

Trauma-sensitive Education in Ireland: perceptions and experiences of educators working in alternative settings working with young people affected by adverse experiences or trauma

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences and perceptions of educators working in alternative settings of trauma-sensitive education in Ireland. The growing pervasiveness of adverse childhood experiences and trauma with young people presenting with increasing levels of EPMH issues this study was undertaken to ascertain the awareness of educators of the effects these issues can have. Underpinned by developmental theory of Maslow, Bowlby and Bronfenbrenner and referring to the seminal ACE study of Felitti and Anda the research study was designed to explore participants experiences of working with young people affected by childhood adversity. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach this research presents the lived experience of teachers working with early school leavers. Through interviews with participants data was collected which enabled a rich narrative that supports literature on current sensitive supportive learning environments in alternative education settings. The study found that further professional development in trauma-sensitive education, the impact of ACEs and trauma would be beneficial to educators. Provision of support for professionals engaged with young people living with the effects of ACEs is vital. Development of policy and programmes is needed to support both students and educators working in a world with increasing pervasiveness of ACEs.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
EPMH	Emotional Psychological Mental Health
ESL	Early School Leaver
ESRI	The Economic and Social Research Institute
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
NCSSLE	National Centre on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
NSCH	National Survey of Children's Health
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
PEIN	Prevention and Early Intervention Network
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
TIPE	Trauma Informed Positive Education
TSE	Trauma-Sensitive Education

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Rita Pierson in her 2013 TED talk proclaims “every kid needs a champion” (Pierson, 2013). I return time and again to Rita’s talk for inspiration and as a reminder that working with young people is a privilege especially those young people who have experienced adversity and trauma in their lives. Rita’s talk is a call to all educators to build relationships with the young people in their classroom, to build confidence and resilience, to create a positive learning environment and to be their champion.

The journey of an educator sometimes begins with learning the technical skills of imparting knowledge. Through experience in the classroom, it becomes apparent that the role of teaching is a lot more than just that. Relationships are the key to positive learning for young people (Alexander, 2019; Brunzell et al., 2016; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a; Jennings, 2019). To build positive relationships with young people, it is incumbent on educators to understand their students as individuals and to understand that some young people have had to or are in the process of dealing with adversity in their lives. This adversity is in addition to the challenge of navigating the educational experience.

This chapter will explore what the research study is about, the rationale for why it was chosen, what it aims to achieve and how it aims to do this. The chapter will demonstrate how this research study can benefit all educators working with young people.

1.2 Background

The Youthreach programme in Ireland was established in 1989 to address the increasingly high levels of early school leavers at that time. The Youthreach programme continues to this day to provide an alternative to mainstream education to early school leavers aged between 16 and 21 years old who have left mainstream post-primary education without formal qualifications. Youthreach is the Irish Government's primary response to early school leavers (Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Smyth et al., 2019).

The approach to teaching and learning in Youthreach centres is underpinned by flexible education pedagogies and youthwork philosophies. It is intended that the individual student's background is taken into account and that active and experiential learning approaches are favoured over traditional didactic or "talk and chalk" teaching.

Positive relationships are central to the Youthreach ethos whereby there "is an emphasis on voluntary participation by the young person". The foundation of the informal learning relationships between Youthreach staff and students are "respect, equity and trust" (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 31).

The evaluation of the Youthreach programme which was carried out in 2019 made me proud to be a Youthreach educator; the evaluation presented findings which I have always held to be true in my experience and anecdotally but had not seen up to this point so explicitly presented with empirical evidence to support.

The evaluation confirmed the positive impact of the Youthreach programme on young people, many staff describe these impacts as life-changing for the students. This is achieved through the approach to teaching and learning as described previously. Student voice is represented in the evaluation also summarised thusly: "the learners themselves highlighted the

value of the programme in providing them with a positive experience of learning” (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 202).

A key finding of the Youthreach evaluation was the increase in emotional, psychological, and mental health (EPMH) issues affecting young people and the need for professional development for those educators working with them (Smyth et al., 2019). This finding has been evident in recent literature. So, while there is undoubtedly significantly valuable work being carried out in alternative education settings such as Youthreach centres, as society and culture changes and we begin to understand more about the issues facing young people it is prudent that progress is made in meeting the resultant needs of young people.

In 2010 Byrne and Smyth examined the dynamics of early school leaving; their longitudinal study “No Way Back?” focuses on presenting how the decision to leave school early is made from the student perspective. A compelling read, this study gives insight into the struggles of a certain cohort of students in education who are in need of supports in addition to traditional mainstream approaches (Byrne & Smyth, 2010).

Kathriona McHugh undertook a doctoral research study with students attending Youthreach centres in the West of Ireland in 2014, this study highlights the increase of prevalence of mental health issues, in particular the mental health of early school leavers (ESLs) who have had negative experiences in mainstream education. McHugh’s research recommends the need “for the creation of educational provisions that have ‘care’ and ‘respect’ as central concepts” (McHugh, 2014a; 2014b, p. 61).

An inquiry-based evaluation conducted with educators and ESLs, prompted by research which highlighted the high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in ESLs, was conducted to explore reengagement of ESLs in education (Hickey et al., 2020). This research

found that ACEs to be significant in the lives of ESLs. Vital factors to student reengagement in education were supportive relationships, collaborative teaching practices and the use of positive behavioural supports. Challenges of working with young people affected by ACEs were identified supporting the argument for provision of significant professional development and support for those working in this education sector (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 1).

There is always room for development and enhancement none more so than when working with young people who are living and accessing education in an ever-changing social culture. The literature supports a call for further investigation in the area of trauma-sensitive education (TSE); research to date demonstrates that second chance educators are positively disposed towards TSE.

1.3 Rationale

As an educator working in an alternative educational setting the idea for this research began to formulate while reading the Youthreach evaluation; it was evident to me that the work being done with young people who have had adverse childhood experiences was vital, but that there was an evident need for professional development for teachers in areas which would support them in meeting the needs of vulnerable students. The data gathered in 2019 demonstrates high prevalence of EPMH issues along with other issues which are characteristic of ACEs (which will be discussed in more detail in the literature review chapter).

Figures 1 and 2 which follow demonstrate the large number of students attending alternative education programmes who possess attributes in their lives which are identifiable with characteristics associated with ACEs.

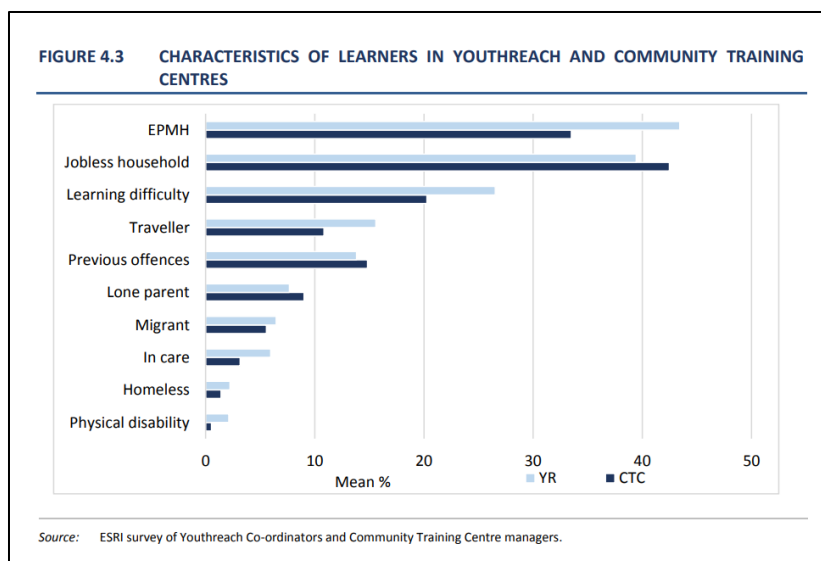


Figure 1. Characteristics of Learners in Youthreach and Community Training Centres

(Smyth et al., 2019, p. 58)

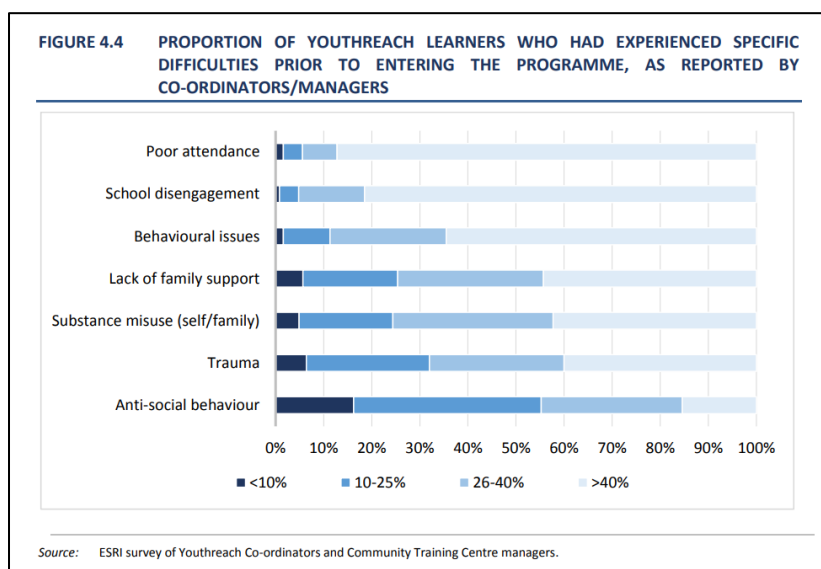


Figure 2. Proportion of Youthreach Learners with Existing Difficulties

(Smyth et al., 2019, p. 59)

When asked to comment on areas of training priorities for staff working with in alternative education settings almost all, 93% of participants felt that staff required training in supporting students with EPMH difficulties and to assist in managing challenging behaviour (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 91).

One educator is quoted as saying,

“...that is one area that I think as Youthreach staff we couldn't get enough training in...because it's so complex ... even the same mental health issue presents so differently and has such different needs ... it's relatively new and I think it's an area that we need to put a lot of resources and energy into, to do the young people justice really” (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 92)

This is a powerful commentary which resonated greatly with me as it aligns with my own personal beliefs of what needs to be done to develop our practice as educators. The researchers highlight “... the implications for staff working with a group of young people with multiple and complex needs” (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 95).

To meet these needs at present centres, take different approaches, some centres have staff supervision in place, some centres have counselling support available for their students but feel this should also be provided to staff. Other centres are more proactive with twice daily debriefing sessions for staff which allows them to discuss challenges they had faced throughout the day, this was identified as being crucial to staff well-being and to ensure that staff do not allow work stresses to intrude on their personal lives. Most centres revealed that there are no supports available to staff who “... constantly have to be mindful of the young people, the state of mental health of students and how the students are impacted by critical incidents and other life changing events” (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 95).

Further investigation of the literature led me to discover trauma-sensitive education (TSE), an approach to learning which aims to support young people who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences and trauma. TSE supports educators to recognise trauma in the students, respond to the trauma needs of the student and to resist retraumatizing the student. TSE also supports the development of regulatory and skills of the student to mitigate the impact ACEs or trauma are having on their lives (Brunzell et al., 2016; Delaney, 2020; Hickey et al., 2020).

Hickey et al.'s (2020) and Delaney's (2020) research into TSE practices in Irish educational settings inspired this research relevant to my practice. Hickey et al.'s (2020) research presents findings from second chance educators on their perception and awareness of TSE, Delaney (2020) presents his findings having implemented a trauma awareness programme with a group of second chance educators detailing their awareness of trauma before and after participation in the programme. Delaney's research ascertains the readiness of the educational setting to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach to teaching and learning, a crucial step in the process.

1.4 Purpose

This research aims to explore TSE in Ireland. ACEs and trauma are widespread globally with the impacts evident throughout the lifespan. Impacts can manifest physically, cognitively, neuro-physically, and psychologically. TSE is a universal approach to teaching and learning which is structured to meet the needs of students impacted by ACEs whether known or unknown (Alexander, 2019; Brunzell et al., 2016; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a; Jennings, 2019).

This research aims to add to the literature that explores TSE in alternative educational settings. Knowledge of ACEs and the impact of trauma will be explored with educators; second chance educators will be asked to convey their concept of TSE. Through interviews with participants their attitude towards a trauma-sensitive approach to education will be interpreted. The objectives of the study will be achieved through interviews with educators using the following questions as principal guides:

Q1. Are educators aware of the impact ACEs and trauma have on young people?

Q2. What knowledge do educators have and what is their attitude towards a trauma-sensitive approach to education?

1.5 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation contains six chapters in total, Chapter 1 introduces the research study by providing background to the research and rationale for carrying out the research. The purpose of the study and the underpinning research questions are presented in Chapter 1. The dissertation structure is outlined before the chapter concludes.

Chapter 2 reviews and presents the relevant research literature on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the effects of trauma on development in childhood, prevalence of ACEs globally and in Ireland are presented. The review of literature aims to contextualise this research study with emergent themes presented which support the research questions established. A review of developmental theory is included to support the existing research literature in the field.

Chapter 3 presents the epistemological and ontological views which underpin the methodology adopted to carry out this study. A description of the methodology is presented including sample selection, methods used, method design and implementation. Data analysis methods are presented with examples included in the appendices. Ethical considerations and limitations of methodology are discussed. Research positionality is explored within the discussion on assurances of quality and rigour of the research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research with discussion of same interwoven throughout this chapter. Through data analysis emergent themes were refined, findings within

these themes are presented along with discussion which either links the findings to the explored research literature or presents a finding contrary to what the literature says.

Chapter 5 concludes the presentation of the research study by summarising the main findings of the research study and its contribution to the current literature in its field. Recommendations and implications for future research and practice which have arisen as a result of this research being carried out are outlined before the final conclusion of the dissertation.

1.6 Conclusion

Having introduced the research providing background and rationale for the study along with the purpose of the study and an outline of this dissertation the next chapter will now present a review of the relevant literature pertinent to this research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

I spoke at the beginning on how “every kid needs a champion” (Pierson, 2013), none more so than early school leavers opting for an alternative to mainstream education. I truly believe this, but it is much more than ‘rooting’ for their success. These students need teachers who know and understand the journey that has led them to leave mainstream education early, who understand the effect this journey has had on them, psychologically, physiologically and emotionally, teachers who know what will help them to develop and learn new skills that will allow them to achieve their potential, in short, students in alternative education settings ...trauma-informed.

The review of literature which informs this research in trauma-informed practices in alternative education settings is presented thematically. An understanding of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the resultant possible trauma is presented drawing on seminal works of (Felitti et al., 1998) and contemporary trauma theory of (Goodman, 2017). Drawing on best practice from school districts in America who have embraced trauma-informed educational practices the effects of trauma on young people is explored (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a).

Exploration of developmental theories from Maslow, Bowlby, and Bronfenbrenner provide links to contemporary research on the effect early childhood adversity can have on a young person’s life and future prospects.

The prevalence of childhood adversity is monitored worldwide with frequency and level of detail of information available to varying degrees across the globe. A global view of childhood adversity from America, across Europe, the UK and Ireland highlights the high levels

of ACEs and justifies the need for an increase in awareness and knowledge of trauma- sensitive education (TSE).

The concept of TSE which aims to meet the needs of young people affected by childhood trauma is outlined. Frameworks of TSE used internationally are explored. Prevalence of TSE in Irish settings is outlined.

Education in alternative settings in Ireland is reviewed and a profile of Youthreach learners (Gordon, 2017; Smyth et al., 2019), this will provide a context for the research study. The final section will then look at how a TSE environment can be adopted in an education setting.

2.2 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The study of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) grew from the seminal work of Felitti and Anda whose study correlated adversity in childhood with poor health outcomes in adulthood (Felitti et al., 1998; Partridge, 2019). This study which focussed on health outcomes only, as a result of ACEs has led to a growing movement of research which focusses on ACEs, the resultant trauma and the effects of such, not just physiologically but also neurologically, psychologically, cognitively and emotionally.

The defined ACEs which Felitti and Anda originally identified in their study are still used today to determine adversity experienced through administration of an ACEs questionnaire, they are:

- Experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Experiencing physical or emotional neglect
- Having a family member die or attempt to die by suicide
- Living in a household with people who misuse substances

- Living in a household with adults with mental illness
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Witnessing violence in the community
- Instability due to parental separation or divorce
- Instability due to household members being in prison

The questionnaire scores one point for each affirmative answer to the questions, this determines the number of ACEs a person has had (CDC, 2021).

Each of the events defined as adverse may be experienced as traumatic for one individual and not for another, that the same event may have differing effects on individuals experiencing it. “How the individual labels, assigns meaning to, and is disrupted physically, psychologically by an event will contribute to whether or not it is experienced as traumatic” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 8). Why some individuals react differently to adverse events where some are resilient and cope with the event and others find the same event traumatic is outside the scope of this paper. This paper’s focus is on those individuals who have experienced adversity in their childhood and are bringing with them to the alternative education setting the effects of trauma.

The effects of adversity may happen immediately or be delayed in their manifestation; they may be short or long-term. The following section looks at these effects in more detail, describing the physiological impact that leads to psychological and emotional difficulties in later life.

2.3 ACEs and Trauma – The Effects

To best understand the impact of childhood adversity and the resultant trauma it is important to understand how the brain and the body respond to stress. This section will consider

the body's stress response system, what happens when adversity causes trauma and common responses that young people may display indicating traumatic experiences (Goodman, 2017; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a).

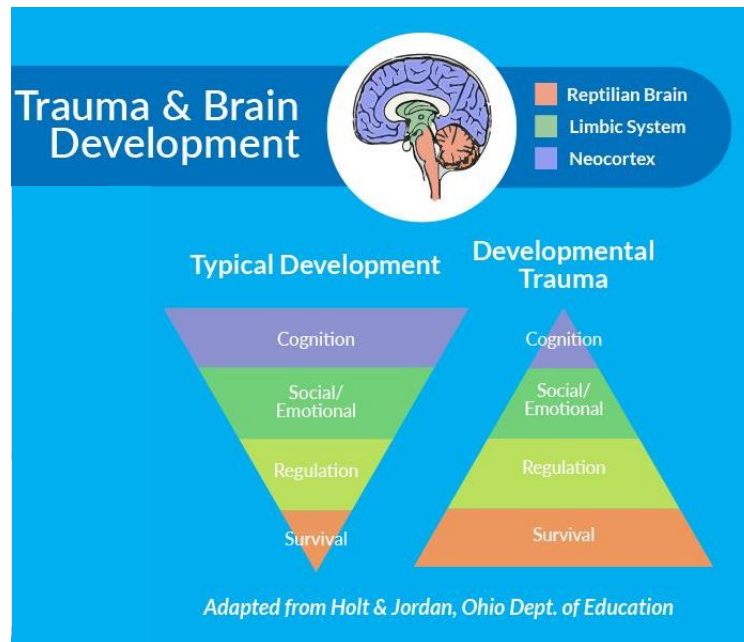


Figure 3. Typical Brain Development vs. Developmental Trauma

Figure 3 above is a vivid visual demonstration of how development is affected by trauma, survival instincts in trauma affected persons is far greater than those with typically developed brains; cognition development is hindered by trauma.

During a stressful event the limbic system, which contains the amygdala and the hypothalamus, send a message to the reptilian brain that there is a threat, the reptilian brain prepares the body to react in the threatening situation. The neocortex assesses the situation, if the threat is perceived to be real the limbic system takes over and the “fight or flight” response is activated.

The brain develops firstly with the reptilian brain then the limbic system (emotional brain) and then the neocortex (the thinking brain). While some level of stress during childhood such as new experiences or challenges promotes healthy brain development, prolonged exposure

to adverse stressful events disrupts healthy development. Constant stressful events at young age which the limbic system perceives to be threats means that the emotional brain is in survival mode most of the time. With the emotional brain in constant use the neocortex or thinking brain gets less use and as a result is underdeveloped (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a).

Understanding brain development and the effect stress can have on that development, taken in context with Felitti and Anda's (1998) ACE study (Figure 4) allows a better understanding of how adversity at a young age can have influence on the whole person throughout the lifespan.

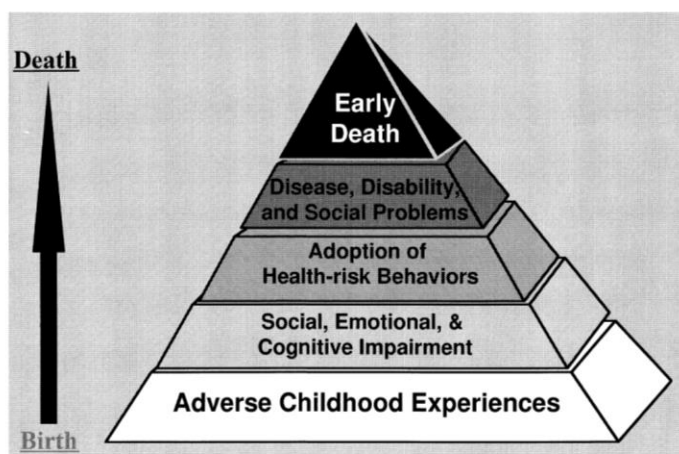


Figure 2. Potential influences throughout the lifespan of adverse childhood experiences.

Figure 4. Impact of ACEs through the lifespan

(Felitti et al., 1998, p. 256)

Traumatic stress within the field of mental health began emerging over 50 years ago. Many advances in scientific research within the realms of neuroscience, biopsychosocial science have allowed for the development and amalgamation of findings to include psychological and mental health findings to provide a wide-ranging understanding of how trauma affects an individual. These developments have provided a holistic perspective of the effect of trauma and

provided a growing understanding for practitioners working with them (SAMHSA, 2014, pp. 5-6).

In his paper on Contemporary Trauma Theory Goodman (2017) provides a framework which aims to assist in understanding the impact trauma or ACEs can have on a person. The main impacts of this framework are described below (Goodman, 2017, pp. 187–188):

Dissociation – whereby a person dissociates from a situation as a defence mechanism.

Attachment – ACEs can have a detrimental effect on a person’s ability to form healthy relationships.

Re-enactment – whereby a person seeks out and displays behaviours which re-enact the traumatic event.

Long-term effect on later adulthood – Goodman posits that trauma which is not addressed appropriately may have devastating effects on functioning in adulthood. These effects can manifest physically, emotionally and psychologically.

Impairment in emotional capacities – difficulties in self-regulation and capacity to be resilient are direct impacts of trauma on the brain.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration in America (SAMHSA) describe the long-lasting adverse effects of trauma which can occur immediately after the event, could have a delayed onset, may not be immediately clear to the person that they are linked to the traumatic event, could be short-term or long-term, examples are:

- Inability to cope with daily life and normal stresses
- Difficulty in trusting and forming relationships
- Unable to manage cognitive process
- Difficulty regulating behaviour or controlling how they express emotion

- Neuro-biological make-up as well as continued health and wellbeing may be affected
- Hyper-vigilance or constant state of arousal
- Numbing or avoidance

(SAMHSA, 2014, p. 8)

Most people face challenges during childhood and adolescence, however for some, the adverse experiences that they go through impair their holistic development and impacts the course their life takes. Educators who do not have an understanding of the impact of childhood adversity and trauma the behaviours observed in an educational setting may be misinterpreted and lead to misdiagnosis of other issues such as ADHD, ODD and or learning difficulties. Knowing the signs of trauma allows educators to understand their students and determine if trauma is a contributing element for consideration in meeting the young person's needs.

The CDC definition of adverse childhood experiences describes ACEs as “potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years)” (CDC, 2022). Alternative education settings offer places to young people in this age range who have left school early for a variety of reasons often linked to childhood adversity (Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Gordon, 2017; Hickey et al., 2020; Smyth et al., 2019).

In the longitudinal study of early school leaving carried out by Byrne and Smyth in 2010 it was found that rejection of school and rejection by school were major factors in the decision to leave school. Within these categories contributing issues were highlighted by participating students where they expressed feeling a lack of encouragement from the school, a feeling of punishment for misbehaviours and negative relationships with teachers and peers. This cohort of students told the underlying stories leading to their early school leaving decisions, many of which detailed adverse childhood experiences (Byrne & Smyth, 2010, pp. 95-129).

As a precursor to the evaluation of Youthreach centres carried out in 2019, Mary Gordon undertook a mixed method research study with the goal of ascertaining key characteristics of a Youthreach learner to inform practice and identify an appropriate approach to learning and teaching which would meet the needs of these students (Gordon, 2017). A significant part of Gordon's research was that she administered an ACE questionnaire to the students of the participating centre. The results show that 22 out of the 23 participants had experienced one ACE or more with almost half having experienced four or more (Gordon, 2017, p. 25). A significant finding when taken in context with the original ACE study pointing towards substantial concern for future health and wellbeing. Gordon concludes that there was "a clear negative relationship between the number of ACE categories experienced by learners and indicators of their health and wellbeing" (Gordon, 2017, p. 32).

The subsequent evaluation of the Youthreach programme findings were published in 2019. In presenting a typical profile of a Youthreach student the report draws on previous research most notably McHugh (2014) and Gordon (2017). Both researchers present a profile of learner who "suffer from economic and social disadvantage as well as educational disadvantage" (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 52). McHugh found in her 2014 research that the profile of Youthreach learners has changed over time with a sharp rise in the level of emotional, psychological and mental health issues being noted (McHugh, 2014b).

Through its gathering of survey data and interviews with Youthreach learners and staff, the Youthreach evaluation concludes that the typical Youthreach learner is one who is "more likely to come from jobless households, have low levels of educational attainment and have experienced many adverse childhood experiences" (Smyth et al., 2019, p. 78)

The most recent research carried out in a Youthreach centre was published in 2020 and investigated adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practices in “second chance education settings” (Hickey et al., 2020). This research found that there was “a perceived high prevalence of marginalisation and trauma” (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 5) amongst Youthreach participants who were aged between 16 and 18 years old. Educators in this study felt that early school leavers’ negative experience in mainstream school are potentially traumatic for them (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 5). The findings of the report were that the levels of trauma and adversity in the lives of the early school leaver participants were significant and were representative of the accepted premise that marginalised young people, including those who have left school early have elevated levels of ACEs (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 13).

When discussing what a trauma-sensitive classroom or education setting should look like in a later section the training needs of educators will be discussed. In the context of the effect of ACEs and trauma on young people and with the acceptance that the majority of Youthreach students will have had adversity in their lives prior to attending Youthreach, it is prudent here to look at how this can manifest in a classroom setting. The impact of trauma on school performance can be substantial, with careful observation an educator can begin to recognise the effects of trauma by noting if any of the following characteristics are being displayed, the following lists are adapted from the Trauma-Sensitive Schools training package “Understanding Trauma and Its Impact” (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a) :

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, poor appetite, and a decline in self-care
- Intense feeling of fear, anxiety, and concern for their safety
- Difficulty identifying how they are feeling and controlling their emotional reactions

- Angry or aggressive outbursts
- A desire to withdraw from peers and adults
- A tendency to engage in risk-taking behaviours
- Trouble trusting adults and peers, reading social cues and building relationships
- Difficulty paying attention and learning
- More time out of the classroom
- Increased isolation
- School absences
- More suspension, disciplinary actions
- Higher referral rates to school support services
- Poor academic achievement

There is a gap in the empirical research to support the impact childhood adversity has on early school leavers in the context of an alternative education setting. With the existing research pointing towards the existence of trauma-affected students attending alternative education we can look to developmental theory to supplement our understanding of the effect of ACEs on the young people who attend these centres.

2.4 Developmental Theory

While there is a dearth of evidence to inform practice for educators, there is a wealth of developmental theory that can be utilised to understand the effects childhood adversity can have on a young person's holistic development. Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' describes how a person can reach their potential once certain needs are met (Maslow, 1943); Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby, asserts that lack of secure and consistent care at an early age leads to impaired development through the lifespan (Bowlby, 1988); Urie Bronfenbrenner developed an

ecological systems theory that posits that development occurs within a complex system of relationships which are influenced by the environment in which they exist (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These three influential theories will now be considered in the context of adverse childhood experiences.

2.4.1 Maslow

Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation presents a hierarchy of needs which posits that emotional and behavioural problems in humans arise when needs within the hierarchy are unmet.

Brendtro (2019) posits that young people who experience adversity in their lives have unmet needs which manifests as painful emotions, painful thinking, or pain-based behaviour. Brendtro further links Maslow's theory of unmet needs to support the premise that ACEs affect childhood development. The unmet needs of childhood adversity are the stressful occurrences which are the starting point of pain-based behaviour, young people who are in pain struggle daily to handle the distress of their lives. Maslow observed that the symptoms that are observable as emotional problems "are attempts to cope with unmet needs" (Brendtro, 2019, p. 10).

Felitti and Anda's ACE study uses a pyramid structure similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs to demonstrate how ACEs influence health and well-being throughout the lifespan (see figure 4). At the bottom of the ACEs pyramid are adverse childhood experiences which happen in the context of unmet psychological, safety and social needs as defined by Maslow's hierarchy. The ACE study of Felitti and Anda explains Maslow's hierarchy in neurobiological terms, "both models explain the same phenomenon of self-actualisation is less likely to be attained if basic needs are not met" (Alisha, 2018, p. 2).

2.4.2 Bowlby

Attachment theory developed by Bowlby describes the psychological bond or emotional connection formed as an infant with the primary caregiver. Children develop an internal working model when they interact with caregivers during infancy which helps them predict and understand other people's actions in the world and make sense of interpersonal reactions. A secure attachment style develops when caregivers are responsive to a child's needs which is the case for most children.

In contrast when children feel insecure during infancy an insecure attachment develops which manifests as anxiety, over-emotional responses and withdrawal from relationships. The problems associated with dysfunctional attachment which have a profound impact on development through the lifespan are most apparent when security is threatened as can happen with childhood adversity (Smith et al., 2016).

Individuals who have a secure attachment style have positive sense of self-worth, see others as positive and are capable of forming intimate and positive relationships with others. Individuals whose attachment has been disrupted during childhood have lack a sense of self-worth, tend to avoid forming close relationships, feel anxious about rejection and tend to avoid forming relationships (Lin et al., 2020).

The psychological foundations where children find emotional security and form cognitive working model of the self and others are created in early family relationships. Good quality caregiving which is nurturing and sensitive and which meets the needs of children allows for the formation of positive models of the self and others. Where childhood adversity occurs children may experience adverse events which bring about interpersonal experiences that disrupt these psychological foundations for working models which allow them to adapt in the social world and

can manifest as a negative working model of self which affects their relationships with themselves and others (Lin et al., 2020, p. 3).

2.4.3 Bronfenbrenner

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of development posits that development occurs through interactions with individuals, groups and structures. To understand how child development occurs it is necessary to understand the context in which the child experiences development. The influence of context over time can contribute to competence or dysfunction (Olofson, 2017).

The bioecological framework is divided into five different systems in a nested arrangement each contained within the next. As the five systems are interrelated the influence that one system has on a child's development also depends on the relationships of the five systems (Guy-Evans, 2020).

The microsystem which is the most influential as it contains relationships which can have the most effect developmentally such as parents, siblings, teachers and school peers. Families can influence the cognitive development of children, conflict within families can adversely affect development and can be considered "contextual with respect to individual adversity" (Olofson, 2017, p. 201). The bioecological model of development can be used to support the theory of development that incorporates threats and supports present in a child's proximal processes.

DeCandia and Guarino are proponents for trauma-informed care as the appropriate method to help those affected by ACEs and trauma; they present trauma-informed care as a paradigm shift from traditional methods of treating trauma and describe it as "an ecological approach ... which can be viewed as a universal design for serving trauma survivors" (DeCandia & Guarino, 2015, p. 8).

This ecological approach which highlights the importance of factors beyond the traits of the individual and their response to trauma. An ecological approach to trauma is based on the understanding that environmental factors have an influence on well-being, interventions must take account of individual, interpersonal and community relationships; this approach reflects a heightened awareness of context and allows for a paradigm shift from “what’s wrong with you” to “what happened to you” (DeCandia & Guarino, 2015, pp. 12-13).

With knowledge of prevalence of ACEs and the traumatic effects they can have on child development and acknowledging that the context in which they are experienced supported by Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory it is incumbent on educators to continue to review/enhance/change/strive towards an approach to education that provides the safe environment for students to address the deficits that adversity have created in their lives this far.

With studies such as the CDC adverse childhood experiences study and developmental theories pointing towards the effect that ACEs have on child development it is now apt to review the prevalence of ACEs globally. The next section looks to present data on ACEs globally, in an American context, in Europe and where possible in an Irish context.

2.5 Prevalence of ACEs

In a 2022 study designed to investigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences on criminal behaviour a total of 3,797 participants from five continents completed the ACE questionnaire. The results of the completed questionnaire showed that a mean score of 2 ACEs was reported globally, on average all participants had reported that they had experienced two of the ten ACEs described on the questionnaire. The European country participants of Portugal, Spain and France reported having on average one ACE with Australian, South American and

African participants reporting higher levels of ACEs with a mean score of two up to four (Basto-Pereira et al., 2022, p. 4).

A WHO statistic is quoted in an October 2019 policy paper on ACEs produced by PEIN (the Prevention and Early Intervention Network) which states that over 250 million children around the world are affected by childhood adversity which hinders them in reaching their potential. (PEIN, 2019, p. 1).

In America the CDC places current figures of ACEs at 61% of adults across twenty five states reporting having experienced at least one ACE with almost 1 in 6 reporting they had experienced four or more types of ACEs (CDC, 2022). The US 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) found that just under half of the children in the United States have experienced at least one ACE as reported by their parents with one in ten children having experienced three or more ACEs. The NSCH survey found that the most common ACEs reported were economic hardship and divorce or separation of a parent (Sacks & Murphey, 2018).

A Norwegian study carried out to determine the occurrence of ACEs in a large population of ACEs found that 65.8% of the 8,199 participants had experienced at least one ACE with 28% of them having experience of more than one ACE (Broekhof et al., 2022, p. 3).

While a comprehensive ACE specific study has not been undertaken in Scotland, the level of deprivation with 24% of children living in relative poverty indicates that the potential of ACEs prevalence is high. Their response to ending childhood adversity acknowledges that adversity occurs across all socio-economic bands and that while they have numbers for deprivation and poverty these are indicators that addressing the issue of ACEs, creating

awareness of and providing support for will provide for better outcomes in terms of health, education and employment (Hetherington, 2020, pp. 14-16).

The longitudinal childhood study being carried out by the ESRI and the Department of Childhood and Youth Affairs (Murray & Morgan, 2019) included a section in their most recent publication which highlights stressful events which have occurred in the lives of the participants. The table below (Figure 8) is adapted from the results presented and shows that 80% of the cohort have experienced at least one adverse event by age 8.

Event	% Of Growing Up in Ireland Child Cohort that have experienced event
Death of a parent	3
Death of a close family member	43
Divorce/separation of parents	15
Serious illness/injury of family member	13
Moving house	42
Moving country	10
Drug-taking/alcoholism in immediate family	4
Stay in foster/residential care	5
Conflict between parents	12
Mental disorder in immediate family	4
Serious illness/injury to child	5
Parent in prison	1

Figure 5. Adverse Childhood Experiences in Ireland

Table reproduced and adapted from (Murray & Morgan, 2019, p. 41).

Internationally and nationally, adversity in childhood is prevalent. The previous section has shown how trauma in childhood can adversely affect development. Protective factors in the family and the wider community can be implemented to alleviate the effects of childhood diversity, a trauma-informed approach to education supports children who have been affected by adversity and promotes an approach to teaching and learning which aims to not only identify the effects of trauma in students also to support positive education for those affected.

2.6 Trauma-Sensitive Education

A framework of trauma-sensitive education was developed by the Australian researchers Brunzell, Stokes and Waters in 2016 who coined their approach “trauma-informed positive education” (TIPE) (Brunzell et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2021). TIPE is underpinned by a positive psychology philosophy which aims to enhance the strengths of the young person affected by trauma to counteract the effects of childhood adversity. TIPE is described as a whole-school approach to education which supports trauma-affected students across three domains of 1. Increasing self-regulatory abilities, 2. Increasing abilities to form positive relationships and 3. Increasing resilience. Brunzell et al.’s research has focused on how specific classroom interventions can help students who are displaying disruptive behaviours which are understood to be manifestations of adversity in childhood.

American leading expert on trauma-sensitive educational practice, Patricia A. Jennings echoes the philosophy espoused by Brunzell et al.; trauma-sensitive classrooms should promote positive relationships, be safe and caring learning environments and support the development of self-regulation through strength based education (Jennings, 2019, p. 47).

While both TIPE and the trauma-sensitive approaches described here advocate for an understanding of trauma and the impact it can have on young people both approaches assume a

number of factors such as knowledge of individual circumstance of the student and both seem only targeted at young people affected by trauma.

School wide approaches which are built around a multi-tiered system of support are designed for all staff and students. “A trauma-sensitive school is a safe and supportive community that enables both students and adults to feel safe, build caring relationships with one another regulate their feelings and behaviour as well as learn” (Alexander, 2019, p. 65).

The National Centre for Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) highlights a trauma-sensitive approach as one which is not just in the classroom but something “in which all aspects of the educational environment – from workforce training to engagement with students and families to procedures and policies – are grounded in an understanding of trauma and its impact and are designed to promote resilience for all”

A trauma-sensitive school strives to meet the needs of all students whether trauma has been identified or not, the multi-tiered approach is designed to benefit all students. Adopting a trauma-sensitive approach to education does not require that the details of the student’s histories be known in order to support them at school. A trauma-sensitive approach can be implemented without knowing the details of the past or current circumstances, this can also help avoid retraumatising students through recounting their stories (Alexander, 2019, pp. 73-74).

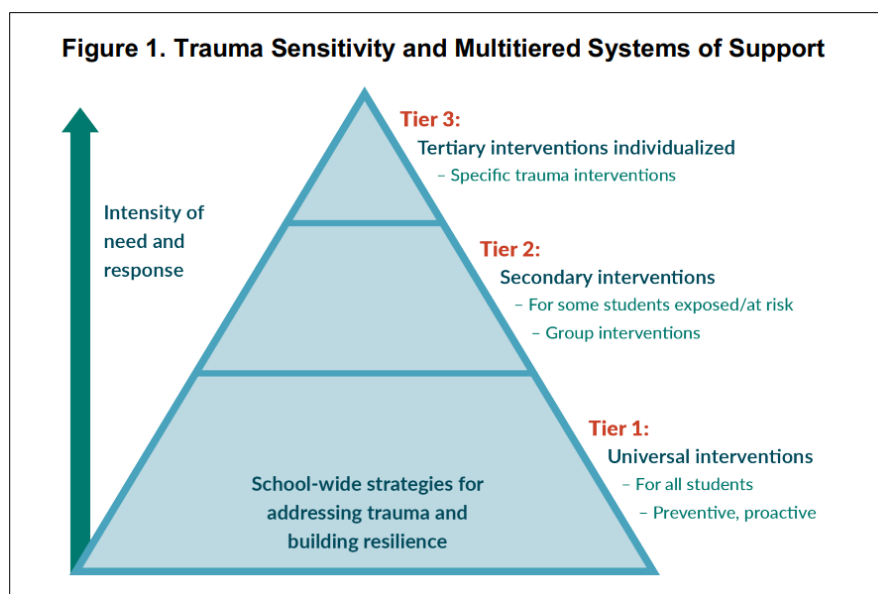


Figure 6. Trauma-Sensitive School - Multitiered Systems of Support

(Guarino & Chagnon, 2018b, p. 6)

Within a multi-tiered prevention framework trauma-sensitivity is a universal approach, as can be seen in Figure 9, adopted by the entire school. Because not all student trauma is known to staff and not all students require intensive intervention taking a universal precautions approach ensures that all students get what they need and minimises risk of harm. Trauma-sensitive schools also help students to access more intensive trauma-specific supports when needed, these can be offered in school by professionals or accessed through the community.

The training provided by The NCSSLE acknowledges that existing culture and practice in an educational environment may already embody the core principles of trauma-sensitive education or in some cases adopting trauma-sensitive approaches to teaching and learning may require a more significant change to ethos and values. Whichever the case may be an explicit change to the educational environment which names their overarching values as trauma-sensitive cannot be undertaken lightly. The trauma-sensitive schools training provides comprehensive resources to support such a change (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018b).

2.7 Building a Trauma-Sensitive Education Environment

Staff who support a trauma-sensitive approach to education realise the prevalence of trauma, recognise the impact trauma can have on students, families and staff, respond appropriately with trauma-sensitive strategies and avoid retraumatising students or families. There may be individuals in school environments whose professional practice is trauma-informed; for a whole-school to be considered trauma-sensitive requires development across a wide range of domains.

Becoming a trauma-sensitive school requires a school wide commitment to translating the core principles into concrete daily practices. Building a trauma-sensitive school can be achieved through:

- Staff development
- Creating a safe and supportive environment
- Assessment of needs and provision of support
- Development of social and emotional skills
- Collaboration with students and families
- Adaption of policies and procedures

Ultimately trauma-sensitive schools aim to help students feel safe, be connected, get regulated and to learn. A paradigm shift that supports these aims supports the whole school environment. In recognising the effect of trauma on students a trauma-sensitive school also recognises the effect working with trauma effected students can have on professionals. Self-care for educators is an important factor in the staff development of educators.

2.8 Alternative Education in Ireland

Youthreach is an alternative education programme for young people aged 16 years to 21 years old who have left school early without any formal qualifications.

Gordon (2017) in her work on developing a profile of Youthreach learners affirms that young people attending a Youthreach programme have experienced a high level of adversity in their childhoods. In the cohort that were engaged with in her study a high number were involved in the justice system, were living in significant poverty, were from a minority or migrant background and were receiving support for physical and mental health issues.

Gordon asserts that “there is no reason to see this sample as unusual or unrepresentative of the general body of Youthreach learners across the country and so it is reasonable to consider the findings to be generally applicable” (Gordon, 2017).

To address the issue of trauma which SAMHSA describe as a costly public health issue, they say this requires a multi-disciplinary approach which is supported by organisations and communities. The effects of trauma places heavy burdens on public services with education being one such service. SAMHSA acknowledge the lack of awareness and education in trauma informed practices amongst public service providers even going so far as to say that this lack of knowledge can create trauma inducing scenarios for example punitive discipline in schools where an understanding of and support for those affected by trauma would be far more appropriate. (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 2)

A recent study of ACEs in alternative education settings in Ireland highlighted that “for marginalised and vulnerable youth, who may also experience learning challenges, educational contexts may be experienced as traumatising or re-traumatising” (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 13).

A main finding of this study was to emphasise the importance of learning environments being trauma-sensitive allowing for development of student well-being, resilience and promote learning and skills development.

While this study found that the approach to learning and teaching in general is appropriate for young people who are impacted by ACEs a need for professional development in the area of trauma awareness and TSE is passionately encouraged.

2.9 Conclusion

As an educator in an alternative education setting the childhood adversity experienced by students is apparent on a daily basis in most every class. To that end, developing expertise in the area of ACEs and the impact they have on young people is essential not only to meet the educational needs of the students but to develop resilience and regulatory skills that could serve to mitigate the effects of exposure to trauma and ACEs.

The ESRI report and international literature evidences a high prevalence of ACEs among young people. Youthreach students are a particularly vulnerable cohort who are highly likely to have been exposed to ACEs. To improve the outcomes of Youthreach students it must first be ascertained what the level of knowledge Youthreach educators have of ACEs and the impact they could potentially have on the students they teach.

Gaining this knowledge provides an opening to begin a conversation on how best to improve the outcomes for Youthreach students. Trauma-sensitive education is becoming a popular approach to teaching and learning which promotes the development of resilience and regulatory abilities of students. With the development of these skills, it is thought that students

who have been affected by ACEs will be better able to achieve positive outcomes from an educational environment.

This research study aims to explore with Youthreach educators their knowledge of ACEs and their impact; awareness of Youthreach educators of TSE and their attitudes and opinions of TSE as an appropriate approach to teaching and learning for Youthreach students.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As an educator who believes that an understanding of trauma and its impact on young people is vital for those working in alternative education settings my aim was to ascertain levels of awareness among those currently working in the sector. Knowledge and attitude towards trauma-sensitive education (TSE) is part of the first stage towards building a trauma-sensitive educational environment levels of which this research aims to ascertain. This section will set out the epistemological and ontological beliefs which have led to the chosen methodology of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). Justification for this method over other methods will be presented.

The design and implementation of the IPA project will be outlined including participant selection process, interview design, piloting of interview and process undertaken to carry out interviews. A much-contested limitation of IPA is researcher positionality, this will be addressed in this section. Analysis of data, ethical considerations and limitations of methodology will be discussed.

3.2 Methodology

Authenticity is key to working with young people affected by adversity, to that end it was clear from the beginning that the data gathered and interpretation of same needed to be authentic to the environment in which it lived.

The phenomenon of TSE with the desire to incorporate the lived experience of educators working with trauma affected youth led to the final choice of using interpretive phenomenological analysis. Guided by Husserl's principle of phenomenological inquiry the aim

was for me to step outside of my everyday experience of working with young people in alternative education in order to be able to examine the everyday experience of others engaged with the same profession (Shinebourne, 2011, p. 17; Smith et al., 2009, p. 12).

This research aimed to understand and learn from each participant's experience in their own unique context how they make sense of the phenomenon of working with young people who have had adverse childhood experiences, as such the idiographic approach that is IPA is appropriate (Noon, 2018, p. 76). The phenomena to be explored were identified as working with young people in alternative education who have had adverse childhood experiences, educators' perceptions of the effect of adverse childhood experiences and if so, what are they, do educators have knowledge of trauma-sensitive education.

Having identified that epistemologically I wanted to follow a phenomenological approach following Carter & Little's framework of relationships of epistemology and methodology (Carter & Little, 2007, pp. 1317, 1320) justification was sought for IPA. Ontologically the research aimed to present the lived experiences of educators which is supported by an interpretivist paradigm which confirmed the adoption of phenomenology to allow the study of direct experience while mitigating for interference of exiting pre-conceptions held (Scotland, 2012, pp. 11-12).

I wanted to find educators lived experiences of working with young people who have experienced trauma, this is difficult to do quantitatively. While quantitative data would be useful and can tell its own story about levels of knowledge in numbers, I felt that a more powerful way to demonstrate knowledge of trauma and its effects or lack thereof would be through the teachers' own words. Further investigation into the theories underpinning IPA, phenomenology

as discussed along with hermeneutics and idiography support my epistemological and ontological aims.

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. The objective of IPA in the context of this study is to understand the lived experiences of participants as they understand the phenomenon, to that end analysis within IPA always involves interpretation. “There is a phenomenon ready to shine forth, but detective work is required by the researcher to facilitate the coming forth, and then to make sense of it once it has happened” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 35).

As IPA is concerned with examining how the phenomenon appears, as the researcher I was tasked with presenting the lived experience of the participant. “IPA is idiographic in that it emphasises detailed and in-depth examinations of how individual persons in their unique contexts make sense of a given phenomenon” (Noon, 2018, p. 76). In the context of my study the individuals are the educators who agreed to participate providing me with accounts of their experiences working with young people in their centre who have experienced childhood adversity.

I chose IPA over a quantitative or other qualitative methods such as gathering data through qualitative surveys as I wanted to get the lived experiences of teachers working with young people in alternative education; IPA afforded me the opportunity to gather rich narrative data of the real voice of the participants.

I felt that quantitative information only would not give me a clear idea of people’s level of awareness of trauma and its impact. I wanted to really know did teachers working with young people know how trauma affects young people, from the physical and psychological effects right up to how it can manifest in the classroom. I also wanted to know did teachers know about TSE. My feeling is that educators do use strategies that support trauma affected young people but that

they don't really know that that is what they are doing and or why this works for the young people.

3.3 Sampling

As interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an idiographic approach the sample size chosen was small which allows for a detailed analysis of the data collected to provide rich accounts of the perceptions and understandings of the participants. The participants were purposively chosen to allow access to their particular perspective of the phenomenon, trauma-sensitive education, which is the focus of this study (Noon, 2018; Smith et al., 2009; Tuffour, 2017).

I approached the coordinator of a Youthreach centre in the South-East of Ireland to seek permission to carry out research and approach the centre staff to participate. At that point a title for the research had been settled on which aimed to determine the readiness of the Youthreach centre to adopt a trauma informed approach to teaching and learning. This subsequently changed as I felt that through carrying out interviews alone would not put me in a position to determine readiness, to do this would require a much larger and more involved work with the centre.

The aim of the research was subsequently refined to exploring educators' experiences of working with young people who have had adverse childhood experiences, the awareness of this cohort of professionals as to the effect this trauma can have, the knowledge and attitude of these teachers to a trauma-sensitive approach to education.

A copy of the request to conduct research letter is included in Appendix I. This letter outlined that staff of the centre would be approached and asked if they would like to participate in the research, a confirmation of permission granted was included and signed by the coordinator

and returned to me confirming that permission was granted, and granting permission for me to approach staff to attend interviews in relation to the research topic and that this would be a voluntary process with confidentiality granted as far as practicable.

A homogenous sample of participants was chosen to provide a consistent and meaningful account of their experiences. All participants approached were educators working in the same alternative education centre. From a logistical perspective the homogeneity of the sample allowed for access to participants to be readily agreed on with the coordinator of the centre.

This purposive homogenous group of participants will provide insight to educators working in alternative education centres throughout Ireland on the phenomenon of trauma-sensitive education and working with trauma-affected youth in an educational context.

The context of a Youthreach setting to explore the phenomenon of TSE was chosen having reviewed the literature from which can be deduced that early school leavers (ESLs), who make up the student population of Youthreach centres have experienced adversity and/or trauma up to the point where they make the decision to leave school early (Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Gordon, 2017; Hickey et al., 2020; Smyth et al., 2019).

All teaching staff of a Youthreach centre were approached and asked to voluntarily participate in the research study. The years of experience varied among the staff from 17 years to 1 year, it was felt that this variation in years of experience would not hinder but enhance the study. More experienced teacher's contributions create discourse based on working in the sector through evolutions of policy and changes to cultural societal impacts on their profession and the lives of young people. Less experienced teacher's contributions allow for initial perceptions which are unincumbered by years of system policy implications and just as valuable as perceptions formed over years of practice.

The centre comprised of 8 teaching staff, which was ideal as it was probable that not all would agree to participate and it was anticipated that the final number of participants would be between 4 and 5. Smith (Smith et al., 2009) purport that a number of 4 to 5 is ideal as it allows for a good amount of rich data to be gathered but isn't so much that there is too much data to be handled.

3.3 Research design

Once permission to carry out research in the centre the proposed participants were approached, each were given a participant information sheet (Appendix II) outlining the premise of the research and the proposed commitment on agreement to take part. Included with the information sheet was a participant consent form. Commitment to anonymity and confidentiality was defined for the participants and an outline of the future use and storage of both the data gathered and the subsequent final dissertation.

The participants right to withdraw from the study was clarified whereby participation in the study was voluntary and withdrawal from the study at any time was permissible. On dissemination of the information and consent forms participants who agreed to take part were asked to sign the included declaration and return to me for record keeping.

A vital element of providing information sheets and consent forms was to ensure that participants were aware that the research surrounded adversity and trauma in childhood and the young people that they work with; this is a topic which could potentially be upsetting and as such clarity surrounding the nature of the study was communicated from the outset.

For ease of access and practicalities it was decided to approach colleagues in own centre to be interviewed. In this way interviews could be scheduled at shorter notice and to fit in around the day-to-day activities of the centre. As each interview would take up to an hour permission had been given by the coordinator for these to take place during the working day, it was therefore important that day to day activities were not disrupted in any way by me conducting research.

“A conversation with a purpose is how” is how Smith (2009) describes the qualitative research interview. He describes how the aim of the interview is to facilitate interaction with the participants which allows them to tell their own experiences using their own words. Diaries, focus groups and one to one interviews are all valid methods of gathering data using an IPA methodology it was decided that semi-structured interviews would elicit a more rich narrative data; the participants were known to me and it was felt that this approach to data collection would work well allowing the participants to feel comfortable feeling they were conversing with a colleague (Noon, 2018, p. 76).

A schedule of interview questions was designed and piloted prior to the interviews with participants. This schedule (Appendix III) consisted of open-ended, questions which aimed to allow participants to provide narratives of personal experiences and perceptions in their own words. The interview was piloted with a professional working in the same sector of education as the final participants.

The interview was piloted with a former colleague who also works with ESLs. This person was chosen as a someone who would be able to answer each question authentically and somebody who would provide critical feedback for the structure of the interview. Discussion on how some questions could be redesigned to be clearer and gain a better more meaningful

response from the participant was had with the pilot interviewee. Feedback from the pilot was taken and changes made to the interview schedule of questions and a final schedule was produced.

Prompts were included with the questions to ensure that the interview was guided towards answering the research questions. The interviewing process allows for the researcher and participant to engage in a conversation which flows organically, and questions can be amended to allow responses from the participant taking the conversation in an unanticipated direction.

While preparation of an interview schedule is encouraged by Smith and he notes that a good interview is essential when using an IPA methodology, he does note that “even if one has prepared an interview schedule ... it will not guarantee its quality... unless one has engaged deeply with the participant ... in order to learn more about their lifeworld, then the data will be too thin for analysis”(Smith et al., 2009, p. 58). Interviews were held in person and recorded using transcription app (Otter.ai, 2022) and traditional Dictaphone as backup.

3.4 Researcher positionality

Positionality describes the world view of an individual and the position adopted when approaching a research task. In the context of this study this section aims to present my world view with the objective of explicitly stating personal positions which may influence both how the research is conducted and its outcomes and results.

“A good strong positionality statement will typically include a description of the researcher’s lenses ... potential influences on the research ... the researcher’s chosen position on

the participants ... the research project context ... and how these might have influenced the research process” (Darwin-Holmes, 2020, p. 4).

As an educator who passionately believes in supporting ESLs to achieve their potential, I have pursued this research study. The participants engaged in the study are colleagues who I work with in an alternative education setting.

To ensure, as far as practicable, objectivity a reflexive journal was maintained throughout the process. This allowed me to maintain reflexivity throughout the process (Darwin-Holmes, 2020).

Acknowledgment of the existence of double hermeneutics is clearly stated here. I was mindful of the existence of the hermeneutic circle throughout the data collection and data analysis stages of the study; reflexive journaling was utilised to support this issue (Darwin-Holmes, 2020; Noon, 2018; Smith et al., 2009).

3.5 Data analysis

The data from the pilot interview was used to do initial analysis. This was done for practical reasons to determine the length of time it would/may take to analyse the data from all participants. It was also done so that the analysing methods of transcribing and coding could be finalised. At this point it was felt that transcribing would be done manually, this proved to take a huge amount of time and the decision was taken to export transcript from otter.ai (Otter.ai, 2022) and amend the transcriptions by listening and adjusting the transcript. This also gave the opportunity for initial notes to be made.

What I have found is that the interviews need to be read and re-read repeatedly, it is through this process so that the full value is taken from the rich data gathered. By going back to

each interview time and again it allows for me to step back from the data and avoid being influenced by my position as a researcher familiar with colleagues, this has allowed me to interpret meaning from the experiences relayed to me.

All interviews were audio recorded using Otter.ai recording application with additional back-up of a traditional Dictaphone used should the application fail. The audio recordings were imported to MAXQDA (VERBI, 2022).

The analysis of the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews was thematic. Thematic analysis of the raw data was underpinned by deductive reasoning thus allowing the data to relay the stories of the participants on each engagement with the interview (Smith et al., 2009). An inductive and iterative cycle as described by Smith et al. (2009) for IPA, the analysis process followed several steps:

Analysis Process	Iterative and Inductive Process
Data organisation	Each interview was transcribed, initial notes were taken, interviews were re-read and listened to concurrently
Creation of codes	Interview 1 was analysed line by line, distinctive responses were highlighted and assigned a code Appendix IV
Identification of themes	Emergent themes were highlighted by identifying patterns and connections in participants experiences
Finalisation of themes	Six themes were finalised, and structure created to provide thick description that addresses the research questions
Production of narrative accounts	Narrative accounts combined with discussion in my own words created

Notes were made immediately after each interview; this allowed me to identify initial thoughts of the interview process and capture any immediate thoughts on themes I felt had been significant through the interview process.

Recordings were then uploaded from the application to a MAXQDA qualitative software account (VERBI, 2022). I listened to the recordings a number of times using the MAXQDA and read the transcripts concurrently making notes on the experiences of the participants whilst doing so.

I used the first interview to create codes through line-by-line analysis highlighting significant responses as I listened and read the transcript. I then used the MAXQDA software to store the distinctive codes of the first interview.

The subsequent interviews were then put through the same process using the codes stored in the MAXQDA to identify segments. It was then possible to group the rich narrative data of each interview into each theme.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Due to the nature of this study which looks at the phenomenon of educational approaches for young people who have been affected by adversity and trauma, there were vital ethical considerations which were robustly handled when designing the research.

The topic of confidentiality was considered carefully when undertaking this research. As the questions and focus of the interview relates to children who have experienced trauma and adversity. The issue of child protection and safeguarding was paramount throughout the process. Prior to each interview participants were reminded that the interviews were confidential and

asked not to relay and specific or identifying experiences during the interview without compromising their ability to relay their experiences.

Participants were also reminded of child protection guidelines and our roles as teachers as mandated persons and that were a child protection issue or topic to arise the procedures for mandated reporting would ensue.

I also needed to consider the effect talking about such topics may have on participants. It was ensured that participants knew they could withdraw at any time. Information and consent letters outlined these procedures, all participants declared their understanding prior to interview, and this was reconfirmed verbally at the start of each interview. At the end of each interview, I spoke with each participant about how they found the process and reminded them of access to counselling support available to them if anything that had been discussed during our time together had caused any upset to arise.

3.7 Limitations

This section presents steps taken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the research study. The sequence of data collection was clearly planned and executed to ensure objectivity with any potential bias stated in section on positionality. A clearly stated research question was determined which supports the choice of IPA as an appropriate methodology. Internal validity and authenticity are evident in Chapter 4 which presents the findings with discussion that is linked back to the literature. Sample selection is clearly outlined in conjunction with researcher positionality to allow external validity and transferability to be ascertained.

Having listened to the interviews a number of times there seems to be elements of a pleasing bias, that the teachers are telling me what I wanted to hear which was definitely all true

but did maybe wonder if there was more that could have been said, was there a fear of what was being said was not guaranteed confidential as I had said in the beginning, certainly in terms of support from the centre and the supports given to staff by the centre I do wonder if there was more that could have been drawn out here.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

A strength of interpretative phenomenological analysis is being able to present rich narratives gathered through interviews with participants. This chapter allows me the privilege of interpreting educators experiences working with trauma-affected youth. This chapter presents the findings of the research with concurrent discussion thematically.

The research sought to address educators' awareness of the impact of ACEs and trauma on young people and knowledge of and attitude towards trauma-sensitive education (TSE).

Through interpretative analysis of the interviews with educators working in an alternative educational setting, five broad themes surrounding these questions emerged and are summarised in the next section.

Knowledge of ACEs and trauma

Participants were asked a series of questions to ascertain their knowledge of what they understand adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and childhood trauma to be; participants were asked to relay any experiences that they have had of working with young people that had experienced adversity and trauma.

Participants overall identified ACEs and trauma that are in line with the literature definitions; Their understanding did present a distinct difference between ACEs and trauma whereby trauma is understood to be catastrophic events and not necessarily as prevalent as ACEs.

Awareness of impact of ACEs and trauma

Participants understood that ACEs and trauma can have a detrimental effect on young people and talked about disruptive behaviours, anti-social behaviours, and difficulties in forming

positive relationships. What was not apparent however was a knowledge of the wider psychological, neurobiological, or long-lasting impacts of ACEs and trauma.

Approach to teaching, learning and support

A range of flexible teaching and learning methodologies were described which participants adopt to meet the needs of students with varying needs. Teachers described a compassionate approach to working with young people in an alternative education setting setting which has the intention of understanding the students' needs. Student-centred practices were described that are experiential in their philosophy. Trust and forming of positive relationships were identified as being crucial in having a successful professional relationship with students.

Awareness and attitude towards trauma-sensitive education

When asked about their knowledge of and attitude towards TSE many teachers were unaware of the approach. All teachers when asked what they thought this approach to teaching and learning would entail were able to describe aspects of a trauma-sensitive approach to education. All teachers had a positive attitude to TSE as something that would be beneficial to them as professionals and supportive to their students. It is interesting to note that while all teachers describe trauma-sensitive practices within their daily practice that they are unaware that they are currently teaching in a trauma-sensitive manner.

Professional development and support for staff

Professional development appears to be readily available to staff, teachers describe their centre as being supportive in providing access to training. There was no awareness of trauma-sensitive training, but all were positive when asked if they thought it was an area of professional development they would participate in and see as being beneficial to their practice.

While all teachers describe a strong team and professional relationships with their colleagues as being their primary sources of support there is an absence of formal support or supervision structures in place. Some participants describe this as being an area that they are keen to be developed in their centre.

4.2 Knowledge of ACEs and trauma

All teachers acknowledged that a negative experience of education up to this point has resulted in students attending alternative education, "... bad relationships with teachers and schools ... "(P03), P04 explains that "... they would have been probably poor attenders' poor abilities in school and sure the teachers in their mind were always at them ... ". While school was not a positive experience for students', participants did convey that this was not the main factor which contributed to them leaving school early and relayed their understanding of adversities which young people have experienced.

"... families that are separated or one parent families and families that experience difficulties related to anti-social things and, and addiction problems, you know, drugs and alcohol addiction and, and, yes, sometimes, you know just child protection issues and that going on as well so there's so many [ACEs] ... ". (P03)

P05 also talks about substance issues, "... students who come from very dysfunctional homes where there might have been drug addiction" and mentions that some students are living with family members "... in prison or on parole" and have witnessed "...violence, crime..." and be living in "...extreme poverty" and coming from a "... devastating socio-economic background". P02 talks of some young people "...being taken out of the family home ... and maybe into foster care", this participant also identifies that some young people may have suffered the loss of a parent.

One participant identified the very basic need of food being an issue, "... some students would come in hungry; they weren't being fed, they were malnourished", P02 has identified an ACE in the category of neglect. This also aligns with Maslow's theory of needs whereby unmet needs at the base level prohibit successful positive development (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2018).

A common theme throughout the interviews with participants was their awareness of high incidence of EPMH issues. All participants viewed anxiety and mental health difficulties as being increasingly prevalent among the young people they work with and cite this area as one of the more debilitating issues in the young person's lives:

"... its mental health issues, there is a lot of anxiety, and mental health, and that seems to be prominent at the moment. In the earlier years of Youthreach it possibly would have come from ehm their background in that they would have had poor school attendance ... I think and mental health is the big one. (P04)

P02 ascertains "... if they suffer with mental health seems to be a huge one..." and continues "...you see a lot more youngsters suffering with anxiety at the severe end where they just can't deal with ... a lot of people". P04 concurs that "... its mental health issues, there is a lot of anxiety and mental health and that seems to be prominent at the moment".

It is evident from the interviews that the participants are familiar with the circumstances which have contributed to their students' journeys to alternative education. There is a feeling that participants are somewhat overwhelmed by the enormity of adversity that the students they teach have faced. Many of the adverse experiences described appeared to be accepted as common place and not viewed as potentially having a traumatic impact on development through the lifespan on the young person.

It is hard to convey here the sadness and that each participant felt for the situations their students are living in, but it is apparent in the dedication that teachers in alternative education

settings have for their profession, their dedication to their educational practice, made all the more challenging for students and practitioners by the prevalence of ACEs and trauma.

In 2020 Hickey et al.'s research found that 23.5% of 120 second chance educators strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of what trauma and traumatic stress are with 62.2% also agreeing, with the remaining 14.2% saying they did not have an understanding (Hickey et al., 2020, p. 4). This finding highlights a need for awareness training around ACEs and childhood trauma, a finding that is reflected in the participants responses in this study. Teachers' comments reflect all aspects of childhood adversity as defined by Felitti and Anda and are in line with current identifications of ACEs and childhood trauma (CDC, 2022; Felitti et al., 1998; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a; SAMHSA, 2014)

4.3 Awareness of impact of ACEs and trauma

Participants relayed their experiences of working with young people who have displayed behaviours in the educational setting which they, the participants, perceived to be as a result of previous adversity or trauma. P01 shared experiences which demonstrate what could be described as typical disruptive behaviour, "walk outs, yeah, arguing with you, ... maybe being disruptive ... I've seen the physical side of it, I've been hit, I've had thigs fired at me...". P01 then described an experience where an interaction with a student during a practical class had become volatile and then meeting that same student later that day describes meeting:

"that same young [student] on the corridor and saying well done and they'd be crying and I'd say what's up with you – 'I was ever taught how to use a hammer or saw, I always thought I was stupid' – you see the emotion sometimes and someone could say, what's the big deal, but they cried because they never allowed to use a hammer".

This story reflects how the young person had acted out in the classroom but then relays to the teacher that the behaviour was the result of previous negative experiences in their past and simply being trusted to use a tool was something they could not cope with. P02 describes how complex emotions can manifest in explosive behaviour:

“I have seen that there’s so many can get very angry at you, maybe throw tables and chairs and scream and shout and maybe bash the head and hurt themselves. And so, it’s like they are funnelling that trauma and experience, you know, onto themselves. They’re trying to let it out but they’re trying to hurt themselves as well with the hurt that they are feeling”

P02 gives a startling description of a young person grappling with emotions that they are unable to process in a productive way and which manifests as aggressive and harmful behaviours, emotions that they perceive to be impacts of ACEs.

Participants of this research describe how the young people they work with have difficulties building trust, have barriers that are difficult to penetrate, have lost confidence in themselves as a result of not having the ability to form positive relationships:

“... they become very distant and they become very closed books, they don’t trust that easy because they are living this life that they don’t tell anyone about and they certainly don’t trust a teacher in that regard and I think Youthreach is very unique in the sense that they do build such a strong rapport with teachers that they do tend to let down those barriers ... but I think that’s their own cry for help, I think they are basically asking you to sort this and stop it for them basically ... there’s a big wall up there but a lot of them are trying to let you break it down” (P04)

P03 describes how breakdown of relationships affect young people’s confidence and self-esteem, particularly when relationships are difficult in their school setting:

“... once a gap is established ... if relationships break down because there is not enough support to be able to address it or for intervention straight away and the longer it goes on it effects

confidence ... negative terms are embedded in their brain and that's the only voice they hear and they believe ... that they will never amount to much" (P03)

P05 describes what can happen where there has been an absence of supportive relationships in a child's life "when you come from devastation and a traumatic childhood and there is no positive role models, if you see one positive role model you will latch on to that for love nor money". P02 describes the stigma and shame associated with childhood trauma, "... it's a huge stigma that they carry with them ... it's like it's always part of them, and they find it hard to shake it off".

This P02 asserts can also be hard to "shake off" as many young people who have ACEs also have key workers from relevant services who work with them on a regular basis, "... they would have juvenile liaison officers, would have been involved with Tusla and government agencies ... have had caseworkers and social workers attached to them" (P02).

Participants' awareness of the impact of ACEs was evident in their experiences of working with young people who have difficulties forming trusting relationships, regulatory capabilities are impaired, have angry or aggressive outbursts and have difficulty controlling their emotions; these impacts of ACEs are all supported by the literature (Goodman, 2017; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a; SAMHSA, 2014).

What wasn't evident through interviews with participants was their awareness of the physical, neuro-physical or cognitive impairments that can occur where young people's resilience does not allow them to overcome traumatic stress or support systems are not in place to guide them through stressful events (Felitti et al., 1998; Goodman, 2017; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a); all participants were prompted for responses in these areas during the interviews but did not respond with experiential evidence.

A comprehensive awareness of the wide-reaching effects of ACEs and trauma can only serve to enhance the professional practice of educators working with young people who have left school early. Participants of this research have accumulated knowledge of the impact of ACEs through their dedicated work with young people, provision of awareness programmes to support this first-hand knowledge with empirical research and theory would support not only educators but also the students they teach.

The literature has identified the inability to regulate emotions as an indicator of ACEs and trauma (Brunzell et al., 2016; Goodman, 2017; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a).

Development of regulatory skills is hindered where adversity and trauma are experienced. The ability to form positive relationships also suffers where ACEs are present, this is evident in the literature (Alexander, 2019; Guarino & Chagnon, 2018a; Jennings, 2019) and in the attachment theory of Bowlby (Bowlby, 1988; Lin et al., 2020),

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs relationships and esteem needs feature towards the top of the hierarchy, the basic of needs at the bottom fall into the categories of physiological and safety needs (McLeod, 2018), P05 describes impacts of ACEs that they have experienced, " ... the child needed to eat something and that child needed to feel safe and the child needed to feel a supportive environment around them". Typically physiological and safety needs are provided to children by primary care givers in a family setting which is the child's immediate environment or microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Guy-Evans, 2020). Disruption to a child's primary attachments and within their microsystem as a result of ACEs can impact on young people as experienced by P05:

"... the thing is we're just teachers and we can't do everything. And then you might say, oh where are the parents ... where is the role models, where is the person that says this is not okay, and then you realise that there is no person there ... and that's really difficult because now, in a way, you're that

person, whether you like it or not, and here's the funny thing is, is that you're not meant to be that person".

The next section presents findings and discussion on approaches participants use to support students in their centre.

4.4 Approach to teaching, learning and support

The ethos of an alternative education setting such as Youthreach is one which is holistic, centres adopt an approach to teaching and learning which aims to help students achieve academically and personally. Alternative education centres are characterised by their smaller class sizes and student populations which lends itself to a more individualised programme for each student. Teaching strategies that teachers identified are ones they use to meet the needs of students attending alternative education to mitigate what they see as behaviours associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are discussed in this section.

Pedagogies which enhance student engagement are used and more didactic methods are avoided, "... if you stay away from the chalk and talk type classes, you have to make it more interesting and use fun things, set targets for their needs" (P04). Keeping the students interested and ensuring that classes are differentiated and student focused is vital according to P04:

"keep them short sporadic kind of classes, don't be doing the long kind of boring assignments all in one class, just kind of break it up and have the four or five different methods ... ensure that you are not giving the whole class the same targets, each individual, they are so different and they are at different levels so assign different tasks within the class to suit the abilities of each ... don't just assume they are all at the same level, they're not and they all learn at a different rate..."

Practical strategies are used to meet the needs of each individual student, "... multiple breaks, having the option to take a break when they need it ... if they're feeling fidgety and they need to

stand up ... they can walk around the room, and that's fine ... it's about giving them space and time" (P02). P03 asserts that what is needed is to "... support the learner as a whole person rather than just academically".

Building positive student teacher relationships is central to success in the practice of the participants, as described by P04 the centre "... is very unique in the sense that they do build such a strong rapport with teachers, they do tend to let down those barriers a lot more than they ever imagined they would". Talking about the importance of building positive relationships P04 continues:

"... I think that's our biggest obstacle is to break down that kind of fear to say that we're actually on your side ... I think the fact that we're informal, on first name basis and it's not the typical Miss xx ...if we don't get that relationship, it's game over, you need to win them over"

P04 explains why positive relationships with students are important, why there is a need to "win them over ... it's more that they can see you're honest, we're not pretending to be something we're not, we genuinely want to get the best out of them ... in the classroom like I wouldn't be afraid to talk about my personal life ... you trust them with your own stories"

Smaller class sizes were mentioned as beneficial in being able to build relationships with students and allowing teachers to recognise the needs of individual students more readily,

"because there is such small classes, we only have maybe eight or ten in a class at any one time so you can very much read them and see there is something happening and see that there is something going on... they are smaller classes so we get to be able to pick up on these cues quicker" (P04)

P01 described a feature of building relationships within the centre was listening to the students, "... the youngsters here, get talked to get listened to ... I think one of the biggest things we do here is listen".

Smaller class sizes allow approaches to teaching and learning to be tailored to each student as described by (P05) "... on a practical level the classes are smaller and that does help ... because the classes are smaller ... its more individual and it allows you to shape your teaching methodologies to suit a particular student".

Teachers describe the technical pedagogical skills that they use in their professional practice, they were also asked to describe their experiences of skills they have used to meet the behaviours that they perceive are manifestations of impacts of ACEs, P03 describes the need to "differentiate between the behaviour and the learner" and that if there has been a situation in a classroom that it is important to "put an argument with a learner behind you ... you've got to put that behind your view".

When talking about classroom situations that are heightened emotionally P04 asserts "there is always going to be challenging and difficult behaviours and you just have to know when to challenge back and when not". Both participants describe here the importance of the role of the teacher in not elevating a potentially volatile situation and where these situations occur the importance of knowing that there is something underlying the behaviour.

Evident in teachers' descriptions of working with young people with ACEs is a flexible and active approach to teaching and learning, tenets of trauma-sensitive education. Positive relationships are another foundation on which a trauma-sensitive education environment is built which again is apparent in participants accounts. Building resilience and developing regulatory skills are areas of a trauma sensitive approach to learning which when prompted were not forthcoming in participants interviews (Alexander, 2019; Brunzell et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2021; Jennings, 2019).

Participants of this study are aware that their approach to teaching and learning which is holistic, active and experiential in its approach is an appropriate methodology for the setting they are in, they know this because they can see this first hand in the positive outcomes that students achieve during their time on the programme. A developed knowledge of TSE that enhances and develops their existing practices would concrete the teaching philosophies of those educators working in alternative education settings.

4.5 Awareness and attitude towards trauma-sensitive education

This study was interested in ascertaining teachers' awareness of an attitude towards trauma-sensitive education (TSE). The previous section demonstrated how teachers employ a range of trauma-sensitive approaches in their professional practice however familiarity with the concept of TSE was not evident through interviews. When asked what they thought TSE might entail a good understanding of the concept was displayed and a positive attitude conveyed towards adopting a trauma-sensitive approach in their practice.

4.5.1 TSE Characteristics

When asked what supports are available to students in their educational setting and what the expectations for students were (these questions were intended to ascertain trauma-sensitive supports currently in place), all participants spoke about a strong supportive team, compassionate leadership, and on-site and off-site supports available to students. P02 says,

“I would have to say, from the coordinators, the teachers, a team effort, there's a massive support, so the students really do feel in a safe environment, and they feel confident, comfortable enough to know when that relationship is built to actually confide and trust those teachers and be able to speak to them about some very difficult conversations and topics ... the teachers have a much

more empathetic, you know, they empathise more with the students, so there's more understanding".

When talking about the expectations the centre has for the students that attend P01 proffers:

"let's put it this way, the happiest student I've ever seen didn't end up with any real qualifications, but he ended up doing what makes them happy in life ... I've seen people achieving their potential by maybe just building self-confidence"

P03 describes how students are aware that they are being approached in a sensitive way

"... they know that you have their back, and it could be the first time in their life that someone has their back and for them to start to believe that they are capable of doing so much ... sure, that can just change their whole life".

P03 again describes a visibly strong team as being a strength of the ethos of the centre, "we're all the one team and I think they see us as a team, we really want to get the overall result ... we want them to get to a better place". P05 also talks about the value of a strong team

"... the staff team is really really important and having that connection between the staff ... there are going to be different people and that is just based on simple personality, which is fine, but I think the overall strategy in relation to the staff to know that that's in benefit here is for the good of the student in the long term is really important".

All teachers spoke about the benefit of having an on-site counsellor available to students.

4.5.2 Awareness of trauma-sensitive education

Participants were asked questions surrounding the concept of trauma-sensitive education, none of the participants were aware of this as an educational approach. However, participants did show an understanding of what trauma-sensitive education entails, and some were aware that practices currently in use in their centre currently were of a trauma-sensitive nature, P04 ascertains "I think Youthreach are ahead of the game on this ... I think we're ahead in the sense

that we are already doing this without it being labelled trauma-sensitive education”; while P04 believes trauma-sensitive practices are in use in the educational setting, P02 is of a different opinion, “... I wouldn’t be familiar with that term, I don’t think it’s there at the moment, if it was we would have the weekly meetings, you know, weekly, monthly meetings about certain students, understanding their specific traumas”.

P02 highlights the issue of information sharing, a foundational concept of trauma-sensitive education. Proponents of TSE maintain that not all those engage with a student need to know specifics of a student’s previous life circumstance.

The topic of having information features among the interviews of this study with some teachers feeling they need to know more to better support students and other teachers feeling that they do not need specifics in order to meet the needs of students. P03 feels that “communication is definitely an area that can be improved ... having much more awareness ... and much more sharing of information ... can only be a good thing”.

In contrast P05 feels they are made aware of issues that are necessary for their approach to teaching and learning, and says that knowing all details of a person’s backstory is not necessary for their practice, “I’m okay with not knowing everything, we don’t need to know everything” clarifying that being given details “... may impact on your perception ... I prefer to make my own perception”.

Perhaps a more comprehensive awareness of TSE would better facilitate teachers who feel a need to have more information understand the universal approach to students that TSE is and that information sharing, and knowledge of specifics is not necessary to support students who have experienced adversity and trauma.

4.5.3 Attitude to trauma-sensitive education

All teachers displayed a positive attitude to a trauma-sensitive approach to education during interviews. P02 articulates "... I think it's something that Youthreach centres should have ... all educators of Youthreach should be aware of trauma-sensitive education". P03 feels that "awareness of the trauma and having the awareness of the training and education ourselves of how best to support learners... looking at the psychological aspects of and understanding how it comes out in behaviour", P03 shows here the need for further awareness and knowledge surrounding the impact of ACEs and that a trauma-sensitive approach to education would be a positive step towards supporting young people.

P05 recounts an example where something as simple as how they spoke in class was something which needed adaption to make the learning environment more supportive for a former student, "... when I started off, I spoke too loudly in class...I had to quiet my voice ... I was told by a student that it wasn't just the volume, it was the intensity that made them feel uncomfortable".

This participant uses this as an example of how they have adapted to be more trauma-sensitive, this encounter helped them consider that how they act in the learning environment can affect students who have had adverse experiences, certain behaviours by the teacher may be triggering for the young person. P05 uses this example to support an argument in favour of second chance education settings being trauma-sensitive in their approach.

While attitudes towards TSE are positive it was clearly identified that professional development is desirable to support an implementation of a new initiative in the setting. Examples of practical steps that participants have taken, such as quieting their voice, demonstrates a willingness on their part to develop their professional practice to meet the needs

of their students. Accepting that all students in an alternative education setting have had difficulties in their lives leading to them leaving school early it seems that encouraging awareness of a trauma-sensitive approach to education is a logical next step in enhancing programme outcomes for the young people who participate.

4.6 Professional development and support for staff

P02's attitude towards TSE is positive and feels it should be adopted by all professional in alternative education settings, when discussing how this could be implemented the participant said, "I think it needs to come from the top ... from the Department of Education ... set some kind of training in place for all educators, or a new policy in place that goes to further education", this sentiment echoes the findings of the Youthreach evaluation and the participants from Hickey et al.'s study.

Both the Youthreach evaluation and Hickey et al.'s study present an evident need and willingness on the part of educators in alternative settings to participate in professional development to support the evident growing prevalence of additional needs among the cohort of students that they engage with, particularly in the area of EPMH needs (Hickey et al., 2020; Smyth et al., 2019). The participants of this study concur, P03 highlights that "...it's a stressful job and emotions run high and it's challenging, and you're met with challenges in the classroom regularly" continuing on to say that training in resilience and skills to deal with this would be beneficial.

Formal professional support is not available to the participants of this study to support them in their professional practice, all participants mention the strong team as their primary support to help them with their stressful day to day practice. P05 mentioned earlier that it's the

staff team that provides a strong support to them, something they rely on as they say that sometimes

“... it goes home with you over the weekend, it’s so annoying and frustrating, and we need to learn how to deal with it and that makes you good at your job, I think if it takes over that makes you bad at the job, there is a middle ground and you have to find that sweet spot”.

P04’s attitude to professional development is evidently positive. “... in-service that will be available on that [TSE] I would love to do ... I just feel anxiety is just huge at the moment and self-harm and depression ... I’d like to think there are ways of helping them”. With the prevalence of adversity among the students that P04 works with when talking about how they handle prolonged exposure to adversity, trauma and its effects they maintain that experience and a strong team primarily are the resources that promote their own well-being:

“when you’re young and green to some of the student issues and how much of it was around I thought, God, this only happens on soaps, I found I was going home in the evening and even talking about some of the students and their experiences but I found that once you know you’ve done your best for the student you soon learn that you can’t bring it home with you”.

P04 is clear to say that this only came with years of experience, “... that didn’t happen overnight, and still to this day I might be taken by surprise by some of the experiences”, in these instances, P04 explains that it is the support of the team that helps in navigating difficult situations, “... I use the staff team for support ... we’re lucky to have a good supportive team that we can kind of bounce ideas off each other”.

It is a testament to the participants that the remain positive and dedicated in what is clearly a challenging work environment. The student is the centre of their daily activities, and they rely on each other for support to ensure that they continue to be their best professional selves.

The interviews presented here a snapshot of the work being done nationwide by educators with young people living with the effects of trauma and adversity. The most recent Youthreach Evaluation highlights deficits in professional development and support for staff. This study and the presentation of the stories of its participants serves to strengthen the case in support of immediate provision of professional development and support for educators in alternative education settings.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study are broadly in line with the current literature in the field of TSE. Teachers' awareness of ACEs and trauma, while not explicitly characterised as such all teachers understood that what has happened in young person's past has had an effect on them. The teachers seemed to view trauma as 'bigger' more serious things like death, rape and suicide and there was a general acceptance that young people who had things like substance misuse or broken homes, that that was just part of their lives.

A deeper understanding of how childhood adversity affects development across the lifespan was not evident through interviews with the participants. Mental health and anxiety were the most prevalent issues that were mentioned by all teachers, they talked about the pervasiveness of anxiety and the impact it has on the young people they work with, with little access in the community to support them.

As is evident in the literature, approaches to teaching and learning currently in practice are sensitive in their underpinning values. Teachers spoke about understanding that behaviours which can be concerning, and challenging are as a result of past experiences. Teacher's concept

of education aligns with a trauma-sensitive approach as they aim to support the student as a whole during their education.

Experience of teachers is a predominant factor in how they approach their work with young people. All participants spoke about how in the beginning they found it hard to deal with the challenges of their work but over the years they have become better at working with young people who display behaviours that are because of trauma or adversity.

None of the teachers had knowledge of or had the opportunity at the time of interview to explore the concept of trauma-sensitive education. All had a positive attitude towards the concept. Some felt that what is being done in their educational setting currently constitutes what they perceive could be considered trauma-sensitive education and that their centre is “ahead of the game on this” (P04).

As with the lack of awareness of trauma-sensitive education teachers didn't seem to know about training available to help them with working with young people. All seemed open to training and learning new ways of working with young people and mentioned that the centre has a positive attitude towards continuous professional development.

There was little mention of supports provided for staff. Most staff said that they deal with the pressures of the job themselves, that over time they have learned how to cope with the stresses of working with trauma affected youth. A supportive team is the primary support system utilised by participants of this study.

The organisational structure of an alternative education setting appears to lend itself to be trauma-sensitive. All teachers mentioned smaller class sizes as being a positive whereby there is the possibility then to form positive trusting relationships with the students. They can then get to know each student and find out how best to support them.

One teacher mentioned the positive of having a supportive staff team that is visible to the students, that the staff support each other and that there is an atmosphere of all being the one team students included, that the students are involved in everything that goes on its not just the teachers dictating what goes on in the centre, there is a collaborative approach to the work that is being done.

The following chapter will conclude the findings and discussion of this study; implications and recommendations drawn from this research will be presented.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to the research study which was undertaken to explore the concept of trauma-sensitive education in Ireland through exploring the perceptions and experiences of second chance educators working with young people who have been affected by childhood adversity and trauma.

The study took an interpretative phenomenological approach aiming to allow participants to provide a rich narrative which would represent the lived experiences of those working in an environment for which TSE is designed to support. This chapter will present an overall conclusion and contribution of the study. Implications and recommendations arising from the completion of the study will be presented.

5.2 Conclusion and contribution

This study confirmed existing research which finds that educators working in second chance education settings have an approach to education which supports the varying needs of students (Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Smyth et al., 2019). Students who attend such settings have invariably had negative educational experiences and most likely had adversity in their lives which led to their decision to leave mainstream education early (Smyth et al., 2019).

The findings of study lead to the conclusion that educators have awareness and knowledge of effects of childhood adversity and trauma to varying degrees, participants of the study confirm that formal professional development in the area of the effects of ACEs or trauma has not been made available to them up to the point in time of interviews taking place. With the

wealth of research across many fields originating with Felitti et al.'s seminal research of ACEs, subsequent research on the effects of ACEs and the wide field of research in child development theories, access to training which unifies and makes sense of these separate paradigms, as trauma-sensitive education does, is needed in the education sector, particularly for those working with vulnerable young people who have experienced adversity and trauma.

This study adds to the field of research in an Irish context which acknowledges the prevalence of ACEs and calls for a trauma-sensitive approach to education.

Having used an interpretative phenomenological approach this study has enabled the lived experience of those engaged with young people who have experienced ACEs and trauma to be heard. The narrative explored in this research presents a picture of dedicated professionals whose approach to education is student-centred with a compassionate approach which aims to support the needs of the young person while being mindful of possible previous adversities.

5.3 Implications and recommendations

Initial teacher education for all sectors of Irish education system could provide modules in trauma-sensitive education, this would cater for the need for knowledge on effect of ACEs across the lifespan. ACEs are a global phenomenon increasing in their pervasiveness, impacts of which are being understood more and more with additional research. The impacts of ACEs can be seen across the lifespan and as such it is prudent that all those engaged with education have at minimum, an understanding of the potential for working with a student who is experiencing the effects of trauma.

Professional development for those currently engaged with working with young people is evident in its immediate need for accessibility. Research to date with educators has highlighted

in no uncertain terms that professionals are identifying deficits in their skill sets which they believe can be mitigated through professional development. With programmes already in existence which could provide the foundation for pilot initiatives which produce implementation policy it is incumbent on those tasked with meeting the needs of young people of Ireland to provide adequate supports to all stakeholders of education.

Teachers working with young people are tasked with not only providing academic support to their students but also need to be mindful of the high prevalence of EPMH difficulties currently being experienced by this cohort of students (Gordon, 2017; Hickey et al., 2020; Smyth et al., 2019).

Support for those working with young people who spend prolonged time in challenging and potentially upsetting working environments. This study identified as did previous research presented in the literature, that access to formal support in the form of professional supervision is not currently accessible in the second-chance education sector. Provision of professional supervision on a regular basis would aim to enhance the well-being of professionals thus enhancing their professional practice.

Further evaluative research on the effectiveness on implementing trauma-sensitive education programmes in an Irish context should be carried out. Hickey et al.'s study provides the rationale for implementing a trauma-informed programme. Delaney evaluates the effectiveness of an awareness programme and the perceptions of the efficacy by the participants of the study.

Much more needs to be done to promote the need for enhanced approaches to education which support the quickly growing pervasiveness of ACEs in Ireland. With young people needing far more support with EPMH issues professionals engaged with working with should be

supported in accessing professional development which has been empirically researched to meet the needs of these students.

More explicit policy to acknowledge the prevalence of ACEs in Ireland and subsequent policy that supports and provides for the necessary resources to implement change to systems.

5.4 Conclusion

This study explored the concept of trauma-sensitive education in an Irish context. The review of literature contextualised the cohort of early school leavers who attend second chance educational settings as one which would benefit greatly from a trauma-sensitive approach to education. Exploration of trauma-sensitive education was presented which was supported by data on prevalence of ACEs globally, across the US and Europe and finally in Ireland. The impact of ACEs vividly explained through analysis of development theorists, Maslow, Bowlby and Bronfenbrenner; The seminal ACEs study of Felitti et al. was introduced as the foundation of this study and to provide rationale for the need to explore TSE in an Irish context.

Using interpretative phenomenological analysis participants to the research were asked to share their perceptions and experiences of working with young people who have experienced adversity in their lives. Through exploration of the rich narrative data provided by the participants this study found six emergent themes.

Teachers working in second chance education settings have awareness of what adversity in childhood could constitute, and while not explicitly voiced, awareness of the impact of ACEs was evident through the experiences participants divulged. The supportive approach that participants take to their educational practice was

clearly possible to interpret from the data with many teachers sharing approaches to teaching and learning which are trauma sensitive.

Knowledge of the concept of trauma-sensitive education was not clearly apparent however all participants displayed a positive attitude towards professional development in this area were it to become accessible to them. Obvious from the narratives gathered through interview was the lack of support for teachers, teachers shared their resourcefulness in using their strong team to support them in a profession which has the potential to affect their overall well-being.

This study contributes to the current research on trauma-sensitive education and highlights the gap in the literature. Further research is needed to support new policy and practice implications in the educational sector. ACEs impact across the lifespan, awareness of how to meet the needs of those who have experienced adversity is a universal need in the education sector as a whole.

This study confirmed existing research which finds that educators working in alternative education settings have an approach to education which supports the varying needs of their students. The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that educators have awareness and knowledge of effects of ACEs to varying degrees and that professional development in this area would be beneficial and received positively. This study adds to the field of research in an Irish context and acknowledges the prevalence of ACEs and calls for a trauma-sensitive approach to education.

Inclusion of trauma awareness and trauma sensitive education practices at initial teacher education stage would cater for the need for knowledge of an issue which is a global phenomenon increasing in its pervasiveness.

Provision of professional development for those professionals currently engaged with working with young people is needed immediately, professionals are identifying deficits in their skills to meet the needs of their students.

Formal support framework is needed for those working with young people who spend prolonged time in challenging and potentially upsetting working environments.

Further evaluative research on the effectiveness of implementing trauma-sensitive education in an Irish context should be undertaken.

With the increase in prevalence of EPMH difficulties in young people much more needs to be done to promote enhanced approaches to education, explicit policy that acknowledges this issue and makes provision for the necessary resources required to implement developments is required.

This study highlights the amazing work currently being done in alternative education settings and also highlights the immediate need to support educators and students to thrive in the educational setting in a world where ACEs are becoming more and more prevalent.

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Appendix I – Letter of permission

Mr Robbie McCabe
Coordinator
Gorey Youthreach
Civic Square
The Avenue
Gorey
Co. Wexford

28th January 2021

Re: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mr. McCabe,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at Gorey Youthreach. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Practice course at National College of Ireland and am in the process of writing my dissertation.

The study is entitled “A qualitative study to determine the readiness of a Youthreach Centre in adopting a trauma-sensitive approach to education”.

The project will involve interviewing Gorey Youthreach staff members about their knowledge of trauma-sensitive practice in an educational setting, their understanding of the impact adverse childhood experiences and trauma can have on young people and their perspective and attitudes towards adopting a whole-centre trauma-sensitive approach to teaching and learning.

I am seeking permission to approach staff to ask them if they would like to participate in this research, I will furnish them with information pertaining to the research and an opportunity to agree to participate. Participants will be asked to complete an initial short questionnaire to gather demographic data primarily. I hope to conduct an interview with each staff member individually which should take no longer than one hour. No costs will be incurred by your centre or the individual participants.

If you are willing to grant permission, I would be grateful if you could sign the enclosed form and return to me along with a cover letter on official headed paper confirming permission has been granted.

If you require any further details or have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me, many thanks in advance for your consideration of this research project.

Best regards,

Gráinne O'Donoghue
Gorey Youthreach
Phone: +353 [REDACTED]
Email: grainneodonoghue@wwetb.ie or x18211968@student.ncirl.ie

Confirmation of permission granted to Gráinne O'Donoghue, student at National College of Ireland in part fulfilment of course requirements for Masters in Educational Practice.

I understand that Gorey Youthreach's participation in this project will involve:

- Allowing Gráinne O'Donoghue to conduct interviews with staff members.
- Allowing Gráinne O'Donoghue to conduct interviews with staff during normal working hours.
- Allowing Gráinne O'Donoghue to conduct interviews with staff either in-person on centre premises or remotely.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand that staff who are interviewed are free to withdraw themselves from this study at any time and without giving a reason.

I understand that participants in this study will do so confidentially, and that all information will be stored anonymously and securely once it has been collected. All information appearing in the final report will be anonymous.

By completing the following details, you are indicating that permission is granted for Gráinne O'Donoghue to carry out research with staff of Gorey Youthreach as participants.

Name of Organisation: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

- Is a cover letter completed to accompany this signed consent form? Yes No

Appendix II – Participant Information and Consent Form

April 2021

I am currently completing a Masters in Educational Practice with the National College of Ireland and would be grateful if you would consider participating in my research project:

“Trauma-sensitive education in Ireland: perceptions and experiences of second chance educators working with young people who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences or trauma”

The aim of this research is to explore second-chance educator’s experience of working with young people who have left school early, how they perceive adverse childhood experiences have affected the students they work with and their knowledge and attitude towards a trauma-sensitive approach to education.

I hope that the findings of the study will inform practice and add to the discourse on future learning and teaching policy.

The research will take the form of a semi-structured interview which will give us the opportunity to talk about your experiences working with young people in a Youthreach setting. The interview will be held at a date, time and location which suits you. It will last for approximately 60 minutes; you will have the opportunity to take a break or end the interview at any stage. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Throughout the study your identity will remain anonymous. An audio recording will be made, all information discussed in the interview will be confidential. All information and data relating to the study will be stored securely and discarded 5 years after completion of the research in accordance with NCI policy. The findings will be shared with NCI for the purpose of grading and these findings can be shared with you also.

I hope that you will be willing to participate as your experiences will be of great value to the research. Should you wish to participate I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached participant consent form to me.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

Gráinne O’Donoghue

Phone: + 353 87

Email (work): grainneodonoghue@wvetb.ie

Email (college): x18211968@student.ncirl.ie

Participant Consent Form

Researcher: Gráinne O'Donoghue

College: National College of Ireland

Course: MA Educational Practice

Study: Trauma-sensitive education in Ireland: second chance educator's experiences of working with young people who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences or trauma.

Purpose of study: The aim of this research is to explore second-chance educator's experience of working with young people who have left school early, how they perceive adverse childhood experiences and/or have affected the students they work with and their knowledge and attitude towards a trauma-sensitive approach to education.

Research procedures: The research will take the form of a semi-structured interview which will give you an opportunity to share your experiences of working with participants of a Youthreach programme. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and you will have the opportunity to take a break or end the interview at any stage. An audio recording will be made of the interview.

Confidentiality: Throughout the study your identity will remain anonymous: personal information, names and any other identifying information will not be used in the research. Information discussed in the interview will be treated with confidentiality as far as is practical in line with child protection guidelines. All information and data gathered, including the audio recording will be used only for the purpose of this study. Information and data gathered will be securely discarded within 5 years of the completion of this study in line with NCI policy.

Right to withdraw: Participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time should you wish.

Researcher contact details:

Phone: +353 87 7511538

Email (work): grainneodonoghue@wwetb.ie

Email (college): x18211968@student.ncirl.ie

Declaration

- I have read the information sheet on the nature of this research
- I understand what is involved in this research
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this research
- My questions about this research have been adequately answered
- I agree to an audio recording of the interview being made
- I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix III – Schedule of Interview Questions

Schedule of Interview Questions – Final Draft

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research, I'd like to talk about your experiences of working with young people in a Youthreach setting.

We can take a break or stop the interview at any time if you need to.

Everything discussed here will be confidential in so far as is practical and all names and identifying information will be anonymised.

I would like to record the audio of our meeting.

Opening Questions

1. How long have you worked in Youthreach?
2. What is your position in Youthreach?
3. What do you most enjoy about the work that you do?

Research Q1

Are Youthreach educators aware of the impact ACEs and trauma have on young people?

1. Can you tell me about some of the reasons that the young people you have worked with have had for leaving school early and joining a Youthreach programme?
2. Without giving me any identifying details can you tell me about some of the adverse experiences or trauma that your students past and present have had?

Reminder of confidentiality and/or child protection implications

3. How do you think these types of experiences have affected them overall?

Prompt

- Physical, emotionally, psychologically, cognitively, behaviourally?
- Resilience
- Regulatory abilities
- Positive relationships

4. Tell me about times that you have seen this manifest in the classroom?

Research Q2

What knowledge do Youthreach staff have and what is their attitude towards a trauma-sensitive approach to education?

1. What strategies do you use in your classroom to support young people who are displaying behaviours which may suggest they are have difficulties being in a classroom setting?

Prompt

- Do these strategies work all the time with everyone?
- What do you do next?
- How do the students respond in these situations?

2. How does your centre support young people who have left school early and may have had adverse childhood experiences or experienced trauma?

Prompt

- Values and ethos
- Policies
- Overall approach to teaching and learning

3. How important is it for you to form a positive relationship with the young people you teach?

Prompt

- How do you form this relationship – trust/empathy/support?
- Has there been a time where this has been difficult to do? What has the experience here been?

4. Are you aware of or informed of the backgrounds of and the needs of the students who attend the Youthreach programme?

Prompt

- Do you think that you should be given more information?
- Are you given enough information?
- Do you feel that you don't need to know the backgrounds of the young people? (will get to know them in time and will work in present relationship)

5. Do you meet as a whole staff to discuss how best to support the students?

Prompt

- How often do you meet?
- Do you think this is adequate, could you meet more, do you meet too often?

6. Does your centre use outside expertise to support young people who are experiencing difficulties?

Prompt

- If yes what are these supports?
- Do you think that more could be done with outside professionals?
- If no, why do you think that is?

Research Q3

At what level of readiness is the Youthreach centre at to adopt an approach to trauma-sensitive education?

1. Trauma-sensitive education is a relatively new phenomenon and not commonly seen in educational settings in Ireland today, what does the term trauma-sensitive education mean to you?

Prompt

- Is this something that you have heard of before?
- What do you think it might involve?
- Do you think it is different to what is currently practiced in your centre?
- Do you think it is something that might be suitable for all Youthreach students or just a specific cohort?

2. Do you think there is a need to develop the approach to teaching and learning that there is currently in your Youthreach?

Prompt

- What would this look like?
- What do you think could be changed?
- Is this very different to what is currently being done in your Youthreach?

3. What would you see as the benefits of implementing these changes?
4. What do you think would need to happen for this change to come about?
5. Do you feel there is any training or professional development that could be done, to better support you in doing your job working with young people who have had adverse childhood experiences or experienced trauma?

Prompt

- Would your centre support you in accessing this training?
 - How would this benefit you and your students?
 - Is there training that you have seen that you would like to undertake?
6. Has there ever been a time when working with young people in Youthreach has had a negative impact on you professionally or personally?

Prompt

- Feelings of being stressed, not knowing how to handle a situation with a particular student, has had an effect on the group as a whole, times where reaction may have been inappropriate, triggering situations, bringing the work home, worrying about a particular student.
 - Long term or short term
 - How have you dealt with this?
 - How has this informed your practice?
7. What supports are there for you as an educator working with young people who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences or trauma?

Prompt

- Counselling
- Team meetings/peer support
- Do you feel that this is adequate, or should there be more?

Closing Questions – positives to finish

1. What benefits have you seen in students participating in a Youthreach programme?

2. Can you share some highlights or experiences that stand out for you working with young people in Youthreach?

Prompt

- What has been a contributing factor to this happening?
- What was your role in this experience?

Appendix IV – Data Analysis using manual methods and analysis software

197 coded segments (from 5 documents, 0 document groups)

Coded Segments

All codes

I suppose, walk outs, yeah, arguing with you, you know be argumentative, maybe being disruptive, maybe being something that the warrant but all the other children's just to cause disruption and I've seen the physical side of it. I've been hit, I've had things fired at me that sort of thing

Comment	Document name	Code	Beginni...	End	Preview	Modified by
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 for various reasons could be family could be marriages could be	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 defensive.	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 defensive holsters when they actually get an order or direction	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 Can you sort of say, you know, why is that person being like th	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 you know usually to smile or something. And sometimes that brea	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 it actually follows right through to adulthood	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 I suppose, walk outs, yeah, arguing with you, you know be argum	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 and that I even go back and question myself, like what did I do	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 I was hopefully I have a be able to have a conversation with co	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 it was from it like practical subjects. So it's very easy then	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 I structure methodology changes from room to room. And my teach	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 because the groups are so diverse and so changeable, and even i	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 like the youngsters here, are they gets talked to get listened	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 that the teachers wouldn't even know them and sometimes teacher	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 positive its a thin line as far as positive as regard as 30 Enj	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 Often a finisher. And probably, I probably forget her name, Any	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 Yeah, yeah, it's a working relationship. Yeah, if your professi	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 probably enough to do my job. But then be informed at the depth	grainmeodonog...
	P01	Initial notable (...)	1	1	0 to allow that person to ensure to actually not through done that	grainmeodonog...

8:43 PM 7/17/2022

Summaries with Coded Segments - Data Analysis TIFE.mx22

Code	Coded segments	Summary
Initial notable (+) (+)	<p>reason for joining YL. → ACEs identified.</p> <p>successes of ACEs TSE.</p> <p>→ impact of ACEs → TSE strategies altitude knowledge of TSE.</p> <p>support training for reeducation</p>	<p>what can cause trauma - identify by ACEs.</p> <p>class size.</p>
4_001 Otter: 1 - 1 (0)	<p>for various reasons could be family could be marriages could be support should enter family and dash to get to the secondary school. They're a bit shy or they're not maybe as far forward as potential, and when they get there, they tend to get left behind because of the size of the class as a support and maybe you've been bullied as well and maybe fall behind</p>	
4_002 Otter: 1 - 1 (0)	<p>defensive.</p>	
4_003 Otter: 1 - 1 (0)	<p>defensive holsters when they actually get an order or direction are maybe come under pressure to produce or tactically into this offensive mode</p>	
4_004 Otter: 1 - 1 (0)	<p>Can you sort of say, you know, why is that person being like that, you know, and sometimes, maybe the art of teaching or the art of getting around is actually finding a way and maybe coming up with different approach or different angles</p>	

4_ Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

you know usually to smile or something. And sometimes that breaks the barrier.

4_ Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

it actually follows right through to adulthood

4_ Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

I suppose, walk out, yeah, arguing with you, you know be argumentative, maybe being disruptive, maybe being something that warrant but all the other children's just to cause disruption and I've seen the physical side of it. I've been hit, I've had things fired at me

4_ Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

and that I even go back and question myself, like what did I do to bring it to that level that somebody fires me, and, and then maybe meet that same young girl on the corridor and say well done and they'd be crying and I'd say what's up with you I was never taught how to use a hammer or saw, I always thought I was stupid you see the emotion sometimes. Someone said like what's the big deal but he wasn't how can you see the old chap and he cried, because he was never allowed to use a hammer.

there is an awareness here that teacher behavior + relationship can have an impact on student. ↳ awareness of not escalating.

4_ [redacted] Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

I was hopefully I have a be able to have a conversation with contract to me with a youngster to have that conversation was very important you don't trust.

4_ [redacted] Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

it was from it like practical subjects. So it's very easy then when you get something made with the person. Yeah, def object actually becomes the focal point oh gee, but you know, it's the first achievement yet and you know that from painting or from whatever it might be the fact that they actually don't that that's a start.

how effective positive education can be in elevating a person with ACEs.

4_ [redacted] Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

I structure methodology changes from room to room. And my teacher practices even they change.

4_ [redacted] Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

because the groups are so diverse and so changeable, and even in 10 years to change so much.

4_ [redacted] Otter: 1 - 1 (0)

Search results

ANY: class

50 hits in 6 documents and 0 document groups

Preview	Document group	Document name	Search item	Beginning	End
<p>class at any one time so you can very much read them and see there is something through something at home by their behaviour because there is such small classes, we only have maybe eight or ten in a class at any one time so you can very much read them and see there is something happening and see that there is something going</p>		P04	class	20	20
<p>being such small numbers for us we are in a luckier position to be able to do with them, as I said they are smaller classes, so we get to be able to pick up on these cues quicker and then we have the supports of the counsellor there for them</p>		P04	class	20	20
<p>G And in the classroom itself then are there any particular teaching strategies that you would use to meet that kind of behaviour, anything come to mind with anybody</p>		P04	class	21	21
<p>C I suppose if you stay away from the chalk and talk type classes, you have to make it more interesting fun thing set targets for their needs and kind of use the games, use the interactive board more kind of bring in your Kahoots and your</p>		P04	class	22	22
<p>board more kind of bring in your Kahoots and your quizzes and those things and just keep them short sporadic kind of class, don't be doing the long kind of boring assignments all in one class just kind of break it up and have the four or five</p>		P04	class	22	22
<p>in your Kahoots and your quizzes and those things and just keep them short sporadic kind of class, don't be doing the long kind of boring assignments all in one class just kind of break it up and have the four or five different methods within</p>		P04	class	22	22
<p>... then I suppose to ensure that you are not giving the whole class the same targets, each individual, they are all so different and they are all at different levels so assign different tasks within the class to suit the abilities of each I think is</p>		P04	class	22	22
<p>you are not giving the whole class the same targets, each individual, they are all so different and they are all at different levels so assign different tasks within the class to suit the abilities of each I think is very important with us anyway.</p>		P04	class	22	22
<p>some are going to take to it and others are not and I suppose you have to work on their confidence and their, once you kind of build up that kind of confidence level</p>		P04	class	22	22