic criteria. All the studies included in the systematic review which related to stalking severity (Baldry et al., 2017; Kamphuis et al., 2003; Kraaij et al., 2007; Mechanic et al., 2000) found that increased violence and threats of violence towards the victim were associated with increased PTSD symptoms, suggesting that BB was exposed to known risk factors for PTSD.

Schema therapy was found to yield some positive effects for BB, pointing to the idea that certain aspects of the modality are more effective than others in treating victims of stalking. With the deep violations and distinct breaches of trust that stalking entails, particularly when the perpetrator is a current or former intimate partner (Hall, 1998; Kamphuis et al., 2003), it is likely that the focus within the schema therapy model on developing

a functional, healthy, safe, and trustworthy relationship between the therapist and client would have the most beneficial effect. Therefore, interventions for victims of stalking should involve an elongated period of relationship building before any change work can begin. This may help to ensure that the ensuing therapeutic work is effective and leads to changes that are maintained in the longer-term.

Chair work may be another aspect of schema therapy that is particularly effective in therapeutic engagement with victims of stalking. By allowing the client an opportunity to directly address the perpetrator, they may begin to release some of the feelings of anger they have likely been left with (Baldry et al., 2017). Furthermore, chair work enables the client to externalise their distress, placing it deliberately outside of themselves, and addressing it in a meaningful and compassionate way. Externalising distress can help to ease rumination and reduce a client's impulse to blame themselves for what happened to them (Bell, Montague, Elander, & Gilbert, 2020).

Finally, one of the aims of schema therapy is to develop the client's healthy adult. A fully-fledged healthy adult is able to validate the client's vulnerabilities whilst setting limits for the unhelpful coping strategies the client might have learned to use. By employing labels such as "healthy adult" and "vulnerable child", the client is encouraged to make their internal thought processes more tangible, and easier to access and attend to. A well-developed healthy adult should also empower the client to trust

their own decision-making processes, and slowly restore their trust in others.

An intervention that combines these aspects of schema therapy may be particularly effective in treating victims of stalking.

Recommendations

In light of the findings presented within this thesis, it is important to consider possible future research, which could extend the available knowledge in this field.

Firstly it is important to explore preventative actions that could be taken to reduce the prevalence of stalking. It is likely that public campaigns are necessary to educate the wider population so that they are better able to identify stalking behaviours, as well as where to seek help if they believe they are being victimised. Campaigns on social media can reach a wide audience and quickly gain traction, making this platform an advantageous option for rapid dissemination of information. Aside from public education, there is an ongoing need for further training for police services and other agencies that come into contact with victims of stalking on a regular basis. If victims are dissuaded from reporting their experiences because they anticipate poor responses from professionals, they will not receive the support necessary to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation (Ngo, 2019). Furthermore, police must have a full understanding of the gamut of stalking perpetrator behaviours, in particular being able to identify those that are indicative of increased risk of serious violence

and/or homicide. The available evidence with regards to training effectiveness is mixed. Scott et al. (2013) study indicates that specialist training positively influences police responses to stalking allegations such that the trained officers were less influenced by stalking myths compared to their non-specialist and laypersons counterparts. Other studies suggest that it is exposure to and experience of stalking cases that positively influence police officers' abilities to recognise the dangerousness of stalking, and reduces the amount of responsibility ascribed to the victim (Lynch & Logan, 2015; Weller et al., 2012). Further research is warranted to develop a comprehensive manualised training package, which can be delivered to multiple services with relative ease and speed.

The old adage 'prevention is better than cure' suggests that the implementation of school-based violence reduction programs should be given serious consideration, particularly in light of UK statistics indicating that stalking is most prevalent amongst individuals aged 16-19 (ONS, 2018). A school-based dating violence prevention program found physical dating violence was reduced at the 2.5 year follow-up in those students who received the full intervention in comparison to a control group (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, & Jaffe, 2009). However, De La Rue, Polanin, Espelage, and Pigott's (2017) meta-analysis found variable outcomes when exploring the effectiveness of school-based violence prevention programs on dating violence in adolescence. Although significant positive outcomes were discovered whereby knowledge of and attitudes towards dating violence improved, results in relation to dating violence

perpetration and victimisation were non-significant, and this latter finding was unchanged at follow-up. Whilst positive shifts in young people's attitudes towards dating violence are encouraging, the changes are unlikely to impact on their behaviour without an element of skills-building added into the intervention. An effective intervention is likely to include educational elements and practical skills training in order to turn improvements in knowledge and attitude into behavioural changes (De La Rue et al., 2017). The variability in outcomes of school-based programs suggests further research is needed to identify the content and methods of delivery that are most effectual before wider dissemination. However, the current evidence suggests a two-pronged approach including both educational and skills training aspects is likely to be the most effective school-based violence reduction intervention.

Unfortunately, preventative measures will not stop stalking from occurring altogether. Therefore, post- or mid-stalking interventions must be considered for both perpetrators and victims. Currently there are no evidence-based interventions aimed specifically at victims or perpetrators of stalking. Future research should focus on developing supportive interventions for victims that take into account the nature of what they have been exposed to, whilst helping them to feel empowered and safe. These interventions, as in the schema therapy model, should begin by building a strong therapeutic rapport between client and therapist to encourage trust and openness. Research relating to interventions for identified stalking perpetrators appears to be in its infancy, and urgently

needs to progress in order to reduce rates of recidivism in stalking. Probation services may be best placed to deliver these interventions to known stalking perpetrators with a view to preventing reoffending.

Future research relating to risk factors for PTSD in female stalking victims should opt for longitudinal design methodologies which can yield more robust evidence of patterns that develop over time. For example, where social support is concerned, victims may find their social support to be accessible and of benefit in the initial stages of stalking victimisation, but this may change over time. These changes cannot be captured using a cross-sectional methodology. Additionally, future research which uses samples of non-help-seeking victims of stalking is recommended, particularly since studies have found that most victims tend to seek support from informal as opposed to formal sources (Coker, Derrick, Lumpkin, Aldrich, & Oldendick, 2000; Ullman, 2007). Non-help-seeking victims are therefore likely to represent a larger number of overall victims of stalking than those who seek formal support. Furthermore, help-seeking victims are reportedly more likely to be experiencing what they perceive to be stalking of increased severity (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2002). Therefore, non-help-seeking samples may be able to speak to a broader range of stalking victims' experiences.

The systematic review shows clear direction for new research. Firstly, this review was only interested in female victims of stalking, therefore future research could focus on the potential risk factors for male victims of

stalking and symptoms of PTSD. Whilst men are much less likely to become victims of stalking than women (5.7% lifetime prevalence compared to 15.2% prevalence for women [Breiding, 2014]), the number of male victims of stalking is increasing exponentially. Matos et al. (2019) recently found that the lifetime prevalence of stalking victimisation in men has grown to 13.6%. There is a societal expectation that men should be able to take charge of such situations and thus not suffer the psychological consequences in the same way as female victims do (Matos et al., 2019). Furthermore, research has found that male victims take longer to report their stalking victimisation than women consequently experiencing significant deterioration in their emotional wellbeing, and use fewer effective coping strategies (Acquadro Maran, Varetto, Corona, & Tirassa, 2020). However, stalking in which men are the victims remains startlingly under-researched. Also under-researched is stalking within homosexual relationships and the potential risk factors for victims of female to female, and male to male stalking. It would be beneficial for all victims of stalking for the literature to have a clearer understanding of whether or not the same risk factors for PTSD apply to victims of stalking regardless of the genders of those involved. Research might also want to examine the nuances of different relationships between victims and perpetrators to identify additional risk factors that could apply outside of the prototypical male to female ex-partner circumstance.

With regards to future research stemming from the empirical study presented here, it would be interesting to employ a measure of

endorsement of the just world hypothesis, to see if and how it changes the relationship between stalking myth endorsement and victim blame. Dalbert, Montada, and Schmitt (1987) have produced an open access measure called the Belief in a Just World (BJW) scale which splits BJW into Personal and General dimensions. Alternatively Lipkus, Dalbert, and Siegler (1996) developed the BJW-Self and BJW-Other scales. Personal belief in a just world has been associated with benevolent behaviour and positive mental wellness for the individual (Dalbert, 2009), whilst general belief in a just world has been linked to hostile and punitive approaches towards those who unsettle the social structure (Khera, Harvey, & Callan, 2014). Accordingly, one might expect a stronger personal belief in a just world to have the effect of reducing both stalking myth endorsement and victim blaming tendencies. Additionally, future research could study other types of relationships not yet fully examined in the literature, for example an employer/employee relationship in which the target's boss is their perpetrator. It might be interesting to identify the ways in which this type of stalking influences how the colleagues of those involved apportion blame.

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to advance our current understanding of the perceptions of stalking, as well as stalking victims' experiences and the psychological toll it can take on them. The empirical research extends our knowledge and understanding of how blame is attributed within stalking cases, and why blame attributions differ from case to case. The

systematic review is the first to have brought together identified risk factors for the development of PTSD symptoms in victims of stalking, and highlights clear areas for future research. The case study emphasises the serious nature of this offence and the true psychological toll it can take on its victims, whilst also providing some hope, through the schema therapy model, that the damage caused is not everlasting. The critique of the vignette methodology identifies the most effective ways that vignettes can be used within perception research to yield meaningful outcomes. Though, perhaps more so than anything else, the critique opens up a thinking space for researchers to closely consider and reconsider their use of this methodology.

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N.B. References in bold are those studies included in the systematic review

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Appendices

Appendix A: Poster presented at the British Psychological Society's Division of Forensic Psychology Conference (Brighton, 2016)

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

The impact of prior intimate relationship length on perceived locus of responsibility, perpetrator dangerousness and target-perpetrator age difference

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[1,2]University of Nottingham

1. Introduction

Studies have found that annually 4% of females in the UK are victims of serious stalking perpetration (2). Previous studies have found that in ex-intimate relationships the victim is perceived as more responsible, and in less danger than in stranger or acquaintance relationships (3; 4; 5; 9). In fact, research has found that ex-intimate partners who stalk exhibit the greatest levels of aggression towards their victims, but that stranger stalkers are most frequently convicted (8). Scott, Nixon and Sheridan (2013) found that specialist police officers are less vulnerable to these common misperceptions, potentially indicating the effectiveness of focused training.

With regards to age; statistics suggest that the male perpetrator is usually a few years older than his female victim.

The aims of this study were as follows:

- To find out who participants believe should be held responsible for the stalking perpetration in a long relationship and a short relationship – the victim, or the perpetrator.
- To establish how dangerous the perpetrator was perceived to be in each condition.

2. Methods and Materials

- 2-way (length of prior relationship: short vs. long) repeated measures design.
- Length of prior relationship manipulated in vignettes.
- Dependent variables: perceptions of dangerousness, perceptions of responsibility, and assumed age.
- Opportunity sample of 100 individuals aged 18+ (average age 26.68 years).
- Online questionnaire comprised of 2 vignettes, and distractor task.
- 15 questions relating to the outcome variables, scored on 7-point Likert scales.

3. Results

The following findings were statistically significant:

- Participants perceive the perpetrator to present a greater danger to the victim when they had been in a short relationship than when they had been in a long relationship ($t(97) = 16.11$, $p < .001$) (see **FIGURE 1**).
- Participants perceive the victim to be more responsible for the stalking perpetration when they were in a long relationship than when they were in a short relationship ($t(293) = -3.78$, $p < .001$) (see **FIGURE 2**).
- Participants perceive the perpetrator to be older than the victim in both short and long conditions by an average of 1.4 years ($F(1, 97) = 27.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta 2 = .88$).

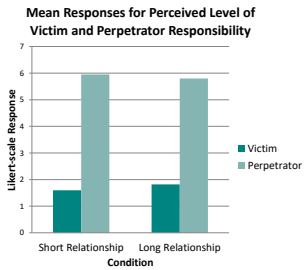


FIGURE 1: A graph illustrating the condition means in response to 'How likely is this scenario to result in the victim becoming physically harmed?'

4. Discussion

- Participants perceived that the victim was more likely to be harmed by the perpetrator when they had had a short relationship than when they had had a long relationship. This result is consistent with the common misperception that stranger stalkers are more dangerous than ex-intimate stalkers (4; 9).
- Participants perceived that the victim would be held more responsible when the perpetrator and victim had had a long intimate relationship.
- The perpetrator was perceived to be less responsible for his criminal behaviour when he and the victim had been in a long as opposed to a short relationship.
- Participants perceived the perpetrator to be significantly older than the victim in both conditions. However, this may be due to social conventions within heterosexual relationships (1) rather than for any reason specific to the crime of stalking.

5. Recommendations

Based on the results yielded, it is recommended that the public be made more aware of the dangers of stalking, and informed of the help available to anyone who believes they may be being stalked. The National Stalking Helpline has launched annual campaigns since 2012 in the form of Stalking Awareness Day. Despite these campaigns, the results of the current study and several others indicate that misperceptions regarding stalking still exist and must be addressed. Specific recommendations include a national television campaign, similar to those used to raise awareness of domestic abuse, and the provision of education for young adults.

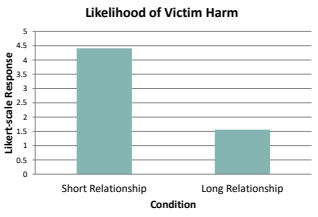


FIGURE 2: A graph illustrating perceptions of who is responsible for the stalking perpetration in both conditions.

6. Conclusions

- The current research suggests that perceptions of responsibility and dangerousness in relation to stalking do not reflect reality.
- Perpetrators who are more emotionally invested in their victims are more likely to present a greater danger than those who are less invested (7).
- Perpetrators who have been romantically involved with their victims for a longer period of time are therefore more likely to cause them harm.
- Regarding responsibility, the victim is never responsible for a crime being perpetrated against them.

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Nicole Harvey
University of Nottingham
Email: msxnh5@nottingham.ac.uk
Dr Simon Duff
University of Nottingham
Email: simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 2.1: The study advertisement which was posted on social media

STUDY ADVERTISEMENT

You are being invited to take part in a perception study which is part of my doctorate research. The study is an online questionnaire, which should take you no longer than about 10-15 minutes to complete. You will be asked about your perceptions of a given scenario. If you have any questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to drop me an email (msxnh5@nottingham.ac.uk).

Please feel free to share the study information and pass the link to others!

Thank you.

Appendix 2.2: Ethics approval letter

The University of Nottingham

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Research Ethics Committee
School of Medicine Education Centre
B Floor, Medical School
Queen's Medical Centre Campus
Nottingham University Hospitals
Nottingham
NG7 2UH

Direct line/e-mail
+44 (0) 115 8232561
Louise.Sabin@nottingham.ac.uk

29th March 2016

Nicole Harvey
Trainee Forensic Psychology Doctorate Student
c/o Dr Simon Duff
Director, Top-Up Doctorate in Forensic Psychology
Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology
Psychiatry and Applied Psychology
Room B15 YANG Fujia
Jubilee Campus
Wollaton Road
Nottingham
NG8 1BB

Dear Nicole

Ethics Reference No: R15032016 – please always quote
Study Title: Stalking: The impact of previous relationship and myth endorsement on blame.
Chief Investigator: Dr Simon Duff, Director, Top-Up Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Centre for Forensic & Family Psychology, Psychiatry and Applied Psychology, School of Medicine.
Lead Investigator/Student: Nicole Harvey, Trainee Forensic Psychology Doctorate Student, Psychiatry & Applied Psychology, School of Medicine.
Proposed Start date: 1/3/2016 End Date: 1/04/2017 12 months
No of Subjects: 280 (18+yrs)

Thank you for submitting the above application which was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 25th March 2016 and the following documents were received::

Stalking: The impact of previous relationship and myth endorsement on blame:

- FMHS Research Ethics Application Form dated 10.02.2016
- Research Proposal dated 10.02.2016
- Study Advert for Social Media 10.02.2016
- Information Sheet 10.02.2016
- Consent Form 10.02.2016
- Online Survey no 1 10.02.2016
- Online Survey no 2 10.02.2016
- Debrief Sheet 10.02.2016

These have been reviewed and are satisfactory and the study is approved.

Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions set out below are followed:

1. You must follow the protocol agreed and inform the Committee of any changes using a notification of amendment form (please request a form).

2. You must notify the Chair of any serious or unexpected event.

The University of Nottingham

3. This study is approved for the period of active recruitment requested. The Committee also provides a further 5 year approval for any necessary work to be performed on the study which may arise in the process of publication and peer review.

4. An End of Project Progress Report is completed and returned when the study has finished (Please request a form).

Yours sincerely

pp Lomasney

Professor Ravi Mahajan
Chair, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2.3: Vignettes for each condition of the study

Intimate

Dave and Sharon have been in a relationship together for 6 years. They met on a night out and hit it off almost immediately, finding that they had a lot in common. Their relationship so far has not been out of the ordinary, but lately Dave has been acting strangely. Sharon knows he's logged into her Facebook account behind her back because she receives social media security alerts by text. She thought nothing of this at first, but Dave has also been checking her phone when he thinks she's not looking. Dave texts Sharon 50 times and calls her at least 20 times throughout the day – even more if she's out with friends in the evening. Sharon has asked Dave to stop this as she's unable to answer so many texts and calls at work and finds it distracting, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Last time Sharon stayed out late she got a threatening call from an angry-sounding Dave saying he'd knock her teeth out if she didn't get home quickly. Most recently Dave has been coming to Sharon's place of work uninvited, making up different excuses for being there each time, such as "I just wanted to see how you're doing" or "I thought we could grab some lunch together". Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon

feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns home Dave always fires questions at her about where she's been and who she's been with, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Ex-Intimate

Dave and Sharon had been in a relationship for 6 years but Sharon recently ended it as she felt it was fizzling out and that they should go their separate ways. In the week following their break-up, Sharon realises that Dave has been logging into her Facebook account because she receives social media security alerts by text. She thought nothing of this at first, as her password is saved on his laptop so it could have been an accident. However, Dave has also been texting her at least 50 times a day, and calls at least 20. Sharon has spoken to Dave on the phone and asked him to stop calling and texting her so much as she's unable to respond to so many texts and calls at work and finds it distracting, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's even threatened to harm her if he sees her with another man. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work and insisted on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also

found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns home Dave has always left a voicemail on her home phone number asking her to call him and let him know where she's been and who she's been with, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Friend

Dave and Sharon have been friends for 6 years. They met on holiday and found out they actually lived quite close to each other. They meet up every two weeks or so for dinner and to have a catch up. However, recently Sharon has noticed that Dave asks to meet up much more frequently, even when Sharon tells him she's quite busy he insists that she make time to see him. She thought little of this at first – perhaps Dave was having a hard time and needed a friend. Since they last met up Sharon has received approximately 50 texts about 20 calls per day from Dave. Sharon has spoken to Dave on the phone and asked him to stop calling and texting her so much as she's unable to respond to so many texts and calls at work and finds it distracting, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's

even threatened to harm himself if they don't meet up soon. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work insisting on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns home Dave has always left a voicemail on her home phone number asking her to call him and let him know where she's been and who she's been with, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Acquaintance

Dave and Sharon have often bumped into each other at their local café on their way into work. If there's time they might sometimes stop for a brief chat, but other times they greet each other in passing, and then grab their coffees-to-go and head of to work in different directions. However, recently Sharon has noticed that Dave always wants to stop for a chat, even when Sharon tells him she's in a hurry. Dave has sometimes stood in the way of Sharon's exit at the café, but she would feel rude asking him to move so she continues to chat with him. She thought little of this at first – perhaps Dave didn't even realise he was doing it. One morning Dave asked for Sharon's number, and because she was in a hurry she gave it to him. Since then Sharon has received approximately 50 texts about 20 calls per day from Dave. Sharon has spoken to Dave and asked him to stop calling and texting her so much as she's unable to respond to

so many texts and calls at work and finds it distracting, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's even threatened to harm her if she stops going to the café. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work and insisting on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns home Dave has always left a voicemail on her home phone number asking her to call him and let him know where she's been and who she's been with, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Stranger

Dave and Sharon often see each other on the same bus to work but have never spoken or sat near each other. Sharon much prefers to read a book or play on her phone on her journey to work than talk to anyone. However, recently Sharon has noticed that Dave will move from his usual seat when she gets on the bus in order to sit closer to her. The other day Dave did actually sit next to her, although they still did not speak. She thought little of this behaviour at first – perhaps Dave wanted to start a

conversation but was a bit awkward. One morning Dave got off the bus at the same stop where Sharon usually alights. Since then Dave has been alighting at Sharon's stop every day and walking behind Sharon as she makes her way to work. Sharon has also received approximately 50 texts and about 20 calls per day from a number she doesn't recognise. Each time she answers the person on the other end of the line hangs up. One day she calls the number back, and a man answers – he explains he's Dave, the man from the bus. Sharon asks Dave how he got her number but he doesn't give a straight answer. She asks him to stop calling and texting her so much, but his behaviour has continued. Sharon's friends have also started to notice that Dave quite often "coincidentally" turns up to their nights out. Whilst Sharon doesn't mind having Dave around when she's socialising with her friends, she'd rather he asked her first. Sharon frequently receives late night calls from Dave asking her where she's been and who she's been with that day. He's even threatened to harm himself if she doesn't answer his calls. Most recently, Dave has been turning up to Sharon's place of work insisting on walking her home, despite Sharon making it clear that she'd prefer to listen to music whilst she walks. Sharon has also found herself inundated with gifts of flowers at work, all sent by Dave. Sharon feels embarrassed receiving so many flowers in front of colleagues. When she returns she always finds further gifts from Dave on her doorstep, which makes her feel very uncomfortable.

Appendix 2.4: The Victim Perpetrator Blame Scale (VPBS)

1. How much do you blame Sharon for what happened?
2. To what extent did Sharon communicate that she was not interested in a relationship with Dave?
3. To what extent was Dave responsible for what happened?
4. How much do you consider the situation to be Sharon's fault?
5. How much do you blame Dave for what happened?
6. Do you think Dave could persuade Sharon to become interested in a relationship in the future?
7. How much do you consider the situation to be Dave's fault?
8. To what extent was Sharon responsible for what happened?

Appendix 2.5: The Stalking Myth Scale (SMS)

1. People usually don't intend to harass or stalk others, but sometimes they get too carried away.
2. Many instances of stalking by would-be lovers could be avoided if the alleged victim would have just told his/her stalker clearly that s/he was definitely not interested in a romantic relationship.
3. Stalking isn't really violence until the stalker has tried to commit a physical assault.
4. People tend to exaggerate how much stalking affects them.
5. Stalkers often suffer from mental illness.
6. Many alleged stalking victims are actually people who played hard to get and "changed their minds" afterwards.
7. No matter how a person acts, it should not be assumed that s/he led someone to stalk him/her. (reverse-scored)
8. An individual in a committed relationship has the right to keep tabs on his/her partner in whatever way s/he wants.
9. A person never enjoys being followed or watched by another person. (reverse-scored)
10. It is just part of human nature for people to pursue love interests who aren't receptive to them. After all, we always want what we can't have.
11. Real stalking occurs when the stalker is a stranger.

12. Even though someone may call it stalking, s/he probably felt flattered by all the attention.
13. In any case where stalking is alleged, one would have to ask whether the victim was flirting too much or sending "mixed messages."
14. People rarely lie about having been stalked. (reverse-scored)
15. A stalker is usually someone the victim knows well. (reverse-scored)
16. Being in love is not a reason to stalk someone. (reverse-scored)
17. Victims of stalking are usually public figures, like celebrities or politicians.
18. Stalking doesn't really occur within committed relationships like a marriage.
19. A person who is willing to go to the extremes of stalking must really be in love.
20. Being stalked has a serious, lasting impact on the victim. (reverse-scored)
21. Some people will go overboard when they think they are in love, but that shouldn't be labeled "stalking."

Appendix 2.6: Participant debrief sheet

DEBRIEF SHEET

Study title:

Stalking: The impact of previous relationship and myth endorsement on blame

Background:

Stalking was criminalised relatively recently in the UK under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

With so much ambiguity around what exactly constitutes a case of stalking, there is a lot room left for individual interpretation. The consequences of this are that individuals who might be involved in a case of stalking will each have their own unique ideas of what stalking actually is. These different ideas (both correct and incorrect) are likely to impact upon the final outcome of a case. Many misperceptions about stalking still exist – some of these misperceptions are known as 'stalking myths'. The endorsement of stalking myths generally leads to the stalker being excused, more blame being placed on the victim, and minimisation of the crime. Studies have found that stronger stalking myth endorsement is associated with higher levels of stalking perpetration among both men and women (Lippman & Ward (2014). Research has also looked into gender biases in relation to stalking myths. Sinclair's (2012) study found that male study participants were more likely to blame a female victim of a hypothetical stalking scenario than female study participants. This was especially true when the male participants were asked to take the perspective of the stalker. Prior research has not yet looked into the effect of believing in stalking myths on the relationship type between the victim and perpetrator (i.e. intimate, ex-intimate, friends, acquaintances, strangers), and who people believe should be to blame for the stalking perpetration. This is what the current study is looking to find out.

Aims:

In this study we want to find out if the type of relationship between the victim and perpetrator affects perceptions of perpetrator and victim behaviours, whether the extent to which the perceiver endorses stalking myths impacts upon who they blame for stalking perpetration, and whether or not there is a gender difference in terms of who endorses stalking myths to a greater extent.

We expect to find that the more intimate the relationship type, the more the victim will be blamed, and the perpetrator exonerated; the greater the extent to which stalking myths are believed, the more the victim will be blamed and the perpetrator exonerated; that male study participants will be more likely to endorse stalking myths and blame female victims than female study participants; and finally that study participants who endorse many stalking myths will blame the victim to a greater extent when the victim and perpetrator are intimate or ex-intimate partners in comparison to when the victim and perpetrator are strangers.

How it works:

This study has 5 different conditions (hence you were asked to click on one of 5 squares to randomly direct you to one of the conditions. You might have worked out by now the type of relationship the

hypothetical scenario you read was representing (current intimate, former intimate, acquaintance, friend, or stranger). The study is concerned only with heterosexual relationships where the male is the perpetrator and the female is the victim.

The questions you answered were from the Victim Perpetrator Blame Scale (VPBS), and the Stalking Myth Scale. The former is used to establish who you believe is more to blame for the stalking, while the latter establishes to what extent you believe in common stalking myths.

Why do we need this research?

It is critical that we identify possible misperceptions associated with stalking in the community so that education and training programs can be put in place to address them. In a worst case scenario, stalking misperceptions could lead to a victim of stalking failing to recognise the signs that s/he is being victimised, until it is too late. Endorsement of stalking myths could mean a perpetrator being allowed to walk free from conviction, simply because jurors were not fully aware of the realities of this crime.

It is not just the general population who require training and education, services likely to be involved in stalking cases should be given full specialist training so that they are aware of common early indicators of stalking behaviour. If red flags are spotted, the relevant next steps can be taken to ensure that a case of stalking does not become a case of homicide. The results of this study may have implications for the development of public awareness campaigns, and education, and training programs.

Key references:

Weller, M., Hope, L., & Sheridan, L. (2013). Police and Public Perceptions of Stalking: The Role of Prior Victim–Offender Relationship. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 28(2), 320-339.

McKeon, B., McEwan, T. E., & Luebbers, S. (2014). “It's Not Really Stalking If You Know the Person”: Measuring Community Attitudes That Normalize, Justify and Minimise Stalking. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, *22*(2), 291-306.

Scott, A. J., Lloyd, R., & Gavin, J. (2010). The influence of prior relationship on perceptions of stalking in the United Kingdom and Australia. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *37*(11), 1185-1194.

If you would like to find out more about stalking, please use the following links:

www.stalkinghelpline.org

http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/stalking_and_harassment/

https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-victims/ive-been-affected/stalking-and-harassment

http://www.suzylamplugh.org/

http://www.nss.org.uk/

If you feel you will be, or have been, negatively affected as a result of taking part in this questionnaire, please use the resources below for help and support:

The Samaritans
www.samaritans.org
Tel: 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org

National Stalking Helpline
www.stalkinghelpline.org

Appendix 2.7: Participant information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

FMHS Research Ethics Reference no: R15032016

Title of Study: Relationship Behaviour

Name of Researcher: Nicole Harvey

We would like to invite you to take part in our research. Before you decide, we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. The researcher's e-mail address is provided in order for any questions you might have to be answered. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish, and ask us if there is anything that is not clear.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to find out more about the public's views on different relationship behaviours.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part because you are 18 years old or above. We are inviting 280 participants like you to take part.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason. This would not affect your legal rights.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The study requires you to read a hypothetical scenario and then to answer two sets of questions. If you identify with anything written in the questionnaire and feel that you could be negatively affected by it you are advised not to participate any further in the study. If you do choose to participate, the whole questionnaire should take you no more than 10-15 minutes to complete, after which time you will be asked questions regarding your age, sex, relationship status and occupation, and see a debrief screen detailing how the research might be used in the future. The debrief screen will also give contact details for the researcher and supervisor, should you have any queries regarding the study, and some references for further reading.

Expenses and payments

Participants will not be paid to participate in the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is not expected that there are any disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in this study. However, if you have personally been affected by any of the issues covered in the study then there is a chance that it could trigger some disturbing thoughts or images.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot promise that the study will help you, but the information we get from this study may help future victims of crime. The information gleaned from this study might go towards creating training and education programmes for public service workers (i.e. the police) and members of the general public so that they have a greater general awareness of criminal behaviour, legislation, and a better understanding of the likely perpetrators and victims of crime, and the possible dangers involved.

What happens when the study stops?

The data will be stored in files on a password-protected computer, only accessible to the researcher and members of university staff. The data will be analysed using statistical methods, via a computer programme called SPSS.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher who will answer your questions. The researcher's contact details are given at the end of this information sheet. If you remain unhappy, you can contact the researcher's supervisor. These contact details are also at the end of this information sheet.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. It will be stored securely and on a password protected computer. Any information that you provide will be anonymised (have your name removed) and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be recognised.

The information you provide will be viewed by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. It may be viewed by other authorised individuals at the University of Nottingham who will check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this duty.

All research data will be kept securely for seven years. After this time your data will be disposed of securely.

Your confidentiality will be safeguarded during and after the study by asking participants to decide on a code for their data before they start the study. This code will mean that the data is completely anonymous to everyone except the participant and can be used to withdraw data before analysis begins. Once analysis of the data has begun it will not be possible to identify which sets of data belong to which individual participant, and therefore withdrawal during or after analysis is not viable. The procedures for collecting, analysing, storing and destroying data meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights being affected. If you withdraw from the study, then any unidentifiable information collected so far cannot be erased and this information may still be used in the project analysis.

You may withdraw from the study at any time before data analysis begins. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be completely removed from the study and destroyed. However, it will not be possible for you to withdraw during or after data analysis, as identification and extraction of individual data will be impossible.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of the study will be included in a Doctoral level thesis, which will be submitted for assessment in 2017. If the study is published, it will be within a peer-reviewed journal. The reviewing and publishing process can take some time to complete. After the study you will be given a debrief sheet, as detailed above. However, if you would like a summary of the results, this can be made available to you once the study is complete. You will not be identified in any reports, dissertations or publications. The results of this study will be written up as part of my educational qualification.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Nottingham's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' research ethics committee.

Further information and contact details

Researcher's name: Nicole Harvey
Researcher's e-mail address: msxnh5@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor's name: Simon Duff
Supervisor's e-mail address: simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk

If you feel you will be, or have been, negatively affected as a result of taking part in this questionnaire, please use the resources below for help and support:

The Samaritans
www.samaritans.org
Tel: 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org

National Stalking Helpline
www.stalkinghelpline.org

Appendix 2.8: Participant consent form



CONSENT FORM

Division of Psychiatry and Applied Psychology
School of Medicine

Study Title: Relationship Behaviour

Researchers: Nicole Harvey and Dr Simon Duff

FMHS Research Ethics Ref:

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are aged 18 years +. This study is being done by **Nicole Harvey, Trainee Forensic Psychologist; and Dr Simon Duff, Forensic Psychologist,** from the University of Nottingham. The information we get from this study may help future victims of crime.

The purpose of this research study is to find out about people's different perceptions of relationship behaviours, and will take you **approximately 10-15 minutes** to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. The data will only be uploaded on completion of questionnaire by clicking the FINISH button.

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, the topic discussed may be sensitive for some people and therefore you can find support information in both the information at the start of the questionnaire, and in the debrief at the end. As with any online related activity the risk of a breach is always possible, however we will do everything possible to ensure your answers in this study will remain confidential. We will minimize any risks by keeping the data securely for seven years. After this time your data will be disposed of securely.

The results of the study may be published in scientific journals and presented at scientific conferences. The data will be reported anonymously, with any identifying information removed.

If you have any questions about this project, you may contact the Lead Researcher: Nicole Harvey (msxnh5@nottingham.ac.uk), or if you have any concerns about any aspect of this study please contact the Research Supervisor: Dr Simon Duff (simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk).

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Nottingham, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

I have read and understood the above information and consent form, I confirm that I am 18 years old or older and by clicking the NEXT button to begin the online questionnaire, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information on the previous page
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can end the study at any time and withdraw my data by closing the questionnaire.
3. I understand that my answers will be anonymous.
4. I understand the overall anonymized data from this study may be used in the future for research and teaching purposes.

Appendix 2.9: SPSS output

a) Normality tests of DVs

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
DV_perp_blame	.303	340	.000	.702	340	.000
DV_vict_blame	.346	340	.000	.647	340	.000
DV_stalking_myth_endorsement	.056	340	.012	.970	340	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

b) Kruskal-Wallis Test – Victim blame (Hyp 1)

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks

	Relationship_type	N	Mean Rank
DV_vict_blame	stranger	67	158.58
	acquaintance	67	195.93
	friend	65	165.54
	ex-intimate	72	159.92
	intimate	69	173.09
	Total	340	

Test Statistics[a,b]

	DV_vict_blame
Chi-Square	8.668
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.070

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Relationship_type

c) Kruskal-Wallis Test – Perpetrator blame (Hyp 2)

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks

	Relationship_type	N	Mean Rank
DV_perp_blame	stranger	67	176.58
	acquaintance	67	185.63
	friend	65	165.88
	ex-intimate	72	162.24
	intimate	69	162.87
	Total	340	

Test Statistics[a,b]

	DV_perp_blame
Chi-Square	3.544
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.471

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Relationship_type

d) Spearman's rho correlation between MES and VB

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

			DV_stalking_myth_endors	DV_vict_blame
Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.448**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	340	340
	DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.448**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	340	340

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

Relationship_type				DV_stalking_myth_endors	DV_vict_blame
stranger	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.391**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
			N	67	67
		DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.391**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
			N	67	67
acquaintance	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.524**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	67	67
		DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.524**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	67	67
friend	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.526**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	65	65
		DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.526**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	65	65
ex-intimate	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.505**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	72	72
		DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.505**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	72	72
intimate	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.382**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
			N	69	69
		DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	.382**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
			N	69	69

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

e) Spearman's rho correlation between MES and PB

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

			DV_stalking_myth_endors	DV_perp_blame
Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.361**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	340	340
	DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.361**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	340	340

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

Relationship_type				DV_stalking_myth_endors	DV_perp_blame
stranger	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.354**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
			N	67	67
		DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.354**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
			N	67	67
acquaintance	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.139
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.262
			N	67	67
		DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.139	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.262	.
			N	67	67

friend	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.530**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	65	65
		DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.530**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	65	65
ex-intimate	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.404**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
			N	72	72
		DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.404**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
			N	72	72
intimate	Spearman's rho	DV_stalking_myth_endors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.377**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
			N	69	69
		DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.377**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
			N	69	69

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

f) Spearman's rho correlation between VB and PB

Correlations

			DV_perp_blame	DV_vict_blame
Spearman's rho	DV_perp_blame	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.541**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	340	340
	DV_vict_blame	Correlation Coefficient	-.541**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	340	340

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

g) Mann-Whitney U tests and regression analyses for stalking myth endorsement, victim and perpetrator blame by gender

NPar Tests

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
DV_stalking_myth_endors	340	2.1284	.53192	1.00	4.67
DV_vict_blame	340	4.1882	2.04806	3.00	14.00
DV_perp_blame	340	19.3882	2.45716	5.00	21.00
IV_gender	340	1.8235	.38178	1.00	2.00

Group Statistics

	IV_gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
DV_stalking_myth_endors	male	60	2.2651	.46495	.06002
	female	280	2.0991	.54148	.03236
DV_vict_blame	male	60	4.2667	1.97327	.25475
	female	280	4.1714	2.06678	.12351
DV_perp_blame	male	60	19.6500	2.37090	.30608
	female	280	19.3321	2.47577	.14796

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks

	IV_gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
DV_stalking_myth_endors	male	60	201.64	12098.50
	female	280	163.83	45871.50
	Total	340		
DV_vict_blame	male	60	175.59	10535.50
	female	280	169.41	47434.50
	Total	340		
DV_perp_blame	male	60	180.16	10809.50
	female	280	168.43	47160.50
	Total	340		

Test Statistics[a]

	DV_stalking_myth_endors	DV_vict_blame	DV_perp_blame
Mann-Whitney U	6531.500	8094.500	7820.500
Wilcoxon W	45871.500	47434.500	47160.500
Z	-2.706	-.510	-.925
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.610	.355

a. Grouping Variable: IV_gender

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.018[a]	.000	-.003	2.05076	.000	.107	1	338	.744
2	.452[b]	.204	.199	1.83271	.204	86.216	1	337	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.448	1	.448	.107	.744[b]
	Residual	1421.505	338	4.206		
	Total	1421.953	339			
2	Regression	290.031	2	145.016	43.175	.000[c]
	Residual	1131.922	337	3.359		
	Total	1421.953	339			

a. Dependent Variable: DV_vict_blame

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender

c. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.362	.544		8.026	.000		
	IV_gender	-.095	.292	-.018	-.326	.744	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	.108	.668		.161	.872		
	IV_gender	.195	.263	.036	.743	.458	.986	1.014
	DV_stalking_myth_endors	1.750	.188	.455	9.285	.000	.986	1.014

a. Dependent Variable: DV_vict_blame

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.049[a]	.002	-.001	2.45779	.002	.826	1	338	.364
2	.317[b]	.101	.095	2.33699	.098	36.844	1	337	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.992	1	4.992	.826	.364[b]
	Residual	2041.761	338	6.041		
	Total	2046.753	339			
2	Regression	206.218	2	103.109	18.879	.000[c]
	Residual	1840.535	337	5.462		
	Total	2046.753	339			

a. Dependent Variable: DV_perp_blame

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender

c. Predictors: (Constant), IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	19.968	.651		30.655	.000		
	IV_gender	-.318	.350	-.049	-.909	.364	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	23.514	.851		27.617	.000		
	IV_gender	-.560	.335	-.087	-1.672	.095	.986	1.014
	DV_stalking_myth_endors	-1.459	.240	-.316	-6.070	.000	.986	1.014

a. Dependent Variable: DV_perp_blame

h) Regression analyses for victim and perpetrator blame and the interaction between gender and stalking myth endorsement

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	290.067	3	96.689	28.702	.000[b]
	Residual	1131.886	336	3.369		
	Total	1421.953	339			

a. Dependent Variable: DV_vict_blame

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender_x_Myth_end, IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.132	2.416		-.055	.957		
	IV_gender	.323	1.267	.060	.255	.799	.042	23.538
	DV_stalking_myth_endors	1.856	1.048	.482	1.772	.077	.032	31.254
	Gender_x_Myth_end	-.057	.553	-.035	-.103	.918	.021	47.547

a. Dependent Variable: DV_vict_blame

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	208.555	3	69.518	12.707	.000[b]
	Residual	1838.198	336	5.471		
	Total	2046.753	339			

a. Dependent Variable: DV_perp_blame

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender_x_Myth_end, IV_gender, DV_stalking_myth_endors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	21.580	3.079		7.008	.000		
	IV_gender	.472	1.614	.073	.292	.770	.042	23.538
	DV_stalking_myth_endors	-.601	1.335	-.130	-.450	.653	.032	31.254
	Gender_x_Myth_end	-.460	.704	-.233	-.654	.514	.021	47.547

a. Dependent Variable: DV_perp_blame

Appendix 2.10: Table of more detailed participants' characteristics

Participants' occupations

Occupation	**N (%)**
Full-time student	82 (23.4)
Part-time student	5 (1.4)
Accountancy and financial management	6 (1.7)
Civil and structural engineering	5 (1.4)
Construction and building services	5 (1.4)
Consumer goods and FMCG	1 (0.3)
Engineering	4 (1.1)
Financial services and insurance	2 (0.6)
Healthcare	71 (20.2)
Hospitality, leisure and travel	4 (1.1)
HR and recruitment	1 (0.3)
IT and technology	14 (4.0)
Law solicitors	2 (0.6)
Logistics, transport and supply chain	2 (0.6)
Management and business	9 (2.6)
Management consulting	4 (1.1)
Marketing, advising and PR	9 (2.6)
Media, journalism and publishing	9 (2.6)
Property	4 (1.1)
Public service, charity and social work	35 (10.0
Quantity surveying and building surveying	1 (0.3)
Retail, buying and merchandising	4 (1.1)
Sales	4 (1.1)
Science and research	11 (3.1)
Teaching and education	52 (14.8)

Appendix 4.1: Quality Assessment Form

AUTHOR:

TITLE:

YEAR:

A) Title and Abstract

1. Is the study's design indicated with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

2. Does the abstract provide an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

B) Introduction

1. Does the background/rationale adequately explain the purpose of the research?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

2. Are specific objectives, including any pre-specified hypotheses outlined?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

C) Methods

Study design:

1. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

2. **Are the key elements stated early in the paper?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

Study Setting:

3. **Are descriptions of the setting, locations, and relevant dates provided? (Including periods of recruitment, exposure – if relevant, follow-up – if relevant, and data collection)**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

Participants:

4. **Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

5. **Was eligibility criteria, recruitment and selection process clearly stated?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

6. **Were the participants representative of the defined population?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

Variables:

7. **Were interventions, outcomes and potential confounders clearly defined?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

Data Collection:

8. **Were the tools shown to be valid?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

9. **Was the administration consistent? (Including carried out in same environment, with the same assessor and assessor trained to use the tool)**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

10. **Are assessment methods comparable if more than two groups were used?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)
n/a

11. **Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

Bias:

12. **Did the method describe any efforts to avoid potential sources of bias?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)

No (0)

D) Analyses

1. **Are the statistical methods appropriate for the study design?**

   Yes (2)
   Unclear (1)
   No (0)

2. **Are all statistical methods discussed, including those used to control for confounds?**

   Yes (2)
   Unclear (1)
   No (0)

3. **Is there an explanation of how missing data was addressed?**

   Yes (2)
   Unclear (1)
   No (0)

E) Results

Participants:

1. **Were withdrawals and drop-out numbers reported?**

   Yes (2)
   Unclear (1)
   No (0)

2. **Were reasons given for non participation/attrition?**

   Yes (2)
   Unclear (1)
   No (0)

Descriptive Data:

3. **Were the characteristics of study participants (e.g. demographic, clinical, social) described?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

4. **Are results clearly defined?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

5. **Are confidence intervals 95% or above?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

6. **Are the results accurate? (outside of confounding variables, chance or bias)**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

F) <u>Discussion</u>

1. **Is there a clear statement of findings?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

2. **Is there a summary of key results with reference to study objectives?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

3. **Are limitations of the study discussed, taking into account sources of potential bias?**

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)

No (0)

4. Are the results discussed in terms of external validity?

Yes (2)
Unclear (1)
No (0)

INCLUDE **EXCLUDE**

Appendix 4.2: Data extraction form

Data Extraction Form

General information

Date of data extraction:

Author(s):

Article title:

Source (e.g. journal, conference), year, pages, country of origin:

Reviewer:

Specific information

Reverification of eligibility (tick of correct)

Population [ ] Exposure [ ] Comparator [ ] Outcomes [ ]

Study

1. What was the study design?

2. What were the study aims and objectives?

Population characteristics

1. Population (describe)

2. Inclusion criteria

Population:

Exposure:

Comparator:

Outcome:

3. Exclusion criteria

4. Recruitment procedures (participation rates if available)

5. Participant characteristics

Age

Gender

Sexuality

Ethnicity

Other information

6. Inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation in study

7. Informed consent obtained? *(Yes/No/Unclear)*

8. Ethical approval *(Yes/No/Unclear)*

Exposure (development of PTSD symptoms)

1. Valid and reliable measure of symptoms of PTSD?

2. Duration of PTSD symptoms?

Comparator (no development of PTSD symptoms)

1. Valid and reliable measure of symptoms of PTSD?

Outcome (vulnerability/resilience factors)

1. What were the outcome measures?

2. Who carried out the measurement? (Self-report questionnaire, interviewer/interviewee style)

3. If there was a) an assessor and b) a comparison group, was the assessor blind to the group status?

4. Notes

Comparison

1. Was there a comparison group? (tick)
Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. If yes, define comparison group (e.g. individuals who did not develop symptoms of PTSD)

Attrition

1. What proportion of participants agreed to participate? (plus proportion of those who did not agree to participate, if possible)

2. What was the attrition?

3. What were the reasons for drop-outs?

Analysis

1. What statistics were used?

2. Do the statistics adjust for confounds? How?

3. How was missing data dealt with?

Notes

Appendix 5.1: Norms for the SMI

Mode	Very Low	Average	Moderate	High	Very High	Severe
Child Modes						
Vulnerable Child	1	1.47	1.98	3.36	4.47	6
Angry Child	1	1.81	2.29	3.09	4.03	6
Enraged Child	1	1.20	1.49	2.05	2.97	6
Impulsuive Child	1	2.15	2.68	3.05	4.12	6
Undisciplined Child	1	2.27	2.87	3.47	3.89	6
Happy Child (Reversed)	6	5.06	4.52	2.88	2.11	1
Avoidant Modes						
Compliant Surrenderer	1	2.51	3.07	3.63	4.27	6
Detatched Protector	1	1.59	2.11	2.95	3.89	6
Detatched Self-Soother	1	1.93	2.58	3.32	4.30	6
Overcompensating Modes						
Self-Aggrandizer	1	2.31	2.90	3.49	4.08	6
Bully & Attack	1	1.72	2.23	2.74	3.25	6
Parent Modes						
Punitive Critic	1	1.47	1.86	2.75	3.72	6
Demanding Critic	1	3.06	3.66	4.26	4.86	6
Healthy Adult Modes						
Healthy Adult (Reversed)	6	5.16	4.60	3.60	2.77	1

Appendix 5.2: Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form 1 (YSQ-S1)

YSQ - S1

Name_____Date_____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe himself or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally **feel**, not on what you **think** to be true. Choose the **highest rating from 1 to 6** that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

1 = Completely untrue of me

2 = Mostly untrue of me

3 = Slightly more true than untrue

4 = Moderately true of me

5 = Mostly true of me

6 = Describes me perfectly

1. _____ Most of the time, I haven't had someone to nurture me, share him/herself with me, or care deeply about everything that happens to me.

2. _____ In general, people have not been there to give me warmth, holding, and affection.

3. _____ For much of my life, I haven't felt that I am special to someone.

4. _____ For the most part, I have not had someone who really listens to me, understands me, or is tuned into my true needs and feelings.

5. _____ I have rarely had a strong person to give me sound advice or direction when I'm not sure what to do.

*ed

6. _____ I find myself clinging to people I'm close to, because I'm afraid they'll leave me.

7._____I need other people so much that I worry about losing them.

8. _____ I worry that people I feel close to will leave me or abandon me.

9. _____ When I feel someone I care for pulling away from me, I get desperate.

10. _____ Sometimes I am so worried about people leaving me that I drive them away.

*ab

11. _____ I feel that people will take advantage of me.

12._____I feel that I cannot let my guard down in the presence of other people, or else they will intentionally hurt me.

13._____It is only a matter of time before someone betrays me.

14. _____ I am quite suspicious of other people's motives.

15. _____ I'm usually on the lookout for people's ulterior motives.

*ma

16. _____ I don't fit in.

17. _____ I'm fundamentally different from other people.

18. _____ I don't belong; I'm a loner.

19. _____ I feel alienated from other people.

20. _____ I always feel on the outside of groups.

*si

21. _____ No man/woman I desire could love me one he/she saw my defects.

22. _____ No one I desire would want to stay close to me if he/she knew the real me.

23. _____ I'm unworthy of the love, attention, and respect of others.

24. _____ I feel that I'm not lovable.

25. _____ I am too unacceptable in very basic ways to reveal myself to other people. *ds

26. _____ Almost nothing I do at work (or school) is as good as other people can do.

27. _____ I'm incompetent when it comes to achievement.

28. _____ Most other people are more capable than I am in areas of work and achievement.

29. _____ I'm not as talented as most people are at their work.

30. _____ I'm not as intelligent as most people when it comes to work (or school).

*fa

31. _____ I do not feel capable of getting by on my own in everyday life.

32. _____ I think of myself as a dependent person, when it comes to everyday functioning.

33. _____ I lack common sense.

34. _____ My judgment cannot be relied upon in everyday situations.

35. _____ I don't feel confident about my ability to solve everyday problems that come up.

*di

36. _____ I can't seem to escape the feeling that something bad is about to happen.

37. _____ I feel that a disaster (natural, criminal, financial, or medical) could strike at any moment.

38. _____ I worry about being attacked.

39. _____ I worry that I'll lose all my money and become destitute.

40. _____ I worry that I'm developing a serious illness, even though nothing serious has been diagnosed by a physician.

*vh

41. _____I have not been able to separate myself from my parent(s), the way other people my age seem to.

42. _____ My parent(s) and I tend to be overinvolved in each other's lives and problems.

43. _____ It is very difficult for my parent(s) and me to keep intimate details from each other, without feeling betrayed or guilty.

44. _____ I often feel as if my parent(s) are living through me--I don't have a life of my own.

45. _____I often feel that I do not have a separate identity from my parent(s) or partner.

*em

46. _____ I think that if I do what I want, I'm only asking for trouble.

47. _____ I feel that I have no choice but to give in to other people's wishes, or else they will retaliate or reject me in some way.

48. _____ In relationships, I let the other person have the upper hand.

49. _____ I've always let others make choices for me, so I really don't know what I want for myself.

50. _____ I have a lot of trouble demanding that my rights be respected and that my feelings be taken into account.

*sb

51. _____ I'm the one who usually ends up taking care of the people I'm close to.

52. _____ I am a good person because I think of others more than of myself.

53. _____ I'm so busy doing for the people that I care about, that I have little time for myself.

54. _____ I've always been the one who listens to everyone else's problems.

55. _____ Other people see me as doing too much for others and not enough for myself.

*ss

56. _____ I am too self-conscious to show positive feelings to others (e.g., affection, showing I care).

57. _____ I find it embarrassing to express my feelings to others.

58. _____ I find it hard to be warm and spontaneous.

59. _____ I control myself so much that people think I am unemotional.

60. _____ People see me as uptight emotionally.

*ei

61. _____ I must be the best at most of what I do; I can't accept second best.

62. _____ I try to do my best; I can't settle for "good enough."

63. _____ I must meet all my responsibilities.

64. _____ I feel there is constant pressure for me to achieve and get things done.

65. _____ I can't let myself off the hook easily or make excuses for my mistakes.

*us

66. _____ I have a lot of trouble accepting "no" for an answer when I want something from other people.

67. _____ I'm special and shouldn't have to accept many of the restrictions placed on other people.

68. _____ I hate to be constrained or kept from doing what I want.

69. _____ I feel that I shouldn't have to follow the normal rules and conventions other people do.

70. _____ I feel that what I have to offer is of greater value than the contributions of others.

*et

71. _____ I can't seem to discipline myself to complete routine or boring tasks.

72. _____ If I can't reach a goal, I become easily frustrated and give up.

73. _____ I have a very difficult time sacrificing immediate gratification to achieve a long-range goal.

74. _____ I can't force myself to do things I don't enjoy, even when I know it's for my own good.

75. _____ I have rarely been able to stick to my resolutions.

*is

Scoring Instructions for YSQ-S: (to be distributed AFTER completion of the YSQ-S)

There are no known norms for the YSQ-S, therefore the numbers to the left of each group of items should be summed. A group of items are those items appearing before the abbreviation with the asterisk (e.g. *et, *ab) and are listed below. Members should focus on those 3 to 4 EMS with the highest value of summed items in that group.

Items 1 – 5 comprise the Emotional Deprivation EMS

Items 6 – 10 comprise the Abandonment EMS

Items 11 – 15 comprise the Mistrust/Abuse EMS

Items 16 – 20 comprise the Social Isolation/Alienation EMS

Items 21 – 25 comprise the Defectiveness/Shame EMS

Items 26 – 30 comprise the Failure EMS

Items 31 – 35 comprise the Dependence/Incompetence EMS

Items 36 – 40 comprise the Vulnerability to Harm and Illness EMS

Items 41 – 45 comprise the Enmeshment EMS

Items 46 – 50 comprise the Subjugation EMS

Items 51 – 55 comprise the Self-Sacrifice EMS

Items 56 – 60 comprise the Emotional Inhibition EMS

Items 61 – 65 comprise the Unrelenting Standards EMS

Items 66 –70 comprise the Entitlement EMS

Items 71 – 75 comprise the Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline EMS

Note: From www.schematherapy.com/id54.htm

Adapted from Young Schema Questionnaire - Long Form.

Young, J.E. (1999). Cognitive therapy for personality disorders: A schema- focused approach (third edition). Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press.