WHAT WORKS? A GROUNDED THEORY OF EFFECTIVE PEER MENTORING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

J.E. POWELL

DOCTORATE IN CHILD, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

A thesis submitted for the degree of D. Ch. Ed. Psych

Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust / University of Essex

Date of submission: January 2016

ABSTRACT

The current research was carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) between September 2013 and May 2015 in a large County in South-East England as part of a Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology. Using critical realism as a guiding epistemological position, the study sought to bring school based peer mentors and mentees voice to the forefront, by exploring their view of what works. The study aimed to offer a framework for understanding and developing peer mentoring relationships and inform safe and effective peer mentoring practice in secondary schools.

This study was conducted using grounded theory methodology as a strategy of inquiry. Data was captured from semi structured interviews which were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed, assisted by MaxQDA. Purposive sampling was used to select nine participants from two secondary schools: of which 4 were peer mentors and 5 were mentees whom had participated in their schools peer mentoring programme during the academic year 2013/14.

The BONDS model addresses the delivery of peer mentoring within the context of peer support interventions and secondary educational settings. The acronym 'BONDS' represents the data which emerged from grounded theory methodology as 5 integrated mechanisms which mediate effective peer mentoring. The model proposes that effective peer mentoring is synonymous with a nurturing experience characterised by 'boundaries' within peer mentoring, the 'openness' of the mentee to engage, the mentors abilities to build a safe and supportive

relationship, the peer mentor and mentees 'dual experience' of the school system and 'staff contact' with mentors.

This study adds to the limited body of research which explores the views of peer mentors and mentees engaged in peer mentoring programmes in the UK. The implications of the findings are discussed and good practice recommendations are made to inform the work of school staff, Educational Psychology services and other professionals working to support young people through school based peer mentoring. The limitations of the study are also addressed and suggestions are made for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks, to my research supervisor and personal supervisor. Thank you to Dr Carol Greenway for your patience, understanding and encouragement and Dr Chris Shaldon for your moral support and insightful comments throughout my training. You have both been brilliant mentors!

Well done, to my fellow Trainee Educational Psychologists (cohort 2012-2015) - we made it!

I am grateful to my Educational Psychology Service who were extremely supportive of me as a Trainee and of my research. Thank you for providing the time and resources needed to conduct this research. I very much look forward to my continued work with you.

I would like to acknowledge the time given by the schools and fabulous young people who participated in this study. I am grateful to all involved for their co-operation and willingness to share their experiences in an effort to advance the knowledge base in peer mentoring.

I am truly appreciative of my family and friends for their unconditional love and understanding, for knowing when to be supportive, encouraging, challenging, and when to say “Just get on with it”! Thank you to my friends who provided food, red wine, laughter breaks and encouragement. Special thanks to the ‘bestest’ mum and dad for always believing in me and supporting my dreams – even the crazy ones!! I love you. X

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research was completed as part of a Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology. The researcher was a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), on placement in an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in a County in South-East England. This thesis aims to provide a summary of the original research undertaken to explore the mechanism/s that maximise the effectiveness of peer mentoring in secondary schools. This chapter, **Chapter One** intends to orientate the reader to the structure of the thesis and introduce the concept of peer mentoring. It describes the researcher's position and contextualises the research rationale nationally and locally. **Chapter Two** aims to justify the research aims and questions by providing a summary of relevant published research and by identifying gaps in the literature. The research aims and questions are stated at the end of this chapter. **Chapter Three** navigates the reader through the contextual and qualitative data collection and data analysis process. It also describes the researcher's critical realist orientation and discusses issues of trustworthiness and ethics. **Chapter Four** presents the results of contextual data gathered from secondary schools across two areas of the County. Here, readers are also acquainted with the five interrelated categories of the proposed BONDS model derived from grounded theory analysis of 9 semi structured interviews. **Chapter Five** aims to inform the reader of the theoretical and practical implications of the research. It acknowledges the strengths and limitations of the research and describes the researcher's personal and epistemological journey through the process. The chapter ends the thesis with a brief summary of the findings in relation to the original contributions to peer mentoring in UK secondary schools and suggests ways forward.

1.1 TERMINOLOGY USED IN CURRENT RESEARCH

Throughout research literature a number of ambiguous terms and phrases are referred to, thus for the purpose of clarity, the following definitions apply to the current research (defined in alphabetical order). The reader may wish to refer back to these definitions while reading the remainder of the thesis.

Context: The context refers to the 'open system' in which the research and phenomena of interest take place. Open systems are complex systems, influenced by numerous internal and external factors (Dowling & Osborne, 2003; Miller, 2003). There may be contextual conditions that facilitate or inhibit mechanisms so their actions are best considered to be a tendency rather than a rule. In this case, the context refers to two large secondary school settings within a County in South East England.

Dyadic Relationship: Dyad is defined as two things of a similar kind, nature or group and dyadic communication means the inter-relationship between the two. Thus for the purpose of the current research, the term 'dyadic relationship' refers to the relationship between a peer mentor and their mentee.

Effective: In this study, the word "effective," relates to the changes, benefits or other results that occur as a result of peer mentoring. These are also referred to as hard and soft outcomes. Hard outcomes (such as attendance, punctuality, grades etc.) are more easily observed and counted. Soft outcomes (such as confidence, self-esteem and communication skills etc.) are more difficult to measure.

Mechanisms: "Mechanisms describe what it is about programmes and interventions that bring about any effects….." (Pawson & Tilley, 2004, p. 6). Mechanisms are made up of a number of processes which lead to particular outcomes. Thus for the purpose of the current research, the term refers to the system-level and relationship-level aspects of peer mentoring which facilitate (and hinder) the positive outcomes of peer mentoring as an intervention.

Peer Mentoring: A one-to-one relationship, between an experienced student (mentor) and a less experienced student (mentee) in which the mentor voluntarily gives their time to support and encourage the mentee to learn and develop emotionally, socially and/or academically. The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a significant and sustained period of time (Cartwright, 2005; Knowles & Parsons, 2009; O'Hara, 2011). This definition of peer mentoring is an amalgamation of definitions, combined to fit the researchers understanding and experience of peer mentoring during the secondary phase of education.

1.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE

The researcher was interested in exploring pastoral interventions for young people during the secondary phase of their education. The focus was on the secondary phase because secondary school age students (11 to 19 years) face more developmental, social, academic, and organisational change than at any other period in their lives (Houlston, Smith and Jessel (2009). The secondary phase is a time denoted by change/transition, pressures and for many a time when they begin to make life changing decisions. Most young people will have to manage a transition from a small primary school to a large secondary school. In addition to trying to sort out where they might fit in this new world, young people at this time are experiencing a period

of physical and hormonal change which often triggers a range of emotional changes. During this time young people also experience a change in curriculum delivery, the pressures of homework and exams and begin to make significant decisions about their future. Adolescent and societal changes can have a negative impact on those most poorly equipped to deal with them. Some young people move through this phase of development relatively smoothly, while for others this can be an extremely challenging time in their lives. Schools are well placed to help young people facing social, emotional and academic challenges by providing additional support to address difficulties related to underachievement and wider issues. In identifying approaches that could help them with either academic or emotional problems, a recurring theme among young people was the importance of peer support (The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services, 2010).

Knowledge and experience of peer mentoring gained from working as a Lead Mentor in a secondary school sparked the researcher's interest in further exploring peer mentoring as an intervention to support social, emotional and academic difficulties. Following the formal introduction of mentoring, utilising peers as mentors became a common pastoral intervention used in UK secondary schools (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009; Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010; Thompson & Smith, 2011) it combines elements of formal peer support and informal peer relations into mutual development and learning for students (National Mentoring Network, 2004).

1.3 RESEARCHER'S POSTITION

Several years' experience of leading a peer mentoring programme (PMP) has equipped the researcher in valuing and promoting peer mentoring as an aspect of pastoral care and an early intervention in which to develop mentee's social and emotional readiness for learning while also giving mentors the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills and model desirable behaviours.

Based on previous experiences of peer mentoring and current experiences as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, the researcher was confident in her belief that peer mentoring can be an effective and valuable form of pastoral care/peer support in schools. On this basis, the researcher was not concerned with exploring whether peer mentoring is effective in secondary schools, instead she was interested in understanding what works and why, so that success can be maintained and developed. The following chapter titled, 'Review of Literature' highlights this as an empirical gap in the research on peer mentoring.

A personal interest in a particular research area brings with it inherent assumptions. Willig (2008) states that "we cannot ask questions without making assumptions" (p. 38) thus, personal and epistemological reflexivity requires an awareness and acknowledgement of the researcher's contribution to the research process (Willig, 2013). The researcher's assumptions are as follows:

- The researcher proposes that the benefits of education are not purely academic and that peer mentoring should be viewed as a viable pastoral intervention for supporting

the holistic needs of young people. As such, peer mentoring utilises one of the most valuable resources available to every school – its own students.

- The researcher assumes that the dyadic relationship (i.e. the peer mentor-mentee relationship) plays a fundamental role in the success or failure of a peer mentoring programme.
- The researcher assumes that peer mentoring is most effective for those young people with low to mid-level support needs (e.g. confidence building, time management skills, personal skills to help make new friends, or assistance with job hunting) and is less likely to be suitable for those young people with intensive or complex support needs (e.g. mental health concerns or diagnosis, where there are child protection concerns, or a difficult family breakdown).
- It is the shared belief of the current researcher that Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to "play a major part in furthering the practice of inclusive education by bringing peers from the periphery to a position of prominence." (Leyden & Miller, 1996, p. 3).

The notion of reflexivity is considered in the 'Discussion' chapter, whereby the researcher reflects on her standpoint in relation to peer mentoring and attempts to identify the ways in which her assumptions have shaped the research process and findings.

1.4 MENTORING

Mentoring is a very human and natural activity that has been around since the Ancient Greeks and there are many examples in history of mentoring/supportive relationships. The first

documented mentor was Goddess Athene who worked with Telemachus the son of King Odysseus (Garvey & Langridge, 2006). Other examples include:

- Moses and Joshua;
- Socrates and Plato;
- Aristotle and Alexander the Great;
- Lord Cecil and Queen Elizabeth I;
- Freud and Jung.

In recent years it has grown in popularity as a learning and developmental process (Garvey & Langridge, 2006) and is used within a range of contexts including schools, business, universities, nursing etc. Mentoring takes many forms and has many purposes. In considering 'mentoring as a function', Colley (2003) pointed out that the function of mentoring may vary depending on context and need, and is described as:

> *"teaching, coaching, advising, guiding, directing, protecting, supporting, sponsoring, challenging, encouraging, motivating, befriending, inspiring . . ."* (Colley, 2003:31).

Similarly, Anderson and Lucasse Shannon (1995) identify the following five functions of mentor action:

- teaching (modelling, confirming, disconfirming, informing, questioning, prescribing);
- sponsoring (supporting, protecting, advocating);
- encouraging (inspiring, affirming, challenging);
- counselling (listening, clarifying, probing, problem-solving, advising); and
- befriending (accepting and relating).

In viewing 'mentoring as a relationship', Anderson and Lucasse Shannon (1995) claim that the distinctive feature of mentoring is that it is an "ongoing caring relationship" (p. 29). Similarly, Roberts (2000) believes that mentoring is characterised by a supportive relationship.

1.4.1 Mentoring in Schools

Learning Mentors were one strand of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative formally introduced in the UK by the British Government in 1999. The initiative endeavoured to support schools in raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap between more advantaged and less disadvantaged students. Learning mentors bridged academic and pastoral support roles with the objective to help individual students engage more effectively in their learning and achieve appropriately. The aim was to raise student achievement, break down barriers to learning, improve attendance and reduce exclusions (Kendall, O'Donnell, Golden, Ridley, Machin, Rutt, & Noden, 2005). At this time mentoring was associated with good practice in schools and was heavily funded and resourced by the government. Initially just based in secondary schools, mentoring programmes were proven to be very successful and quickly expanded to include primary schools. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), stated that:

> "The most successful and popular of the EiC strands is learning mentors. The creation of these posts has been greatly welcomed and has enabled the majority of schools to enhance the effective of support they offer to disaffected, underachieving or vulnerable pupils...Overall, the programme was seen as providing good value for money." (Ofsted, 2003, p. 3).

Evidently mentoring took place in schools in various forms before the launch of the EiC initiative (e.g. Dearden, 1998) however it was the politically high profile of the programme that thrust mentoring to the forefront of good practice in tackling underachievement in UK schools.

In schools, mentoring can take many different forms and have many different uses ranging from professional development and support for teachers to students mentoring other students (Garvey & Langridge, 2006). Activities vary from programme to programme, range from direct academic support with homework or other school tasks to supporting young people who are hard to reach or deemed to be at risk of educational failure or exclusion. Mentors work with individual students, groups of students, teachers, parents/carers and other agencies (Hayward, 2001). The flexibility of the mentor role enables it to be adapted to the needs of an individual mentee/s.

A range of styles of mentoring exist. The 'classic model' refers to a one-to one relationship between an adult (members of staff or volunteers from the local community or business) and a young person (Philip & Spratt, 2007). Rhodes (2003) describes this model as a relationship between an experienced adult and an unrelated young person. E-mentoring follows the classic model through electronic contact. Peer mentoring and group mentoring are now prominent styles that have been incorporated into mentoring programmes within the UK. What unites all forms of mentoring is an aim to provide a non-judgemental, supportive relationship in which to help mentees reach their full potential (Philip & Spratt, 2007).

In reviewing the literature, it is apparent that there is no single definition of mentoring (Parsons, 2008; O'Hara, 2011). In fact, Piper and Piper (1999) describe mentoring as a

"ubiquitous and chameleon-like approach which is everywhere in name but nowhere in substance" (p. 129). Given the vagueness of mentoring, a number of definitions have appeared in the literature describing the function and the relationship:

> "[a mentor is] many things - a positive role model, an adviser, an experience friend. Someone from outside a person's immediate circle taking a special interest can make an enormous difference" DfEE, 1997).
>
> "to provide support and guidance to children, young people and those engaged with them, by removing barriers to learning in order to promote effective participation, enhance individual learning, raise aspirations and achieve their potential. Mentoring offers an opportunity for a young person to build a positive relationship with someone they can rely on, someone who is part of the community, but not associated with other adults in authority in their lives" (DfES, 2005, p. 12).
>
> "relates primarily to the identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person. It can be a long term relationship, where the goals may change but are always set by the learner. The learner owns both the goals and the process. Feedback comes from within the mentee – the mentor helps them to develop insight and understanding through intrinsic observation." (DfEE, 1997, p. 4)

Overall, mentoring is viewed as a complimentary service that enhances existing provision and extends the range of networks and partnerships offered to support learning opportunities and improve the effectiveness of services to children and young people (DfES, 2005). Many schools implemented a Learning Mentor Programme and Peer Mentoring became a prevalent strand of school-based mentoring in the UK.

1.5 PEER MENTORING in Schools

The concept of peer mentoring falls under the umbrella term of peer support. Alongside peer mentoring, there are a number of additional forms of peer support, such as peer tutoring; peer counselling; peer listening; befriending; buddying, peer mediation and many more (Cowie &

Wallace, 2000). Peer support describes a range of activities and systems which support young people to be helpful to each other by developing supportive student-student relationships. In schools peer support programmes offer a framework of support for vulnerable students in addition to that provided by adult-based pastoral services (Houlston *et al.*, 2009). Such initiatives aim to build on the natural helping resources normally offered though friendship groups (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Topping (1996) points to the benefits of peer support for both the 'helper' and the 'helped'. He notes that peers can speak to one another in the vernacular "with the credibility of participants in the same culture and without any overtones of social control and authoritarianism" (p. 24).

Peer mentoring is the most common form of 'peer support' used in secondary schools in the UK (Houlston *et al.*, 2009). Peer mentors are usually slightly more advanced students so they can share useful knowledge and experience that is otherwise difficult to obtain. Peer mentoring may help new students adapt to a new academic environment faster, the relationship can give the mentee a sense of being connected to the larger community where they may have otherwise felt lost. Evidence suggests that using peers as mentors is a positive approach to supporting young people (Philip & Spratt, 2007). Peer mentoring can extend the influence of the teacher through the deployment of students (Goodlad, 1998) as peer mentors can "reach where the teacher cannot be or cannot go" (Topping, 1996, p. 23). It is viewed as an opportunity for the mentor to use their experience to support others in a similar situation (Philip, Shucksmith & King, 2004; Pawson, 2004). It is suggested that peers may be more influential than adults as they may have 'street knowledge' and recognise the realities of what they each experience (Philip & Spratt, 2007).

1.5.1 Prevalence of Peer Mentoring in England

The concept of peer mentoring is the most common form of peer support used in secondary schools in the UK (Houlston, Smith and Jessel, 2009; Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, 2010; Thompson & Smith, 2011). Houlston *et al.,* 2009 estimated that 62% of schools engaged in peer support programmes and secondary schools operated mentoring (84%) more than any other peer support programme. They also reported that mentoring programmes were more common in secondary schools than primary schools. These figures were supplemented by the MBF (2010) estimates of peer mentoring provision within schools, they reported the following:

Table 1: Peer Mentoring Provision in England in 2010

	Total schools in England	Contact with MBF		Schools contacted running peer mentoring projects		APS approved projects	
Primary schools	17,361	339	2.0%	89	26%	55	0.3%
Secondary schools	3,343	1720	51.5%	595	35%	86	2.6%
Special schools	1,078	44	4.1%	12	27%	1	0.1%

Based on this data, the MBF (2010) estimated that, if each project supports 20 young people (as an average), there are at least 16,000 young people being supported by peer mentoring within English schools of which 81% were secondary aged students.

The MBF have played a significant role in this growth in popularity of peer mentoring through their successive pilot programme work: the 2001-04 programme ran an initial pilot with six schools which was then rolled out to 300, the 2006-08 pilot programme which focussed on anti-

bullying included 180 schools across 29 local authorities. Many of the schools involved had little or no previous experience of peer mentoring.

Evidently not all schools in the UK operate a peer mentoring programme and a number of reasons have been put forward for this. Some schools may not see the need to operate a peer mentoring as if they already have well-established pastoral systems in place and/or a school ethos that does not require a formal/structured programme (Houlston *et al*., 2009). Some may have difficulties managing their time, workload and/or resources (Knowles & Parsons, 2009; Houlston *et al*., 2009), and some may have concerns about the developmental capabilities of their students (Houlston *et al*., (2009). Poor communication between staff, mentors and mentees and a lack of staff support (Knowles & Parsons, 2009) have also been identified as reasons for schools not operating a peer mentoring programme.

1.5.2 Towards a Definition of Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is poorly defined and conceptualised. Figure 1, presents various definitions of peer mentoring, mentoring and peer support to highlight the overlaps in meaning. It is best understood as possessing the same characteristics as the 'classic model' of mentoring (i.e. adult-student mentoring) with the added caveat that the mentor is a peer (i.e. a similar age) of the mentee.

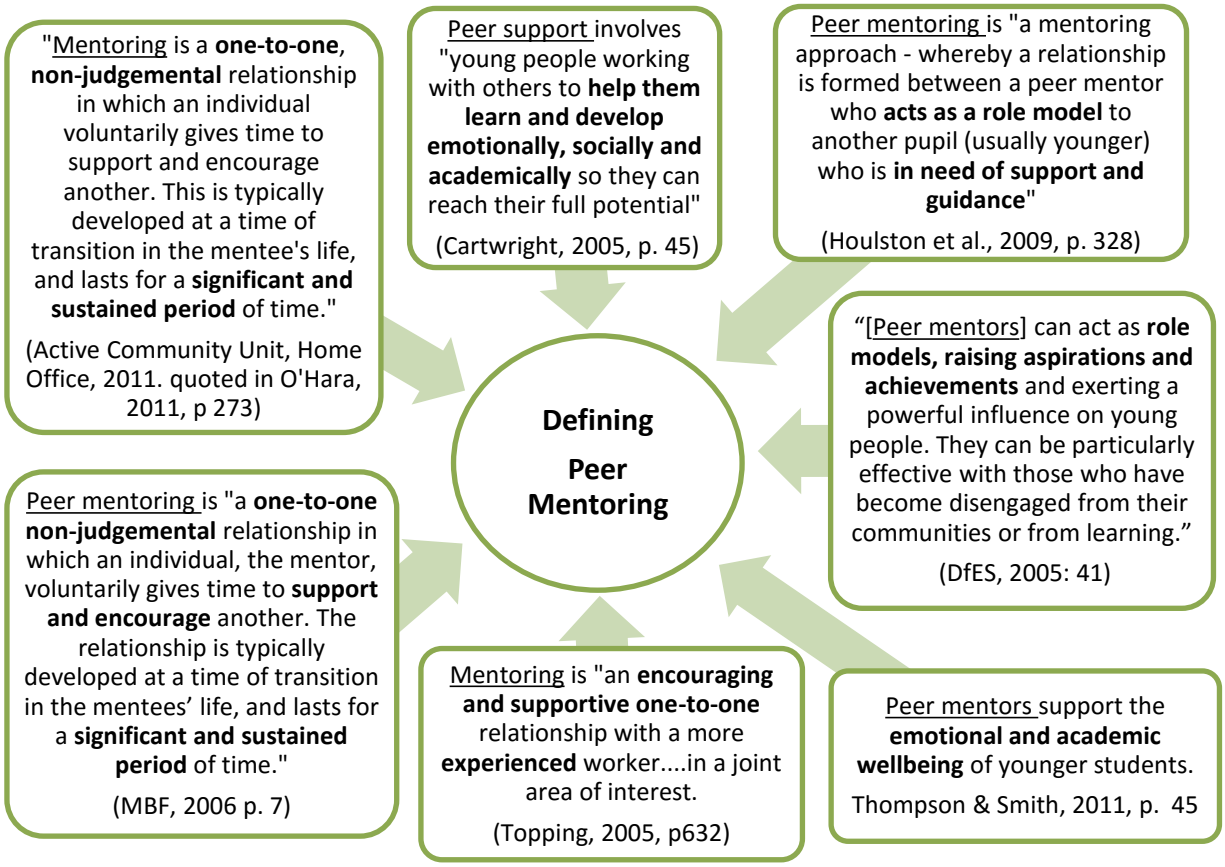


Figure 1: Peer Mentoring, Mentoring & Peer Support Definitions

Given the ill-defined boundaries within which mentoring is described, understanding peer mentoring within the parameters intended by the current researcher was key to establishing validity. The researcher proposes the following definition of 'peer mentoring' for the purpose of this research:

> 'A **one-to-one** relationship, between an **experienced** student (mentor) and a less experienced student (mentee) in which the mentor voluntarily gives their time to **support and encourage** the mentee to **learn and develop emotionally, socially and/or academically.** The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a **significant and sustained period** of time.'

This definition encapsulates key words and phrases of other prominent definitions. The definition does not limit the intended aims/objectives of the intervention offered to young people. It

acknowledges the hierarchical roles of the relationship and the range of possible outcomes for mentees. It does not make assumptions about the needs of the mentee and is therefore applicable to all peer mentoring aims and objectives. This definition of a one-to-one supportive relationship between peers, fits the researchers understanding and experience of peer mentoring in the secondary phase.

1.6 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

In addition to its formal introduction in 1999, mentoring (and peer mentoring) was promoted in the Labour Governments 2003 Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' (2004) which stressed the need for services to focus on early intervention and prevention. It recommended increasing the number of learning mentors as a means of improving school attendance and behaviour (DfES, 2004). The subsequent 2005 Green Paper 'Youth Matters' stated an intention to promote and expand opportunities for peer mentoring in schools, colleges and universities as part of encouraging young people to support other young people (DfES, 2005). As an outcome of the recommendations in *Youth Matters*, the then-DfES contracted the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation. The MBF is the national strategic body for practitioners and organisations working in mentoring and befriending and to manage a national peer mentoring pilot project, which subsequently established a formal peer mentoring scheme in a large number of schools across England.

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF)[1] is a national charity that works to support, develop and grow mentoring and befriending programmes throughout England. Some of their main services for peer mentoring programmes include:

[1] Further information about the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation can be found at: http://www.mandbf.org

- Approved Provider Standard: the national benchmark for safe and effective practice in peer mentoring
- Training & accreditation: specialist training for people with or without peer mentoring experience
- Bespoke training & consultancy: training tailored to specific needs and delivered in-house
- Resources: training packs, toolkits, publications, reports, research, information sheets, DVDs etc. - all available on the website

With the support of the Department for Education (formerly the Department for Education and Skills) the MBF took a lead in piloting peer mentoring within schools. This included the Peer Mentoring Pilot Programme 2001-2004 (run by the National Mentoring Network) and 2006-2008, an Anti-bullying Peer Mentoring Pilot 2008-2010 and the Outcomes Measurement Pilot 2009-2011. These initiatives led to the development of evaluation materials, good practice resources training, guidance manuals and the engagement of schools in working towards the completion of the mentoring Approved Provider Standard (APS) (MBF, 2010).

Affiliates of the MBF have been involved extensively in research on peer mentoring: they have conducted national studies, used large samples of participants and gathered qualitative and quantitative data about models of peer mentoring, aims of peer mentoring, mentoring sessions, perceived impact and benefits, training of co-ordinators, management, implementation, peer mentoring relationships etc. It is the current researcher's view that the 2006-2008 study, while conducted more than a decade ago, is a foundational and key piece of

research in the field of peer mentoring. Consequently, the MBF's findings from this study are referenced frequently throughout the 'Review of Literature' chapter.

While the Coalition Government (2010-2015) continued the commitment of the previous Government to tackle educational inequality and to close the attainment gap, the expansion and promotion of peer mentoring seems to have lost its momentum as there was very little reference to it as an intervention for schools in current Government policy. However, a national evaluation of how schools were utilising their 'pupil premium' (introduced in April 2011) to support disadvantaged students, reported that pooled with other sources of funding, schools used a range of different methods including mentoring (Carpenter, Papps, Bragg, Dyson, Harris, Kerr, & Laing, 2013) to provide curriculum, social, emotional and behavioural support.

1.7 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The current research was commissioned by a large County in South-East England where approximately 178,000 children are educated in the county's network of 525 schools and settings which range from Community, Voluntary-aided, Voluntary Controlled, Academy, Free and foundation Schools. The County's Children's Services bring together teams of professionals to provide support for schools and settings to improve outcomes for children and young people (CYP) with difficulties that affect their access to learning, to their development and to their life outcomes. Children's Services have a number of priorities and principles, the most relevant to the current research being that schools and settings engage all CYP in their learning so that they can make measurable progress and achieve socially, emotionally and academically. Thus this research is highly relevant locally.

Little was known about the extent of peer mentoring in place across secondary schools in the County. However, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist on placement in the County, it was her experience that there was a high demand from local secondary schools to support young people with mid-level support needs such as low self-esteem, disruptive behaviour, anxiety etc.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the thesis structure and a rationale for the current research. It has described the researcher's axiological position along with her assumptions acquired from her previous and current experiences. The concept of mentoring and peer mentoring was been introduced and set in the national and local context. The following chapter summarises published literature on peer mentoring in UK secondary schools and aims to identify gaps in the research field and justify the current researcher's aims, research questions and methodology.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In a review of literature, the 'literature' refers to what is already known and documented in a field of research. This chapter aims to provide the reader with a summary of published research findings and to develop an argument to support the need for the unique perspective of the current research. The chapter ends by stating the research aims and research questions.

The current research used Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). There is debate within the GTM field whether to carry out a literature review before or after data collection and analysis. Traditionally literature reviews involve systematically identifying, locating and analysing documents containing relevant information (Fox, Martin & Green et al, 2007; Robson, 2011). This type of in-depth and methodological review of earlier work can help to strengthen the researcher's argument and credibility. The founders of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) however, proposed that data collection and analysis should occur before conducting a literature review, as researchers may see their data through the lens of earlier ideas and become biased. This perspective has been heavily disputed, particularly among funding agencies and those who work with doctoral students who must, by the requirement of their courses demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of previous studies and prominent theories in the field. Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose a more middle-ground perspective, reasoning that when developing a grounded theory, it is important to consider how a review of literature can be used as an analytical tool to enhance conceptualisation, rather than constrain theory development. Similarly, Maxwell (2006) emphasises the importance of relevance rather than comprehensiveness when reviewing literature.

The current researcher made a decision to conduct a preliminary review prior to collection and analysis to facilitate the interview process and a more in-depth review following analysis. Findings from both stages are presented in the preceding chapter and the current chapter. A consideration of the links between the grounded theory, the literature presented in this review and other theoretical links is reserved for the discussion in chapter six.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

What follows is a brief exploration of the considerations faced by the current researcher and previous researchers in this field, particularly around defining the concept. This is followed by a demonstration of the various ways in which peer mentoring programmes are managed and implemented in the UK. The chapter goes on to highlight that, despite an increase in peer mentoring in primary and particularly secondary schools, research has produced mixed evidence of the impact of peer mentoring and it remains an under-researched area. This chapter identifies gaps in the literature which form the rationale for the current research aims and questions.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW SEARCH & PROCESS

A review of literature was conducted before and after analysis, firstly to inform the researcher during data collection, secondly to aid conceptualisation of categories during the analysis process.

The first step in the literature review process was to identify research on peer mentoring with a view to understanding what peer mentoring is, how it has been defined and what its essential

attributes are. The literature collected in this initial review informed the definition given to schools and increased the researchers familiarity with the concept of peer mentoring and thus supported the semi-structured interview process. Some of the information gathered from this step was presented in chapter one. The second step of the process was to identify relevant studies with the aim of providing an overview of published research, developing a deeper understanding of peer mentoring and exposing gaps in the field. This is presented in this chapter.

Between September 2013 and April 2015 a search for relevant peer mentoring literature was conducted using the PsychINFO and EBSCOhost database with the search terms ‘peer mentoring’ AND ‘school’ OR ‘pupils’ OR ‘students’ OR ‘children’ OR ‘young people’. These search terms were also entered into the search engine of the Tavistock & Portman catalogue, the Institute of Education catalogue and Google Scholar. The Tavistock & Portman and IOE Library catalogues covers all the Library's main collections on education, international education and other subjects, it includes books and pamphlets; journal titles; curriculum resources; official publications; Trust/Institute thesis’ and dissertations; electronic resources. These databases were searched for articles between the dates 1999 and 2015. This time period was chosen as the concept of mentoring and was formally introduced in 1999 and earlier articles were thought to have limited relevance to current educational practice. Age limiters were set to include young people between the ages of 11 and 19 years as the focus of the research was on peer mentoring in secondary phase of education. Only peer reviewed articles were included (articles scrutinised by experts in the field prior to publication) as these can be viewed as being of high scholarly quality. Articles published in a language other than English were excluded. The titles and abstracts of papers were read and those which were judged

relevant to this review were obtained. As the review progressed and articles were studied, the researcher was often led to further articles from reference lists. The review draws mainly on literature based on peer mentoring in UK schools, as these are regarded as more contextually and culturally relevant to the current research. Where research from other countries is referenced, this is noted to acknowledge its cultural roots.

The exploration of literature was conducted in a reflexive framework in which the researcher put aside, as best she could any preconceptions and theoretical assumptions regarding peer mentoring to enable the possibility of new understanding to emerge from the literature. Setting aside judgements about the expected nature, essence, reality of things is known as 'bracketing' ones knowledge (Schutz, 1970; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

2.2 LITERATURE ON PEER MENTORING

This cannot be a comprehensive review of the literature on peer mentoring in secondary schools in the United Kingdom (UK) as this area of research is fraught with definitional, conceptual and practical challenges. The majority of reviews and original research begin by stating the difficulties defining mentoring due to its various forms and ill-definition (Knowles & Parson, 2009; Hall, 2003; Philip & Spratt, 2007). Previous reviewers also report that much of the existing literature has been produced in the United States of America (USA) and is based on the classic model of mentoring (Knowles & Parson, 2009; Hall, 2003; Philip & Spratt, 2007). Philip and Spratt (2007) reiterate these challenges and highlight other difficulties with reviewing published research on mentoring. They note three specific challenges, firstly in measuring outcomes of mentoring, secondly that mentoring interventions and evaluations have varying

starting points, aims and methods of delivery. Finally, there are challenges around defining the term 'mentoring'. It is the current researcher's experience that these issues remain unresolved and that in conducting the review it was often difficult to determine whether the literature referred specifically to peer mentoring or other forms of mentoring as reviewers fail to make the distinction.

The form in which mentoring exists and its descriptions are varied; a number of expected and unexpected terms were encountered, including classic mentoring, pupil mentoring, E-mentoring, volunteer mentoring, team mentoring, best friend mentoring, mentoring is conducted one-to-one and in small groups. A discussion of the various forms and definitions is beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis however, Hall (2003) quotes Philip's (1999) comments on the catalogue of terms associated with mentoring:

> *"Mentoring can hold a range of meanings and the terminology reveals a diverse set of underlying assumptions. For example, youth mentoring has been associated with programmes aiming at coaching, counselling, teaching, tutoring, volunteering, role modelling, proctoring, and advising. Similarly the role of the mentor has been described as role model, champion, leader, guide, adviser, counsellor, volunteer, coach, sponsor, protector, and preceptor. A similar range of terms may apply to the mentee, protégé, client, apprentice, aspirant, pupil etc.*
>
> *The process itself may also be described variously as 'reciprocal', 'helping', 'advising', 'leading', or 'facilitating' as 'a collaborative enterprise' with shared ideals or as a 'learning process' by which the mentor leads by example. In general however*

> *knowledge and understanding about the processes which take place within mentoring relationships remains at a preliminary stage. Clearly some of the meanings are contradictory especially in the absence of explanatory frameworks."* (Philip, 1999, quoted in Hall, 2003).

Philip's (1999) quote highlights the ambiguity surrounding terminology and in distinguishing mentoring from other forms of educational interventions. It's easy to see why Philip and Spratt (2007) refer to mentoring as the "catch all term" (p. 7)

Hall (2003) and Philip and Spratt (2007) carried out large scale reviews of mentoring in the UK. Most large quantitative studies of the impact of mentoring came from the USA. These studies indicated that mentoring may have some impact on problem or high-risk behaviours, academic/educational outcomes, and career/employment outcomes however this impact may not be significant (Hall, 2003). In the UK, the evidence base is modest; claims have been made about the impact of mentoring however there is limited evidence to substantiate them (Hall, 2003).

Table 2 presents Philip and Spratt (2007) findings from their review of published research on mentoring programmes in the UK. They state that mentees regularly report increased social confidence, increased feelings of social support, receiving support with addressing problematic relationships and benefit from increased involvement in the community. The negative findings included difficulty recruiting male mentors, young people rejecting the opportunity to be mentored and the difficulties faced by some in developing relationships between mentees and mentors.

Table 2: Positive and negative findings of mentoring and befriending interventions

Positive Findings	Negative findings
Those who took part in mentoring, who developed meaningful relationships and who continued to meet with their mentors over time, reported increased social confidence and feelings of social support. For some young people, where a meaningful relationship developed, it offered a positive alternative to other relationships with professionals and family, providing support, the possibility of a reciprocal relationship and challenge. For a number of young people, successful mentoring offered a springboard to renegotiate previously problematic relationships with family and social networks. A mix of mentoring and other interventions appeared to be valuable for successful outcomes but it was difficult to disentangle the benefits of mentoring itself. Young people leaving care, particularly valued the 'soft skills' of the befriending elements of the mentoring programmes. In some programmes, those who reported meaningful relationships with mentors, were more likely to return to education or training and to do reasonably well than those whose relationships failed. For some young people, involvement in a meaningful mentoring relationship was linked to increased involvement in their community. Mentoring programmes that were well planned and which followed clear systems for recruitment, training and support to both mentors and young people were more likely	A number of studies have examined 'mentoring' with offenders or young people who are defined as at risk of social exclusion but this kind of mentoring is based on imposed rather than voluntary relationships and findings need to be treated with caution. Several UK studies have found mentoring had little impact on offending behaviour and some participants were more likely to be involved in criminal activities after being mentored, than those who did not take part. It may be the case that mentoring programmes are not suitable for certain groups of young people. Many young people rejected the opportunity to be mentored and substantial numbers dropped out of programmes. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining potential mentors were evident. The absence of male mentors/befrienders was a recurring issue. Building and sustaining mentoring relationships is a fragile and uncertain process demanding considerable time, skill and persistence which is sometimes not available within the resources available to mentoring interventions. Mentoring programmes in prison seem to offer benefits but these do not appear to last beyond the prison gates. Large numbers of those involved in mentoring projects failed to develop relationships at all The endings of relationships, when a strong relationship has been developed, can be very problematic. This is particularly evident

to offer the potential for meaningful mentoring to develop. However evidence was mixed on this with questions arising around 'programme integrity' and the level of adherence to such systems.	when endings are poorly planned but can also be true despite planning by agencies. The realities of managing mentoring projects with limited budgets, high turnovers of personnel, uneven skill bases and challenging target groups posed considerable challenges.

(Philip & Spratt, 2007, p. 5-6)

Many of the definitional challenges and findings (positive and negative) associated to mentoring generally are also specifically applicable to peer mentoring. Additionally, Knowles & Parsons's (2009) paper is based on an the evaluation of a Formalised Peer Mentoring programme initiated and supported by the Department for Children, schools and Families (Parsons, Maras, Knowles, Bradshaw, Hollingworth, Monteiro, 2008). This extensive piece of research evaluated the peer mentoring programmes operating in 180 secondary schools across England. They concluded that while qualitative interview evidence (i.e. self-report data) indicated benefits (essentially about liking the intervention), impact data (attendance, attainment, behaviour) did not substantiate positive effects.

2.3 MANAGEMENT, IMPLEMENTATION & PROCESS

Peer mentoring interventions vary in management and operations making it difficult to compare the findings of one study to another. Therefore the present section of this chapter takes each study in turn to demonstrate the variation in peer mentoring coordination.

Dearden (1998) describes setting up and running a peer mentoring programme with Year 10 mentors and Year 6 mentees in four feeder primary schools. The programme aims were to develop friendship links between older and younger students and possibly ease transition from

primary to secondary education through extending the younger students circle of friends, extend learning opportunities for younger pupils, develop the self-confidence and interpersonal skills of older students, develop awareness and responsibility in the older students ability to help others. Mentors met with their mentee at their primary school once a week, for 30 – 45. Responsibility for what took place in the mentoring meeting were given to the Year 10 students who were expected to select a range of activities to suit the needs of their mentee.

Pyatt (2002) set up a cross-school peer mentoring programme in which four Year 12 girls mentored five Year 7 girls from a different school. Mentees were pupils who were believed to be in need of some 'personal time' and were identified by Form Teachers and the Head of Year based on issues such as lack of confidence, displaying disorganised or attention-seeking behaviour and more-specific needs such as dyspraxia. The Year 12 girls were trained for a total of twelve hours by the local authority Behaviour Support Team. The training covered topics such as confidentiality, listening skills, problem resolution and understanding emotions.

Knowles and Parsons' (2009) found that 56% of the schools stated that their main long-term outcome for the programme was for improved academic performance, 30% wished for a reduction in bullying, 8% aimed for improved attendance and 6% wanted fewer exclusions. Almost all schools also hoped to increase the ability of pupils to cope with school life and to improve their confidence. Knowles and Parsons (2009) found that in the majority of schools involved in their study, mentoring sessions took place on a formal basis once per week, on a specific day. It most commonly occurred during break time and form/tutor time and less so during lessons or assembly, before/after school or it happened on an ad-hoc basis. They also found that the control exerted by co-ordinators varied considerably from school to school.

The Year 10 mentors and Year 7 mentee's in O'Hara's (2011) study met twice per week under close adult supervision during tutorial time to discuss different aspects of school and home life. Year 9 students expressed an interest in training to be a mentor, following parental consent they were interviewed and trained. They undertook their mentor role in year 10. Mentees were also required to have parental consent before engaging in any mentoring activity. Mentors and mentees completed a matching questionnaire to be matched to a mentor with shared interests and/or similar personality characteristics, where possible they were matched with the same gender.

Thompson and Smith (2011) carried out an investigation of strategies used in 1,905 schools to tackle bullying. They found that peer mentoring was identified as a peer support strategy commonly used in secondary schools to support students with a range of issues including bullying. Schools recruited mentors through advertising (e.g. assemblies and posters) and that in some schools, using application forms with references. Staff interviewed and selected students, who were trained in-house or by external trainers. Thompson and Smith (2011) identified three ways in which mentors were used; being paired with a designated mentee; providing support 'on demand' at a drop-in service in a designated room usually at lunch break, or were on duty around the school at break-times.

Thompson and Smith's (2011) findings were not all positive. School staff reported that the recruitment of mentors could be unpredictable and varied by cohort, with some years over-subscribed and others with few volunteers. A lack of designated space; little support from the senior leadership team and the logistics of organisation and supervision could also be problematic.

Knowles & Parsons (2009) note that what distinguished one peer mentoring programme from another was the degree of formalisation rather than the issue (transition, bullying, attainment and behaviour) on which the peer mentoring focused. Programmes were particularly successful where full training, strong support systems (Knowles & Parsons, 2009), management (MBF, 2010) and enthusiastic, committed and reliable mentors were in place (Knowles & Parsons, 2009). Additionally, Parsons *et al.,* (2008) identified a number of other organisational factors that may influence positive outcomes from peer mentoring intervention (see Figure 2).

- Pre-arranged mentor-mentee meetings with a set time and set place each week;
- Formal meetings between mentors and mentees;
- Designated mentoring area within the school;
- Programme coordinator available 'around' for sessions;
- Mentor-mentee pairs well matched - similar hobbies / interests;
- Same gender mentor-mentee pairs; and
- Programme coordinators are approachable people with an 'open door policy.

Figure 2: Factors that influence more positive outcomes (Parsons *et al.,* 2008, p.69)

Co-ordinating a successful and effective peer mentoring programme requires a sense of purpose, confidence, commitment, time, resources and suitable students. However, what constitutes a successful and effective programme? Is it how well the programme is managed and implemented or is it the outcomes for the students involved? Evidently, system-level elements of the programme (i.e. the management, implementation and peer mentoring process) influence the potential benefits to mentors and mentees.

2.4 IMPACT OF PEER MENTORING

A considerable number of young people and volunteers have taken part in peer mentoring. There is anecdotal and qualitative evidence provided by school staff, peer mentors and

mentees which indicate that the experience is enjoyable and positive for both mentors and mentees. However, objective and quantitative research evidence about the impact of the intervention have been mixed.

Nelson's (2003) study of a primary/secondary transition project involving thirty Year 9 students supporting thirty Year 6 students through transition to Year 7, reported a positive impact upon students key skills and learning. Nelson (2003) concluded that the mentoring programme had improved the literacy and communications skills of mentors and mentees, had reduced anxiety about transition and had improved pupil's self-esteem and confidence. Pupils felt more able to work as part of a team, to resolve problems and to be responsible for their own learning. Dearden (1998) reported similar findings on a mentoring programme in which twenty Year 10 students mentored twenty Year 6 students from four feeder primary schools. Approximately two thirds of the mentors agreed that mentoring had increased their personal development and interpersonal skills. Almost all mentors felt that they had helped the Year 6 mentees to learn and feel less anxious about secondary school. 90% of the mentees felt more confident about secondary school, more positive about themselves and felt they had a better understanding of older pupils. At least 80% of mentees felt more able to accept help from others and to trust older pupils, and all of the pupils felt that they had been helped to learn. Views from the Year 6 teachers were largely positive about the project. Thompson and Smith (2011) reported that mentors contributed proactively to a healthy school climate, by making transition less *'traumatic'* for Year 7 mentees. Beresford (2004) suggests that there is some evidence showing the value of peer mentors in supporting the process of transition from childhood to adulthood. However, O'Hara (2011) found that peer mentoring did not appear to counteract the emotional effects of the first term of Year 7 at secondary school.

O'Hara's (2011) study exploring the effects of peer mentoring on the emotional literacy competencies of year 7 mentees found that peer mentoring was effective with mentees with low to average levels of emotional literacy prior to undertaking peer mentoring. The findings demonstrated a positive impact on their emotional literacy competencies, behaviour (i.e. conduct problems and hyperactivity/inattention) and the perceptions of their social and emotional difficulties. Pyatt (2002) set up a cross-school peer mentoring programme in which four Year 12 girls mentored five Year 7 girls from a different school with social and emotional difficulties such as lack of confidence, displaying disorganised or attention-seeking behaviour and more-specific needs such as dyspraxia. Pyatt (2002) reports that, after mentoring, the behaviour of Year 7 students' improved in some cases but not all and that overall their behaviour did not deteriorate.

A national study into the use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools by Thompson & Smith's (2011) found that mentoring programmes worked well for low level bullying, especially disputes. Some school described mentoring programmes as '*the foundation of the schools anti-bullying work'* and '*an excellent programme [which] worked really well'.* Some students involved in bullying incidents thought mentors were an effective way of reporting and dealing with bullying. For mentors who had been bullied, mentoring provided an opportunity to use this experience constructively to help bullied students. In some cases, mentoring was therapeutic for previously bullied mentors. However there were also students involved in bullying, who thought mentors could be ineffective and give unsuitable and inappropriate advice and others who felt that teachers dealt better with bullying.

Knowles & Parsons (2009) did not find many statistically significant changes pre- and post-mentoring in regards to peer identity, family identity, school identity, academic effort, academic competence, academic importance and general self-worth, although there was positive qualitative-evidence provided from mentor- and mentee-evaluation questionnaires regarding the experience. They report that for mentees in their study, there was an improvement in attainment, no change in attendance and a slight worsening in behaviour, (although 50% remained the same) commendations and detentions. While for mentors attainment improved, attendance got worse and behaviour and 'other' remained unchanged. The MBF's (2010) review of 23 peer mentoring programmes report improvements in peer mentors and mentees attainment, attendance, behaviour and well-being.

Mentors and mentees perception of the impact of peer mentoring was also explored by Knowles and Parson (2009). They report that most of the mentees enjoyed the peer mentoring experience and believed it had been helped in the ways that they had hoped i.e. developed their interpersonal skills, received help with school work, a chance to talk through problems, improved behaviour and attendance. All mentors were glad they became mentors, the majority felt it had been enjoyable and stated they would volunteer again. However, Thompson and Smith (2011) report that some students thought mentoring only provided a temporary solution and sometimes did not work at all.

2.5 PEER MENTORS

Peer mentors are often chosen because they can share knowledge and experience and because they possess good communication, social and leadership skills. As a consequence, mentors

serve as positive role models for students. Mentors provide support, advice and encouragement and even friendship (Dearden, 1998) to younger students.

Batty, Ruddock and Wilson (1999) found that Year 8 mentees identified the qualities of a good mentor as someone who is reliable, approachable, a good listener who is interested in what the mentee says, trustworthy, has the skills to encourage the mentee without being intrusive or pushy and is knowledgeable and experienced. Knowles and Parson (2009) found that the vast majority of mentors agreed that the relationship with their mentee was good or had improved. They put this down to spending time with them and building trust. Enabling factors according to co-ordinators included the peer mentors enthusiasm, commitment, reliability, staff support, a high profile of the programme within the school and training (Knowles & Parsons, 2009).

In Thompson and Smith's (2011) review, mentors were criticised as being unreliable, not taking enough time to get to know their mentees and in some cases ignoring them. Mentees felt *'let down'* if the mentor's attention was diluted by too many mentees. In contradiction, some found one-to-one relationships intimidating. Batty *et al.,* (1999) conducted a study aimed at comparing the effectiveness of teachers and Year 12 peers as mentors to Year 8 students. The study found slightly more positive responses regarding the effectiveness of mentoring when the mentor was a teacher.

There are a number of reported benefits for peer mentors. Mentors develop friendships through their participation (Thompson & Smith, 2011) and benefit from the satisfaction of helping a younger student. Mentoring gives mentors a chance to sharpen their sense of self-worth (Knowles & Parson, 2009), build their confidence and develop their interpersonal skills

(Dearden, 1998; Thompson & Smith, 2011). Additionally, Thompson and Smith (2011) report that mentors learned to deal with difficult situations (e.g. bullying) and developed good problem solving and teamwork skills. Mentoring gave students the opportunity to be actively involved in their school and to '*give something back'*. Mentors benefited from mentoring, being both '*very conscientious'* and *'passionate about their role'* (Thompson & Smith, 2011). Mentors get to meet their altruistic (Dearden, 1998; Knowles & Parson, 2009) and personal aims such as helping with their career/CV/university applications (Knowles & Parson, 2009).

However, Thompson and Smith (2011) found that Peer mentors could become frustrated if the mentoring process was ineffective and there were reports of jealousy and competition, especially if one mentor was more popular than the others. They also point out that mentoring friends was difficult and empathising with someone else could also be painful.

2.6 PEER MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Research into mentoring has utilised both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine important questions about outcomes/impact, processes/ programme fidelity. So far the features and scope of peer mentoring have been discussed, with little mention of the relational elements of peer mentoring. Mere participation in a peer mentoring programme does not necessarily lead to positive outcomes: although self-reports indicate that peer mentors and mentees often view mentoring as a positive experience and find it helpful (Knowles & Parson, 2009), students may have qualitatively different experiences within their dyadic relationships (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Research from the UK exploring the dyadic peer mentoring relationship is limited/absent therefore, the current researcher turns to the US for some pertinent insight. Within in the realm of adult-student mentoring (i.e. classic mentoring), American, Assistant Professors, Deutsch and Spencer (2009) point out that "there is still little work on what makes for effective practice within dyads or what program elements help to sustain relationships." (p. 48). Deutsch and Spencer (2009) emphasise the social and contextual influences on mentoring relationships. They assert that the relational quality is a product of social interactions between two people which develops over time in particular social contexts. Nakkula and Harris (2005) divide indicators of relational quality into internal and external indicators. Internal indicators relate to: (1) relational factors, including compatibility, the mentor's approach, engagement, closeness, frequency of contact, and longevity of the relationship; and 2) instrumental factors, including the nature of the goals of the pair, instrumental orientation, and perceived and received support. External indicators relate to environmental factors which are out of the dyads control such programme support, parental engagement, matching, logistical challenges. While Deutsch and Spencer (2009) and Nakkula and Harris (2005) write with reference to classic mentoring (i.e. adult-student mentoring), the current researcher envisages the same issues pertaining to peer mentoring (i.e. student-student mentoring).

2.7 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Peer mentoring in UK secondary schools remains an under-researched and equivocal area. While research has begun to unpick dimensions of peer mentoring programmes, major gaps in our knowledge persist. Evidently peer mentoring is valued by peer mentors, mentees and school staff, however it is also clear that peer mentoring is not a 'magic wand' that can address

all matters and that structural/management level issues play a significant role in the success or failure in achieving positive outcomes. The majority of research conducted has used qualitative methodologies, seeking the views of those involved in peer mentoring programmes. However, there appears to be a lack of quantitative evidence which focuses on evaluating the impact. Literature reporting the impact of peer mentoring had been largely positive before Parsons *et al.,* (2008) and Knowles and Parsons (2009). Their mixed findings questioned the effectiveness of peer mentoring and evidenced the need for further evaluative research. It raised questions about whether it is appropriate to base evaluation on qualitative and quantitative data that are essentially about liking for the intervention and perceptions that it is good when there is an absence of improved attitudes, attendance, attainment and behaviour.

As is evident, the quality of mentoring relationships and the quality of programmes are interconnected. In other words, effective peer mentoring programmes support effective peer mentoring relationships (the dyadic relationship) equally effective peer mentoring relationships facilitate effective programmes. Although it is generally understood that the bond that forms between the peer mentor and mentee is at the heart of the mentoring process, little is known about the nature, quality, and development of mentoring relationships. Thus, we are left with little understanding and limited information about the programme practices that are most likely to promote positive outcomes and enhance the dyadic relationships within them.

The theoretical base for peer mentoring remains weak particularly as there is conflicting evidence based on different forms of the concept, aims and methodologies, we therefore still have little understanding of “what constitutes the building blocks for successful” (Philip & Spratt, 2007, p. 42) peer mentoring in UK schools.

2.8 CURRENT RESEARCH AIMS & QUESTIONS

Having identified gaps in our knowledge, the purpose of the current research was to develop a better understanding of the context that best supports the development of the dyadic peer mentoring relationship. It intended to move beyond gathering facts to exploring the experiences and perceptions of peer mentors and mentees as until their views are heard the facts remain cold and lacking in richness. It is important to identify and explain the conditions under which mentoring is likely to be helpful and not harmful to young people and to provide a framework for supporting the highest-quality peer mentoring. Building an empirical knowledge base of effective peer mentoring practice is vital.

2.8.1 Research Aims

This research has three main aims. Firstly and primarily the aim of the current research was to generate new knowledge by exploring what works from the perspective of school-based peer mentors and mentees. It aimed to understand the system-level and relationship-level mechanisms (i.e. the factors that facilitate and hinder) that support effective peer mentoring in local secondary schools in order to offer a framework for understanding and developing peer mentor-mentee relationships.

Secondly, there are elements of emancipatory research, as it recognised the importance of the peer mentor and mentee perspective in bringing about positive change. It aimed to provide students with the opportunity to talk about a good relationship, express their views and have their opinions heard. Raising the voice of the student has an emancipatory element as their

views will be taken seriously. It also provided the school/programme co-ordinator with an opportunity to reflect, evaluate and promote their peer mentoring programme.

Thirdly, the intention was to inform practice by providing key messages regarding the development of peer mentoring in local secondary schools. It also aspired to be informative in highlighting areas in which Educational Psychologists (EPs) can support schools in setting up peer mentoring programmes, developing good peer mentoring relationships and/or in training co-ordinators and peer mentors.

2.8.2 Qualitative Research Questions

Following the context-mechanism-outcome configuration model (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; 2004) the current research intended to generate information that indicated how peer mentoring works and the conditions that are needed for such mechanisms to be effective. Therefore the current research aimed to explore peer mentoring at the system-level and relationship-level with a focus on peer mentor and mentee perspectives of the mechanisms that mediate effective peer mentoring. The following research questions were set to provide the researcher with a focus:

- What do peer mentors and mentees perceive to be the mechanisms that mediate effective peer mentoring?
- What recommendations emerge for sustaining and improving peer mentoring programmes and relationships?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This brief review of literature endeavoured to provide a justification for the current research by describing what is already known about peer mentoring in UK secondary schools and by identifying gaps in the knowledge base. The chapter ended by stating the current research aims and questions. The following chapter describes and justifies the methodology used to gather, organise and interpret data for the purpose of developing a peer mentoring theory grounded in data.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & DATA COLLECTION

This chapter begins with a description of the researcher's orientations and the rationale for conducting a qualitative research design. It goes on to describe the processes undertaken to gather contextual data and to identify interview participants. The remainder of the chapter includes detailed descriptions and justifications of the methodology chosen, research design, participants, strategies for data capture, procedures, techniques for data analysis and issues of trustworthiness and ethics.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This qualitative research design used critical realism as a guiding epistemological position, to explore peer mentors and mentees views of what works to develop effective mentoring in secondary schools. This was not a mixed-method piece of research, however in order to understand the context in which the research was taking place, a questionnaire was sent to 30 secondary schools to gather contextual data about the prevalence and status of peer mentoring across 2 areas of a County. Following this, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 peer mentors and 5 mentees whom had participated in their schools peer mentoring programme (PMP) during the academic year 2013/14. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim with the analysis process assisted by computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software – MaxQDA. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach to Grounded Theory (GT) was the chosen research methodology for the current study.

3.1 RESEARCHER'S ORIENTATION

The current researcher holds the position of a practitioner researcher described by Fox, Martin and Green (2007) as someone employed in a professional capacity who, as part of their role, is expected to undertake research. The current researchers aim to understand and develop a local theory of peer mentoring mechanisms within secondary schools fits within the realm of educational psychology research as it combines "a scientific way of thinking with recognition of the context and uniqueness of human behaviour" (Fox *et al*., 2007, p. 70).

Matthews (2014) and others propose that all research is shaped by the researchers varying assumptions associated with the nature of truth/knowledge (ontology), the acquisition of truth/knowledge (epistemology) and ways of knowing that truth/knowledge (methodology). Ontology refers to different ways of constructing reality (i.e. what there is to know in the world), and tend to ask questions of "how things really are" and "how things really work" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Ontologies (worldview philosophies) range from realist positions, such as positivism which argues for an objective real world, to relativist positions, such as social constructionism which argue that reality is socially constructed by different groups of people or cultures as they interact and experience the world (Creswell, 2009; Fox *et al.,* 2007). Epistemology, refers to different forms of knowledge regarding reality (i.e. what it is possible to know) and tend to ask questions of the nature of the relationship which exists between the inquirer and the inquired (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Methodological questions are those that tend to ask how an inquirer can go about finding out what he or she may want to believe or know (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). A researcher's ontology and epistemology shapes the research design, methodology and the method(s) chosen (Creswell, 2009).

The current research adopted a critical realist epistemology within a realist ontology. Critical realists assume that data collected from participants can uncover something about their lived reality. While an external reality exists, it is always represented in the interpretations that people make of it (Harper, 2012; Willig, 2013; Matthews, 2014). This implies multiple perspectives of experience/reality which, due to a range of interacting factors and experiences are open to different interpretations by individuals, groups or systems (Breakwell, Wright & Smith, 2012; Fox *et al.,* 2007; Robson, 2011). Therefore the role of the critical realist's researcher is to interpret underlying social and/or psychological processes.

3.1.1 Context-Mechanism-Outcome Configuration

As previously stated in chapter one, the researcher was interested in understanding 'what works, rather than merely 'does peer mentoring work? Pawson and Tilley (1997; 2004) have summarised this kind critical realist approach to research as one involving context-mechanism-outcome configurations. In other words, in order to answer this question, generative/critical realists aim to identify the underlying generative mechanisms that explain 'how' the outcomes were caused and the influence of context. This generative realist/critical realist approach to research in the 'field' (rather than in laboratory situations) purports that human behaviour can only be understood within the context of the social system in which it takes place and emphasises the identification of the mechanisms that cause events/outcome to occur in these contexts. Mechanisms are made up of a number of processes operating in complex open systems however there may be conditions that facilitate or inhibit these mechanisms (Matthews, 2014). Pawson & Tilley (2004) states that "…. it is not programmes that work but the resources they offer to enable their subjects to make them work. This process of how subjects interpret and act upon the intervention stratagem is known as the programme

‘mechanism’ and it is the pivot round which realist research revolves.” (p. 6). This proposal connects mechanism-variation and relevant context-variation to predict and to explain outcome pattern variation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; 2004).Therefore, adopting this framework allows the real world researcher to pay attention to what works and why for these people in a particular system. Critical realists assert that it is only by collecting and subsequently analysing and interpreting data that we have evidence for the existence of mechanisms and the contexts in which they operate (Robson, 2011; Willig, 2013).

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is concerned with finding the best way to answer research questions and is influenced by the purpose of the research, the researcher’s epistemology and research limitations, such as time, money and the support available. There are three research designs which provide a framework to guide research activity: flexible design, fixed design, and multi-strategy research (Robson, 2011).

The current research espouses a flexible design (also referred to as a qualitative research design) as it aimed to explore socially and/or individually constructed views, beliefs, experiences, processes etc. of people in their naturally occurring environment, namely this is a piece of ‘real world’ research (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Willig, 2013). A flexible research design opposed to a fixed or multi strategy design was deemed appropriate as the research developed incrementally and flexibly (emerges, unfolds) during the process of data collection and analysis. In contrast to fixed research designs which customarily involves quantitative methods of data collection and the use of statistical analysis (traditionally referred to as quantitative research)

this research involved the collection of qualitative data and used qualitative data analysis (Robson, 2011; Fox *et al.,* 2007). As the researcher did not intend to combine qualitative methods with quantitative methods, a multi-strategy (also referred to as mixed-methods) research design was discarded (Robson, 2011).

3.3 CONTEXTUAL DATA

Before the researcher could begin to explore peer mentors and mentees views of what works, an exploration of what was actually happening within a local context needed to be conducted. It was unknown which schools were running peer mentoring programmes thus data was required to help clarify the prevalence and status of such programmes. This process was also a way of locating potential interview participants.

3.3.1 Rationale for choosing to use a questionnaire.

A questionnaire was used to investigate the prevalence and status of peer mentoring programmes (PMPs) in two areas of the County. Questionnaires were chosen as the method of gathering data as they enable generalisations to be made so that inferences could be made about trends in the prevalence and status of PMPs in the County. Other advantages of using a questionnaire to gather such data, include a higher level of objectivity via standardised administration, quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions, large amounts of data collection in a relatively short time and the ability to generalise findings to the population being explored (Robson, 2011).

3.3.2 Items on the pilot questionnaire.

The researcher developed her own questionnaire (see appendix 1) which was aimed to be short and easy to complete, yet yield valuable information. To enable data to be gathered quantitatively, questions were closed or scaled with the exception of the final question which enabled the respondent to provide additional information. Schools were asked to fill out a self-completion questionnaire consisting of the same eight questions.

Introductory questions asked for the contact details of the main person involved with peer mentoring. The items forming the main body of the questionnaire were derived from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation's (MBF), Approved Provider Standard (2014) for safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending. The MBF assists in providing a framework for both developing and/or reviewing Peer Mentoring and Befriending programmes in the UK and the Approved Provider Standard (APS) is the national quality standard developed as a benchmark for safe and effective good practice. The APS comprises of 10 requirements across 4 key areas: management and operation; service users; mentors and befrienders; the mentoring and befriending relationship. Respondents were asked to indicate the status of the schools PMP during the academic year 2013/14 by rating themselves against each of the 10 APS 'requirements' on an 4-point likert scale with anchors at the extremes of 'fully developed' and 'do not plan to develop'. The final three questions asked which year groups were involved in peer mentoring, whether the school's Link Educational Psychologist was involved in the programme and whether they were willing to participate in the semi-structured interviews. The last question invited additional comments.

3.3.3 Inquisite Survey Builder

This research used an internet-based survey builder – Inquisite Survey Builder (http://www.inquisite.com/), under the local county council licence. This enabled the researcher, supported by the local Information Management Team, to design the questionnaire, create online previews, publish the questionnaire, collect data and generate a database of responses.

3.3.4 Piloting the Questionnaire.

The questionnaire was tested and each question discussed and reviewed with peers i.e. friends, colleagues, staff prior to distribution to education provisions. Before the main data collection, a draft email and questionnaire were checked by a research supervisor and placement supervisor, which following a few grammatical and format amendments was then piloted using two adults involved in peer mentoring in different Local Authorities. The purpose of the pilot test was to ensure the questionnaire was understood and unambiguous in its questions therefore minimising variability (Creswell, 2009), while still gathering the intended information. The pilot was successful and the questionnaire remained unchanged.

3.3.5 Questionnaire Validity & Reliability.

While the questionnaire used to gather contextual data did not form a significant part of the current research, it was still important to ensure it was valid and reliable. Validity refers to the ability of the questionnaire to measure what it is designed to measure. A questionnaire must not only be valid but also reliable. Reliability is the ability of the questionnaire to produce the same results under the same conditions. It is important to note that to be reliable the questionnaire must first be valid.

Validity is a difficult thing to assess and it can take many forms. Creswell (2009) defines four types; internal, external, construct and conclusion validity. Internal validity was addressed by attempting to recruit a large sample of secondary schools in order to account for drop-outs and maximise the chances of an adequate return rate. External validity was hoped to be improved with a representative and appropriately sized sample of schools for the County, however as it was expected that peer mentoring programmes would vary enormously from one secondary school to the next, claims beyond the sample of returned questionnaires were restricted. Construct validity was addressed by designing a questionnaire with items informed by a national mentoring Charity (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation) and by piloting the questionnaire to ensure it was asking what the researcher intended to find out. Piloting the questionnaire helped to develop the questions, format, and scales and in establishing content validity, (Creswell, 2009). In addition the term 'peer mentoring' was operationalised (see page 9 for the definition supplied to secondary schools) to ensure the questionnaire was completed in relation to the same type of intervention intended for the studied. Conclusion validity was not thought to be an appropriate consideration for this study as the results from the questionnaire were not statistically analysed.

In relation to reliability, participant error was minimised by ensuring the questions were unambiguous and easy to understand. The questionnaire included a rating scale to ensure participant responses are as close to their views as possible. Participant bias is more difficult to reduce when using self-administered questionnaires, as there is no control over where, when or if others are involved when completing them.

3.3.6 Distributing the questionnaire – procedures and participants

In order to establish the prevalence of peer mentoring programmes in these two areas, the perceived elements of safe and effective peer mentoring practice present in these programmes and to identify potential interview participants, all secondary schools were initially contacted via an email in July 2014. Thus secondary schools were selected using a convenience sample i.e. they were a naturally formed group.

Prior to sending the email, Educational Psychologists covering the two areas were asked to contact their secondary provisions to gather the name of the Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator or most appropriate member of staff. Where this information was provided, an email was sent directly to these people or it was sent to 'admin' requesting that they forward it on to the most appropriate member of staff. Secondary schools with peer mentoring programmes were invited to complete a short online questionnaire. Electronic communication (email and online questionnaires) was chosen to maximise the return rate of the questionnaire, however a paper version of all documents was also available on request.

An email with the 'Research Information Sheet' attached and a link to the online questionnaire was sent to all of the 30 secondary education provisions (mainstream, academies, special schools and alternative provisions) across two areas of the County. The email and the information sheet intended to inform schools of the research, invite them to participate and detail their involvement. Schools were also given the option to complete a paper-based questionnaire on request.

It was deemed necessary to include a definition of peer mentoring in the email to ensure all relevant peer interventions that may have been operating under an alternative name were included in the current research. The following definition of peer mentoring was included in the email to help schools identify appropriate peer support programmes for the research: *'A one-to-one relationship, between an experienced student (mentor) and a less experienced student (mentee) in which the mentor voluntarily gives their time to support and encourage the mentee to learn and develop emotionally, socially and/or academically. The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.'* (Cartwright, 2005; Knowles & Parsons, 2009; O'Hara, 2011) All secondary schools in the two areas of the County that were operating a peer support programme which fit this definition during the academic year 2013/14 were eligible to participate in the current research.

Due to initial low rates of return, schools were contacted again via email two weeks later, follow-up phone calls were made in September 2014 and a final email was sent in November 2014 to encourage participation.

3.3.7 Capturing Programme Characteristics

To gather an overview of the characteristics and objectives of the Peer Mentoring Programmes, a brief meeting was held with the Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (or the equivalent) of each of the two schools that opted to participate in the semi structured interviews. The discussion was allowed to develop organically, questions broadly based on Houlston, Smith and Jessel's (2009) short questionnaire where only asked when necessary (see appendix 2 for questions).

3.3.8 Contextual Data Analysis.

Data gathered from the questionnaire was collated and presented using Microsoft Word to produce descriptive representations of the information gathered on peer mentoring programmes in the specified areas of the County. This enabled aspects of the information gathered to be presented numerically and graphically i.e. table, bar chart, pie chart etc. This kind of visual representation of data, aids the accessibility of the identified trends and patterns in the prevalence of PMPs, the elements of good practice present in PMPs and demographic information of the year groups involved in the mentoring programmes.

3.4 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The researcher's choice of research question and research design has implications for the selection of data collection and analysis methods. The method(s) used to collect data is based on what kind of information is being sought, from whom and under what circumstances. There are number of methods available to the practitioner researcher however the method chosen is specific to the purpose of the research. Robson (2011) suggests the following for selecting methods:

- To find out what people do in public, use direct observation
- To find out what people do in private, use interviews or questionnaires
- To find out what people think, feel and/or believe use interviews, surveys/questionnaires or attitudes scales.

3.4.1 Rationale for using Semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview technique was chosen for the current research as the aim was to discover peer mentors and mentees perceptions. Interviews can provide more in-depth

information than surveys and allow follow-up to better understand an interviewee's answers. As a result, interviews provide a good source of information for developing and understanding of effective peer mentoring programmes and relationships (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). Semi-structured interviews are a flexible and adaptable method of data collection which enables the researcher and the respondent to co-construct meanings and/or interpretations (Charmaz, 2006) as the flexibility of this interviewing method provided freedom regarding the order, wording and priority of questions, leading to in-depth and unanticipated responses (Robson, 2011). Thus it made it possible to modify the line of enquiry, follow up interesting responses and explore participant's perceptions (Joffe, 2012). Through questioning, it also enabled the researcher to steer the interview to obtain the kind of data required to answer the research question.

It was the researchers view that young people would be more comfortable with a non-directive/informal style of interviewing and that it would allow the researcher and the interviewee to develop a rapport. It was also hoped that a possible result of taking part in the interview would be that the interviewee considered aspects of their peer mentoring experience in a new or different way so new knowledge and new understanding were generated for both the interviewer and the interviewee (Willig, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews are compatible with realist research as they can be designed and implemented in such a way as "to facilitate true and undistorted representations" (Willig, 2013 p. 11) about the world and about how things really are. Semi-structured interviews are also compatible with some versions of grounded theory (Willig, 2013) such as Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 1998).

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews represent one of the most common ways of collecting data in qualitative research in psychology because they provide opportunities for the researcher to collect rich data (Joffe, 2012; Robson 2011; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Willig, 2013) which is compatible with several methods of data analysis (Willig, 2013).

Typically interviewing involves the researcher asking questions and receiving answers from a participant (Robson, 2011). They allow researchers to explore phenomenon with individuals or groups, are not tied to any particular research paradigm (Breakwell *et al*., 2012)

There are three main types of interview which are distinguished by the degree of structure or standardisation (Robson, 2011)

- Structured interviews: have predetermined questions with fixed wording, which are usually in a pre-set order from which a researcher will not deviate, so that all interviewees answer the same questions, in the same order. This can limit the range and depth of responses (Smith, 1995).
- Semi-structured interviews: the interviewer has an interview guide/schedule that serves as a checklist of topics to be covered, the wording and order are modified during the interview and any additional unplanned questions are asked to follow up on what the interviewee says.
- Unstructured interviews: the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern but allows the conversation to develop within this area. It may have one overaching question and can be completely informal. Questions are generated during the interview depending on responses generated. This can lead to low consistency across interviews (Breakwell *et al*., 2012).

Questions function as triggers that encourage the interviewee to talk freely and openly while also allowing the interviewer to maximise their understanding of what is being communicated. They enable the interviewer to follow up on interesting responses, investigate underlying motives, observe non-verbal responses which can help in understanding the verbal response and express ignorance/naivety in order to give voice to implicit assumptions and expectations (Robson, 2011: Willig, 2013)

Interviews are time consuming and the flexibility, particularly of semi structured interviews and unstructured interviews, require a degree of interviewer skill and experience. In addition, the lack of structure raises concerns about reliability as biases are difficult to eliminate (Robson, 2011). The use of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative research method has been criticised for not taking into account the many contextual features of the interview, instead it is argued that it only takes the data at face value (Willig, 2013). Critics emphasise the importance of considering: interactional features, its status as a conversation between two people, the stake that both have in the interview, possible effects of social identities and linguistic variability (Willig 2013).

3.4.3 Interview schedule

The use of an interview schedule enabled the interviewer to maintain control of the interview and ensure she did not lose sight of the original research aim. The interview schedule outlined questions and topics to cover during the interview (see appendix 3). Rather than imposing questions and topics, it was used flexibly to thoroughly explore the participant's views and experiences of peer mentoring. Possible questions and topics were initially brainstormed

independently and then with the researcher's supervisor to ensure all relevant topic areas were considered. The structure of the interview schedule incorporated Robson's (2011) guidance and included the following:

- Introductory comments
- List of topic headings and key questions
- Prompts
- Closing comments

The approach used for the main body of the interview with peer mentors and mentees was influenced by Joffe (2012) process of subjectively eliciting relevant material which accesses 'naturalistic' ways of thinking about the research issue and enables the researcher to then pursue their pathways of thought. Participants were asked to spend up to 5 minutes, writing and/or drawing any positive and negative words, sentences, phrases or images that came to mind when he/she thought about the peer mentoring programme and peer mentoring relationships. They were given the option to write in two pre-labelled boxes (programme and relationship) or on a plain sheet of paper. Following this brief task, interviewees were asked to discuss each word, sentence, phrase and/or drawing.

Additional comparison questions were added to the interview schedule to encourage interviewees to consider possible similarities and differences between the peer mentoring relationship and other supportive relationships i.e. teacher-student, parent-child, siblings, friends etc.

3.4.4 The Semi-structured Interviews

All interviews were conducted at the interviewee's school. A suitable, quiet and private location was found and interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the interviewee. Up to one hour was allocated for each interview, as anything under 30 minutes is unlikely to be valuable and anything over one hour may have been making unreasonable demands on the interviewees time (Robson, 2011). The researcher ensured she managed the time appropriately: interviewees were not obliged to continue for the complete hour if the interview appeared to end naturally likewise interviewees were not required to remain after the full scheduled hour.

Each interview, which lasted between 21 minutes and 51 minutes, was semi-structured, with questions being purposefully created to gain insight into their experience of the dyadic relationship and programme. Interviewees were informed that interviews could last up to one hour and informed consent was sought. Interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder to prevent both the researcher and the interviewee from distraction, to maintain rapport and to aid analysis (Robson, 2011; Willig 2013). Interviewees were provided with an explanation of why the recording was being made and how it would be used.

3.4.5 Sampling Procedure

The questionnaire used to gather contextual data identified two schools that were willing to participate in semi-structured interviews. The Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (or equivalent) from each of the two schools were tasked with selecting interview participants and managing consent issues. Co-ordinators were informed of the current researcher's intentions to select a purposive sample of peer mentors and mentees. This sampling method was chosen because the researcher's aim was to gather context specific data to formulate an understanding of peer

mentoring in a local context rather than to make statistical and/or universal generalisations (Silverman, 2013). A purposive sample was employed to target a particular group of students (i.e. those engaged in peer mentoring during the academic year 2013/14) whom were representative of the peer mentoring population in each of the two secondary schools. It was assumed that by deliberately selecting particular students, it was probable that the sample had a good understanding and valuable perspective of peer mentoring in a secondary school setting. Thus basing the results on what this group of students said provided a valid representation of the rest of the population.

To obtain potentially important group and intra-group differences and similarities (Joffe, 2012) and to ensure valuable and relevant perspectives on peer mentoring were gathered. The researcher conveyed her sample preference based on variables such as the peer mentor's and mentee's year group and gender. The researcher aimed to have an equal number of females to males, peer mentors to mentees and at least one interviewee from each year group. In addition, matched/paired peer mentors and mentees were not interviewed to avoid the possible complications, concerns and issues that this could raise. To be eligible to be a participant in an interview, students had to have been either a peer mentor or mentee during the academic year 2013/2014.

The Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator at each school was asked to distribute the following:

- A Participant Letter: Potential interviewees were provided with a letter requesting their participation in the current research and an outline of how they would be involved.
- A Participant Research Information Sheet: This sheet provided potential interviewees with details of the study, a rationale for the research, a brief description of how the

research would be carried out and guidance regarding the right to participate and to withdraw. This she*et al*so included the current researcher's and Quality Assurance Officer's contact details.

- A Parent/Carer Letter and opt-out form: Parents/carers of each interviewee were provided with a brief description of the research purpose and their child's involvement. An opt-out form was included, should parents/carers decide they did not want their child to participate in the research. An opt-out form rather than a consent form was chosen to ensure all students had an equal opportunity to participate.

Prior to conducting semi-structured interviews, the Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator supplied the researcher with the names and the year group of the students that would be taking part in a semi-structured interview. The researcher is unaware of the process schools used to identify and select participants for interviewing. The current researcher's reflections on how participants were selection is discussed on page 154.

3.4.6 Interview Participants

Initially ten students were selected and interviewed however at the request of a parent, one interview participant's data was withdrawn from the research (this is explored and considered in the discussion chapter). The final sample consisted of three male peer mentors, one female peer mentor and five female mentees whom were interviewed individually. Pseudonyms, rather than actual names, were used during analysis and throughout this document.

3.4.7 Transcribing Interview Data

To be able to carry out a full analysis of the data, it was necessary to audio record and transcribe all of the interviews. Due to time constraints an independent freelancer was hired to transcribe all the audio interviews in a 'true verbatim' style, in which all words and sounds on the recording were transcribed without editing. Every word and vocalisation was typed out including, 'ums', 'uhs', stutters, false starts, repetitions and filler words. Non-verbal communication such as laughter and pauses were also included. This style of transcription was used to create a comprehensive record of the interviewees words and actions and to ensure as little as possible was lost 'in translation' (Willig, 2013). All interview transcripts are included on the enclosed USB.

In accordance with ethical considerations regarding confidentiality, the Freelancer signed a 'Confidentiality Agreement' which placed a responsibility on him/her to maintain full confidentiality and accept legal responsibility for any breach and for any harm incurred by individuals if he/she disclosed identifiable information (see appendix 4).

The recordings were uploaded to a computer and transcribed to a Word document. Transcripts were checked by the researcher for accuracy against the original recording to eliminate errors.

3.5 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe analysis as "the interplay between researchers and data. It is both science and art." (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 15). Decisions about what method of analysis to use is influenced by the researcher's orientation, research question and the type of data the

researcher will be working with (Willig, 2013). There are various forms of qualitative data analysis most of which involve coding the data to create or find meaning whilst leaving participants views intact (Robson, 2011). Common qualitative methods of data analysis include: Thematic Analysis (TA), Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Discourse Analysis (DA) and Grounded Theory (GT) amongst others. The current research uses Grounded Theory.

3.5.1 Selecting a Method of Analysis

Initially Thematic Analysis (TA) was the researchers chosen methodology as it can usefully identify and summarise key features, similarities and differences raised by an entire data set (i.e. the interviews with mentees and peer mentors) and generate unanticipated insights, providing the reader with a sense of the predominant and important affective, cognitive, social or symbolic themes raised (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2012). However, following an in-depth discussion with a new research supervisor in December 2014, the current researcher made an informed decision to change the method of data analysis from Thematic Analysis to Grounded Theory (GT). The basis for this choice was to extend the research beyond the mere identification and description of themes to the development of a contextually relevant and theoretical perspective of peer mentoring in secondary schools. An additional benefit was that the researcher developed a deeper understanding of the conceptual relationship among themes/categories identified through her interaction with the interview data (a more detailed discussion of the rationale for choosing GT follows below). A significant consequence of altering the method of data analysis at a late stage was that the researcher had to adopt the abbreviated version of GT which prevented her from employing all of the analytical tools/devices used with the full 'abductive' version to facilitate the coding process. This consequence is explained further on page 71 and 75.

3.5.2 Rationale for using Grounded Theory

The process of analysis and coding interview content with the aim of cultivating a deeper theoretical understanding of effective peer mentoring was guided by Grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory (GT) was the chosen research methodology for the current study as the aim was to develop a contextualised theory of peer mentoring based on (or grounded in) young people's actual mentoring experiences. The aim was to go beyond recognising and organising patterns/themes within data (Robson, 2011; Willig 2013), thus Thematic Analysis was deemed inappropriate. Phenomenological Analysis and Discourse Analysis were also considered unsuitable as they did not fit the researcher's epistemological stance or researcher question. It was the researcher's view that Grounded Theory was the most appropriate methodology to use to generate theory grounded within the data, particularly as peer mentoring is a poorly researched area (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

GT's end goal is to generate a theory, one that provides the simplest possible descriptions to explain complex social and psychological phenomena by exploring the relationships between abstract constructs or emergent ideas. GT therefore offers helpful and relatively easy to remember schemata to understand the world a little bit better. All other qualitative methods such as Thematic Analysis, Discourse Analysis etc. are inductive and aim to generate themes only. Other quantitative methods are deductive and aim to test existing theories, not generate them. As grounded theories are not tied to any pre-existing theory, grounded theories are often fresh and novel and hold the potential for innovative discoveries in social science.

Strauss & Corbin's (1998) approach to GT assumes that social and/or psychological events and processes have an objective reality in the sense that they exist "independently of the

researcher's awareness of it" (Willig, 2013, p. 15) but they can still be observed and documented and therefore interpreted through thorough analysis. This assumption endorses the realist ontological and a critical realist epistemological orientation of the current research as it affirms the role of the researcher in interpreting underlying social and/or psychological processes.

3.5.3 Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative methodology used to develop theory from data, rather than to empirically test and/or verify previous research or pre-existing theories (Fox *et al*., 2007; Tweed & Charmaz, 2012; Willig, 2013). Thus GT rejects attempts to obtain information to prove or disprove a previous theory/research, instead it endorses the derivation of new theoretical perspectives and an increased understanding of meaning, processes, action, or interaction grounded in what people actually say and do in relation to their particular experiences (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Therefore GT is appropriate for the current piece of research as there are no peer mentoring theories/research to prove or disprove.

Grounded theory differs from other qualitative research methods in two main ways: a) in its process and b) in its outcomes. GT is a process of category identification and integration which results in an outcome of this process, thus GT is both a method and a theory. As a 'method' GT provides guidelines on how to identify categories, how to make links between categories and how to establish relationships between them. As a 'theory' it provides us with an explanatory framework with which to understand the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2013).

Grounded theory involves a number of highly developed, rigorous, logical and transparent procedures for analysing qualitative data and producing substantive theoretical frameworks that explain complex social actions/interactions and consequences within the field of social science (Miller, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; Willig, 2013). Coding constitutes the most basic yet fundamental process in GT (Willig, 2013). Techniques of induction, deduction and verification are used to simultaneously develop theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Fox *et al.*, 2007). Put simply, theory can be generated initially from the data or if existing theories seem appropriate to the area of investigation then these may be elaborated and modified as incoming data are analysed against them. In the development of new theory, conceptual frameworks guide, not dictate the focus of the grounded theory inquiry and observations.

GT methodology was first described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a positivist research paradigm and compatible with objectivist underpinnings and the symbolic interactionist approach to the study of human behaviour (Robrecht, 1995; Wells, 1995). GT has continued to develop through the work of researchers such as Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; 2006) and is now largely seen as a way of researching the socially constructed world.

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) approach assumes an objective observer who discovers data, which is then reduced to manageable research problems and objectively analysed, thus the researcher is detached from the data. While Charmaz (2000; 2006) maintains that GT through a constructionist approach assumes that people create and maintain a meaningful world in which to confer meaning and act with them. Therefore the data cannot present a window to reality, hence the researcher's imposes their interpretations by looking beyond surface meaning in

order to highlight values and beliefs. Strauss and Corbin (1998) however assume an objective external reality in which a researcher aims to collect unbiased data, give voice to and gain insight into the respondent's view of reality in contrast to their own. Therefore the researcher interacts with the data which is viewed as a window into the participant's lived, objective reality. With Strauss and Corbin's (1998) version of GT, theory is generated as data are collected and frameworks are then developed and modified (Fox *et al.*, 2007).

3.5.4 Analytical Tools/Devices Used

To identify, refine and integrate categories and ultimately to develop theory, grounded theory researchers use a number of tools/devices to facilitate the coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Willig, 2013). Generally, GT researchers advocate an abductive process of simultaneous data collection and analysis, whereby the researcher collects further data in light of categories that have emerged from earlier stages of data analysis (Willig, 2013). Due to time and resource constraints, the researcher used the abbreviated version of grounded theory which in contrast to the full 'abductive' version (moving back and forth between data collection and analysis with the aim of theoretical saturation) involves one round of data collection and coding only. This version of grounded theory did not allow the researcher to broaden and refine the original data and the proceeding analysis (Willig, 2013). Therefore processes of coding, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sensitivity, theoretical saturation and negative case analysis occurred *within* the interview transcripts texts.

Asking questions and making theoretical comparisons are basic however essential operations for identifying and developing categories. Consistent and systematic questioning and comparison stimulates thinking about properties and dimensions of categories and generates

ideas or ways of looking at the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Below follows a description of the additional tools/devices used by the current researcher to increase her sensitivity to the data, recognise her bias and overcome analytical blocks (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Table 3: Analytic tools and devices used by the researcher

Device/Tool	Researcher's Action
Memos: Memos are a written record of theory development. They stimulate thinking, provide information about the research process and can substantiate the findings of the research (Willig, 2013). Memos are intended to be analytical and conceptual rather than descriptive (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memos specific to grounded theory include a) conceptual/theoretical which describe the development of a category and help to develop ideas on the possible pathways for integrating the theory and b) operational memos which relate to procedural directions and can serve as reminders (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).	Memos were maintained throughout the process of data collection and analysis. They included definitions of categories, justification of labels chosen, emerging perspectives and reflections. Some of the memos are long or short, abstract or concrete, integrative (of earlier memos or ideas) or original (Willig, 2013). See the enclosed CD for memos written by the researcher during the analysis process.
Microanalysis: Detailed line by line analysis carried out at the beginning of a study to	Given that the abbreviated version of grounded theory was used, line-by-line coding

generate initial codes (with their properties and dimensions) and to suggest relationships among categories; a combination of open and axial coding. Although sometimes referred to as line-by-line analysis the same process can also be applied to a word, a sentence or a paragraph (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).	was carried out to generate depth of analysis and to compensate for the loss of breadth related to the researcher's dependence on original data only (Willig, 2013). This ensured that higher-level categories and theoretical formulations emerged from the data rather than being imposed upon it (Willig, 2013).
Constant Comparative Analysis: The aim is to link and integrate categories so that all instances of variation are captured by the emerging theory (Willig, 2013). A number of techniques are available to aid researchers in making comparisons. The following were utilised by the current researcher include: *Comparing incident to incident:* involves comparing incident to incident at the property and dimensional level looking for similarities and differences to classify them. *Theoretical Comparisons:* this involves objectively comparing categories to bring out possible properties and dimensions. There are	The researcher performed the following: Compared the codes created for one segment of data to the codes created for another to determine whether they were similar or different in meaning. Having identified a common feature that unites instances of a phenomenon, the researcher refocused on differences within a category in order to be able to identify any emerging subcategories. Every time the researcher came across a new paragraph which fitted with an identified code, they were compared with each other.

two types of theoretical comparisons: - The Flip-flop technique: can be used to gain a different perspective on a phrase or word. Helps to think analytically rather than descriptively - Systematic Comparison: This means comparing two or more phenomena in the data to one recalled from experience or from literature. *Waving the Red Flag:* Both analysts and participants have biases, beliefs and assumptions. 'Waving the red flag' involves noticing when these encroach upon the research.	Considered what the opposite or extreme meaning would be in order to elicit its significant properties. Ask what if questions to explore all dimensions of the two phenomena i.e. How do they differ? How do people respond differently? Was sensitive to words and phrases like never, always, sometimes, and occasionally as such instances signal a closer look.
Theoretical Sensitivity: this refers to the researchers interaction with the data and is what moves the researcher from a descriptive level to an analytical level (Willig, 2013)	This required the researcher to fully immerse herself in the data, asking questions of the data, emerging categories, ideas, concepts or links and when appropriate modifying them accordingly.
Theoretical Saturation: The point at which no new properties, dimensions or relationships emerge during analysis (Strauss & Corbin,	The researcher coded all but one of the data set until no new categories were identified and no new instances of variation emerged.

1998). This tends to happen at the end of the analysis process.	One interview was held back and analysed to subsequently check for saturation. Categories were well developed and relationships among categories were established and validated.
Negative Case Analysis: This tool aims to keep the theory emerging from the data, adding depth so that it captures the full complexity (Willig, 2013).	The researcher looked for instances that did not fit with a category or a link between categories in order to ensure all possibilities were considered.

Given that the full version of GT aims to achieve theoretical saturation (Willig, 2013), the current researcher attempted to compensate for this potential shortcoming of using the abbreviated version. As briefly described in Table 3, theoretical saturation was attempted by fully performing the Strauss and Corbin (1998) GT analytic process with 8 of the 9 interview transcripts. During this stage of analysis concepts were identified and their properties and dimensions were discovered until no additional data emerged. Following this, the remaining interview transcript was analysed separately until no additional data emerged and its constructs and categories were compared against those derived from the original 8 transcripts looking for instances of similarity and variation. No new properties, dimensions and/or relationships emerged thus verifying that each category and the associated constructs were sufficiently detailed and differentiated enough to offer depth and breadth of understanding about the phenomenon/category and its relationship to other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Willig, 2013). Thus the current researcher is confident that she achieved theoretical saturation within interview data.

3.5.5 Stages of Analysis: Strauss & Corbin (1998)

Good qualitative research should be transparent about its process of analysis, it is therefore necessary to systematically outline the analytic procedure. The different ways in which grounded theory researchers establish relationships between categories and integrate them into higher order analytical categories (i.e. the analysis process) is referred to as coding paradigms (Willig, 2013). Coding paradigms orientates the researcher to particular ways of linking categories and helps to arrange categories in a meaningful and hierarchical way with some categories constituting the 'core' and others the 'periphery' (Willig, 2013).

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm is substantiated by creative, inductive reasoning and the continuous interplay between the data and the researcher. Bias cannot be eliminated but is made explicit and subject to challenge from the researcher and others through the transparency of the process. Their process of theory generation involves generating categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding), and then establishing the core category or categories explaining the interconnection of these categories via a 'storyline' (selective coding) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Creswell, 2009).

3.5.5.1 Stage 1: Open Coding

Before beginning data analysis it is important to become very familiar with one's initial data. This was achieved by reading the interview transcripts and by listening to the audio recordings of each interview.

Following this, the first stage is open coding, which is essentially concerned with teasing out the theoretical possibilities of the data (Robson, 2011). This comprises of generating provisional words or phrases (codes) that serve to indicate the meaning of a segment of data (Robson, 2011). This preliminary stage of coding segments can lead to low-level categories. Categories encompass a variety of similarly themed codes and group concepts that seem to relate to the same phenomena. Once a category is identified, they are developed in terms of the properties and dimensions of the concepts in the data. Properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, while dimensions represent the location of a property on a continuum or range. During this stage, many different categories are identified, some pertaining to a phenomena, others (later to become subcategories) refer to conditions, actions/interactions or consequences. Figure 3 provides a screenshot taken in the early stages of the current researcher's data analysis.

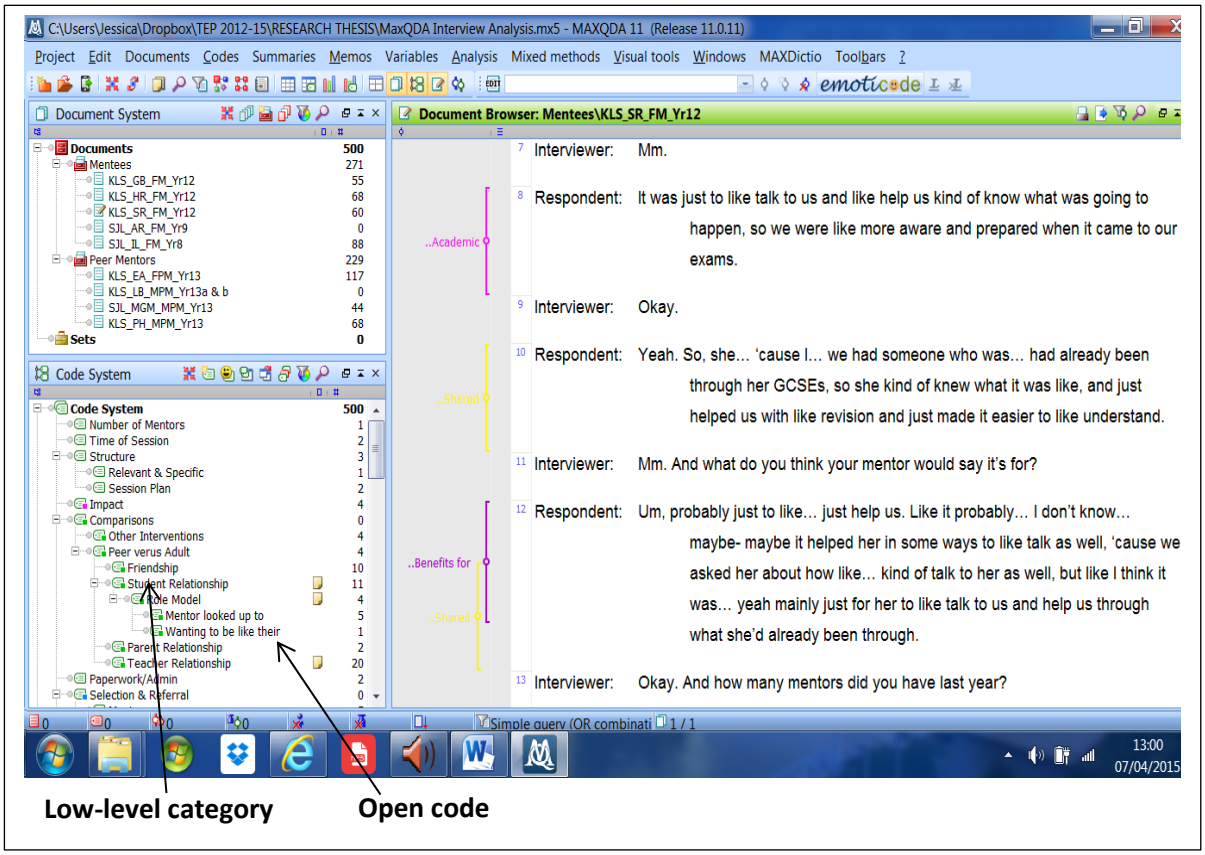


Figure 3: MaxQDA Open Coding Example (screenshot)

3.5.5.2 Stage 2: Axial Coding

Axial or theoretical coding (Robson, 2011) is to establish links between the categories developed through the process of open coding and to integrate them into higher-order analytical constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Robson, 2011; Willig, 2013). During axial coding, the researcher systematically codes around the axis of a category to add depth and structure and to develop links between categories and constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By asking theoretical questions and by thinking comparatively according to the properties and dimensions we open up the possibility of theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding is viewed as leading to an understanding of the central phenomenon in the data in terms of its context, the conditions which gave rise to it, the action and interaction strategies by which it is dealt with and their consequences (Robson, 2011). Although axial coding differs in purpose from open coding, they do not necessarily occur sequentially in the analysis process, a sense of how categories relate begin to emerge during open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) these coding paradigms often occur simultaneously.

Categories and their related constructs were explored in terms of 'process' (i.e. experiences of peer mentors and mentees over the course of the relationship) and 'change'; (i.e. the factors and circumstances that impact upon the dyadic relationship). If the researcher had simply wanted to explore or describe peer mentoring, this would have completed the analysis, however grounded theory seeks to go further (Robson, 2011), hence the final stage of GT analysis was completed. Figure 4 provides a screenshot of codes identified through the axial coding process.

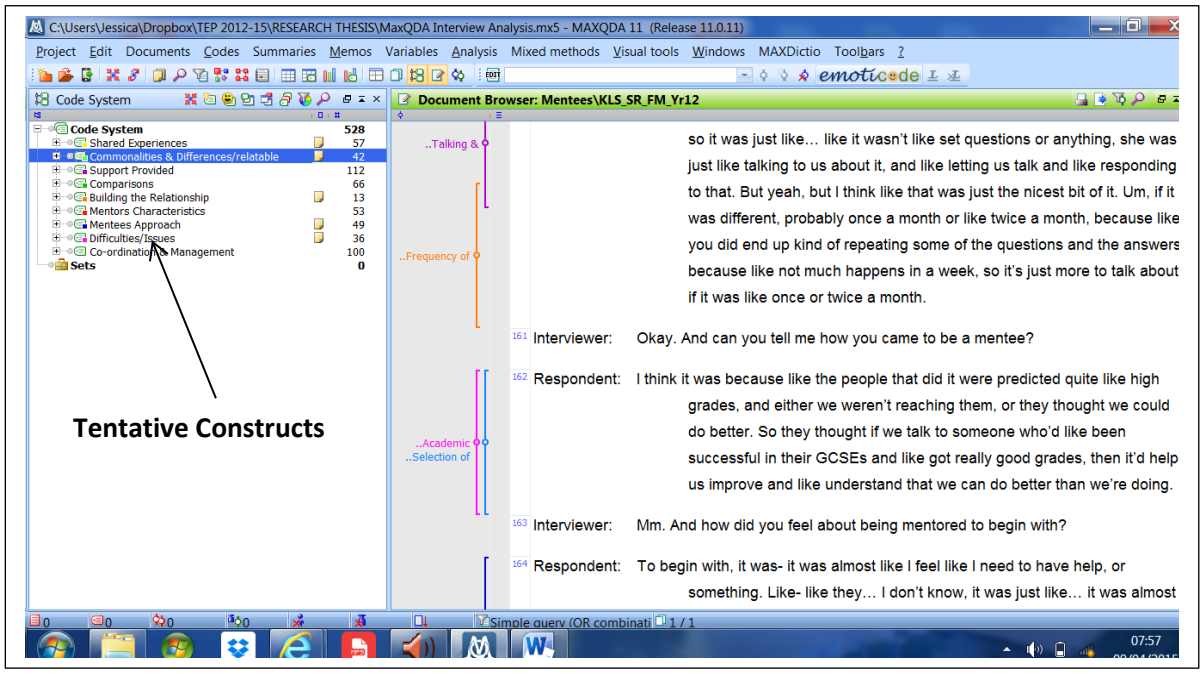


Figure 4: MaxQDA Axial Coding Example (screenshot)

3.5.5.3 Stage 3: Selective Coding

It is not until the major categories are finally integrated to form a larger theoretical scheme that the research findings take the form of theory. Selective coding refers to the process of integrating and refining the theory by focusing on a central category (sometimes referred to as the core category). The central category becomes the centrepiece of analysis and is the phenomenon around which categories arising from axial coding are integrated. Integration involves organising categories around a central explanatory statement of relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Corbin and Strauss recommend approaching this task via a 'storyline' (Robson, 2011) using diagrams, sorting and reviewing memos and using computer programs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Figure 5 provides a screenshot of the final key categories identified through selective coding.

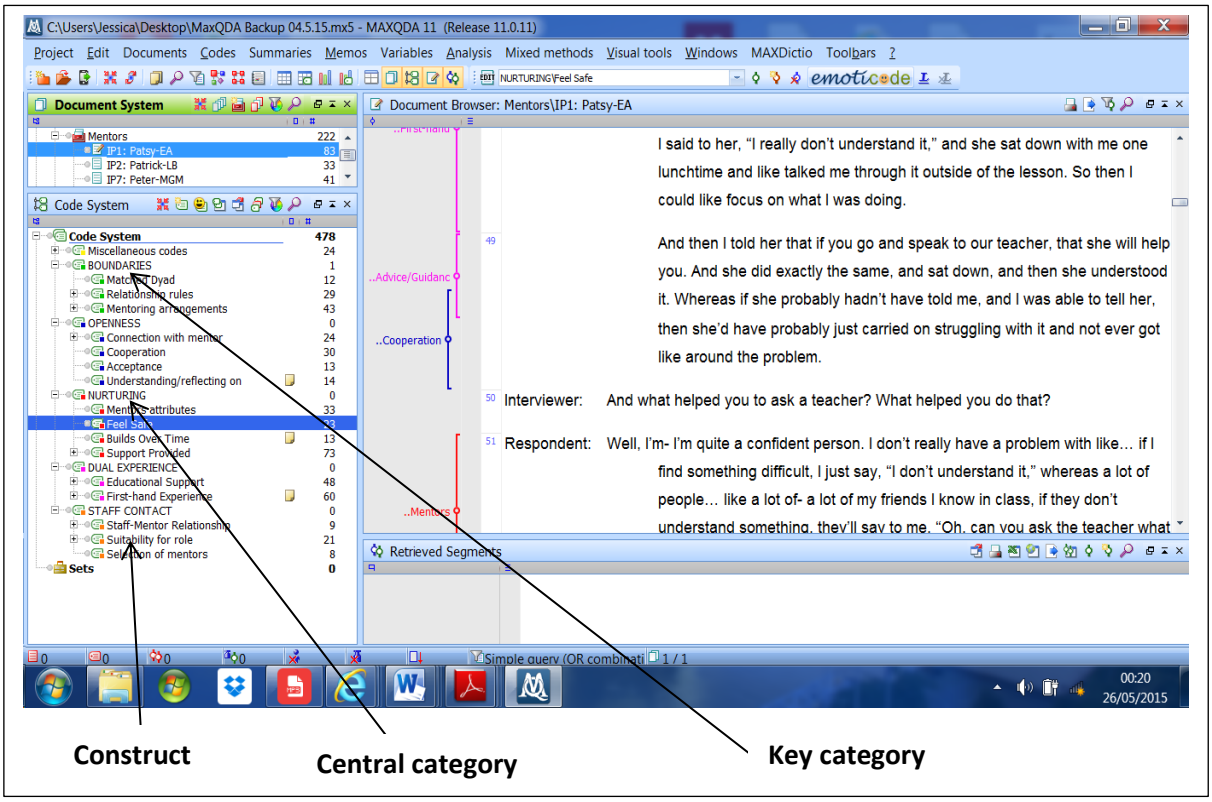


Figure 5: MaxQDA Screenshot of Key Categories

3.5.6 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) Software – MaxQDA

Qualitative research generally produces large volumes of raw data (Robson, 2011; Willig, 2013) in this case 10 interview recordings were transcribed and subsequently analysed assisted by MaxQDA. MaxQDA is the computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software used to systematically find patterns of codes, links between codes, sequencing and co-occurrence (Creswell, 2009; Joffe, 2012) within the transcribed interview data set. MaxQDA works well with text files and provides a quick and easy access 'single location storage system' that aided the analysis of differences, similarities and relationships between codes. Being able to see all of this simultaneously was very useful and time saving, it enabled easy annotation and retrieval of sections of the transcribed peer mentor and mentee interviews, thus it created a

straightforward 'theoretically-based coding system' (Matthews, 2007). It was acknowledged that CAQDAS such as MaxQDA requires time and effort to gain proficiency and familiarity (Robson, 2011) however the benefits of MaxQDA were considered to outweigh such issues.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

There is much debate about whether evaluative concepts applied to quantitative research (reliability, validity and generalisability) are appropriate to qualitative research methodologies (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Robson, 2011). In qualitative research, validity relates to the procedures employed by the researcher to check for and minimise threats to accuracy and qualitative reliability indicates that the researchers approach is consistent (Creswell, 2009: Robson, 2011). Generalisability refers to the extent to which results are representative of other groups or settings. This includes the concept of ecological validity which is the extent to which research findings accurately represent real-world settings.

Typically, terms like validity, reliability and generalisability are avoided in grounded theory research, as these terms are quantitative in origin. Grounded theory studies do not assert one unified truth in the world, therefore it is difficult to claim that a qualitative piece of research is absolutely valid because 'truth' is assumed to be subjective and largely based on perceptions. Likewise with claims of reliability: a grounded theory researcher generally expects the research process to change throughout the study as the topic evolves and the grounded theory becomes more refined. Grounded theories are typically ecologically valid because they are "close" to the data from which they were generated. Although the constructs in a grounded theory are abstract, they are context-specific, detailed, and tightly connected to the data.

The concept of 'trustworthiness' was introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1981) as a way of broadening the debate. Guba and Lincoln (1981) espouse four main indicators of trustworthiness that a grounded theory researcher should establish: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Fox *et al.*, 2007). It is through complete transparency in the data collection and analysis process that a grounded theory researcher is able to demonstrate trustworthiness as this restricts the possibility of the researcher basing conclusions on biased theories. The following describes the strategies and measures used to establish aspects of trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.6.1 Credibility & Transferability

To establish credibility (the qualitative counterpart to internal validity), the following measures and strategies were put in place:

- In-depth interviews were conducted with young people who had previously engaged in peer mentoring during the academic year 2013/14. A purposive sampling method was used to select the most appropriate students to interview.
- Saturation. An adequate amount of data was examined to ensure that no additional data was likely to yield different findings. In addition, the researcher used a novel technique to check for saturation.
- Reflexivity (the use of field journals to capture ideas, connections, methodological notes, etc. related to the understanding of the phenomenon). A research diary was kept to record ideas, decisions and reflections and a personal supervisor and research supervisor was utilised to discuss and reflect on aspects of the research the researcher's development.

- The researcher acknowledges the possible influence of her own background, gender, culture, history and socioeconomic origin on how interpretations are made.
- Peer review of data and findings. Use of peer debriefing and research supervision in which someone else reviewed and asked questions about the research.

To ensure transferability (the qualitative counterpart to external validity), the following measures and strategies were put in place:

- The generated theory provides a rich, thick description derived from the data.
- Participant selection includes sufficient variation/"typicalness". An attempt was made to have a homogenous, yet representative sample. Attempts were made to have an interviewee from each year group, male and female and equal numbers of peer mentors and mentees.
- A naturalistic setting i.e. the participant's school. Descriptions and codes were developed in relation to the school context and young people.

3.6.2 Dependability and Confirmability

To establish dependability (the qualitative counterpart to reliability), the following measures and strategies were put in place:

- Audit trail (research journal or memos). A transparent audit trail of how data was collected and analysed. Some original evidence is presented systematically to demonstrate the link between interpretations and the evidence.
- Crude memos and analysis records kept in addition to using MAXQDA. In addition screenshots and the final MAXQDA data analysis is available for scrutiny.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcripts will be checked for obvious mistakes

- Peer reviews (as above)
- Reflexivity (as above)

To ensure confirmability (the qualitative counterpart to objectivity), the following measures and strategies were put in place:

- Reflexivity (as above)
- Audit trail (as above)
- Negative or contradictory information are presented and openly discussed.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Student/trainee research is expected to comply with the 'Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics' set out by the Health Professions Council (2007) and within the 'Code of Human Research Ethics' produced by The British Psychological Society (2010). Therefore careful consideration was given to ethical issues related to research involving human participants. Details of the measures and commitments put in place to ensure transparency, trustworthiness and the protection of the health and well-being of all those involved with the current research can be found in appendix 5.

Ethics were primarily addressed in accordance to the BPS's (2010) four principles listed below while simultaneously considering ethical issues specifically related to valid consent, withdrawal, deception, risk, debriefing, giving advice and confidentiality.

- Respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons;
- Scientific value;

- Social responsibility
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm

The Health Professions Council (HPC) states that "As a health professional, you must protect the health and wellbeing of people who use or need your services in every circumstance" (HPC, 2007, p. 1) and that professionals must maintain high standards of performance, conduct and ethics. Similarly the British Psychological Society (BPS) affirms that "Researchers should respect the rights and dignity of participants in their research and the legitimate interests of stakeholders such as funders, institutions, sponsors and society at large." (BPS, 2010, p. 4)

3.7.1 Ethical Approval

Formal ethical approval was received from the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee before any research activity commenced. In addition, the research was fully supported by the County's Educational Psychology Service's (EPS) Principal Educational Psychologist, Team Manager and Field Supervisor as their permission and approval to research peer mentoring in the County was sought.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the researcher's critical realist orientation and described the qualitative research design of the study. The participant recruitment strategies, data collection and analysis methods and issues of trustworthiness and ethics have been explained. The following chapter presents the contextual findings and explains how the qualitative results derive the grounded theory of effective peer mentoring in secondary schools.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUAL RESULTS & QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This chapter aims to provide the reader with contextual data gathered from secondary schools across two areas of the County and provides a detailed description of the BONDS model of effective peer mentoring as derived from Grounded Theory Methodology.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter is divided into two sections: contextual results and qualitative findings. The first section of the chapter presents the contextual data gathered from secondary schools across two areas of the County. The prevalence and status of peer mentoring programmes (PMPs), the year groups involved in the programmes, the involvement of Link Educational Psychologists and details of the schools and students that participated in the qualitative research are detailed to provide insight into the context in which this research took place. The second section of the chapter goes on to provide a description of the proposed model to explain the mechanisms that maximise the development effective peer mentoring in the secondary phase. Grounded theory methodology was used to analyse interview data from four peer mentors and five mentees engaged in their schools peer mentoring programme during the academic year 2013/14.

4.1 CONTEXTUAL RESULTS

A total of 30 secondary schools/provisions were asked to contribute to the current research. Schools were asked whether they operated a peer mentoring programme during 2013/14, if so they were directed to an online questionnaire.

4.1.1 Prevalence of Schools Operating a Peer Mentoring Programme

Figure 6 shows that of the 30 schools, 23% operated a peer mentoring programme (PMP) during the academic year 2013/14, 30% did not operate a (PMP) during 2013/24. Fourteen schools did not respond. Of the seven secondary schools that operated a PMP, six were mainstream schools and one was a special school.

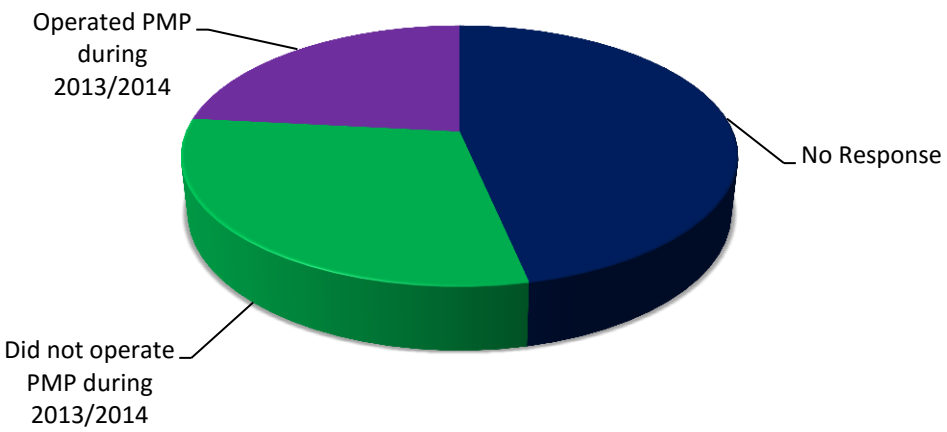


Figure 6: Secondary schools operating PMPs during 2013/14

Four of the secondary schools (two mainstream schools, two special schools) that were not operating a PMP expressed their intention to run a peer mentoring programme during 2014/15. The two special schools had previously run a peer mentoring programme however they had been unable to do so during 2013/14.

4.1.2 Status of Peer Mentoring Programmes

Of the seven secondary schools operating a peer mentoring programme during 2013/14, four mainstream schools completed the questionnaire. To establish the status of the peer mentoring programmes, schools were asked to rate themselves against each of the Mentoring and

Befriending Foundations (MBF), Approved Provider Standards (APS) requirements/elements. Each of the 10 requirements focuses on the key management and operational areas that underpin the safety and effectiveness of any mentoring or befriending project. See appendix 6 for the 10 APS requirements.

Figure 7 shows how developed schools considered each of the 10 key operational and management areas of mentoring within their programmes. In the interest of confidentiality, these schools are referred to as School A, B, C and D. School A rated all areas of their peer mentoring programme as 'partially developed', except their recruitment and selection process (6) which was rated as 'fully developed'. School B rated eight areas of their programme as 'fully developed' with assessing mentees needs (5) and monitoring mentoring relationships (10) as areas which were 'partially developed'. School C rated all areas as 'partially developed' with the exception of resources available (2) which they 'plan to develop'. School D had the least developed programme, they rated their programme aims, objectives and outcomes (1), resources available (2), recruitment and selection process (6), induction and training (7) and their monitoring of mentoring relationships (10) as 'partially developed' areas. They rated the management of programme staff, mentors and mentees (3), the process for identification and referral of mentees (4), assessing mentees needs (5), support for mentors (8) and the process for matching mentees with mentors (9) as areas they 'plan to develop' further.

School B and D agreed to engage further in the current research by inviting peer mentors and mentees to participate in interviews with the researcher. Additional information regarding the programme characteristics of these two schools are presented under the subheading 'Participating Secondary Schools'.

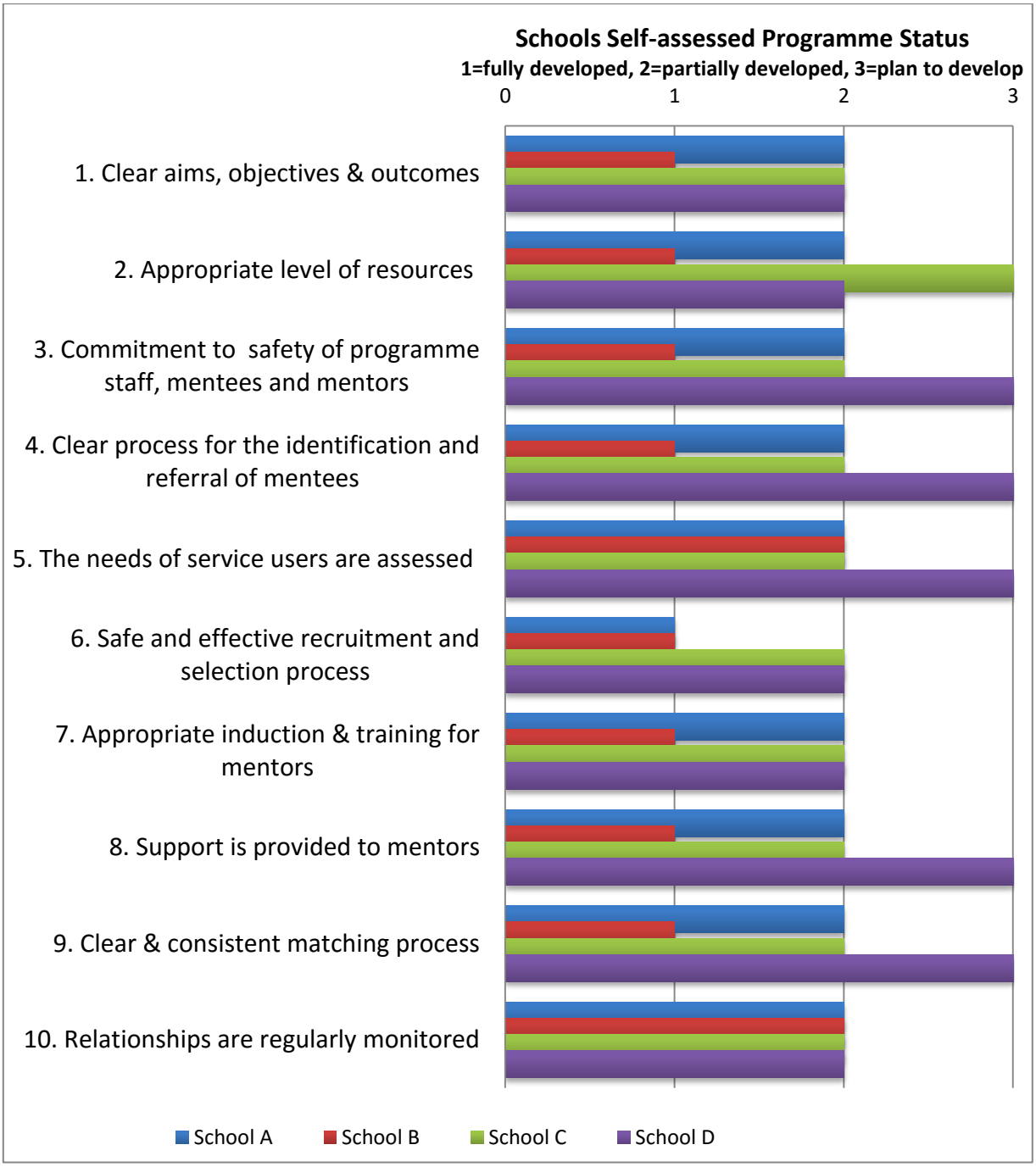


Figure 7: Schools self-assessed programme status against APS requirements during 2013/14

4.1.3 Year Groups Participating in Peer Mentoring

Table 4 shows that students in Years 7, 12 and 13 volunteered as peer mentors, while students across Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 were supported as mentees during 2013/14.

Table 4: Year groups participating in peer mentoring during 2013/14

	Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Key Stage 5		
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Other
Peer Mentors	X					X	X	
Mentee	X	X	X	X	X	X		

4.1.4 Involvement of Educational Psychologist (EP) in Peer Mentoring Programme

Schools reported that the Link Educational Psychologist was not involved in any aspect of their peer mentoring programme. This was verified with the team of EPs working with each of these schools and highlights an area in which EPs may have a role to play in supporting schools.

4.1.5 Additional Comments about Peer Mentoring

Schools were invited to make any additional comments. One school used this opportunity to state that "After some success with our peer mentoring programme in 2012/13, we have struggled to get both mentors and mentees to engage fully this year." (School D)

4.1.6 Secondary Schools Participating in Current Qualitative Research

School B is a larger than average co-educational secondary school for students aged 11–18 years. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals was below the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and of those who were learning English as an additional language was below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational need was average (Ofsted, 2008).

School B's peer mentoring programme is well established: it has been operating for over 7 years and is recognised by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation as the programme that meets the Approved Provider Standards. Peer mentors attend the sixth form and volunteer their time to meet with a mentee for 20 minutes each week. The school provide 40 mentors from the start of Year 7 until the end of Year 7, although some mentees continue to engage with the programme beyond Year 7. The programme's outcome is to aim to support transition to secondary school, provide a caring, inclusive community and enable mentees to talk and get advice related to their social and emotional needs i.e. friendships, family etc. Peer mentors are trained in-house to support social and emotional needs. Mentees are selected by their tutor, some self-refer and attendance is optional. Mentees are not inducted however, the tutor/referrer explains why they have been referred and the potential benefits of being involved. There is a gender balance among mentees however more female students than male students volunteer for peer mentoring.

School D is an oversubscribed co-educational, all ability secondary school for students aged 11-18. The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) was below the national average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs was above average (Ofsted, 2014).

School D's peer mentoring programme had been running for two years. The programme has 10-12 Year 12 and Year 13 students volunteering as peer mentors to support Year 11 mentees through their GCSE's. The programme focuses on providing academic support with the aim of improving predicted grades, providing help with post-16 decisions and supporting students that

are underachieving and/or disengaged. Peer mentors are trained in-house, however in previous years an external provider trained the mentors. Mentees are referred for peer mentoring via the KS4 office, thus there are no self-referrals. The mentoring relationship usually lasts for one term. There is a gender balance among the mentees; however there are more female mentors than males.

4.1.7 Interview Participants

Table 5: presents the students that were interviewed. Ten secondary aged students from two schools were interviewed over a two week period: four peer mentors and six mentees; of which six were female and four were male. One mentee's data was withdrawn from the research at the request of a parent and one interview with a peer mentor was cancelled as they attended a university interview. Thus nine interview transcripts were analysed using grounded theory.

Table 5: Peer mentor and mentee interview participants

Interview Participant	School	Gender	Year	Role
IP1: Patsy	D	Female	12	Peer Mentor
IP2: Patrick	D	Male	12	Peer Mentor
IP3: Marie	D	Female	11	Mentee
IP4: Michelle	D	Female	11	Mentee
IP5: Melissa	D	Female	11	Mentee
IP6: Phillip	B	Male	12	Peer Mentor
IP7: Peter	B	Male	12	Peer Mentor
IP8: Monica	B	Female	8	Mentee
IP9: Margaret	B	Female	7	Mentee
IP10: Mark - withdrawn	B	Male	8	Mentee
Pam – unavailable	B	Female	13	Peer Mentor

As stated in the 'Methodology & Data Collection' chapter, each interview participant was given a pseudonym, hereafter these will be used rather than their actual names. To help the reader

to identify whether quotations are from mentors or mentees, peer mentors were allocated a gender specific name with the initial 'P' and mentees with the initial 'M'.

4.1.8 Summary of Contextual Results

In summary, 23% of secondary schools (six mainstream schools and one special school) across two areas of the County reported to have operated a peer mentoring programme during 2013/14, with four schools stating an intention to run a programme during 2014/15. The status of the programmes among the four schools varied considerably with some more established and developed than others. Peer mentoring was being used across all year groups with predominately sixth formers (i.e. Year 12 and 13) volunteering to mentor students in lower years (i.e. Year 7, 8 and 11). At the time the current research was conducted, the Educational Psychologist did not play a role in supporting the peer mentoring programme. Two larger than average secondary schools agreed to invite peer mentors and mentees involved in the programme during 2013/14 to participate in semi-structured interviews exploring their experience of peer mentoring. The participating school's programmes were very different in terms of their outcomes, stage of development and the size of their programme. Nine interview participants: 4 mentors, 6 mentees, 4 male and 6 female were selected for interviewing.

4.2 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The following section of this chapter provides an overview of the proposed BONDS model of effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools, developed using grounded theory methodology. The overview is designed to orientate the reader to the bigger picture by

discussing how the four key categories relate to the central category of the BONDS model, as illustrated in figure 8 and figure 9. This is followed by the complete grounded theory, in which each category comprising the BONDS model are introduced and defined. This chapter ends with a consideration of peer mentoring outcomes.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, direct quotations from the interview data are used to support analytical points and to illustrate the emergent model. As stated previously, each interview participant was given a pseudonym and quotes are coded under this name. Appendix 8 is a sample of the transcribed interviews, please also see the USB attached for the remaining eight interview transcriptions.

Tables 7 – 11 contain axial coding constructs and example text segments with their open codes. To keep the word count to a minimum and to avoid overstating the topic, peer mentors will be referred to as 'mentors' from this point forward.

4.2.1 The Emergent BONDS Model

Systematic analysis of 9 semi-structured interview transcripts using Grounded Theory Methodology (as described in chapter four) yielded 1 central category and 4 integrated key categories comprising of 15 conceptual constructs. Collectively the categories and their associated constructs identify and describe 5 mechanisms which coalesce to mediate effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools.

During analysis descriptive labels were assigned to each of the 5 categories and the initial letter of each label was used to form the acronym BONDS:

B - BOUNDARIES within peer mentoring

O - OPENNESS of the mentee

N - NURTURING EXPERIENCE (central category)

D - DUAL EXPERIENCE of the school system

S - STAFF contact with the mentor

The acronym 'BONDS' represents the data which emerged from grounded theory methodology as 5 integrated mechanisms which mediate effective peer mentoring. It is proposed as an emergent theoretical model which addresses the delivery and management of peer mentoring within the context of peer support interventions and mainstream secondary educational settings. The BONDS Model provides a contextual theory/explanatory framework with which to understand effective peer mentoring as it describes the relationships between abstract/emergent ideas grounded in the views of peer mentors and mentees in the secondary phase.

4.2.2 Overview of Grounded Theory

The BONDS theoretical model denotes 5 integrated mechanisms (derived from the 5 categories) which enable effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools. The model proposes that effective peer mentoring is synonymous with a nurturing experience characterised by feeling of security bestowed by a relationship with boundaries, the feeling of being at ease and therefore open to engaging with the programme, the feeling of being able to relate to someone with a shared experience of the system and a feeling of trust in the process/school staff. These mechanisms are best understood as an interaction between relationship-level and system-level elements of the programme. The nurturing aspect of peer mentoring best serves secondary

school students requiring social and/or emotional support and development. A diagrammatical representation of the BONDS model described is represented in detail in figure 8 and in a simple format in figure 9.

The category labelled 'Nurturing Experience' was assigned as the theory's central category as it pulls together the other 4 categories and is the core mechanism that brings about effect in peer mentoring. Thus the central category 'Nurturing Experience' conveys the interpersonal bond formed between the peer mentor and the mentee and is the link between all other categories. As an independent category with its own constructs, it represents the mentor's role in forming a relationship that is nurturing. The *mentor's attributes* that is, their qualities, skills and knowledge determine their ability to provide a nurturing experience. In addition their ability to be *supportive* and to allow *developmental* interactions (i.e. interactions that grow and change over time) helps to build trust within the peer mentoring relationship. For both peer mentors and mentees to have a nurturing experience they require the relationship-level elements of boundaries and the open approach of the mentee to feel secure and comfortable, equally they require the system-level elements of sharing educational experiences and contact with programme staff to feel able to relate to each other and trust in the mentoring process.

At the relationship-level are the mentoring arrangements, rules of the interactions and the mentees engagement with the programme/mentor. ***Boundaries within peer mentoring*** serve to protect the dyad during their interactions. The *matched dyads* are paired together by the programme co-ordinator with the goal of compatibility and effectiveness. The mentoring *meeting arrangements* are intended to be regular and time-bound to keep the interactions structured and focussed on the mentees needs. *Relational guidelines* impose implicit and

explicit rules to help mentors and mentees remain safe from harm. The ***openness of the mentee*** to engage with the programme/mentor affected the development of the dyadic relationship. *Cooperation with the mentor* establishes and maintains a beneficial relationship. A *need for acceptance* and an avoidance of being judged negatively lead to some mentees adapting their behaviour and responses during mentoring meetings. Being able to recognise similarities between themselves and their mentor and viewing their mentor as a role model helped them to establish a *connection with the peer mentor*. The mentees *understanding of the purpose* of peer mentoring impacted their initial engagement with their mentor as there was uncertainty about what it was, however *reflection on the impact* helped mentees to realise the purpose, relevance and usefulness of the programme.

At the system-level is the mentor's experience of the school system and their contact with key adults in the school. Peer mentors and mentees have a ***dual experience of the school system*** which places the mentor in an appreciative position and empathetic position. Due to their *first-hand experience*, mentors are viewed as knowledgeable and experienced. They understand the realities of the current system and can more usefully draw on their personal experiences, successes and failures when supporting their mentee. In providing *educational support,* mentors draw on the inherited knowledge and skills passed on from teachers. ***Staff contact with mentors*** in the sixth form is more frequent and extended than in the lower school (i.e. Years 7 to 11) therefore the *staff-mentor relationship* is usually close and well established. This facilitates the *selection of peer mentors* when they apply to volunteer for the role. Alongside in-house training, prior knowledge of sixth form volunteers aids assessment of their *suitability for the role*.

Figure 8: Detailed diagrammatic representation of the proposed BONDS Model

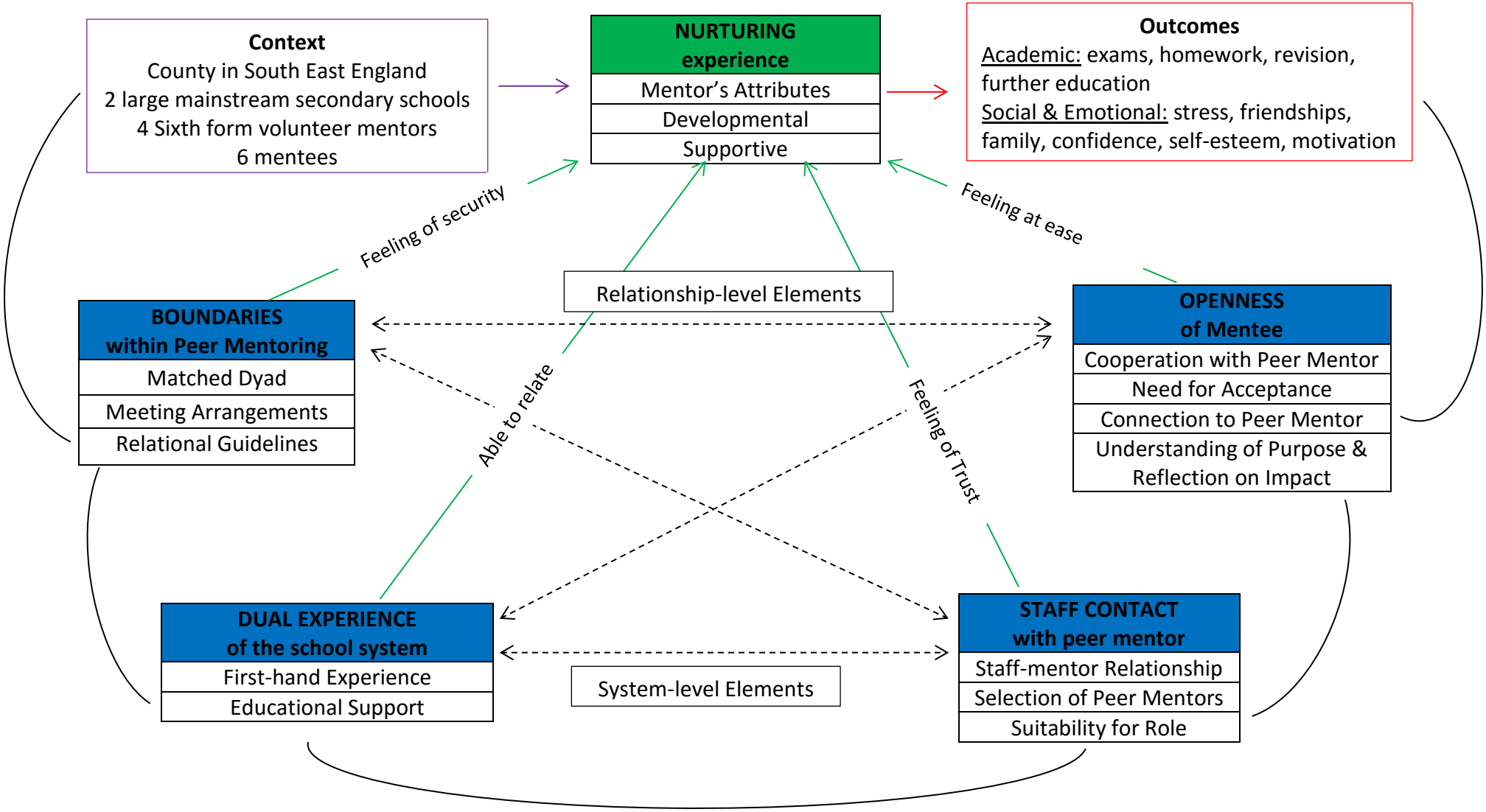
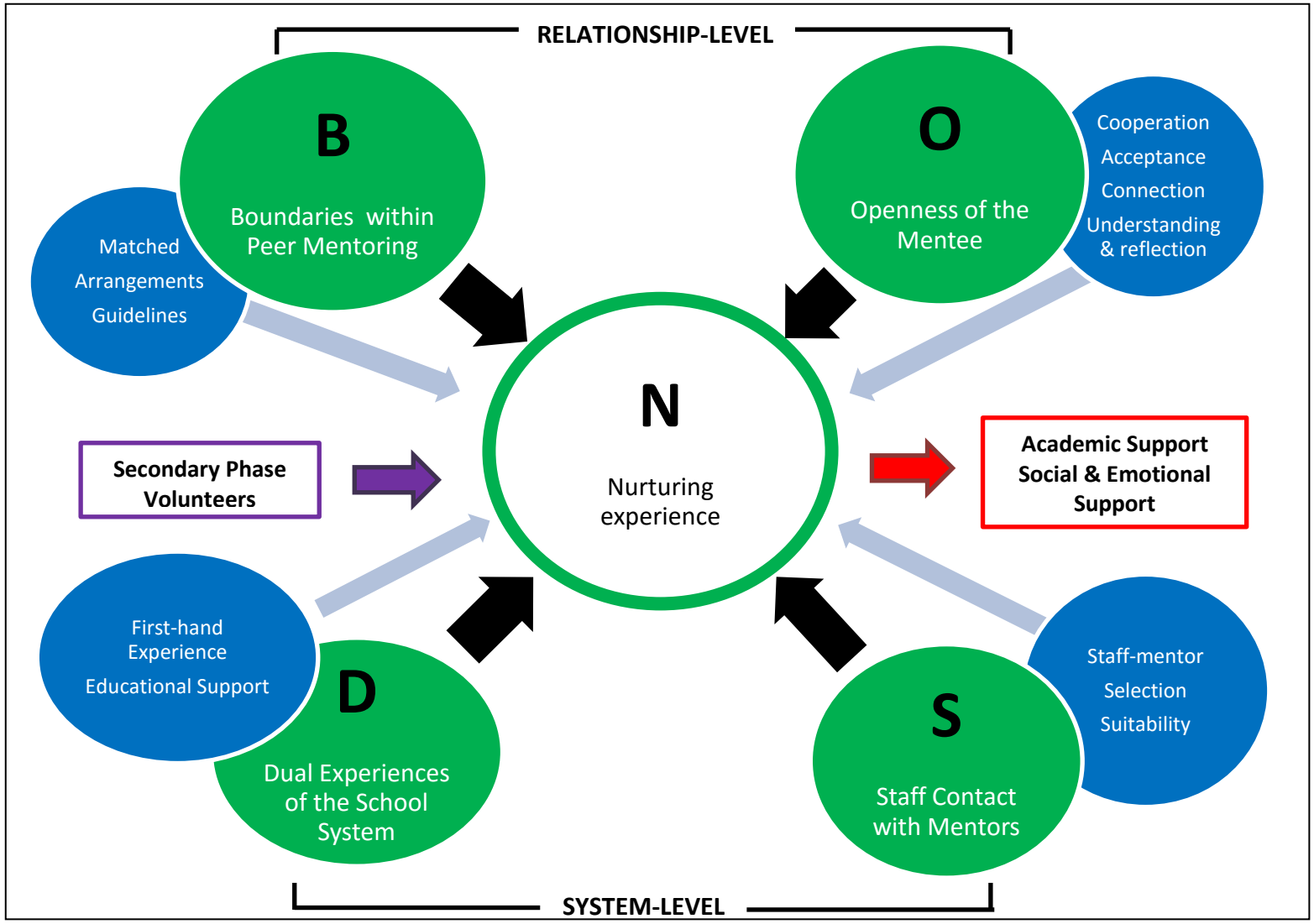


Figure 9: Simple diagrammatic representation of the proposed BONDS model



Context
County in SE England
2 secondary schools
4 Sixth Form Mentors
6 mentees
Mechanisms
Boundaries
Openness
Nurturing
Dual experience
Staff contact
Outcomes
Academic
Social & Emotional

4.3 COMPLETE GROUNDED THEORY

This subsection of the chapter describes the complete BONDS model through an examination of the five interrelated categories which represent the model of effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools. As the category entitled 'Nurturing Experience' is at the centre and with which all other categories have some kind of relationship, this category is discussed first. The section continues with an exploration of the relationship-level aspects of the model. The category labelled, 'Boundaries within Peer Mentoring' describes the mentoring arrangements and rules of the interactions. Mentees engagement with the programme and the mentor are discussed under the 'Openness of the Mentee' section. Following this is a description of the system-level components of the model. The mentors experience of the school system and their contact with key adults in the school are examined in sections named, 'Dual Experience of the School System' and 'Staff Contact with the Mentor'.

4.4 CATEGORIES & CONSTRUCTS

Conceptual explanations of the five categories and a description of each construct in relation to the raw data are provided, followed by a corresponding table of axial coding constructs and text segment examples with their open codes to assist in illustrating the model. Table 6 provides a list of the key categories and constructs with an indication of how many interview participants endorsed each.

Table 6: Interview Participant Endorsements of Categories

Categories	Number of contributing text segments	Number of participants endorsing category (N=9)
Boundaries within peer mentoring	85	9
Openness of the mentee	81	9
Nurturing experience	142	9
Dual experience of school system	108	9
Staff contact with mentor	38	6

4.4.1 Central Category: Nurturing Experience

In grounded theory research, the central category is at the heart of the theory, it is an abstraction that represents the main theme of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). GT researchers assert that the central category (also referred to as the core category) demonstrates "analytic power" in its ability to "pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146). In this case, a nurturing experience was assigned as the central category as it pulls together the other 4 categories and is the core mechanism that brings about effect in peer mentoring. For peer mentors and mentees to have a nurturing experience and thus for peer mentoring to be effective, they must both feel secure, feel at ease, be able to relate to each other and trust the programme staff and the peer mentoring process. However, such feelings do not occur incidentally or solely as the result of one element/factor rather, these feelings are derived from the combination of the boundaries within the relationship, the openness of the mentee to engage with the programme/mentor, the mentors abilities to build a safe and supportive relationship, their shared experience of the school system and the contact that mentors have with staff involved with the programme. Thus this category goes beyond the realm of the one-to-one relationship and incorporates all elements of the programme which help to establish and sustain the nurturing bonds between mentors and mentees.

As an independent category with its own constructs, this category describes the mentor's role as the mechanism that enables the development of a relationship that is nurturing. It describes the abilities of the mentor to create a build a safe and supportive relationship with their mentee. Therefore in this capacity the nurturing experience relates specifically to the interpersonal elements of peer mentoring relationships.

The words 'comfort' and 'comfortable' were cited 43 times by the interview participants to describe various aspects of their peer mentoring experience, conventional connotations of these words refer to feelings of ease, safety, relaxation, solace, wellbeing etc. which are all tantamount to nurturing. Mentors and mentees inferred that it is the mentor's personal characteristics that enabled these emotional states of mind and thus fostered a relationship that felt comfortable/nurturing. However the mentor's personal characteristics are also mediated by their feelings of security, being at ease, being able to relate and trusting in the programme and staff. Therefore this category conveys the interpersonal bond formed between the peer mentor and the mentee and is also the link between all other key categories.

Mentor's Attributes

A mentees experience of peer mentoring as nurturing depends, in part, on the qualities and ability of the mentor to provide a safe and supportive space. This construct concerns what the peer mentor brings to the mentoring experience. This is influenced by their motivation for the role, their characteristics etc. Peer mentors named a number of personal qualities such as confidence, warmth, welcoming, caring, mature etc. as aspects of the peer mentors character that helps the mentee to feel comfortable. The peer mentors intrinsic and

extrinsic motivations for volunteering played a role in determining whether mentors genuinely cared for and wanted to help their mentee.

> *"I believe I was cared for as a mentee, but not necessarily my person, if that makes sense. Like to me… sorry, to him, I was just a mentee. Like anyone else could have been in my position and he would have felt exactly the same. It wasn't me he cared about; it was the mentee he cared about, if that makes sense"* (Phillip/215).

Mentees expressed the same ideas as peer mentors; they also considered the mentors skills, qualities and knowledge (e.g. confidence, easy to talk to, nice) as factors which helped to make mentees feel comfortable during their meetings. Liking the mentor (because they were nice, friendly, kind, involved in school activities), feeling listened to and understood, all played a part in building the relationship. Mentees spoke of aspiring to be like their mentor as motivating them in their efforts at school and also in developing respect for their mentor. Monica felt that if the mentor was not a positive role model then they were not *"trustworthy"* (Monica/165). It was also important for mentees to feel that their mentor wanted to help and was genuinely interested in them.

Developmental

Peer mentors exercise patience and understanding by allowing the relationship to build and change over time. This gives them a chance to get to know each better, to discover their similarities and differences and develop caring feelings towards each other. In doing so, they learn to trust and feel more comfortable in each other's company.

> *"I mean no one really opens up to a stranger that they've met once. So I think the more you saw them, the more comfortable they'd get around you, the more they get to know you, so then could be more kind of happy to speak to you" (Patsy/198)*

Supportive

Peer mentoring provides an opportunity for support through a trusting and consistent relationship with someone the same age. The peer mentor offers time, commitment and interest in the mentee and subsequently mentees felt held in mind, cared for, listened to, understood and safe.

> *"I'd go back to that word I wrote, 'consistency'. The fact that it was thorough throughout, um, you know he didn't ever not turn up, or I didn't ever not turn up. It was sort of… and that's what puts the trust back… um yeah puts trust into it a bit. Cause you know, you're going to be there, you're going to be sorting things out, and you're going to be helping each other, or, mainly me helping him. But um, yeah, sort of that consistency that was always there, I thought helped."* (Patrick/135)

From both the mentors and mentees perspective, the peer mentoring relationship was characterised as a chance to talk and be listened to and to receive help in areas of difficulty. The peer mentoring relationship was compared to other supportive relationships such as friendships, teacher-student and sibling relationships.

> *"Yeah, you're- you're alongside them, you're with them, rather than on top of them. 'Cause like the role of teacher is the teacher has a degree or whatever, and then they're going to teach you, they're going to tell you what to do to get better. But here, it's more holding your hand, kind of through it, kind of thing."* (Phillip/161)

Table 7: Nurturing Experience – Constructs and Text Segment Examples

Central Category: Nurturing Experience		
Axial Coding Constructs	**Text Segment Examples & Open Codes** *Number of contributing text segments: 142* *Number of participants endorsing category :9*	**Interview Participant / Line of Interview**
Mentors Attributes	*So I think it's important for the mentor to be a confident* **[mentors confidence]**, *bubbly person, so then that instantly makes the child feel more sort of comfortable* **[mentee feels comfortable]** *around them.*	PATSY/98
	I don't really know. I just found it quite natural, to be honest. I don't really know any- any other way to express that, but I just found it quite natural to get on with him, how to help him **[mentor is naturally able to help]**. *I found him very relatable, so yeah.*	PHILLIP/ 229
	Just with the mentor being like easy- easy-going and just them- them being confident **[mentors confidence]** *kind of makes you feel a bit more confident* **[mentee feels comfortable]**	MARIE/83
	I think it was good, yeah. I think yeah like… yeah, yeah it was… it was a nice… like she was friendly **[mentor is friendly]** *and like she was just like easy to talk to* **[mentor is easy to talk to]** *and everything. So I think it was a good relationship, like, yeah. So you could talk to her and stuff.*	MICHELLE/ 140
	when we actually got to know each other, she was just really kind **[mentor is kind]**. *Like she like listened through all my like worries* **[mentor listens]**	MELISSA/ 43
	Yeah, she was really nice, but she was also like… I don't know, I knew she was quite like quite involved with the school. Like she did a lot of things, which was quite… she was like quite known like for her… she does like work for the school, and stuff like that **[mentors involvement in school community]**.	MELISSA/ 107
	So, yeah, I think that's a really good thing to have, 'cause she doesn't lose her patience **[mentor is patient**] *with like, you know, like you… some people just go… you know they just want to… they go right into it, you know, instead of thinking and before… they like jump before any evidence of what's actually happened* **[mentor considers all the information]**.	MARGARET /110

Developmental	*So, like just 'cause of the time we spent together we just bonded more because the more we got to know each other* **[relationship builds over time],** *the more comfortable the sessions became* **[mentee feels comfortable]**, *and then the more we were like willing to help each other out, well actually, her help me.*	MELISSA/ 83
	Well, I think it was kind of like I'd been going to see her for a few weeks and I was like thinking, it's all right, actually, you know, nothing's going to happen, you know, she's not going to turn in to an evil dragon and bite my head off **[mentee feels safe].** *And I was kind of just a bit nervous at the start* **[relationship build over time]** *'cause I don't know this person, she doesn't know me, it's kind of just like who- who is this like person* **[mentee feels comfortable]**.	MARGARET /235
	Just trying to keep up the contact every week and sort of hope it sort of smoothes out soon **[relationship builds over time]**, *because then it will just be easier to talk about anything, really* **[becomes easier to talk]**.	PETER/59
	So, you have to get to know someone to be in a position where you can care **[relationship builds over time]**. *And if you get to that position, I think the mentee would know that as well, definitely* **[mentor cares]**.	PHILLIP/ 108

Supportive	*I also get to talk about stuff I can't talk to my mum about* **[provide understanding],**	MARGARET /156
	Um, I've written 'problem relieving' instead of 'problem solving' **[problem relieving].** *Um, we sort of touched on this earlier. Um, I don't really think that it can fully solve problems, but it can sort of lessen them, or show steps in order to solving them, uh sort of it even… it might even take the weight of them off them a little bit, but never sort of fully get rid of something, as it were.*	PETER/191
	I just think that it does really help people who might not be as confident or as academic as other people, and um, it just really helps you become more confident and actually like believe in yourself **[build confidence & self-esteem],** *kind of, to actually want to achieve the like good… the higher grades and everything* **[provide motivation].**	MARIE/169
	I mean, we just talked about what he felt like talking about at that particular moment **[mentor follows mentees lead].** *I know with my mentee last year, we would jump from schoolwork to PlayStation, to sport, to just around sort of everything, really* **[flexible support].**	PETER/169
	So I think it's nice to think that someone that has… is having a problem can feel that they can come and speak to us. Even if we just sit and listen, and they just talk at us **[mentor provides a listening ear],** *it's like that will make a child feel so much better, if they think that we're sitting actually wanting to listen to them, and that they're kind of telling us everything, getting it off their chest. Um…*	PATSY/138
	I know my one last year, we were quite relaxed about it, so sort of half way through the year onwards he stopped having any problems, but still wanted to carry on with the mentoring. So, it was just sort of a nice chance to have a chat about stuff. I know we used to play games on my phone a bit **[flexible support].** *Just sort of form a friendship, really. So, there's sort of someone else out there who he knew he could talk to if there was anything* **[mentor provides a listening ear],** *but if there wasn't, it was still keeping the contact and knowing that there was someone there* **[consistency].**	PETER/18
	The care has to be both ways **[caring about each other].**	PHILLIP/ 122
	You're not just someone's friend, but you're- you're there to help someone become a better person almost **[help to better self]**	PHILLIP/ 130

4.4.2 Key Category: Boundaries within Peer Mentoring

This category describes boundaries as the mechanism that enables mentors and mentees to feel a sense of security within peer mentoring. Boundaries can be physical, relational, emotional, spiritual and/or sexual: they consist of the limits of what are considered safe and appropriate and protect our physical and emotional well-being. The boundaries within peer mentoring are characterised by purposefully matching mentors with mentees, organised meeting arrangements and guidelines for interacting. They serve as a protective barrier around mentors and the mentees. They aim to prevent the dyad from getting too close and from developing unhealthy attachments. These secondary relationships are not naturally forming interactions instead they are formalised and hierarchical: the mentor and the mentee are unequal. The mentor operates within 'professional-type' boundaries which sets these interactions apart from other personal and educational relationships:

> *"Um… um, I'd say a peer mentoring relationship, it's sort of a more early stage friendship where you're sort of getting to know each other, and then even when it develops, you're still thinking, "I need to sort of be nice to this person constantly," whereas a friendship with like people my age, no, um it's a bit more sort of, I want to say relaxed again. Um, it's a bit more informal because although the peer mentoring relationship is relaxed, trusting, it still sort of has that formal element to it, whereas a friendship can go from one extreme to the other sort of instantly."* (Peter/177)

Meeting Arrangements

Regular and time-bound meeting arrangements attempt to keep the mentoring interactions structured and focused on the needs of the mentee. Mentoring arrangements include the meeting space, frequency and duration of contact. Both mentors and mentees felt the physical location of the mentoring activity was an important consideration. The mentor needs to be able to work with their mentee in a designated, private space without distractions.

Mentors and mentees indicated a need for flexibility in the duration and frequency of their contact with each other. This varied according to the mentees needs/problems and ranged from 10 to 60 minutes and from twice weekly to one meeting per month. Most peer mentors and mentee pointed out that frequent meetings within a set time period fostered stronger bonds, helped to contain problems and made the mentee feel more comfortable. One mentor expressed concerns about running out of things to discuss and another pointed out that she felt structured and planned meetings would help to keep the meetings focused, she stated it would be helpful to:

> *"just know exactly- exactly what you're going to like talk about in that time so that you're kind of not really thinking of things to say"* (Marie/34).

Relational Guidelines

Relational guidelines impose explicit and implicit rules on the mentor-mentee interaction which differ to other relationships. Restraint from crossing or blurring the mentoring rules can be a demonstration of caring and containing behaviour. Mentors and mentees discussed relational guidelines to protect both parties. Confidentiality was discussed as providing the mentee with the opportunity to freely and openly talk without fear of anything being shared with school staff. On the other hand, they also highlighted issues of safeguarding the mentee should something serious emerge from discussion. It was understood that in such instances mentors were obliged to inform staff if the mentee was "at risk of something" (Patsy/66).

Issues regarding the availability of the mentor were raised, with one mentee suggesting that mentors are "approachable" and show they "care" if they are available outside of the mentoring meeting. This view was counteracted by a peer mentor who felt it was important

to maintain distance in the relationship to enable the mentee to develop independence and allow the mentor space to maintain other responsibilities.

Matched Dyads

The matched dyads are paired together: by someone else (the programmes coordinator) based on what they consider to be most beneficial coupling for the mentee. The mentor is perceived to be more knowledgeable and more skilled; they have the lead role in managing the meetings and maintaining the mentees welfare. Mentors and mentees were not involved in the matching process and did not know how or why programme coordinators put them together. One mentor assumed they were paired because they *"did reasonably similar subjects"* (Phillip/192) at school. Four mentees surmised best-fit reasons for being matched with their mentor which were based on academic i.e. grades, ability, primary school and personal similarities such as hair colour, personality, gender.

Table 8: Boundaries within Peer Mentoring – Constructs and Text Segment Examples

Key Category: Boundaries within Peer Mentoring		
Axial Coding Constructs	**Text Segment Examples & Open Codes** *Number of contributing text segments: 85* *Number of participants endorsing category: 9*	**Interview Participant / Line of Interview**
Matched Dyads	*Um, I've sort of jotted down it's sort of complex yet a simple relationship. Um, it's simple in the way that you're sort of there for a purpose* **[there for a purpose],** *and you're there to do… sort of just do one thing. However, it's complex because you're just two people that are sort of being, well not forced, but encouraged to be together and which might not happen without the peer mentoring scheme* **[matched].** *So, you might be from different backgrounds, have different views* **[compatibility],** *anything like that, but um, it's simple because you're just there for one purpose* **[there for a purpose].** *You might be very different people, but it still might work.*	PATSY/111

Meeting Arrangements	*Um, I think having quite frequent meetings. When we did it, I think we met… it was like once every two weeks, I think. And like sometimes it was once every week, but it was mainly once every two weeks. Um, and I think it's better to have more frequent meetings, say like two a week,* **[time/frequency/length/duration]** *'cause then you can build a stronger bond* **[bond]** *with your mentee, so then they can get to the point where they think, like, "They really do care, they really do wanna help me. I feel comfortable enough now to speak to them about this issue that I've wanted to speak about* **[mentee feels comfortable]** *but not felt comfortable to speak about."***[relationship builds over time]** *So, if it's kind of like… to an extent, it could… it should be like quite informal, but then it should have like an element of structure to it otherwise you're kind of not really going to get a good outcome* **[session structure & content].**	PATSY/196 MARIE/30
Relational Guidelines	*…because obviously if the child's at harm or something, then we have to tell a teacher because they might be at risk of something. We can't just say, "Oh no, we'll keep it like private"* **[safeguarding].** *Mr X told us, right at the start, don't sort of get too close and don't let them sort of become too dependent on you* **[attachments].** *uh 'personal' as it's sort of a one-on-one thing to do* **[confidentiality]**	PATSY/66 PETER/183 PETER/199

4.4.3 Key Category: Openness of the Mentee

This category describes the openness of the mentee as the mechanism that enables mentors and mentees to feel at ease with each other. The interaction between the mentoring dyad is influenced by the mentees perceptions, willingness and ability to engage with the programme and/or the mentor. Even with careful matching, not all mentoring relationships will be successful. Sometimes rapport between the pair is missing or there are other intentional or unintentional defences which prevent the relationship from developing.

Co-operation with Mentor

Mentees are not passive receivers' in peer mentoring; they play a key role in establishing and maintaining the relationship through their cooperation with the mentor. Mentees that are open and ready to entertain new ideas and speak freely or without restraint can help to build an effective relationship. Interview participants spoke of the mentees approach to mentoring as facilitating or hindering the interaction between the dyad. Four interview participants used the word 'open' to describe the mentee's willingness to share their thoughts and difficulties, to accept help, follow through on advice from the mentor and the mentee's body language. Mentees that attended through choice, spoke freely, asked questions and were open to receiving help, assisted in building the relationship and in enabling them to gain something out of the experience. Peter described "closed" mentees as being "slightly disrespectful". Reluctance to engage in the programme made it difficult to establish a connection and thus both mentees and mentor were unable to reap the benefits of mentoring. Interview participants cited that mentees feeling comfortable with their mentor influenced their openness within the relationship.

Need for Acceptance

To avoid negative judgements and to support their need for acceptance some mentees behaved or responded in ways that would bring social approval and make them more socially desirable. Margaret and Michelle expressed a need for acceptance: they wanted to be liked by their mentor and voiced some concern about being negatively judged. Such concerns influenced the information these mentee's were willing to share about them self. Melissa however stated that confidence and willingness to be open were reasons why she did not share this concern about feeling vulnerable. Limited knowledge prior to meeting the

mentee prevented *"pre-judgements"* (Patsy/192) and enabled the mentor to be more *"open minded"* (Patsy/194).

Connection with the Mentor

Viewing the mentor as a role-model served to establish the mentees connection with the mentor. Mentees were able to recognise similarities and establish a link between themselves and their mentor which helped the mentee to develop a view of their future self. Mentee's view of their mentor as a role model, someone they can look up to and trust, played an important role in whether the mentee engaged. Decisions regarding the worthiness of the mentor were based on their grades, future prospects and whether they perceived the mentor as a "nice" (Melissa/108). Additionally, Phillip spoke of trusting the teacher's perception of the mentor:

> *"Um, and from teachers that I myself look up to, they said yeah he's really good. I was like, okay, well if that teacher's said that, then they must be, kind of thing. Um, so I think someone that you can personally look up to definitely helps"* (Phillip/229)

Sharing personal (gender, interests) and academic attributes (subjects, areas of difficulty) also helped the mentee to establish a connection to the mentor. Same sex dyads were a preference espoused by two mentees:

> *"I haven't had my period yet, but if I do, I know I've got my friends I can talk to, but you know, "…it's easy to talk that, about your body changing to a girl than talking to a boy, 'cause that's just weird"* (Margaret/276)

> *"… I don't know if this sounds like sexist or anything, but I think I'd feel a bit more hesitant if it was like a- a guy speaking to me rather than a girl, kind of. Um, I don't know why. I think it's… I think you just feel a bit more… because you're… because girls kind of like scared of people like judge you or anything and you just want to please them, so um, I think it was nice that we had like a girl because, as I say, she was more like relatable, kind of"* (Marie/141)

Viewing their mentor in a positive manner served to motivate and inspire mentees: they spoke of wanting to achieve the same grades/prospects and aspiring to be like their mentor.

Understanding of the Purpose & Reflection on the Impact

The uncertainty about the relevance, scope and impact of peer mentoring also influenced how support was received, its perceived relevance and usefulness. However, mentee's reflection on the impact that mentors made both personally and academically highlighted some positive outcomes. The concept of peer mentoring was new to most mentees; this led some mentees to initially question what it was, who it would benefit, how to use their time together and its potential to help. Margaret described it as "weird", Michelle initially thought peer mentoring was "pointless" and Monica felt it was "wasting [her] time".

For one mentee, she gained clarity from her mentor's reassurance and explanation for the purpose of their meetings, thus the mentor's role was to contain the mentees anxieties. For others it was noticing change and being able to make use of the advice given by the mentor. Some mentees recognised the benefits immediately while others were able to see the benefits retrospectively.

> *"Um, at first I didn't really think it would really help me, and I was a bit like, I don't understand how that's going to help me get my predicted grades, but in the end it did."* (Melissa/203)

Table 9: Openness of the Mentee – Constructs and Text Segment Examples

Key Category: Openness of the Mentee		
Axial Coding Constructs	**Text Segment Examples & Open Codes** *Number of contributing text segments: 81* *Number of participants endorsing category: 9*	**Interview Participant / Line of Interview**

Co-operation with Mentor	*I think for the mentee, it helps if they are open and they kind of are confident enough to tell you what's wrong, rather than you sitting there and having to literally force an answer out of them that's just like a one word answer* **[being open].**	PATSY/85
	Um, sort of in the body language and sort of words and mannerisms they use. So if someone's sitting all sort of crunched down and sort of trying to be very closed off from you **[closed body language],** *then I'd say that's slightly disrespectful, and they're not wanting to be open and not sort of accepting that you're there to help* **[not wanting help].**	PETER/81
	I did get on with him immediately **[compatibility],** *um it was quite easy to, because I mean he was quite nice and he came with quite an open mind* **[open mind]** *to the mentoring, which was good because some people can be quite kind of completely-completely shut off, they don't really want to be there or anything* **[not wanting help]**	PHILLIP/62
	If- if you actually want to be there and want the help **[want help],** *then you'll be a lot more like motivated to like better yourself, really, and like- like benefit from the help that she's giving you.*	MARIE/109
	Yeah, like I was willing to take on her advice as well **[open to receiving advice].** *Like I wasn't going to go home and just not use it. I was actually going to work with it and see how it worked and listen to her, so yeah* **[taking advice on board].**	MELISSA/ 132
	Definitely just be comfortable, just speaking in front of others with people sharing your opinions, accepting other people's opinions **[mentees confidence],** *um, expressing yours and… not enjoying it, but just actually like feeling like you're getting something out of it, because obviously there's no point in doing something if you don't feel like you're not going to get anything out of it* **[getting something out of it].**	MARIE/161
	*Um and a lot of work we did was fine to go over um kind of when I was there, he was very motivated at the time, but when it came away, he lost that motivation and it…***[mentees motivation]** *he agreed with everything I was saying, but he didn't necessarily do anything about it* **[mentee not following thorough].**	PHILLIP/41
	Um, so that relationship is a bit sort of harder to get at the moment, because we've um had a few sessions where he's just not wanted to do it at all, so it's sort of hard to build up the relationship and the talk there **[not wanting help].**	PETER/57

Need for Acceptance	*I shouldn't tell anyone because it'll make people judge me and I don't really want her to judge me like I'm a bad person. I want to judge… I want her to judge me like I'm- I'm an all right person who just finds it hard at school* **[judgement].**	MARGARET /223
	At first I was thinking, "Oh my God, the whole school will think I'm an idiot, I need special help," **[judgement]**	MARGARET /237
	Well, sometimes you just feel like you can't say some things just because like they might just be like, "Oh, you're just overreacting," or something **[judgement].**	MICHELLE/ 150
	So you don't know what they're like as a person, so you kind of… it's kind of like having like a blank canvas, really **[no prior knowledge of mentee].**	PATSY/151
	I'm not too fussed about if people are going to really care what I've said […] **[judgement]** *So I was just willing to like tell her everything* **[being open].** *And she gave me like that sort of feeling that I could say anything to her, so I just did, and it worked out fine.*	MELISSA/ 130
Connection with the Mentor	*… and like her niceness* **[mentor is nice]** *and how included she is in the school* **[mentors involvement in school community],** *it just made me like want to sort of do as well as her and like… 'cause she was heading for like a good future, you know she had got offers for university and stuff like that* **[want to be like mentor]** *And she just… yeah, she just seemed like a nice person* **[mentor is nice].**	MELISSA/ 108
	… I just wanted to get the good grades that she… like similar to her, which would make it easier for me to get into sixth form and you know like do what I want to do in the future **[want to be like mentor],** *but because she did so well, it was just like if I try hard maybe I can, so yeah* **[motivates].**	MELISSA/ 120
	Um, so I expected that completely, which is why I thought it would be okay if I was a mentor, because I myself was reasonably lazy, so I found that quite relatable, once again **[share personal characteristics]**	PHILLIP/ 287
	Make sure like boy gets boy, girl gets girl, 'cause I think boys would be a bit more like, "Yes! I got a boy" and be a bit awkward around girls, or something. I think girls just generally don't like boys, they just want to like you know have a girl to talk to about their problems. I think- I think you feel more comfortable, definitely, being with your own gender **[same sex matching].**	MARGARET /274

Understanding of Purpose & Reflection on Impact	*I find it different, like, you know, it's not really something that every school has, like, you know, to talk to a sixth former and just like get to know people* **[new concept].** *It's kind of… I- I just don't… I think it's a… it's a good idea, but I think it's definitely an unusual one, so I kind of put that 'unusual' in 'weird'* **[mentee finds it weird].**	MARGARET /148
	Well at first, I was a bit like, "Oh this is a bit of like"… at first I wasn't that sure about it, I was just a bit like I don't know if I should be doing this **[new concept].** *But then as the time got on, and I realised like her strategies were actually really influencing me, I think I realised that this was going to help me a bit more in the exams* **[realising the benefits].**	MELISSA/ 134

4.4.4 Key Category: Dual Experience

This category describes the mentors and mentees dual experience of the school system as the mechanism that enables them to feel able to relate to each other. It concerns the shared educational experience of the mentor and the mentee. In addition to other shared experiences, attributes and interests, sharing the experience of the current education system played an important role in establishing a connection which enabled the dyad to form a sympathetic and supportive relationship.

First-hand Experience of the School System

Moving from Key Stage 3 (KS3) and 4 (KS4) through to sixth form provided mentors first-hand experience of the school system which placed them in an appreciative position to provide support and characterised them as 'experts' of the school system. Mentors are usually slightly more advanced students so they can share useful knowledge and experience that is otherwise difficult to obtain. Mentors had knowledge of the wider range of subjects taught during KS3 and KS4, they were aware of the expectations during these stages, they had undergone GCSE exams and were gaining direct experience of sixth form. Therefore the

role of the mentor was to impart the knowledge and skills they have gained from their experience of the education system. Mentees felt motivated by interacting with a mentor that had been through the same experience: they felt understood and it helped them to see their goal was achievable. Three interview participants described this as making the mentor more "relatable". Mentee's trusted their mentor, they felt they spoke from experience and therefore knew the realities of being a student in 2013/14.

> *"we're still like at school, in the same position that they are"* (Patsy/30)
>
> *"… they can get that extra push or like motivation from someone who's kind of been there, done it, and got the experience"* (Marie/8)
>
> *"Yeah, 'cause she'd just… well she was in the year… actually she was two years above me, so she'd done her GCSEs and AS-levels, so she had plenty of experience round the exam period, so um, it was really good to like understand how she'd got through it and I just… 'cause she had done it fine, sort of meant like I- I could sort of… I thought, "Oh, I can get through it and it will be fine." So, yeah."* (Melissa/73)

In addition it was also important for mentors and mentees to have the same or similar difficulties/problems. This allowed the mentor to draw on their personal experience and share how they overcame difficulties, failures and successes.

> *"Well, I mean because I've- I've failed a lot, both in my academia at school, I've failed a lot and done well, so when you've experienced both, I think it's good that you can use that to help someone else, I guess."* (Phillip/243)
>
> *"And she… 'cause she had the same problem, she could be like, "Oh yeah, I had that too," and it would just… it meant like she could tell me how I could get through it too, and it was fine in the end, so yeah."* (Melissa/81)
>
> *"So it's literally like they know why you're complaining, like they've probably had the same complaints."* (Michelle/121)

Closely linked to sharing the school experience was the significance of age. A small age gap (1 to 5 years) made the mentor's experience of the school system more relevant and more recent.

> *I think probably between like one and five years, 'cause then like you can kind of remember it like in quite a lot of detail. Maybe not… I don't know… but I think once it's like past like 15 to 20 years, it's just probably like changed so much by then.* (Michelle/136)

Additionally, Patsy felt more empowered to fulfil her role with younger mentees, she described feeling *"intimidated"* (Patsy/192) where the age difference was very small (a few months) and felt it was *"easier to mentor someone younger"* (Patsy/181) as they were more amenable and more open to receiving support.

Educational Support

Mentors adopt a pseudo-teacher role, drawing on inherited knowledge and skills to provide a range of educational support. Interview participants cited a range of ways in which mentors provided educational support. Mentors helped with homework, they provided simple explanations to help the mentee understand topics of difficulty. Mentors offered advice and guidance around sixth form and steps to take in problem-solving. Revision techniques and exam preparation were the most cited forms of educational support. An element of supporting a mentee through their exams was to provide stress relief.

> *"Um, and then I said she like calmed me down, stopped me panicking during exam period."* (Melissa/91)

The role of the mentor was not to 'sugar-coat' aspects of learning; the interview participants spoke of providing mentees with realistic advice and guidance to help them achieve their potential.

Table 10: Dual Experience of the School System - Constructs and Text Segment Examples

Key Category: Dual Experience of the School System		
Axial	**Text Segment Examples & Open Codes**	**Interview**

Coding Constructs	*Number of contributing text segments: 108* *Number of participants endorsing category: 9*	Participant / Line of Interview
First-hand Experience of the School System	*Uh just because you know that she's not being like biased* **[unbiased]** *or anything, like she's actually done it so she knows exactly what you have to do to get the grades that you want. And she's not like feeding us false information, like she- she knows what it's like, so she's going to speak from her experience* **[speaks from experience],** *which is kind of like the best advice, really.*	MARIE/89
	"Well, 'cause she knows more, so she knows what… she's basically gone through. She's been through Year 8, Year… she's been through Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, and I'm like, "Does Year 9 get any harder than Year 8? Or does Year 8 get any harder than Year 7? Or how hard is it in sixth form? You know, how much homework do you get? Do you get more homework in Year 9? Is it hard to choose subjects in Year 9?" **[knows expectations]**	MARGARET /194
	Like you couldn't like go to your history teacher and complain about English, if that makes sense, but like 'cause your mentor, they've been through like basically all the subjects together, so they know like the wider range of subjects and like all of their issues, not just one subject **[knows range of subjects].**	MICHELLE/ 117
	I think it helps if- if a mentee is facing a problem or an issue, […] so you then you can like pass down kind of um steps to take in that problem **[share learning from experience]**	PATSY/108
	But then, going through experiences like that, it showed me that I need to work consistently hard, I need to make sure I know my stuff, and then I- I could- I could tell that to my mentee. I could say, "I myself have been through this. I've not done well. Here's how you do well." I think it- it shows that you actually know what you're talking about **[share learning from experience]**	PHILLIP/ 259
	I don't know if this sounds weird, but maybe age. Um, 'cause if you have someone who's more your age, […] so they know what the reality's like at that point in time **[age bracket].** *Whereas if you have a teacher who's maybe like 40 or 50, then their education was maybe slightly different to yours and the whole like system was different* **[recent experience].**	MARIE/125
	then maybe it's a good alternative to get like, say, motivation, or advice… yeah from like someone maybe a bit more your own age, so it's a bit more understandable and easy to talk to **[age bracket].**	PATRICK/ 110

Educational Support	*So, I don't think everyone that's a mentee has a problem or an issue, they just… most of them just kind of need a sort of a wakeup call really, to how hard GCSEs are at that time, and A-levels are when you get to them* **[reality check].**	PATSY/85
	And I just thought she put it in a way that was quite simple for me to like understand. Like it wasn't over… like putting all these things towards… like bombarding me with like a load of things to do, it was more like simple so I could just do it **[provides simpler explanations].** *So that was it, basically, yeah.*	MELISSA/ 41
	I'd been told about it, but I always thought they were a bit of a waste of… like I just didn't think they were going to help me. But she sort of showed me how to actually um do them properly, like not copy them from the book and do them, it was more like shut the book, do it. And it was just a better way of me to like actually test myself **[techniques/strategies].**	MELISSA/ 65
	Yeah. Well it was just… yeah it was just- it was just beneficial because like it just helped me like with the revision and everything and it just made me feel a bit more like less stressed **[stress relief]** *because everyone… like I realised that she went through it, and then everyone goes through like the same thing and like the same pressure and everything…***[shared experience]**	MICHELLE/ 84
	Um, I think maybe just like give them like kind of a bit of a reality check, really **[reality check].** *So, you say… it's obviously your GCSE results, they stay with you a lifetime, […] you will regret it in the summer when everyone's celebrating and you don't get the results you wanted. It'll be your fault because you haven't put the work in," or something. So, I think just, yeah, just being realistic with them really* **[advice/guidance].**	MARIE/117
	And then he- he goes and he meets someone that's like him but younger, and almost makes him look at himself and almost sees, "Oh, I should do some work," and now he is. Now he is doing work. Um, so yeah, I think it can also help the mentor, as well, yeah **[reality check for mentor].**	PHILLIP/ 310

4.4.5 Key Category: Staff Contact

This category describes programme staff's contact with peer mentors as the mechanism that enables mentors and mentees to feel trust in staff and the peer mentoring process. While this category has the smallest number of text segments, it remains significant as it is the

point in which the mentoring relationship begins and links the system together. The interaction between key school staff and mentors, laid the foundations for the dyadic mentoring relationship. School staff's knowledge of mentors assisted in selecting appropriate volunteers and matching them with a potentially compatible mentee.

Staff-Mentor Relationship

Three mentors discussed their relationship with sixth form staff as being closer than it is with lower school aged students i.e. Years 7 to 11. Due to the arrangement and structure of sixth form education, sixth formers (mentors) study fewer subjects, spend more time with their teachers and therefore they frequently communicate with staff.

> *"… when you're in sixth form, you have like closer bonds with the teachers 'cause you spend a lot of time with them."* (Patsy/129)

Regular and prolonged contact between teachers and mentors result in school staff getting to know mentors very well. On the other hand, the relationship between mentees and staff was described as *"a lot less weak"* (Patrick/110) with some mentees fearful of approaching teachers. Given the "bond" (Patsy/129) between sixth form students (mentors) and school staff, mentors are in the optimum position to play a role in bridging the divide between teachers and mentees.

Selection of Mentors

Three mentors spoke about reasons why peer mentors were selected for the role. Co-ordinators have prior knowledge of mentors i.e. the subjects, qualities, character traits and may screen them for appropriateness based on this. Mentors are chosen because they possess desirable/positive characteristics such as their academic success; good

communication, social and leadership skills. As a consequence school staff had confidence in the mentor to fulfil the role and mentors serve as positive role models for mentees.

Suitability for Role

Suitability for the role is concerned with the peer mentors motivation and preparation for the role. A consistent message throughout all of the mentee interviews were that they wanted to feel 'cared for' to which the mentor's motivation for volunteering was closely linked. Peer mentors had intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to volunteer as a mentor. Participant mentors purported to have volunteered for inherent (intrinsic) reasons such wanting to help and being suited to the role rather than being driven by external (extrinsic) drives such as enhancing their curriculum vitae (CV) or because it was compulsory to volunteer for something. Phillip reported that engaging in mentoring for extrinsic reasons only, had a negative impact on the dyadic relationship. He stated that:

> *"Um, 'cause I mean he signed up to the programme to be honest probably as just something to put on his CV and then something that he could use, which I mean is fair enough, but yeah, I don't believe that there was a great amount of um personalness… per- personal care."* (Phillip, 215)

Preparation for the role of peer mentor involved training mentors particularly around the content of their meetings and managing safeguarding issues. Preparation also aimed to identify mentors commitment and readiness for the role. Peter stated that they *"go through the training thing to make sure we're serious*" (Peter/137).

Table 11: Staff Contact with Mentors - Constructs and Text Segment Examples

Key Category: Staff Contact with Mentors		
Axial Coding Constructs	**Text Segment Examples & Open Codes** *Number of contributing text segments:38* *Number of participants endorsing category: 6*	**Interview Participant / Line of Interview**
Staff-mentor relationship	*So if we kind of act as even say the messenger, we can… they can speak to us, and then we can go to the teacher about the issue* **[act as mediator],** *rather than the child having to sit there and sort of shake in front of the teacher and talk about* **[mentees fear/ authority]** *The sixth form office knows the people they're getting in. I mean before I was even signing up, they knew what subjects I was going to sign up for, they knew who I was, they, you know, they knew all that stuff* **[mentors known by staff].**	PATSY/122 PHILLIP/ 291
Selection of mentors	*I think just by like… I mean our sixth form leaders, they kind of appoint us as mentors* **[mentors are appointed].** *Like I mean not everyone's a mentor. They kind of select, and I think 'cause they know us really well* **[mentors known by staff],** *um, they know what we're like as people, they know how we are. So I think they choose the people that they know would kind of be, one, comfortable to do it, two, is like an inviting person, and someone that will be happy to help others. Like I don't think they'd put someone that was horrible and didn't want to help anyone and only thought about themselves as a mentor* **[suitability for role].** *I think it does help that they know us, though, so they know exactly what we're like as a person* **[mentors known by staff].** *I think that was because the school had confidence in me to spend time with him alone and to actually help him improve, so she thought well if the school is going to have confidence, I will* **[suitability for role].** *Um, volunteering. So, um we get told uh in our sixth form interviews actually, that we need to volunteer for one of four or five things, and then um volunteer to be a mentor* **[compulsory volunteering].**	PATSY/117 PHILLIP/72 PETER/134

Suitability for role	*Um I know we did some training at the start of last year, just an afternoon session, where Mr F went through sort of all different scenarios and sort of skills, really, to have. And he… one of the things he said was, for the first sort of two weeks, don't really ask any deep questions* **[training/preparation for role].**	PETER/29
	You want to see them improve for no reason. Like you just want to see them improve, because, well, you want to **[mentors motivation].**	PHILLIP/ 108

4.5 PEER MENTORING OUTCOMES

There are no measurable outcomes to report. Notional outcomes of peer mentoring are both academic and social and emotional. Mentees reported improvements in their approach to their exams results about by their mentor providing revision techniques/strategies and stress-relief. Softer outcomes were identified as support with homework and advice around further education. Outcomes related to social and emotional support are always difficult to evaluate, however the peer mentors and mentees felt supported in developing their confidence, self-esteem and motivation. In addition mentors helped mentees to problem-solve difficulties they were experiencing. Overall, the participants have provided accounts of when peer mentoring works; they reported positive experiences and developed good mentoring relationships with each other. One peer mentor said he would like to be a mentor again and one mentee said she would like to be a mentor when she is in sixth form.

A theoretical outcome is that peer mentoring in secondary schools provides a nurturing experience which is developed through the bonds formed between mentors and mentees. These 'bonds' are supported by system-level and relationship-level elements of the programme. Thus it can be concluded that while peer mentoring may not have a direct

impact on peer mentors or mentee academic outcomes such as attendance or attainment, the nurturing aspect of peer mentoring plays a role in developing the social and emotional skills which underpin learning. Therefore peer mentoring serves as an effective intervention for supporting and developing the social and emotional wellbeing of students attending a mainstream secondary school.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the first section of this chapter, the contextual data findings and the interview participants were described. The BONDS model of effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools derived from grounded theory was introduced by providing an overview followed by a detailed explanation of each of the five categories. The proceeding chapter discusses the findings in relation to the research questions, addresses the theoretical and practical implications and explores the limitations of the current research. In addition, the researcher reflects on the research process and states her dissemination strategy.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a commentary on the links between the research findings, other theoretical links and the literature presented in chapter two. It also addresses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings for the field, mainstream secondary schools and Educational Psychologists. In addition, this chapter includes the researcher's epistemological, methodological and personal reflections, which also acknowledges possible limitations of the research. The chapter ends the thesis with suggestions for future research, the research dissemination strategy and a brief concluding comment.

5.1 STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

> *"Yeah, you're- you're alongside them, you're with them, rather than on top of them […] it's more holding your hand, kind of through it, kind of thing."*

These words from a peer mentor adequately sum up effective peer mentoring in which a mentor provides a safe and supportive experience for their mentee to develop.

The acronym 'BONDS' represents the data which emerged from grounded theory methodology as 5 integrated mechanisms which mediate effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools.

B - BOUNDARIES within peer mentoring

O - OPENNESS of the mentee

N - NURTURING EXPERIENCE (central category)

D - DUAL EXPERIENCE of the school system

S - STAFF contact with the mentor

The BONDS model is proposed as an emergent theoretical model which addresses the delivery and management of peer mentoring within the context of peer support interventions and mainstream secondary educational settings. The model regards the nurturing experience as the core mechanism to produce social and emotional change. It proposes that effective peer mentoring is synonymous with a nurturing experience, best understood as an interaction between relationship-level and system-level elements of the programme. The nurturing experience is characterised by the feeling of security bestowed by a relationship with boundaries, the feeling of being at ease and therefore open to engaging with the programme, the mentors abilities to build a safe and supportive relationship, the feeling of being able to relate to someone with a shared experience of the system and a feeling of trust in the process/school staff.

The BONDS model provides a contextual theory/explanatory framework with which to understand effective peer mentoring as it describes the relationships between abstract/emergent ideas grounded in the views of nine peer mentors and mentees attending one of two secondary schools in a County in South East England.

5.2 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The primary aim of the current research was to explore what works from the perspective of school based peer mentors and mentees, in particular it intended to understand the system-level and relationship-level mechanisms that support effective peer mentoring in secondary schools. Therefore, research question one asked:

What do peer mentors and mentees perceive to be the mechanisms that mediate effective peer mentoring?

In answering this research question, the BONDS model proposes that there are five inter-related mechanisms which mediate effective peer mentoring in the mainstream secondary phase and that these mechanisms are best understood as an interaction between relationship-level and system-level elements of the peer mentoring programme: '**B**oundaries' within peer mentoring, the '**O**penness' of the mentee, a '**N**urturing experience', a '**D**ual experience' of the school system, and '**S**taff contact' with mentors. At the heart of this theoretical model is 'nurturing', with its benign connotations of growing, developing, nourishing etc. it denotes the full spectrum of support received from effective peer mentoring and exemplifies the 'bonds' formed between peer mentors and mentees.

As explained in chapter one, the term 'effective' in the current research refers to the hard and soft outcomes/changes that occur as a result of peer mentoring. As discussed in chapter two, many of the positive outcomes reported by previous researcher referred to social and emotional outcomes such as improved communication skills, emotional literacy, and support

with bullying. Similarly the participants in the current research spoke of outcomes such as developed confidence and improved motivation. With regards to academic outcomes, minimal reference was made to the impact of peer mentoring on grades however the participants spoke of academic support in the form of “stress relief” through opportunities to talk, exam preparation and help with homework. Thus it can be concluded that while peer mentoring may not have a direct impact on peer mentors or mentee academic outcomes, the nurturing aspect of peer mentoring plays a role in developing the social and emotional skills which underpin learning.

In order to further develop our understanding of the ‘nurturing experience’ as the core mechanism that mediates effective peer mentoring (i.e. positive academic, social and emotional outcomes) it is helpful to consider theoretical links to adolescence and their cognitive, social and emotional development.

5.2.1 Theoretical Links

The process of fostering nurturing experiences (i.e. developing the bonds between mentors and mentees) through peer mentoring can be understood in relation to Bion’s (1962) notion of ‘containment’ as this provides a underpinning theoretical template for understanding the connection between a baby’s (and adolescent’s) cognitive and emotional worlds (Billington, 2006). However, before discussing Bion’s ideas further, it seems pertinent to briefly consider the developmental changes faced by young people during adolescence. In doing so, the aim is to set the context for Bion’s (1962) notion of ‘containment’ and to highlight why nurturing/containing experiences are important during adolescence.

5.2.1.1 Developmental Stage of Adolescence

To understand the relationships formed between peer mentors and mentees it is important to consider the context of their developmental phase. In considering the developmental stage of adolescence as a period of significant biological, psychological and social transformation, it is apparent that young people during the secondary phase are going through a period of psychic vulnerability and change. The resurgence of curiosity about oneself; in striving to make sense of who they are in the world and developing independence, is akin to Bion's (1962) view of the infant's conflict of having a desire coupled with an aversion, to knowing and understanding the truth about one's own experience. As in infancy and again during adolescence, "the psychic changes happen alongside the physical changes and the interrelationship between growth of the personality and physical development becomes more and more complex…" (Youell, 2006, p. 62).

Adolescence is a stage of development characterised by change: it is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, from dependence to independence. Each young person is of course, unique in their development however there are a number of developmental issues that are common during the adolescent years. In addition to the pubertal changes that adolescents experience there are "universal emotional leitmotifs" (Lanyado, 1999) which involve a drive towards seeking the approval of peers, and becoming independent from one's parents (Horne, 1999; Blakemore, 2014). There seems to be a qualitative shift in the nature of thinking such that adolescents are more self-aware and self-reflective than prepubescent children (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). They begin to clarify who they are through the identification and integration of aspects of others (Horne, 1999), they become concerned with how they are seen and fit in with other groups of people their own age. The

psychological need to consolidate their identity as a unique and mature person, separate from that of their parents, coupled with a desire to identify with their peer group, can create a great deal of anxiety (Horne, 1999; Lanyado, 1999; Youell, 2006). Adolescence is also a time which places heavier educational burdens on young people which can lead to their whole sense of self being bound up in identifying themselves with either achievement or failure (Horne, 1999). Adolescence is a time marked by change and seeking peer approval and independence, thus the secondary phase of education is an opportune time for schools to provide peer mentoring as it enables them to take advantage of the importance placed on peer influence during adolescence: young people may be more receptive to mentors of a similar age.

In addition, emerging evidence from the field of neuroscience indicates that the adolescent brain is malleable and therefore easily shaped, particularly by experience. Until about 15 years ago, it was assumed that the vast majority of brain development takes place in the first few years of life and that adolescent-typical behaviour was largely down to changes in hormones and social environment (Blakemore, 2014). However there is growing evidence within neuroscience that as well as changes in hormones and social domains, the adolescent brain undergoes specific and significant structural changes and functional re-organisation. One area of the adolescent brain that endures the most changes is the prefrontal cortex; the part of the brain at the very front, which is involved in decision-making, planning, social understanding and risk-taking. During this time the brain overproduces grey matter which then requires a process of ‘pruning’ in which frequently used connections among neurons are strengthened and infrequently used connections are eliminated. Thus, it is speculated that experiential input plays an important role in determining the connections that are made

and those which remain connected (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Blakemore & Mills, 2014). This experience-dependent process can increase an adolescent's vulnerability to negative environmental experiences and enhance their receptivity to positive life experiences. Thus adolescence can be seen as a time for great potential change and development, where role-models (i.e. peer mentors) can demonstrate how to make good decisions and how to control emotions, thus establishing the connections made in their brain.

5.2.1.2 Containment (Bion, 1962)

Bion's (1962) ideas about containment provide a theoretical understanding of the nurturing experience. Bion (1962) proposes, that such like the experience-dependent process described above for adolescent young people, the infant's quest for truth relies on their capacity to have the experience that is, to stay with (tolerate) uncomfortable feelings such as anxiety and frustration, rather than to dismiss or find a way to bypass them (Waddell, 1998). While Bion (1962) talks of the mother-infant relationship, the term he coined 'containment' is also an effective analogy for the nurturing experience gained from effective peer mentoring. In Bion's thinking, containment is the process whereby projections (of the contained i.e. the infant) are directed and the 'container' (i.e. the mother) contains that which is projected. The container-contained is a model for processing emotional experience which contributes to structuring the infant's personality. In essence it is concerned with developing the infant's ability to make sense of their own feelings through the support and understanding of a 'thinking other' (Waddell, 1998). In describing the relationship between a mother and infant, Bion refers to the emotional experience of learning to think. The notion of the container-contained is centrally concerned with the processing of thoughts from lived

emotional experience (Ogden, 2004), in which the container (mother) helps the way the contained (infant) organises their thoughts and render them true and meaningful (Waddell, 1998). The outcome for the infant is one of being protected, kept safe and understood while the opposite is to leave the child with overwhelming anxieties that they have to manage pathologically through "avoidance/denial/a recourse and retreat to bodily self as the only available resource." *(*Horne, 1999, p. 32)

5.2.2 Containing Young People through Peer Mentoring

Given that adolescence is a period of psychic vulnerability and change, containing experiences are particularly pertinent. In addition, an adolescent's preoccupation with seeking peer approval, becoming more independent and self-aware/self-reflective (Horne, 1999; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Blakemore, 2014) indicates that they may be more responsive to young people of a similar age.

At the heart of the BONDS model is the experience of being nurtured. The nurturing aspect of effective peer mentoring provides peer mentors and mentees with an experience that is safe and supportive and thus containing. However it is not possible to produce a nurturing experience without consideration of the context and conditions which create the experience, in other words it is the system and the relationship that are containing.

In peer mentoring, the process of containment can be related to the mentor's ability to contain the worries, concerns, feelings of the mentee and impart a feeling of being supported and empathised with. During mentoring meetings (i.e. boundaries within peer mentoring), mentors bring their understanding of being an adolescent at secondary school

(i.e. dual experience of the school system) as well as their internal mental and emotional states (i.e. mentors personal attributes). This drawing on one's own inner resources is referred to by Bion (1962) as 'reverie'. It is an unconscious process of being in touch with the mentees emotions, in feeling and making sense of the emotion without becoming overwhelmed and handing back an experience the mentee can tolerate and integrate thus the mentor holds the problem/issue/anxiety, helping the mentee to move forward. This experience of being understood enables the mentee to carry out the same mental functions: to psychically learn from them and develop a sense of inner strength and independence. It is this process of the mentor containing the contained (mentee) that builds trust and provides a space for thinking (i.e. openness of the mentee). This can provide the mentee with the experience of being cared for and of caring for their mentor, which in turn positively impacts the mentee's self-esteem and establishes the bond between them. The following example of 'containment' through peer mentoring was voiced by Patsy:

> *So I think it's nice to think that someone that has… is having a problem can feel that they can come and speak to us. Even if we just sit and listen, and they just talk at us, it's like that will make a child feel so much better, if they think that we're sitting actually wanting to listen to them, and that they're kind of telling us everything, getting it off their chest* (Patsy/183).

Equally peer mentors that have containing relationships modelled to them by school staff are enabled to then offer this to their mentee (i.e. staff contact with peer mentor). These experiences of being contained by others, enables mentors and mentees to grow intellectually and emotionally.

What is being spoken about here in terms of a containing/nurturing relationship is true of any supportive relationship because there is care, being listened to and encouragement.

Feeling emotionally supported in this way opens up ones' learning and development – it frees ones' mind from anxiety. However, ones' ability to provide such support is influenced by context and/or other facilitating or inhibiting conditions.

5.3 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

An additional aim of the current research was to inform practice by providing a framework for developing peer mentoring in secondary schools, thus research question two asked:

What recommendations emerge for sustaining and improving peer mentoring programmes and relationships?

The BONDS model which emerged from the analysis of interview data provides a theoretical understanding of the conditions required to facilitate 5 mechanisms which support the social and/or emotional development of peer mentors and mentees. Used as an intervention to support the social, emotional aspects of learning rather than specifically to improve attendance and/or attainment, peer mentoring capitalises on the school's internal human resources. This understanding of what works, why and for whom helps mainstream secondary schools figure out what is likely to be best peer mentoring practice (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). Grounded in the findings of the current research, three key recommendations are proposed for sustaining and improving peer mentoring experiences and outcomes in mainstream secondary schools.

5.3.1 Recommendation 1: Foster a Nurturing School Culture

The first recommendation is to work at a whole school level to develop the nurturing capabilities of staff and students thus fostering a nurturing school culture. If one regards peer mentoring as developing and existing within the broader contexts of the school system (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009), we can consider it as a three-tiered approach (staff-mentor-mentee) in which school staff model a mentoring relationship to mentors who then offer the same to their mentees. This requires a nurturing school culture where there is a good understanding of the social, emotional and mental health needs of staff which filters down to the students and maximises everyone's potential.

The schools attended by the interview participants involved in this research, provide examples of where peer mentoring is effective; these schools reported to have fully developed or partially developed all of the Approved Provider Standard (2014) requirements and the interview participants generally spoke positively about their peer mentoring experiences. These were two good mainstream secondary school environments for peer mentoring, hence the BONDS model of effective peer mentoring emerged. In the previous section of this chapter, it was recognised that peer mentors that have containing/nurturing relationships modelled to them by school staff are enabled to then offer this to their mentee. However, a member of staff's ability to provide such support is influenced by the wider school context. It is therefore logical to suppose that the programme staff involved in the peer mentoring programmes at these schools also had a nurturing experience. Hutton (2000) suggests that the emotional experience of an individual is rarely situated within one person: it is often a symptom of the whole system. It follows then, that the emergence of the BONDS model is only possible from within a system where the social and emotional

availability of staff and students is supported, where there is understanding and where there is good leadership.

In order to sustain and improve the capacity of peer mentors (and programme staff) to provide a nurturing experience, secondary schools will need to invest time and resources to developing the mentors 'helping' capabilities in the form of supervision. Supervision serves to ensure the wellbeing of the mentee and enhances the competence and development of the mentor. During supervision, the essence of peer mentoring is articulated and modelled by the supervisor (i.e. programme staff) and functions to educate, support and evaluate the peer mentor (Scaife, 2003). For supervision to work optimally and efficiently, it should be offered on a regular and consistent basis to enable the peer mentor to feel safe to explore and reflect on their function as a 'helper'. Thus the supervision that peer mentors receive should encompass all the elements represented in the BONDS model for effective peer mentoring.

5.3.2 Recommendation 2: Work Collaboratively with Peer Mentors and Mentees

The second recommendation proposes that programme staff work collaboratively with peer mentors and mentees during the selection and matching process. Although not framed in an evaluative manner, giving voice to young people has gleaned insight into how support is received, its perceived relevance and usefulness.

It was apparent during interviewing and data analysis that peer mentors and mentees had not been involved nor had they any influence regarding the selection of mentors, the participation of mentees or the matching of dyads. In fact some of the peer mentors and

mentees did not know why they had been chosen to be a mentor/mentee or why they had been matched with their mentor/mentee.

The selection and matching process are aspects of achieving compatible and sustainable peer mentoring dyads. Therefore to ensure mentors and mentees sustain their interest in participating in the programme it is recommended that they are actively involved with the preparation, management and delivery of the intervention. The purpose of peer mentoring should be clearly explained to mentees, programme staff will need to check the mentees readiness to engage with the programme/mentor and the mentee should participate voluntarily. Mentees should be involved in the recruitment of mentors perhaps by identifying the skills and characteristics they value most and if possible choose who they would like to work with or at least be helped to identify why they may be a compatible match for peer mentoring for example by identifying their commonalities. Peer mentors and mentees should also be a part of the evaluation process; this should involve exploring the impact of peer mentoring by reflecting on signs of individual change and/or development for example to their social, emotional wellbeing, their approach to learning, the behaviour etc. Identifying the skills, qualities and changes might help them to identify skills and changes in themselves, thus developing their self-esteem and confidence.

Peer mentoring is a personal development tool as well as an intervention for young people with low-level needs, therefore actively involving them in the programme management and delivery helps to develop skills needed to be successful. Giving them a bit of ownership of the programme so they do not feel that something is being done to them, rather they are part if the process may help to maintain their interest and commitment to peer mentoring.

5.3.3 Recommendation 3: Use the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework

The third recommendation is that mainstream secondary schools regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of peer mentoring. To facilitate schools in appraising their peer mentoring programme, an evaluative framework grounded in the BONDS model has been developed as a tool to help secondary schools evaluate their performance and identify appropriate ways to improve and develop. See appendix 9 for the recommended BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework. The BONDS model helps to enhance a shared understanding of important system-level and relationship-level elements of peer mentoring: it provides a useful framework for schools to reflect on their programme management and delivery and on peer mentoring relationships.

The BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) aims to assist schools in maximising the effectiveness and quality of peer mentoring. It has been designed to be brief, easy to understand and quick to complete and review. The BONDS SEF is intended to be appropriate for all peer mentoring programmes regardless of its form, management, operation, locality etc. It is applicable to peer mentoring programmes that are fully established, in their infancy and those that are in the early stages of being set up. It may also aide schools considering peer mentoring as an intervention as it enables them to use the checklist to ascertain the commitment, resources and processes required thus helping them to decide whether peer mentoring is a viable intervention for their school. It is recommended that the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator (or equivalent) with input from other staff, peer mentors and mentees as necessary. To inform and facilitate the completion of the SEF, the Programme Co-ordinator (or equivalent) may use additional

methods, resources and/or tools for gathering relevant information, for instance to seek the views of peer mentors and mentees.

The SEF is based on the key categories of the BONDS model: Boundaries within peer mentoring; openness of mentee; nurturing experience; dual experience of the school system and staff contact with peer mentor. Each of the 5 categories (labelled as 'five key mechanisms') is broken down into 15 specific characteristics that need to be present to maximise the effectiveness of any peer mentoring programme. These characteristics summarise the constructs identified through Grounded Theory analysis and are presented as 'best practice' statements which aim to inform practice, stimulate thinking and prompt further action. Schools are required to rate their programme from 1 to 5 against each characteristic with 1 indicating that the characteristic (and all aspects of the characteristic) is under-developed and 5 indicating that all aspects of the characteristic is securely developed. Where schools are not yet rating themselves as 5 against a characteristic, they are asked to set a small target in which to inform programme development and improvement. It is recommended that schools review each rating and the associated actions at least annually and set themselves new actions if necessary.

There are a number of key similarities and differences regarding the purpose, design and content of the new recommended BONDS SEF for effective peer mentoring and the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation's (MBF), Approved Provider Standard (APS) self-assessment tool for evaluating mentoring and befriending (see appendix 10). The MBF self-assessment tool is currently used by those aspiring to achieve Approved Provider Standard (APS) accreditation. The tool forms part of the accreditation process and aims to help

mentoring and befriending programme co-ordinators to demonstrate the extent to which their programme meets the 10 requirements and 4 key areas supporting safe and effective practice. The BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) is not intended to replace this self-assessment tool (or other self-assessment/evaluation tools), instead it is recommended as a framework to be used by schools not intending to gain APS accreditation or as a complimentary checklist alongside the APS self-assessment tool where schools do aim to achieve accreditation from the MBF.

Both the BONDS SEF and the APS self-assessment provide schools with a diagnostic tool and an action plan to help them benchmark their programme, assess whether there are areas to address/improve and identify further action if necessary. They are both presented as a checklist which describes various elements of good mentoring practice. In addition, they are both aimed at a range of programmes, from those that are fully operational to those that are in the process of setting up a programme. Similarly they are both relevant to all types of peer mentoring and can be applied to programmes delivered locally, regionally or nationally. Overall each self-evaluation/assessment provides an excellent framework for both developing a programme and/or reviewing an existing programme.

Schools can access the table of requirements, however gaining full access to the APS self-assessment tool is at a cost and it is only available to schools wishing to gain APS accreditation whereas the BONDS self-evaluation framework could be freely accessible to all secondary schools operating a peer mentoring programme. The APS self-assessment tool forms one of five steps in the formalised process of programme evaluation which must be evidenced and shared with the MBF. The APS tool is several pages long while the BONDS SEF

has only two pages. This makes the BONDS SEF quick to complete and easily comparable to any previously completed BONDS SEF's, therefore enabling the process of review and action planning to be pertinent and less arduous.

With regard to content, both tools identify the safety of those directly involved in the programme (i.e. staff, mentors and mentees) as being important aspects of safe and effective peer mentoring. They both highlight the matching, describing it as a "clear and consistent" and "transparent and open" process. In addition the APS requirements and the BONDS characteristics recognise support for mentors as important factors of effective peer mentoring. However in considering the overall differences, the APS focuses on mentoring and befriending policies and procedures and therefore centres on aspects of programme implementation, while the SEF identifies the system-level and relationship-level mechanisms which feed into the effectiveness of the programme, therefore emphasising the characteristics of the service users rather than the procedural requirements of the programme. Therefore, the APS (2014) can be thought of as 'what' is required to operate a safe and effective programme while the BONDS SEF is a checklist of 'how' effective peer mentoring occurs in secondary schools.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS

A number of implications can be drawn from this research for the field of peer mentoring, secondary schools and Educational Psychologists.

5.4.1 Implications for the Field

This section of the chapter provides a brief summary of the current research findings in relation to the original contributions to peer mentoring in UK secondary schools as described in chapter two.

The findings of the current research support existing qualitative research which point to the social and emotional outcomes of peer mentoring for both mentors and mentees (Nelson, 2003; Dearden, 1998; Thompson & Smith, 2011; Beresford, 2004; O'Hara, 2011; Pyatt, 2002; Knowles & Parson, 2009). In addition the current research identified personal qualities/attributes of the peer mentor as contributing to the quality of the mentoring relationship which verifies Batty, Rudduck and Wilson's (1999), Knowles & Parson (2009) and Thompson & Smith (2011) findings. Objective and quantitative outcomes in relation to attendance and attainment were not identified by the current research, thus this research does not contribute specifically to this aspect of the field. However the findings do provide important information about the links between emotional wellbeing and learning.

As discussed in chapter one, the peer mentoring field is fraught with definitional, conceptual and practical challenges. By providing secondary schools invited to participate in the current research with the definition of peer mentoring proposed by the current researcher, an additional definition has been introduced into the field. This definition encapsulated key words and phrases from other dominant definitions and aimed to be applicable to all peer mentoring programmes. Given the findings of the current research and previously identified challenges regarding the concept and definition of peer mentoring, the researcher suggests that this definition be revised further to emphasise the shared experience of the school

system and the nurturing nature of peer mentoring which was missing from the previous definition. Thus the following revised definition is offered:

> 'A one-to-one relationship, between an experienced student (mentor) and a less experienced student (mentee) who has a shared experience of the school system. The mentor voluntarily gives their time to provide a nurturing experience which helps the mentee to learn and develop emotionally, socially and/or academically. The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.'

It is further suggested that this definition could be used within future research exploring peer mentoring.

The current research makes a significant contribution to the field of research on peer mentoring as it provides a theoretical insight in to peer mentoring relationships which was previously missing from the field. The BONDS model offers an explanatory model of five key mechanisms which mediate effective peer mentoring. It provides important information regarding the connection between system-level and relationship-level elements of the programme and highlights the psychological link between emotions and cognition.

5.4.2 Implications for Secondary Schools

The shift towards early intervention (Easton & Gee, 2012; Department of Health, 2013) with young people fits well with the concept of using peer mentoring in secondary schools as a low-level form of support. With the Government's commitment to supporting the mental health of young people through promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention (DoH, 2013), now seems like an opportune time for schools to make use of their internal human resources to develop the social and emotional wellbeing of students.

Despite the gaps in the evidence base, peer mentoring has found a place in educational settings and is viewed favourably by those involved in both its management and delivery. It can be a be a cost effective and sustainable solution to raising achievement and supporting the development of young people (MBF, 2010) and quality support in schools can alleviate some of the workload for teachers, allowing them to focus on teaching and learning (MBF, 2010). Peer mentoring is a flexible intervention; as the research evidence suggests, there is considerable variation in its management and delivery from one school to the next. This can be seen as beneficial to schools because they can adapt the intervention to meet the needs and strengths of their school population.

As the findings of the current research follow the context-mechanism-outcome configurations model; it identifies what works, in what conditions and why for people in the social system in which it takes place (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; 2004). This is likely to be more useful to secondary schools than other types of research evidence which only identify anecdotal information. The BONDS model provides schools with a practical outline of the conditions needed to enable each mechanism of the BONDS model within the context of a secondary school to be effective. It provides information about the peer mentoring practices most like to promote positive outcomes and enhance dyadic relationships. In doing so it also addresses the nature, quality and development of peer mentoring relationships. In addition, the findings of the current research suggests that peer mentoring is best used as an intervention to support the social, emotional aspects of learning rather than specifically to improve grades/impact data i.e. attendance, attainments, behaviour. This information can helps schools is deciding which students are most likely to benefit from this form of peer support. The BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework provides schools with a tool in which to

evaluate and develop their peer mentoring programme. In addition the BONDS model and self-evaluation framework has the potential to fit any variation of peer mentoring in UK secondary schools.

The positive social and emotional impact of peer mentoring warrants more sustainable, longer term investment to ensure it can be embedded in all secondary schools. Schools have reported to the current researcher that they are feeling under pressure and under-funded and having to think very carefully about spending. However the current researcher argues that by using their internal human resources to provide students with less complex needs a peer mentor, schools may be able to reduce their spending on external agencies. Therefore schools should see peer mentoring as a useful way of spending their pupil premium and/or any other funding. The current researcher acknowledges that there is an expectation within schools that educational outcomes are focused and measured and focused however, this 'business model' way of working may well be a culture that undermines the potential investment that good peer mentoring could be in developing and maintaining a good social and emotional environment for staff and students. Although noted that it is more difficult to do, careful planning, evaluation and recording of the softer outcomes of peer mentoring could provide a solution to this concern to this cultural dilemma.

5.4.3 Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

There is general acknowledgement within the profession that education professionals should play a larger role in supporting schools to promote early identification, assessment and intervention (Frederickson, Miller & Cline, 2008; Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011). The data gathered from the 4 contextual questionnaires, indicated that Educational Psychologists

(EPs) are not currently involved in peer mentoring programmes. However through their core functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research (AEP, 2013; Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; BPS, 2002; BPS, 2013; Fallon *et al*., 2010), Educational Psychologists could support the development, understanding and management of peer mentoring in secondary schools.

The psychological knowledge of Educational Psychologists (EPs), mean they could have a play in supporting Peer Mentoring Programme Co-ordinators and/or programme staff through training and/or supervision, thus potentially making it a four tiered process in which the EP supports the programme staff, the programme staff support the-peer mentor and the peer mentors support the mentees). Support could be in the form of workshops, training the peer mentors and/or facilitating work discussion groups/supervision with programme staff.

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to support schools in providing the nurturing experience required for peer mentoring to be effective. Some EPs are therapeutically trained and therefore understand psychodynamic ideas such as containment. They understand the importance of safe, containing bases and the links between emotion and cognition. As Billington (2006) states "Psychodynamic approaches have long since known of the interconnectivity of our emotional and cognitive worlds" (p. 77). Therefore EPs can help schools think about psychodynamic ideas, such as containment and to support them in considering how they can provide a safe and containing base for their students. There is a big window of opportunity for this kind of thinking to be around what EPs who work therapeutically understand by a therapeutic environment where the container/contained can be understood.

Additionally, EPs have a good understanding of the social and emotional foundations of learning and have an appreciation of systemic thinking in terms of understanding that socially and emotionally healthy schools increase the likelihood of getting the optimum from everyone in the system i.e. staff and students. Therefore EPs have a role to play in helping schools to think more broadly then just in academic terms by developing their understanding of the links between emotion and learning. Working at a systems level the different aspects of nurturing are all things that can be thought about, flagged up and understood by the EP and managed within the EP service delivery to schools.

The researcher would like to see EPs promoting and recommending peer mentoring in relation to the findings of this research. That is, to encourage secondary schools to operate a peer mentoring programme, to develop school staff's understanding of the links between emotion and cognition, to emphasise the importance of a socially and emotionally healthy school environment and to evaluate and monitor the performance of peer mentoring programmes by urging schools to use the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework .

5.5 RESEARCHER REFLECTIONS

For the first (and only) time in this thesis, it feels appropriate to write in the first person to reflect on the research, my development and learning. In doing so I acknowledge that as a researcher I affected, and was affected by the research process (Pellegrini, 2009) in ways that I expected and in ways that took me by surprise. In this section I take a reflective and self-reflexive position (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2007; Pellegrini, 2009) in describing some of

epistemological, methodological and personal reflections, in doing so this section also acknowledges possible limitations of the research.

5.5.1 Epistemological Reflections

As a Trainee EP, my aim was to select an area of research that was of personal interest and yet relevant within the County in which I was on placement. I was eager to provide secondary schools with information they would find useful by pinpointing the features needed to sustain and develop peer mentoring (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; 2004). Ultimately, I hoped the findings of my research would raise the profile of peer mentoring and re-ignite secondary schools interest in what I deemed to be a relatively inexpensive intervention.

My axiological, ontological and epistemological position as discussed in chapter one and chapter three brought inherent assumptions about peer mentoring, thus I had to remain mindful of this and remain objective in my literature review and data analysis. The findings of the current research supports all of the assumptions stated on page 11. I am aware of the inferences that the reader may make from this. I acknowledge that it is impossible not to interact with the data: it would be imprudent to deny my previous experience and knowledge and the impact of this when analysing, collecting and interpreting the data. However it is hoped that the data collection and analysis was rigorous and transparent enough to convince the reader that as far as possible I set aside any preconceptions, theoretical assumptions and judgements to enable new understanding to emerge (see discussion on Trustworthiness of qualitative research).

Nevertheless, in taking a self-reflexive stance, I recognise how my position as a bi-racial female from a working class background may have influenced my assumptions (Pellegrini, 2009) in shaping the research process and findings. Overall, these characteristics are likely to account for my interest in the subject area as knowing what it is like to be disadvantaged imparts me with empathy and experiencing a black Caribbean background has immersed me in a culture in which it is customary to extend a helping hand. The influence of my gender may account for my desire to nurture and care for the students. This was evident in my approach to interviewing the participants as I tried to provide encouragement, raise their awareness and develop their understanding of their role.

5.5.2 Methodological Reflections

Chapter three described the methodology used in the current research. This section of the current chapter describes on some of the key methodological issues I reflected on during and after the data collection process.

5.5.2.1 Response Rate

An initial email with an online questionnaire was sent to 30 schools across 2 areas of the County in July 2014 to gather contextual data about the prevalence and status of peer mentoring. However the response rate was very low despite two additional attempts to increase the response rate, for instance 4 schools responded.

I was aware that self-administered questionnaires typically have low response rates, however I wandered whether there were additional reasons for schools opting out of participating. Unfortunately the characteristics of the non-responders are unknown

(Breakwell *et al*., 2012) therefore the contextual results may not reflect the prevalence and breadth of secondary school peer mentoring within the county. However in reflecting on why only four schools responded to the questionnaire and why only two schools were willing to participant in the interview stage, I wondered whether the time of year in which I made the request for participation was inconvenient given that it was the end of the academic year when schools are very pre-occupied. In addition, I explored a variety of literature that defines and describes peer mentoring and decided it was most appropriate to propose a new definition. Despite providing a definition which aimed to encompass all varieties of peer mentoring, I wondered whether schools labelled their intervention differently and they therefore thought they were not eligible to participate.

5.5.2.2 Participant Sample

As described in chapter three, Peer Mentoring Coordinators (or equivalent) were responsible for selecting interview participants. Given that I used a purposive sample it was not necessary to select a statistically representative sample however I had hoped for representation from each year group and an equal number of male and female peer mentors and mentees. However relinquishing control of participant selection to the two Co-ordinators resulted in a disproportionate number of female mentees being interviewed that is, no male mentees participated in the semi structured interviews. Similarly, although schools had indicated that students in Year 7 through to year 12 received mentoring, mentees from years 9 and 10 were not selected for interviewing.

I am mindful that critics could argue that the purposive sampling used in this research decreased the generalisability of my findings as the interview participants and the sample

size were not representative of the peer mentoring population. In addition I am aware that the subjective nature of purposive sampling can be prone to researcher bias or in this case, Co-ordinator bias, which again could raise concerns regarding the representativeness of the sample. It is unknown whether the judgements used by the two Co-ordinators were appropriate which could therefore weaken my argument that the current research achieved theoretical and logical generalisation; I acknowledge a possibility that a different sample could have yielded different findings.

It is my view that as the interview participants had had positive experiences of peer mentoring they were therefore able to describe aspects of effective peer mentoring which was the aim of the research and why the BONDS model emerged. While imbalance in the sample was not perceived to have negatively biased the research findings, a carefully managed selection of interview participants could have resulted in a more evenly distributed sample. I could have been more involved in the selection process or more explicit by providing Peer Mentoring Co-ordinators (or equivalent) with written confirmation of my sample choice and by declining and requesting different interview participants. In considering the reasons why I did not employ these possibilities, I concluded that it was due to my lack of confidence to take up the role of research practitioner and my concerns about inconveniencing the Co-ordinators. I was worried I would appear inexperienced and therefore incompetent. Having completed this research, I feel I would be more confident to voice my preferences in any future research.

5.5.2.3 Consent

Feeling of apprehension regarding the return of consent forms from parents/carers unable and/or indifferent to providing written permission, prompted me to issue parent/carer opt-out forms and to obtain assent via participant consent forms. This method of gaining informed consent was regarded by the researcher to be successful as it resulted in 10 students completing a consent form and participating in a semi structured interview. However at the request of a parent and in-line with ethical stipulations (BPS, 2010; HCPC, 2007), the personal information and interview recordings of one participant was withdrawn on the grounds that the interviewee's additional needs prevented them from giving informed consent.

Obtaining informed consent from interview participants only, achieved the desired outcome of maximising the opportunities for all appropriate students to be involved in the research if they so wished and provided a sufficient number of interview participants. However this experience of withdrawing data highlighted issues related to the mental capacity of 'vulnerable' groups to provide informed consent. In accordance with the Principle of Respect for the Autonomy and Dignity of Persons and the Code of Human Research Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2010), psychologist researchers should ensure that participants from vulnerable groups (such as children, persons lacking capacity, and those in a dependent or unequal relationship) are given sufficient opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated outcomes of any research participation. I was aware that this young person had additional needs and after engaging in initial dialogue deemed him/her capable of understanding what it was they were consenting to (BPS, 2010) therefore I did not feel it necessary to obtain parental consent. While I stand by my original decision not to utilise

consent forms, telephoning the parents/carers of selected participants beforehand to explain all aspects of the research and to verify their agreement may have alleviated any apprehension about their child's participation in the research. An additional step I could have been to contact the parent of the withdrawn interview participant to explore the concern and provide reassurance, in doing so I may have been able to retain the data. Overall withdrawing this participant's data was disappointing as he/she had made some valuable contributions during the interview.

5.5.3 Personal Reflections

The research process has been an emotional rollercoaster; at times feeling completely enthusiastic and passionate about my research and at other times feeling completely deflated and disengaged with the process.

I began this research feeling very inexperienced particularly as I had not undertaken research since my undergraduate level, ten years ago. Due to my own drivers and assumptions about peer mentoring I wanted to ensure that the results of the research were useful and spent a lot of time contemplating the purpose and aim of my research. I often became stuck in wanting to find the 'right way' to proceed and/or the 'right words' to convey my message. Throughout the process I understood more about my learning and study style, in particular, I came to accept that my optimum work/study time is late at night. The greatest challenge was balancing the demands of the research with those of my placement and my personal life.

I thoroughly enjoyed being in a mainstream secondary school environment and engaging with the young people I interviewed. It reminded me of my previous role and of the young people I have had the pleasure of working. This phase of the research reignited my passion for peer mentoring and my belief that this was a worthwhile piece of research.

Various stages of the research process stirred up feelings of anxiety and uncertainty; however on reflection I see that it was the experience of acting as a container and of being contained that help me to complete my research thesis. I was fortunate to have had personal, professional and academic support to provide me with nurturing experiences I needed to contain my anxieties, self-doubt and desire to give up.

5.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research stemming from the findings of this research might usefully:

- Replicate this research in different mainstream secondary schools and compare and contrast the findings with the current research findings.
- Apply the BONDS model to peer mentoring programmes operating in different phases of education, for instance the primary phase, sixth form and/or college.
- Explore whether the BONDS model can be reliably applied to other peer support interventions
- Explore the impact of peer mentoring when mainstream secondary schools use the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework

5.7 DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Dissemination within the Educational Psychology Service will involve a presentation to local Educational Psychologists (EPs) of the research process and findings (July 2015) followed by an open discussion of the opportunities and challenges for EP practice in light of the findings. It is hoped that the initial discussion will provide a starting point for ongoing reflection and dialogue with key members of staff and EPs around the findings of the research.

The Principal EP has requested a copy of the thesis and a summary highlighting the main findings and implications. With the PEPs consent, this summary, along with the recommended BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework will be sent to all local secondary schools and EPs. Additionally, it will be available on request for anyone else that expresses an interest. All dissemination within the Local Authority will preserve the anonymity of the ten (one withdrew after interviewing) young people who were interviewed.

Submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal will be considered during the year following the completion of this research. In addition the current researcher intends to share these findings with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation with the view to publish the research on their website. If publication occurs, the anonymity of the local authority in which the research was conducted will be maintained.

5.8 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Using critical realism as a guiding epistemological position, the study sought to bring school based peer mentors and mentees voice to the forefront, by exploring their view of what works. The study aimed to offer a framework for understanding and developing peer mentoring relationships and to inform safe and effective peer mentoring practice in secondary schools. Data was captured from semi structured interviews with 9 secondary-aged students whom had participated in their schools peer mentoring programme during the academic year 2013/14. Analysis of these interviews yielded the BONDS theoretical model of effective peer mentoring in mainstream secondary schools. This model provides a contextual theory/explanatory framework with which to understand effective peer mentoring as it describes the relationships between abstract/emergent ideas grounded in the views of nine peer mentors and mentees attending one of two secondary schools in a County in South East England.

The BONDS model provides the building blocks for effective peer mentoring in secondary schools. It addresses the delivery and management of peer mentoring within the context of peer support interventions and secondary educational settings. It asserts that mere participation does not lead to positive outcomes, instead there are a number of processes which best facilitate the development of effective peer mentoring. The model proposes that effective peer mentoring is synonymous with a nurturing experience, best understood as an interaction between relationship-level and system-level elements of the programme. The nurturing experience is characterised by the feeling of security bestowed by a relationship with boundaries, the feeling of being at ease and therefore open to engaging with the

programme, the mentors abilities to build a safe and supportive relationship, the feeling of being able to relate to someone with a shared experience of the system and a feeling of trust in the process/school staff.

By drawing on Bion's (1962) notion of 'containment', the findings develop our understanding of the nurturing experience and highlight the connection between emotions and learning, particularly during adolescence. The findings also point to the role of the whole school system in providing a culture that supports and promotes the social and emotional wellbeing of its young people and staff. In addition the findings indicate that peer mentors and mentees have a role to play in the selection and matching process. Schools can use the BONDS model as a checklist to evaluate their performance in the five areas of the model. As a result the researcher devised the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework to assist schools with this.

Grounded in the findings of the current research, 3 key recommendations are proposed for sustaining and improving peer mentoring experiences and outcomes in mainstream secondary schools:

- **Recommendation 1:** Foster a Nurturing School Culture
- **Recommendation 2:** Work Collaboratively with Peer Mentors and Mentees
- **Recommendation 3:** Use the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework

EPs are encouraged to help secondary schools to evaluate and monitor their peer mentoring programmes in relation to the findings of this research, the BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework and the APS (2014) requirements (where applicable) and where possible publish

their own practice-based evidence on the effectiveness of peer mentoring in secondary schools.

Work on the Literature Review commenced prior to the current 2010-2015 Coalition Government, however it is hoped that the new Conservative Government will be as supportive as the 2000-2005 Labour Government in prompting peer mentoring as a sustainable early intervention in mainstream secondary schools. Peer mentoring has the potential to be a powerful personal development tool for the young people involved and a cost effective early intervention for secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1: INTIAL CONTACT WITH SCHOOLS

Initial Email

Re. DOCTORAL RESEARCH: Peer Mentoring in Secondary Schools/Provisions

For the attention of: to the most appropriate member of staff/main contact involved with student/peer support.

Dear Sir/Madam

The purpose of this email is to invite your school to participate in important research into peer mentoring in secondary schools/provisions. This study is being conducted by Jessica Powell, Doctoral student at the Tavistock & Portman Trust and Trainee Educational Psychologist with Hertfordshire's Educational Psychology Service.

Peer mentoring, or components of it may also be described as peer tutoring, peer counselling, peer listening, befriending, buddying and many other alternative terms. For the purpose of this research, peer support programmes that fall within the definition below are deemed relevant.

'A one-to-one relationship, between an experienced student (mentor) and a less experienced student (mentee) in which the mentor voluntarily gives their time to support and encourage the mentee to learn and develop emotionally, socially and/or academically. The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.' (Cartwright, 2005; Knowles & Parsons, 2009; O'Hara, 2011)

To participate in the initial phase of this research, please use this definition to help you answer the following question: **Has there been a peer mentoring programme operating in the school during the academic year 2013/14?** Please click the blue bar above to provide a 'Yes' or 'No' response OR reply to this email stating 'Yes' or 'No'.

If you provided a 'Yes' response, please continue by completing this [short online questionnaire] about the school's peer mentoring programme by 15th July 2014. It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is available in a paper-based format on request.

See the attached 'Research Information Sheet' for more information about this research. If you would like further details or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and participation in this research.

Kind regards,

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: Peer Mentoring in Secondary Schools/Provisions

Why is this study relevant? Peer mentoring has firmly found its place within UK schools over the last 15 years and is viewed favourably by those involved in its management and delivery. Research studies have highlighted the positive impact of peer mentoring particularly in relation to bullying, transitions, self-confidence and self-esteem and formalised systems of practice have been recommended to improve the impact and longevity of the programme. It is the researcher's view that the mentor-mentee relationship plays a fundamental role in the success or failure of a peer mentoring programme. By exploring 'What Works' from the perspective of peer mentors and mentees, this study aims to establish and espouse the positive aspects of mentoring relationships in order to maximise the impact of peer mentoring programmes.

Why should your school participate? Involvement in this study provides an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate how the school's peer mentoring programme measures up to the 10 quality elements of safe and effective mentoring as set by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF). In addition, involvement will provide peer mentors and mentees the opportunity to reflect on and talk openly about their mentoring experience and relationships. The mentor-mentee relationship plays a fundamental role in the success or failure of a peer mentoring programme. Therefore it is important to establish and espouse the positive aspects of these relationships in order to maximise the impact of the programme.

How will the study be conducted? This study will be carried out in two phases:

- In the first phase, a short online questionnaire will be used to gather information about the prevalence and elements of good practice present in Peer Mentoring Programmes within St Albans & Dacorum Secondary Schools.
- The second phase involves interviewing a small sample of peer mentors and mentees to gather their views on what facilitates and hinders peer mentoring relationships and affect outcomes. They will <u>not</u> be asked to share personal information or the content of their mentoring sessions. Interviews will take place at the student's school and will last no longer than 60 minutes. A follow-up focus group will be held with students to feedback the themes drawn from the interviews. Interviews and the focus group meeting will be audio-recorded.

Who else will have access to the information provide? All information will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal data will be held confidentially: it will be kept in lockable storage and computer files will be password protected. Personal data will not be used for any purpose other than for this study and it will be securely destroyed once this study is complete. Questionnaires completed online are initially received by the Information Management Team. Please note, that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations and will be covered by Hertfordshire's Data Protection Policy should it be necessary. Confidentiality issues and implications will be explained and discussed with all students involved.

Research findings will be reported in a Doctoral Thesis in which the identity of participants will be anonymised. On completion of the research (Summer 2015) a summary of the findings will be available on request.

Is participation compulsory? Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please be assured that a decision not to participate will not impact on the service received from the Educational Psychology Service. Your school, students and their parents/carers have the right to decide, either immediately or at any stage during the study, to withdraw their involvement and any unprocessed data supplied. Participants may withdraw without an obligation to give a reason and without disadvantage.

For more information, please feel free to email Jessica Powell, Trainee Educational Psychologist at Jessica.powell@hertfordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01442453904 / 07917067935.

Peer Mentoring Questionnaire

Please complete and submit by [xx.xx. 2014]

1. Name of School: …….

2. Name and role of main contact for Peer Mentoring:

   …….

3. Name and role of person completing this questionnaire if different to above?

   …….

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) provides 10 elements of safe and effective mentoring practice which provides an excellent framework for both developing and/or reviewing the school's Peer Mentoring Programme. For further information see http://www.mandbf.org/quality-standard.

4. For each element below, please indicate which statement best describes the status of the schools peer mentoring programme during the academic year 2013/14.

Please tick one for each element.

ELEMENTS	Fully Developed	Partially Developed	Plan to Develop	Do Not Plan to Develop
The peer mentoring programme has clear aims, objectives and outcomes				
There is an appropriate level of resources available to develop and sustain the project, including funding, management and staff				
There is a commitment to managing the safety of programme staff, mentees and mentors				
There is a clear process for the identification and referral of mentees				
The needs of service users are assessed in determining how mentoring can help them				
The recruitment and selection process for potential mentors is safe and effective				
Mentors receive appropriate induction and training so that they can provide effective support to mentees				
Support is provided to mentors to help them develop in their role				
There is a clear and consistent process in place for matching mentees with mentors				

Mentoring relationships are regularly monitored to ensure they are making progress and that outcomes are achieved				

5. Which year groups participated in the programme during the academic year 2013/14?

Please tick for mentors AND mentees.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Other
Mentors								
Mentees								

6. Is the school's Educational Psychologist involved in the peer mentoring programme?
   Yes No

The second phase involves interviewing a small sample of students involved in peer mentoring. (see 'Research Information Sheet' for more details)

7. Would the school be willing and able to participate in the second phase of this research?
   Yes No

8. Please add any additional comments you would like to make about peer mentoring?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION
All data gathered are held in confidence and no school or individual will be named.
A summary of the research findings will be available on request in Summary 2015.

APPENDIX 2: PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR QUESTIONS

1. What do the school call the programme?

2. Describe what it is?

3. How long has the peer mentoring programme been operating?

4. Qualitative information about the main objectives/aims and expected outcomes.
   -What is hope will be achieved?
   -What would you say are the aims?

5. What is the source of training provided for mentors?

6. What preparation/introduction are mentees given?

7. Total number of peer mentors and mentees typically involved in peer mentoring.

8. Approximate gender ration for peer mentors and mentee.

9. Selection, recruitment and matching of peer mentors

10. Referral/identification of mentees

11. Educational psychologist involvement
    -Do you see a role for EPs?

*Questions 3-10 are based on those used by Houlston, Smith and Jessel (2009) to elicit an overview of the use and characteristics of school-based peer support initiatives in UK schools.

APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-Structured Interview Script & Schedule

*Use 2 audio recorders (both recording at the same time)

Introduction:

Hello, my name is Jessica. Thank you for being here to take part in this interview with me.

The Research:

- I am a trainee Educational Psychologist and as part of my training I have chosen to research peer mentoring in secondary schools. My interest in this came about because I used to work in a secondary school as a Mentor and this area of peer support remains interesting to me.
- The purpose of my research is to gain an understanding of what you think makes peer mentoring relationships work and what things about the peer mentoring programme help quality relationships to develop and succeed.
- Ms Wright/Mr Fernandez chose you to take part in my research as you were a peer mentor/mentee last year.
- My research findings will be presented in a report in May 2015 and a summary will be available at the end of 2015.

The Interview:

- The interview will last between 30 to 45 minutes with a 15 minutes at the end to talk about your experience of the interview.
- There are no right or wrong answers, I am only interested in your opinions and experiences. Please answer the best you can.
- You do not have to tell me anything you do not want to. If at any time you do not want to answer a question, you only need to say so and I will move on to the next question.
- It is perfectly fine to interrupt me and/or ask me to explain anything you do not understand.
- We will hear my voice very little and hear your voice a lot.
- The interview will be audio-recorded so that I can concentrate on our conversation and because I would like to use accurate quotes within my report.

Participant Consent Form: Read and explain each item. Both sign it.

1. Read information sheet, had opportunity to ask questions
2. Audio recorded interviews inc. what will happen to audio recordings
3. Anonymity & Confidentiality inc. all data destroyed securely
4. Safeguarding i.e. exceptions and limitations
5. Right to Withdraw
6. Consent

Do you have any questions?

Warm-up:

*Probes: Anything more? / Could you go over that again? / What is your personal view on this? / Silence / Repeat back all or part of what the interviewee has said.

1. You were chosen to meet with me because you were involved in a peer support programme, which I call peer mentoring. A) What does your school call it? B) What do you call it?

2. Were you a peer mentor or mentee last year?

3. How many peer mentors/mentees did you have last year?

4. Can you tell me what you think [peer mentoring] is for?

5. What do you think a peer mentor/mentee would say it is for?

Main body of interview:

6. Please spend up to 5 minutes, writing and/or drawing in each of these two boxes any words, sentences, phrases or images that come to mind when you think about the peer mentoring programme and peer mentoring relationships.

7. Please tell me about the words, sentences, phrases and/or drawings you have put in each box.

Programme Related Prompts	Relationship Related Prompts
What do you think peer mentoring is? Tell me about: - Selection/recruitment/training/matching process - Sessions – content, location, resources - Objectives/impact/outcome – bullying, behaviour, achievement, attendance, transition, self-esteem and confidence, emotions, personal development, attainment - Support – adult/peer - Management/monitoring/evaluation	Tell me about your: - Peer mentor/mentee characteristics - skills, personality, commitment, gender, age Tell me: - Why you think you were matched to your peer mentor/mentee - Why you think your peer mentor/mentee was selected for peer mentoring - What has been good about being a peer mentor/mentee - What has not been good about being a peer mentor/mentee - What you think about your relationship with your peer mentor/mentee - What you hoped to gain from being a peer mentor/mentee

8. Of the things we have spoken about and your experience, what do you think helped your peer mentoring relationship? * Prompts: is there anything about your peer mentor/mentee/programme that has helped your relationship?

9. Of the things we have spoken about and your experience, what do you think did not help your peer mentoring relationship? * Prompts: is there anything about your peer mentor/mentee/programme that did not help your relationship?

10. Tell me about anything else you think could help to make the peer mentoring programme better? * Use programme related prompts above and/or completed first thoughts sheet.

11. Tell me about anything else you think could help to make the peer mentoring relationships better? * Use relationship related prompts above and/or completed first thoughts sheet.

Cool-off / Debrief:

- Is there anything else about peer mentoring that you think is important that has not been covered in this interview?

- How was this experience for you?
  - Prompts: Did you enjoy it? Were there any difficult questions? How did you find the activity? Are there any questions you think I should have asked?

- Do you have any questions?

Closure:

Thank you very much for helping me and giving up your time. I will not be taking any further action other than to examine this interview for themes. My email address and telephone number is on the participant research information sheet, please contact me if you think of anything you want to add to this interview or if you have any questions. You can also speak to Ms Wright/Mr Fernandez if you need to.

<u>Alternative closure if I have any safeguarding concerns</u>: Thank you very much for helping me and giving up your time. You have told things today which I feel a bit concerned about, so I need to share my concerns with Ms Wright/Mr Fernandez. I would like you to come with me to tell Ms Wright/Mr Fernandez but you don't have to if you do not want to.

*Keep audio recorder going until the mentor/mentee has left the room.

Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Peer Mentoring in Secondary Schools

Name of Researcher: Jessica Powell

Please tick if you agree

1. I have read the 'Participant Research Information Sheet' giving details of the study on peer mentoring and I have been given a copy of it to keep. I have been able to ask questions about the research and my involvement in it and have had my questions answered. ☐
2. I understand that all interviews will be audio-recorded and that I may be quoted in the final report. ☐
3. I understand that my involvement in this study and my information will remain confidential (this means private). I understand that my name or my school will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality. ☐
4. I understand that the researcher must share my information if they believe there to be a risk of harm to myself or others. ☐
5. I understand that my involvement in the study is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw (leave) at any time during the research without giving a reason and that information related to my involvement will be destroyed. ☐
6. I hereby freely and fully consent to take part in the study on peer mentoring which I fully understand. ☐

Your name (in CAPITALS): ……

Your signature: …… Date: ……

Researcher: Jessica Powell

Signature: …… Date: ……

APPENDIX 4: TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust
Directorate of Education and Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London NW3 5BA
Tel: 020 7435 7111
Fax: 020 7447 3837
Web: www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk

Confidentiality Agreement

I, xxxxxxxxxxxx, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentations received from Jessica Powell related to her research study titled: 'Peer Mentoring in Secondary Schools'.

Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents.

2. To not disclose any information received for profit, gain or otherwise.

3. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Jessica Powell.

4. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back-up devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed): xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Transcriber's signature: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Date: 21/12/2014

APPENDIX 5: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Valid Consent & Withdrawal	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"…researchers should ensure that every person from whom data are gathered…consents freely to the process on the basis of adequate information. They should be able, during the data gathering phase, freely to withdraw or modify their consent and to ask for the destruction of all or part of the data that they have contributed."* (BPS, 2010, p. 15) This research/er will: • Provide schools, parents, peer mentors and mentees with an information sheet that is explicit and understandable, offering a clear statement of all aspects of the research and their participation. The language will be clear and accessible and free of technical terms. Potential participants will be given sufficient time to absorb and consider the information. • Assume implied consent from the secondary schools to provide details about their peer mentoring programme by choosing to input responses to the online questionnaire. As conducting the interview involves direct contact with children under 16 years, parents/guardians will be informed about the nature of the study and they will be able to opt their child out of the research. • Through discussion, explore and check that all peer mentors and mentees understand what they have consented to and monitor peer mentor and mentee agreement by paying careful attention to verbal and/or non-verbal signs that they are not willing to continue. • Obtain voluntary consent and document all consent in an auditable record by providing two copies of the consent form; one to be retained and the other for the consenting participant, and/or their parent/guardian. The consent form will contain details of the person to contact in the case of any queries. All records of consent, including audio-recordings, will be stored securely. • Will not exert pressure on participants to take part in or remain in the research and will ensure participants and their parents/guardian(s) are aware that they have the right-to-withdraw from the research at any time. All participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage. This will be stated explicitly within the information sheets, consent form and questionnaires. If a participant withdraws, all their information will be destroyed in accordance to data protection procedures. • Seek permission to record the interviews and use quotes.

Deception	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"This Code expects all psychologists to seek to supply as full information as possible to those taking part in their research, recognising that if providing all of that information at the start of a person's participation may not be possible for methodological reasons."* (BPS, 2010, p. 24) This research/er will: • Provide a full disclosure of the nature, purpose and anticipated outcomes of the research to all relevant school staff, parents/guardian(s), peer mentors and mentees.
Risk	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"Risk can be defined as the potential physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project may generate."* (BPS, 2010, p. 13) This research/er will: • Be friendly, approachable and professional at all times. • Arrange for the interviews and focus groups to take place in a public but confidential space. • Debrief participants at the end and be available to discuss any distress caused post-interview and if necessary encourage participants to seek alternative support. • Provide details of who to contact should a participant wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the research.
Debriefing	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"…when the research data gathering is completed, especially where any deception or withholding of information has taken place, it is important to provide an appropriate debriefing for participants."* (BPS, 2010, p. 26) This research/er will: • Offer 15 minutes at the end of each interview to discuss the experience with the peer mentor and mentees and remind them of contact details if any questions or concerns arise at a later time.
Giving Advice	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"In some kinds of investigation the giving of advice is ethical if this forms an intrinsic part of the research, is agreed with the participant and has been subject to ethics review in advance."* (BPS, 2010, p. 23) This research/er will: • Will not provide advice about educational, personality, behavioural or health issues, instead participants will be directed to speak with the school's Headteacher, INCo or SENCo

Confidentiality	The BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) states: *"Subject to the requirements of legislation, including the Data Protection Act, information obtained from and about a participant during an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance."* (BPS, 2010, p. 22) This research/er will: • Treat participant information confidentially and preserve their anonymity. Information such as the local authority, school names, staff names, participant detail etc. will not be shared, appear in the thesis and all identifiable information will be password protected and/or stored securely in a location separate from linked data. • Transcripts and notes will be anonymised; they will be coded so answers can be removed from the database. • Require a Freelance Transcriber to sign a confidentiality agreement. • Emphasise expectations of confidentiality between participants in the Focus Groups at the start of the group and on the consent form. • Comply with Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, where appropriate.

APPENDIX 6: ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2548
Fax: 020 7447 3837
www.tavi-port.org

24.03.14

Jessica Powell
8 Circle Court
1 Berkeley Road
London
NW9 9DN

Re: Research Ethics Application

Title: Cross-age peer mentoring in secondary schools: An exploration of 'What Works' from the perspective of peer mentors and mentees.

I am pleased to inform you that the Trust Research Ethics Committee has formally approved your application.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Louis Taussig

Secretary to the Trust Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX 7: APS REQUIREMENTS

Mentoring & Befriending Foundation: Approved Provider Standard (2014)
The national benchmark for safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending

The APS provided by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation comprises of 10 requirements across 4 key areas supporting safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending. Each of the 10 requirements focuses on the key management and operational areas that underpin the safety and effectiveness of any mentoring or befriending project.

Four key areas	10 requirements
1. Management and operation	1. The mentoring/befriending project has clear aims, objectives and outcomes
	2. There is an appropriate level of resources available to develop and sustain the project, including funding, management and staff
	3. There is a commitment to managing the safety of project staff, service users and mentors and befrienders
2. Service users (mentees and befriendees)	4. There is a clear process for the identification and referral of service users
	5. The needs of service users are assessed in determining how mentoring and befriending can help them
3. Mentors and befrienders	6. The recruitment and selection process for potential mentors and befrienders is safe and effective
	7. Mentors and befrienders receive appropriate induction and training so that they can provide effective support to service users
	8. Support is provided to mentors and befrienders to help them develop in their role
4. The mentoring and befriending relationship	9. There is a clear and consistent process in place for matching service users with mentors and befrienders
	10. Mentoring and befriending relationships are regularly monitored to ensure they are making progress and that outcomes are achieved

APPENDIX 8: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

File name: **Voice 002**
Audio Length: **0:26:50**

Interviewer: Okay, lovely. So, can you… so I call it peer mentoring, um, is that what you call it?

Respondent: Just yeah, mentoring.

Interviewer: Just mentoring, okay. And could you tell me what you think mentoring is for?

Respondent: Um, it's where you help somebody to maybe progress in an area that they're struggling in. As like an elder, you help someone who's potentially… well not always, but can be potentially younger than you, mainly. Um, yeah, to help them improve in something they're struggling with, like in school and subjects and…

Interviewer: And what do you think a mentee would say it's for?

Respondent: Um, to… yeah to address a problem or an issue that they're struggling with, and they look for someone who might know more about that relevant area to help them

Interviewer: And have you ever been a mentee?

Respondent: Um, I don't think I have, no.

Interviewer: And when you were… you were a mentor last year?

Respondent: Yeah, this time last year.

Interviewer: Are you a mentor this year?

Respondent: Uh no, not this year.

Interviewer: And last year when you were a mentor, how many mentees did you have?

Respondent: Uh just one.

Interviewer: Just one?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how long did you meet with them for?

Respondent: Um, it was… I think it was a couple of times a week for about a month or so.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, lovely. Okay, so the next activity I'd like you to do is on this piece of paper is to just write or draw any images, words, phrases that come to your mind that you think are related to peer mentoring.

Respondent: Just words or…?

Interviewer: Yeah, so just very randomly things that come to your mind, and anything that you think's relevant.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: I'm going to pause these in the meantime.

Respondent: Yeah, I've finished.

Interviewer: Yeah? Okay, so could you talk to me about each- each of your words and…?

Respondent: Yeah, sure. Um, so I put 'help', which is obviously you know 'cause you're helping somebody else. Um, I put 'struggle' which is because the other person in a time, you know, when they're struggling maybe with the certain area.

Interviewer: Okay, I'll stop you. With 'help', what- what do you mean by 'help'? Like what kinds of things would you be doing that--

Respondent: Uh, like advice, or like offering empathy, or understanding, which is another word. Um, so yeah it's support, which is what I put as well, which is another form of help. Um, I put like 'revision and timetable', that's because the mentoring I did was specifically helping uh like a Year 11 student towards his GCSEs. So that's why I put those words, because that was sort of specifically related to what I did.

Interviewer: And how did you help with those things?

Respondent: Um, so like offered… um helped him to make like revision timetables, and like allocating certain times for certain subjects, and worked on what he was struggling in, what he was doing well in, um, and even talking about you know post-16, what he was going to do afterwards, 'cause he was quite undecided so just helping him with that sort of area.

Interviewer: Okay, you said something really interesting there, actually, about also helping him with things he was good at--

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: -- not just the things he was--

Respondent: Yeah, because if you still… even if you're like… because, you know, you talk a lot of GCSEs, just 'cause you're good at one subject doesn't mean you can… or you're good at certain subjects doesn't mean you can just sort of exclude them. And because they still have to… you still have to work for it. Just 'cause, say, something's your best subject, doesn't mean you can you know put it to one side and just assume that you'll pass it. You still have to… something you have to work on.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, thank you.

Respondent: Um, so yeah 'advice', like 'monitor', um--

Interviewer: What do you mean by 'monitor'?

Respondent: So like monitoring progress, and making sure they're doing the right things.

Interviewer: Mhm. How did you do that?

Respondent: Um--

Interviewer: Or how could somebody do that, I guess?

Respondent: Um, again with the revision timetable, and you know almost setting out your week beforehand. Uh yeah, just making sure there's appropriate time for each thing and making sure you stick to those sort of guidelines.

Interviewer: And did you find… did your… do you think your mentee found that helpful?

Respondent: Yeah, because you… yeah you get a sort of balance for subjects and you work out what um… yeah you work out what you need to do and yeah it sort of organises everything a bit more.

Interviewer: So it helped the mentee to organise themselves?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else?

Respondent: Um, yeah I just put like 'track', which is sort of similar to 'monitor', is tracking. Uh, 'progress', 'empathy'. So empathy was sort of because I've been in that situation myself and um like I said I haven't been mentee-ed but you always do ask for advice on how to… and having done A-levels as well, it's on a bit of a harder basis. Um you sort of understand what uh the person I was mentoring was going through, so you… in that way you can offer your advice, and yeah it makes it a bit more easier, because you've experienced it yourself, so you can offer like sort of solid advice on it.

Interviewer: Yeah. And do you think the mentee finds that important as well?

Respondent: Uh yeah, because you sort of… he… when I mentored him, if… it's going to be a lot more useful if the person who's talking to you has relevant knowledge of you know the subject area of what you're talking about. If you're like looking for advice on something, and someone talks to you, um, that hasn't experienced it or doesn't have knowledge of it themself, then it might not be as creditable.

Interviewer: Right, okay. What do you mean by 'creditable'?

Respondent: As in like… say like valid, as in it might not be sort of… so if you ask someone, you know, can you give me advice on, say, like psychology, and they don't really know anything about psychology, you wouldn't, like, you wouldn't say it was creditable because it's not… they don't actually know what they're talking about. Whereas if they, you know, they've studied psychology, then it would be because they actually know what they're talking about.

Interviewer: So is there something there about the mentee needs to… I don't want to put my own word in, but trust that you're giving them the right information?

Respondent: Yeah, the right guidance and information, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And then 'consistency', did you say something…?

Respondent: Yeah, 'consistency'. Um, yeah as in it's got to be consistent, both as in what the mentee is doing in terms of his revision and you know, and then consistent as in what I'm telling him as well, as in what to do. So that's got to be consistent throughout the mentoring. It can't sort of change and yeah, so…

Interviewer: And trust?

Respondent: Um, sort of he's got to be able to, you know… if you… if there's something that is going wrong, like a particular subject that you know he isn't doing very well in, or he's got to be able to- be able to be open to you and sort of say, you know, I'm having these problems. Whereas if he feels like you know he doesn't really trust you that much, he's not going to talk to you like openly, so it makes it a bit harder to understand where the problems lie.

Interviewer: Can you think of any other reasons why trust might be important to… well, to both of you? The mentee and the mentor.

Respondent: Yeah, um…

Interviewer: Or is trust… does trust go one… is it just for the mentee to trust the mentor?

Respondent: Um, no there's got to be a bit of trust from the mentor to the mentee that what he's telling him to do is actually helping him… or advising him to do, he actually goes away and does it. So, there's got to be that sort of element of trust that you know he will take on board the advice um that he's been given.

Interviewer: Mhm. Yeah, I think you're right, it's definitely a two-way relationship in that sense, isn't it?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And I quite like this track and monitor, because I hadn't- I hadn't really thought of that myself. Then you were saying there that you think that for a

mentee, that would be quite important in terms of helping them to organise themselves?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And then if- if a mentee didn't do as you would advise them, what would happen next? Or what would you do next? What would be important to happen?

Respondent: Well, you've just got to sort of outline the implications of… you've got to look at the bigger picture at the end of it, and say, "Look, if you want to, you know, do well in your GCSEs and you want to, you know, progress to where you want to be, you should do it." Like, it is advisable and you've got to sort of outline the implications of him not doing what's recommended in comparison to, you know, if he does it, he will get the sort of out… um, desired outcome.

Interviewer: And do you feel that you got the desired outcome out of your mentee?

Respondent: Um yeah, he seemed… well, I don't… you don't know if… what they actually do when they go away, but he seemed like he was cooperating with everything, so yeah.

Interviewer: And what do you think helped him to, or- or made him cooperate with you?

Respondent: I think I got on with him quite well, actually, yeah. Um, yeah, I think we got on well, and he sort of listened to what I had to say and he took it on board and yeah, I think that helped.

Interviewer: And why do you think you got on well? Or what helped you to get on well?

Respondent: Um, I'm not too sure to be honest. I just sort of… it just felt comfortable. I didn't feel awkward with him, you know, when we met and stuff. Um, it went quite smoothly, so yeah…

Interviewer: How were you introduced to each other?

Respondent: Um, the sixth form sort of just did… so they had the mentors and the mentees, and the sixth form office just paired… with Key Stage 4, they just paired everyone up.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So they just sort of gave us a quick, um, briefing at the start, and then they read out who was going together. And then yeah, so we just started there.

Interviewer: And then did you go and… how did you meet them?

Respondent: Yeah, so um, so we… so it was in registration time. So that first one when they put us together, said, "Right, you've got, you know, 15 to 20 minutes to just quickly talk, get to know each other. And then, um, you've got to sort of pick a time to do it once a week, or twice a week, it depends. Um, and then yeah just, meet back in the same place." So we just spoke about what time suited us best for both of us.

Interviewer: And was there anything about your mentee that made your relationship work, do you think?

Respondent: Um, yeah, he wasn't like difficult. 'Cause I know- I know some people will be difficult, and like, you know, 'cause some people who were put there because you know they don't wanna be at school and like they… that sort of reflects in the mentoring from other people that have spoken to me. They've said, you know, that they didn't want to be there, they made it really difficult, they didn't cooperate. But mine wasn't, he was… he just, yeah, just got on with it sort of thing.

Interviewer: And what do you mean by 'difficult' and 'cooperate'?

Respondent: As in like, you can tell if someone wants to be there or not, and sort of actually wants to do better. And they're sort of, you know, they're sort of enthusiastic about what you're telling them to do, and um, yeah they sort of just do, like listen and… yeah, they get involved, basically.

Interviewer: Yeah. And when a mentee is allocated… I don't know how they're selected to be a mentee, do they have to do… be part of the programme, or could they say, "Actually, I don't want to do it"?

Respondent: Um yeah quite a few people didn't turn up, but the… like sort of the head of years… so like the head of Year 11 will sort of say, "Look, you've been put on the mentoring for a reason, so you should go to it." And I imagine… I don't

know what happened to the ones who didn't turn up, but there would have been some sort of punishment. But yeah, they were put in it for a reason, so the teacher's say you know, you should go because it will be beneficial.

Interviewer: Because I was thinking, there was something quite interesting about mentees who are difficult and uncooperative, but still attending. So what do you think that might be about?

Respondent: I think it's sort of… it's… they- they go, you know, they don't want to be punished for not going, but they sort of just go and sulk and you know just sit there and cross… like fold their arms sort of thing. Um, but yeah, they- they sort of go just- just because they have to, not because they want to be there, or because they want to do better. So it's more of just a getting out of punishment than actually going through their own will, I'd say.

Interviewer: Yeah. And do you know of any relationships where that's changed? Where the- where the mentee perhaps started off like that, but things improved?

Respondent: Um, I think there was a couple that like… because there was quite a few of us doing it. Um, like I said it wasn't with mine, but there was a couple, like you know the first two or three, they just didn't turn up, and obviously as they get more and more in trouble for not turning up, I think they have to, and they have to just sort of try and get on with it and accept that they've got to do it.

Interviewer: So the mentee has to accept, or the mentor has to accept?

Respondent: No, the mentee has to accept that they have to go. They've been put on it for a reason, sort of thing.

Interviewer: That must be incredibly hard as a mentor then--

Respondent: Mm.

Interviewer: -- to have somebody in front of you who doesn't really want to be there--

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: -- and aren't interested in being there.

Respondent: Yeah. Um, yeah I mean it was only for, like I said, 15 to 20 minutes a couple of times a week, but yeah, it would still be hard if you're trying to help someone out and they're just completely not interested. Um, but it would be even worse if you turn up and they're just not there.

Interviewer: Yeah! Well, I don't know if it would be worse, actually, it might even be better.

Respondent: Mm, yeah, that happened to quite a few people.

Interviewer: And have you got any thoughts about what, you know, if- if that… if you were in that situation, what would you do to try and make that relationship better?

Respondent: Um, I think you've just got to keep working at it, to be honest. You've got to say, "Look, you know, it's- it's"… and I think you've just got to highlight that it's for their own good, and like, for example, I'd be doing it just out of, you know, generosity or like um… know what I mean, say, "I don't really want to be here either, but like I'm helping you and you should appreciate." And you've just got to sort of make them realise what people are doing for them, um and that it's- it's for their own good and it might, you know, seem boring or whatever, but in the long run, it will be really beneficial. So that's what I'd say, just offer advice on why they're here and how it's good for them.

Interviewer: Yeah. And what about… like what are the benefits of peer mentoring? So, in terms of you know, why would a mentee talk to a peer mentor as opposed to somebody else?

Respondent: Um, well I think… what say like teachers or something?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, um I don't know. I think when you're lower down the school, like it's not a problem in sixth form, but I think the teacher-student relationship is a lot less weak, I'd say. Like not… very few students will approach a teacher if they have a problem in like Key Stage 3 or 4, whereas in sixth form, you know, you talk to your teachers all the time. Um, so I think maybe if you can't get the advice you want, or you don't feel comfortable asking for advice from teachers, then maybe it's a good alternative to get like, say,

motivation, or advice… yeah from like someone maybe a bit more your own age, so it's a bit more understandable and easy to talk to.

Interviewer: So, being a similar age makes it easier?

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah, you just have that sort of common, you know, denominator sort of thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, of age?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything… any other reasons why they might find you easier to talk to?

Respondent: No, just similarities I'd say, to be honest. And like, again, recently been through the whole GCSE things. Um, yeah, just similarities, I'd say it's based on, to be honest.

Interviewer: Did you and your mentee have any other similarities?

Respondent: Uh yeah, we did actually chat about other stuff sometimes. You know, if we finished a couple of minutes early like with the whole like timetable, and we had a few minutes left just to talk about like football and stuff, you know, sort of boy things.

Interviewer: [Laughter] Boy things. So it sounds like you had quite a structured--

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: -- your time with him was quite structured? You'd do so much of monitoring or work--

Respondent: Yeah, talk about like how the last week went, what he's going to do this week, you know, look at the timetable, what he's allocated, how… like homework, what's going well, what's not going well. So yeah, it was quite structured, and then if we ever finished early, we had a couple of minutes left.

Interviewer: Yeah. I love that you… that you do the bit that's… what's good. I really like that.

Respondent: Yeah, ‘cause it’s important.

Interviewer: Yeah, it is. Why do you think it’s important?

Respondent: Because you don’t want to go to like one of these sessions and just constantly be, you know, this is awful, this is awful, this is awful. You want some positivity in the talk because it’s- it’s a trigger on the mind. If you’re constantly being negative it- it almost brings… you know, he’s going to go away and think, “Oh, if I go back there, I’m just going to constantly be talking negative,” and it actually creates like a sort of downwards effect on mood like- like the brain, um, so if you include some positivity, if you’re talking positive, you’ll think back to that and you’ll think, actually yeah, you know, we spoke about good and bad. It wasn’t just, you know, bad, bad, bad the whole time.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think I agree, I think you’re absolutely right. It’s really important to have the balance--

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: -- of both.

Respondent: Exactly.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, and I had a question and I’ve forgotten it now. I should write them down! It’ll come back to me, I’m sure. So, of the things that we’ve spoken about, and- and you know thinking about your experience as well, is there anything that you think really helped to build your relationship?

Respondent: Mm…

Interviewer: Like key things that you think were really important.

Respondent: I’d go back to that word I wrote, ‘consistency’. The fact that it was thorough throughout, um, you know he didn’t ever not turn up, or I didn’t ever not turn up. It was sort of… and that’s what puts the trust back… um yeah puts trust into it a bit. ‘Cause you know, you’re going to be there, you’re going to be sorting things out, and you’re going to be helping each other, or, mainly me helping him. But um, yeah, sort of that consistency that was always there, I thought helped.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. And is there anything that um, perhaps that we spoke about or that we haven't spoken about yet, that you think didn't help your relationship?

Respondent: Um, not… in terms of our relationship, no. But I'm like… because I'm going to talk about like sort of confounding variables, um, because we all did it… all the… usually there was all the mentees in the um same room at the same time, because when we said, "Do you want to pick a time?" they usually… it was usually a morning registration when neither sixth form or Year 11 had anything going on like assemblies.

And the only problem I found with that was there was a lot of noise going around everywhere, um which didn't directly affect my and his relationship, but it- it's sort of it's a bit distracting. Um so I think it could have been better maybe just to go in separate rooms or not all in one big area.

Interviewer: Do you think things would have been different if you'd got… if you had had a different… had a separate space to yourself?

Respondent: Um, again no, like the structure would've have been the same, what we talked about, what I helped him with. Um it would have been the same, it's just you have, you know, the occasional someone says something really loud and you have to look and it sort of interrupts it a bit. Um, yeah, sort of… I wouldn't say breaks it up, but you have a couple of seconds where you have to look around 'cause someone's being loud or…

Interviewer: Yeah. And is there anything else that didn't help?

Respondent: Um… no, nothing I can think of to be honest. It went pretty well, to be honest, yeah.

Interviewer: Could- could you tell me a bit about your sort of preparation for becoming a mentor?

Respondent: Uh, yeah, sure. So it was… I've always… it… so what, why- why I became a mentor, basically?

Interviewer: Yeah, I guess so. And then um how the school prepared you for it - did you have any training or talk or anything like that?

Respondent: Um, yeah we did. We had like a um… we had a talk and we had like handouts and we had a little folder of you know what should be said, what should be included, um, you know how… what to say if there was any problems, how far you can deal with it before, you know, a teacher has to get involved or something like that. Um, because I know sometimes in mentoring, you know, it could come out that oh he's having problems at home and this and that, and it can actually be like actually quite a serious problem.

I didn't have that, but I know there could have been like an example. So yeah, we had a folder which we like put notes into and made each week, and we had like talk… we had… um in P.S.E. we had like a talk about what's included, yeah, like what to talk about, that sort of stuff.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So yeah, we were sort of briefed on it first. They didn't just say, you know, "You're going to be a mentor. Go!"

Interviewer: Yeah, "Good luck!"

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And was that helpful?

Respondent: Yeah it was, because I was actually really nervous before 'cause we were told that um… so yeah, she said um, "Who wants to be a mentor?" And I put my name down. And then they already started talking about organising who was going to be with who, as in, you know, they started getting all the names in together. And I was like, "I have no idea what to do". And then they said, you know, "There'll be like a talk with how to do it," and it made… um, it was a lot more helpful.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So I wasn't as nervous after that, but before I was, because I was a bit panicky.

Interviewer: And do you think your- your relationship with your mentor would have been… your mentee would have been different if you hadn't had that sort of training?

Respondent: Um yeah, I do, I do. I think I would have just been a bit stumped. It might have been a bit more awkward because I didn't know what to talk about, and it… yeah, it might not have been as effective, 'cause I wouldn't know which sort of route to go down and how to help him, what to suggest. So yeah…

Interviewer: And how do you, um, think about… when you said 'effective' there, how would you know if it was effective or not effective?

Respondent: Um, well like when he came back each week and he said, you know, "It's helping me" or, you know, "I've improved in this" or "I've carried on doing well in this," you… like that's how I know, because you can say to him, you know, "Is it useful for you?" And he says, "Yeah, it's helping me, you know, I'm- I'm getting my homework done, you know, in the allocated time. I'm getting revision done. It's helping me in subjects," like all of that sort of stuff, you can tell. Or if you know he could have come back and said, "Actually, no, it's making no difference, you know, I'm not motivated to do it," that would be like not effective, so yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you still… do you know about what's happening with him now? Do you kind of keep in touch?

Respondent: Um, well he didn't actually do sixth form in the end, so he went off to college, so I don't see him anymore. But yeah, because that was one of his problems, he wasn't sure whether he- he wanted to play college at football or do sixth form. Because he was quite intelligent, and that was… um I think that's why he was put on mentoring, because you find that when people don't have sort of a goal to work towards, they often lose focus, and because he didn't have… he wasn't really sure what he wanted to do, he was starting to underperform. So yeah… but in the end he went to um college to play football, so…

Interviewer: Mm. So do you think you helped him to make that decision?

Respondent: I think so, yeah. Well, I'd like to hope so. Um, but yeah, I'd like to at least hope that I helped him do better in his subjects. I'm not entirely sure what grades he got, but yeah, I know he was predicted quite good, so…

Interviewer: Oh well done! [Laughter] It's not an easy feat! Okay, and can you tell me about anything else that you think would help to make your… to have made your peer relationship better?

Respondent: Um, apart from the like confined space or…?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Um, I'd say… I think like sort of… hm, I was going to say the time then, but I think we were given the right amount of time, maybe a couple of times a week, 20 minutes. I think that's good, because it gives them time to go away and work on it, and like I think if you… if it's any shorter, he hasn't… it's not really enough time to, you know, actually see if it's working. But any longer and it might, you know, start to drift off and, um… I'm just trying to think what else could have been improved. Hm, I was actually pretty happy with it overall to be honest--

Interviewer: Yeah, good.

Respondent: -- apart from… it went really well, um--

Interviewer: It sounds like it went well.

Respondent: Yeah, it was good. Um, compared to what I've heard from other people, it went a lot better than- than like theirs. Um, yeah. It was just the space really, like where… like the location of the mentoring, which was a bit of a problem for me. Um, but in terms of content itself, there wasn't anything wrong with it at all.

Interviewer: It sounds like, from what you've said, that the reason why it worked was because you… you're… I'm assuming you're quite structured yourself, and organised?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you kind of shared your skill with him, I guess.

Respondent: Yeah, sort of.

Interviewer: And- and helped him to develop his own ability to do that.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So there is something about the relationship being… as I said before, you sharing your skills with him, but also him being open to receiving your skills, I guess.

Respondent: Yeah, cooperative, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that's good. Okay. And is there anything that we haven't talked about that you think might be quite important?

Respondent: Mm, um, not… the only… I'd say another thing was with um… so we did the mentoring for a certain amount of time, until it like sort of led up to the exam, and then like that was it sort of thing. So like yeah, we helped like prepare for exams, but then that was it, like they sort of just cut it off. There wasn't any sort of… they didn't say, you know, if um if he starts to struggle again you can sort of go back to him, or you know, he can come back to you.

They sort of just left it as that, um, which he didn't anyway, so… 'cause he didn't sort of approach me again, or whatever, but they didn't sort of… there wasn't anything after the sort of time period where you were mentoring. They just sort of cut it off and said, you know, this is the last one, and that was it.

Interviewer: Okay. Are you saying that as a good thing or a bad thing?

Respondent: Um, no… yeah bad thing, because it wasn't… so say, you know, did the mentoring for a month, it was good for the first month, but then after the second month, went off track again. There wasn't like a… um another sort of you know, if- if problems start to reoccur, you can do it again. That was sort of it.

Interviewer: Okay, so you're saying it- it kind of just cuts too- too abruptly almost?

Respondent: Yeah. I think yeah, if you want to end it, and you know, you've- you've sort of offered all your advice and helped him, you know, given him the revision timetable, told him what to do, that's cool. Like if you… if he wants to go off and just do that. But then there wasn't like a, you know, like a check say

after a couple of months, “Oh how’s it going?” you know, “Do you need any more help?” It was just sort of left as that.

Interviewer: As that. And how would you envisage that kind of… in my mind, I’m calling it a follow-up.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: How would you envisage that? What would it look like, I guess? What would happen? What would you do?

Respondent: Even just another… even just a ten minute, five minute chat, you know, “How’s the last couple of months been?” um, “Do you need any more help?” and if no then, you know, fine. If they’re yes then maybe, you know, start it up again or just for a couple of weeks.

Interviewer: Yeah. I mean every school does it so different, it’s amazing, actually. It’s really interesting. But I think you’re right, it’s a shame when it just suddenly stops--

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: -- and- and it’s perhaps not fair on the mentee, or actually both of you, mentor or mentee.

Respondent: Yeah, I did the last one and then that was it. I haven’t really spoken to him since.

Interviewer: It’s a good- it’s a good point to raise. Do you think that the school would do something about that?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d hope so.

Interviewer: Hm. ‘Cause it’s always interesting to know, just out of curiosity, isn’t it?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What happens next and how they’re getting on?

Respondent: Yeah, that’s right.

Interviewer: And also for the mentee to be able to say… to celebrate them, you know, "Look how well I've done"--

Respondent: Yeah, like, "Thanks for that."

Interviewer: Or like you said, "I didn't do well, could you help me more?"

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So yeah, you're right. It's important.

Respondent: Mm.

Interviewer: Okay, is there anything else, you think that could make it better?

Respondent: Uh no, I think that's everything… everything's been covered.

Interviewer: Okay, well thank you very much!

Respondent: That's okay.

END AUDIO

APPENDIX 9: RECOMMENDED BONDS SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Date of Completion: _____ Date for Review: _____

5 Key Mechanisms	15 Characteristics	Rating Scale					If not yet 5, what will you do to move up 1 point on the scale?
BOUNDARIES within Peer Mentoring	There is a transparent and open matching process in which compatible students are paired together	1	2	3	4	5	
	Mentoring meetings are held regularly in a private space, are time-bound, structured and focused on the needs of the mentee	1	2	3	4	5	
	Peer mentors and mentees understand the expectations and limitations regarding confidentiality, safeguarding and interactions	1	2	3	4	5	
OPENNESS of the Mentee	Mentees are open and ready to receive support from their peer mentor	1	2	3	4	5	
	Mentees feel free of judgement and accepted by their peer mentor	1	2	3	4	5	
	Mentees recognise that they have similarities with their mentor and view them as a role model	1	2	3	4	5	
	Mentees understand the purpose of peer mentoring and are helped to reflect on the impact	1	2	3	4	5	

NURTURING EXPERIENCE	Peer mentors have the qualities, skills, abilities and knowledge to build a safe and supportive peer mentoring relationship	1	2	3	4	5	
	Peer mentors and mentees feel socially, emotionally and academically supported	1	2	3	4	5	
	The peer mentoring relationship is given sufficient time to develop	1	2	3	4	5	
DUAL EXPERIENCE of the school system	Peer mentors know the social, academic and organisational aspects of the school and have experienced the same/similar difficulties as their mentee	1	2	3	4	5	
	Peer mentors use their own educational experience/s to provide honest and realistic advice/guidance	1	2	3	4	5	
STAFF CONTACT with Peer Mentor	Programme staff have supportive and well established relationships with peer mentors	1	2	3	4	5	
	Programme staff select peer mentors based on prior knowledge of their positive attributes, academic success and desirable skills	1	2	3	4	5	
	The commitment and motivation of peer mentors is assessed prior to selection and they receive adequate training to fulfil the role	1	2	3	4	5	

APPENDIX 10: THE BONDS SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (2015) & THE MENTORING & BEFRIENDING FOUNDATION, APPROVED PROVIDER STANDARD (2014)

The BONDS Self-Evaluation Framework (2015)		The Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, Approved Provider Standard (2014)	
Five key mechanisms	**15 characteristics**	**Four key areas**	**10 requirements**
Boundaries within peer mentoring	1. There is a transparent and open matching process in which compatible students are paired together 2. Mentoring meetings are held regularly in a private space, are time-bound, structured and focused on the needs of the mentee 3. Peer mentors and mentees understand the expectations and limitations regarding confidentiality, safeguarding and interactions	**Management and operation**	1. The mentoring/befriending project has clear aims, objectives and outcomes 2. There is an appropriate level of resources available to develop and sustain the project, including funding, management and staff 3. There is a commitment to managing the safety of project staff, service users and mentors and befrienders
Openness of the mentee	4. Mentees are open and ready to receive support from their peer mentor 5. Mentees feel free of judgement and accepted by their peer mentor 6. Mentees recognise that they have similarities with their mentor and view them as a role model 7. Mentees understand the purpose of peer mentoring and are helped to reflect on the impact	**Service users (mentees and befriendees)**	4. There is a clear process for the identification and referral of service users 5. The needs of service users are assessed in determining how mentoring and befriending can help them
Nurturing experience	8. Peer mentors have the qualities, skills, abilities and knowledge to build a safe and supportive peer mentoring relationship 9. Peer mentors and mentees feel socially, emotionally and academically supported	**Mentors and Befrienders**	6. The recruitment and selection process for potential mentors and befrienders is safe and effective 7. Mentors and befrienders receive appropriate induction and training so that they can provide

	10. The peer mentoring relationship is given sufficient time to develop		effective support to service users 8. Support is provided to mentors and befrienders to help them develop in their role
Dual experience of the school system	11. Peer mentors know the social, academic and organisational aspects of the school and have experienced the same/similar difficulties as their mentee 12. Peer mentors use their own educational experience/s to provide honest and realistic advice/guidance	**The mentoring and befriending relationship**	9. There is a clear and consistent process for matching service users with mentors and befrienders 10. Mentoring and befriending relationships are regularly monitored to ensure they are making progress and that outcomes are achieved.
Staff contact with peer mentor	13. Programme staff have supportive and well established relationships with peer mentors 14. Programme staff select peer mentors based on prior knowledge of their positive attributes, academic success and desirable skills 15. The commitment and motivation of peer mentors is assessed prior to selection and they receive adequate training to fulfil the role		