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Title: An exploration of the impact of external experiences
upon the evolving sense of self.

Author: Rina Kaur Bajaj

Theses submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

at

City University, London

Department of Counselling Psychology (School of Social
Sciences)

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I dedicate this doctorate to my parents and my Nanima.

Declaration of powers of discretion

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General Foreword

This thesis is divided into four sections which each explore different but connected areas. The areas are all connected by the theme of sense of self and identity. The style of each section will vary from a third person account to a first person account due to whether the approach required is objective or subjective.

Section A will be related in the first person as it will provide a reflective overview of the thesis as a whole. Section B will mainly utilise a third person account to provide an objective account of the research participants' experience. However, in line with the research methodology that has been utilised (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis), reflexive accounts will be presented in the first person throughout the research and this will be distinguished through the use of an italic font. Section C is a subjective case study exploring the therapeutic process with a client and, therefore, will be presented in the first person. Lastly, section D is an objective literature review in relation to social identity and a third person account will be utilised.

PART A: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1: Reflective threads

Each part of this thesis focuses around the theme of sense of self and identity. This is in relation to the various external influences that shape and mould our identity and sense of who we are. This is evident in the literature review which explores social identity and also in the research component where the impact of belonging to a stigmatised group as a result of an external event is examined. The client study also highlights how others' perceptions can have an influence on a person's developing sense of self. The developing sense of self is illustrated on two levels throughout this thesis: the developing sense of self of my client as well as my research participants, and my own developing sense of self as a practitioner and as a person.

1.1: Reflections on choosing the subject for research

In line with the qualitative method that I have utilised in my research, I feel it is important to give an overview of what led me to explore identity and sense of self.

The journey started when I first started my training and began to see clients face to face. I was amazed to see my clients changing before my eyes as the therapeutic core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence (Rogers, 1951) fostered clients' exploration of their true selves. Through this process clients began to discover more of what their needs were and what they wanted from life. It was through this experience of being with clients and watching them change that the prominence of approval from others became apparent. My clients were often living their lives in terms of what other people thought they 'should do' or 'should be like', highlighting the conditions of worth that were placed upon them (Rogers, 1951). This highlighted how important an influence others can be in shaping an individual's sense of self and how

the prospect of being met with disapproval from others can put individuals into a sense of turmoil and incongruence, as they mould their sense of self to try and fit in with the values that have been prescribed by others.

My specific interest in this research area began when I started to see young Asian men around me (friends and family) experience a mixture of emotions in the aftermath of the London Bombings. These emotions included anger, sadness and anxiety. It seemed as if these emotions had been elicited by perceptions towards these young men, which had suddenly changed in the aftermath of the London Bombings in 2005 (through being negatively associated with the bombers who were young British Asian men). I began to wonder how this event and the negative perceptions of others had influenced their sense of self.

In reviewing the literature around the London Bombings, I found that only three qualitative studies had been conducted into the London Bombings. However, none of this research had targeted Asian men in particular, thus limiting our understanding of their experience in the aftermath of this event. For this reason, I chose to keep the research broad and exploratory, allowing for valuable insights into the way Asian men living in London view their worlds in the aftermath of the London Bombings. I wanted to hear the voices of the participants and, hence, decided to make use of a qualitative study.

1.2: The research component

The research highlighted the participants' questions around their changing sense of self. This had been impacted by the change in the way that they felt that they were perceived by British society. They were conscious of being perceived negatively by others. For the men involved in the research, questions around their identity and sense of self developed as internally they felt as if they were the same but they felt that the way that

they were perceived by others had changed in the aftermath of the London Bombings. This throws into light how major events can lead individuals to re-evaluate who they are as a person and the meaning of life. This highlights the fluid and changing nature of identity and sense of self. Hence, it may be important for practitioners such as Counselling Psychologists to be aware of the various dimensions that may influence Asian men and their sense of self, as this may impact upon the therapeutic process and the types of issues that they explore in therapy. The clinical and long-term implications for the participants are discussed further within the research section.

1.3: The case study

This case study is based on my client Arun, a 37-year-old British Asian man. It highlights the many explorations that Arun went through in our therapy sessions where he was examining his sense of self, who he was as a person and what his needs were. This was in relation to his external world changing through his marital breakdown and the sense of loss he felt when he experienced testicular cancer. This led him to re-evaluate his world and also re-evaluate who he was as a person. When Arun first entered therapy, he seemed to be constrained by the conditions of worth that had been placed upon him (Rogers, 1951) and people telling him what he should be like and what he should do with his life. The client study documents Arun finding himself through the process of therapy and breaking free from these conditions of worth. He began to trust and listen to himself as he began to assert more of his true sense of self. The client study also reflects upon the therapeutic relationship, the interventions that were utilised with Arun and what I learnt through the process as a therapist. Hence, I was also exploring my developing sense of self, the 'therapist' side of myself.

1.4: The literature review

The literature review was concerned with examining social identity, in relation to the self-esteem hypothesis. Tajfel (1972) defined social identity as that part of the individual's self concept which derives from his "knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (p.292). The evidence for the role of self-esteem within the social identity theory was critically evaluated in relation to intergroup discrimination and threatened self-esteem. As Counselling Psychologists, it is important to be aware of the various influences that may have an impact on the individual and the sense of who they are as this may have implications for the therapeutic process. Self-esteem in relation to an individual's social identity is an important construct for Counselling Psychologists to be aware of given its implications for one's general wellbeing, as will be explored further in the review.

This literature review also led me to my research topic, as recent political events such as terrorism have highlighted the powerful impact that belonging to a stigmatised group may have on an individual.

1.5: Summary of the portfolio

Thus, this portfolio is divided into three main components, which each explore some aspect of the changing identity and sense of self of my research participants and client. It also highlights my own growth and how I have been shaped as a practitioner, researcher and person.

References

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centred therapy. Its current practice, implications and theory*. London: Constable and Robinson

Tajfel, H. (1972). *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge University Press: Great Britain.

PART B: RESEARCH

Title: The London Bombings: How have they impacted young Asian men living in London?

Foreword

The majority of the research component of this thesis will be presented in a third person account when describing an objective overview of the research process, the methods employed and an objective view of the participants' experience. However, due to the nature of the qualitative methodology that has been employed in this study, reflexive first person accounts will be present throughout which will be differentiated through the use of an italic font.

Abstract

Aim of the research:

To explore the psychological impact that the London Bombings may have had on young Asian men living in London.

Method:

Ten participants aged between 19 and 32 were interviewed about their experiences in the aftermath of the London Bombings. Semi-structured interviews were employed so that there was some flexibility in the interview process with regards to the information that was elicited. Three of these participants were Muslim, three were Hindu, three were Sikh and one had no religion. The data was analysed utilising Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Analysis:

The analysis revealed eleven super-ordinate themes: 1) Initial reactions to the bombings, 2) Reflecting upon societal impact, 3) Perceptions within British society, 4) Feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings, 5) Fear/Threat, 6) Other key emotions, 7) The media, 8) Connections, links, associations, 9) Dimensions that influence identity / sense of self, 10) Ways of coping and 11) Making new meaning of one's existence. The commonalities as well as the differences in participants' accounts were highlighted and the links between the super-ordinate themes were identified. Four main areas seemed to be most prevalent in the themes: the issues that the participants had around defining their sense of self and their identity, the experience of covert discrimination, the coping mechanisms they employed and the long-term implications of the stress reactions felt by the participants.

Conclusions:

The analysis results suggest that, at least for the men involved in this study, the London bombings have had consequences on the everyday lives of Asian men and the way that

they view their world. It became apparent that they felt that even though they were still the same people internally (and their beliefs about life had not changed), others' perceptions of them had changed. This could have long-term psychological implications for their sense of self and identity in relation to their experiences of covert discrimination in the aftermath of the bombings. There could also be long-term consequences in relation to the coping mechanisms that the men had utilised in the aftermath of the London Bombings and the stress reactions experienced. The implications for Counselling Psychology are discussed and suggestions for future research are highlighted.

List of abbreviations

BPS = British Psychological Society

PTSD = Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

IPA = Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

7/7 = is utilised to refer to the London Bombings carried out in 2005

9/11 = is utilised to refer to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on September the 11th 2001.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Brief overview of the current research

The aim of this research is to investigate the psychological impact that the London Bombings, on July 7th 2005, have had on young British Asian men living in London. On this date, during the morning rush hour, four British Asian Muslim suicide bombers detonated their bombs on the London Underground and a bus. This killed 52 people and injured over 700 people. Surprisingly little research has been conducted into the London Bombings, despite it being an unexpected terrorist attack. Previous research on a similar terrorist attack in America on September the 11th 2001 indicates that such events have a potentially huge psychological consequence, which is important for Counselling Psychologists to be aware of. The researcher has decided to focus on this group as the perpetrators in the attack were young British Asian men and surprisingly, the consequences of this have been yet to be represented in the literature. The researcher's identity as a young British Asian woman has fuelled her interest in this topic as she has a desire to understand this phenomenon. This may help to understand the world view of young British Asian men. In order to do this, she employed a qualitative approach, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The outcome of this research may begin to add to the existing literature around this topic, extending our knowledge and thus advancing professional development, especially within the field of Counselling Psychology.

1.2: Rationale for the research

The bombings in London on the 7th of July 2005 represent an unusual terrorist attack on the city which has potentially huge psychological implications for both those who were victims of the attack and those who have been indirectly affected by the attacks and,

hence, this has implications for Counselling Psychologists in the types of issues they may encounter in their practice. This also provides researchers, including Counselling Psychologists, with a rare opportunity to study this phenomenon.

The researcher in this study has decided to focus on Asian men as the suicide bombers implicated in the terrorist incident were young, British Asian, Muslim men. This may affect both Muslim and non-Muslim men as they may experience feeling stereotyped and be subject to racial profiling. The researcher is concerned with the psychological impact that the London Bombings have had on these individuals, for example has the way that they view themselves or the way that they are viewed by society changed? The researcher has a particular interest in this field as she is surrounded by young Asian males (family and friends) who have had personal experiences related to the London Bombings. This had impacted upon them in terms of how they felt and this, in turn, has affected the researcher. She wishes to gain more insight into the way this phenomenon may be affecting other Asian men like them.

In reviewing the literature for this proposal, the researcher found that not much research has been conducted into the London Bombings and none of this research has targeted Asian men in particular, which represents a fundamental gap in the literature. For this reason the research has been kept broad and exploratory. Previous comparable research examining the impact of the terrorist attack on September the 11th 2001 in America has mainly utilised a quantitative methodology and has focused on factors such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression (e.g., Levine, Whalen, Henker & Jamner, 2005).

It is likely that Counselling Psychologists will come into contact with Asian men, therefore, it is important for them to be aware of such issues which may contribute to the way that young Asian men perceive their world. This may influence the type of issues that these individuals present to Counselling Psychologists. This research may be theoretically useful, facilitating Counselling Psychologists and other professionals gaining an insight into the various influences that impact upon young Asian men and the way that they view their world.

1.3: Review of the literature

This section will explore five main areas of the existing literature around the impact of terrorism and the London Bombings: general research into terrorism, research conducted into the effects of 9/11, research directly conducted into the London Bombings, the changing sense of identity among British Asian men and an exploration into the research about the experiences of discrimination encountered by Muslims and Asians in the aftermath of the London Bombings.

1.3.1: Research into terrorism

The attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on September the 11th 2001 and the bombings on the London Underground trains and bus on July the 7th 2005¹ represent a new phenomenon in suicide terrorism, which has potentially far reaching psychological effects for individuals who are directly and indirectly involved (Weinberg, Pedhazur & Canetti-Nisim, 2003). One interesting commonality between both of these incidents is that suicide bombers from the same terrorist organisation were utilised and they shared similar characteristics, namely, they were young, Muslim men. There are many different kinds of terrorism and types of terrorist attack, so one of the

¹ Please note that September the 11th 2001 may be referred to as 9/11 and the Bombings in London on the 7th July 2005 may be referred to as 7/7 throughout the research.

problems that arises is the notion of what constitutes “suicide terrorism” (Reid, 2001; Weinberg et al., 2003; Pedhazur, 2005). Baruch (2003) states that the suicide bombers involved in these attacks revealed a unique form of death wish and they often left behind a testament indicating that they were willing to die (Pedhazur, 2005). Weinberg et al. (2003) state that the suicide bomber acts like a “human time bomb” (p.139) and the act of the attack is dependent upon the death of the perpetrator. The suicide bombers are often trying to evoke some political or social change and, if they are successful, then their death will fulfil several goals of the organisation behind the attack, including disruption by creating fear, chaos, confusion and impairing of routine activity as the focus shifts onto the terrorist attack which also leads to a draining of resources, attention gathering and organisational profit (Reid, 2001).

The Muslim religion has been implicated in the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks as the suicide bombers were religious self martyrs or *shahids*, who believed that their deaths would gain them entry into paradise (Weinberg et al., 2003). In contrast to stereotypical notions of suicide bombers being oppressed in social, political and economic ways, leading them to be caught up in a hopeless position which leads to them becoming suicide bombers as a way of escaping from this hopelessness, those involved in the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks came from prosperous families and backgrounds and also had academic success. Therefore, Weinberg et al. (2003) speculate freedom rather than oppression may have been a significant factor in these individuals carrying out the attacks. Hence, it seems likely that these attacks have implications for young Muslim men in particular, who are brought up in England and America and who may share some similarities with the suicide bombers. This is one of the areas that the researcher hopes to explore to gain some insight into this phenomenon.

1.3.2: Research into the psychological implications of terrorist attacks

In contrast to the London Bombings, much research has been conducted into the comparable attack on the World Trade Centre and its implications and effects. A large proportion of the research has tended to focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its subsequent effects for those individuals who were victims of the attacks and those who were indirectly exposed to attacks, e.g. through exposure to the media. Levine et al. (2005) state that an understanding of such responses is important for professionals helping individuals cope with trauma, especially as future attacks remain a possibility.

Levine et al. (2001) state that 9/11 evoked negative emotions and symptoms characteristic of PTSD as terrorist attacks such as these led to feelings of threat to personal safety and well-being which may not have been previously present and, hence, this may inflate feelings of vulnerability. In their study, parents and adolescents filled out a survey that was posted out to them at 3 and 8 months after 9/11, examining their emotional reactions to the events, including how sad, angry and anxious they felt and also about how much they thought that the attacks had influenced their future, themselves and America. They found that adults displayed more feelings of anger, sadness and anxiety. In addition, parental anxiety and stress at 3 months was predictive of the intensity of the adolescents' reactions at 8 months. This effect was not bi-directional indicating that, for adults, the intensity of negative emotions recalled in relation to terrorist attacks may increase over time, regardless of the proximity to the attacks at the time. However, this research was conducted in a sample of Californians who were already involved in research and it is not known if similar results would be found for those living in New York where the attacks took place. Secondly, questions arise regarding whether similar findings would be found if a qualitative methodology

was employed where the researcher plays an active part in the dynamic process of the research (especially when interviewing participants and analysing the data).

Arieh and Friedman (2005) conducted a longitudinal study and found that survivors of terrorist attacks had higher rates of PTSD than survivors of motor vehicle accidents, indicating that the trauma experienced in relation to terrorist attacks may represent a unique phenomenon, with differing consequences. However, they also found that the type of traumatic event experienced is not necessarily predictive of PTSD and not all individuals exposed to a terrorist attack will develop PTSD (Arieh & Friedman, 2005). Tied in with this, Bonnano, Galea, Bucciarelli and Vlahov (2006) state that the majority of adults will experience at least four traumatic events in their life and as everyone reacts differently, only a small proportion of the adult population will develop PTSD. Hence, adults may demonstrate a certain amount of resilience and so may be able to maintain a healthy level of functioning. However, this may indicate that, although a larger proportion of the adult population may not experience PTSD, they may demonstrate other reactions to traumatic events such as terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, a gap remains in the literature as Bonnano et al. (2006) state that research into adult resilience has tended to focus on adults' reactions to the death of a spouse and these quantitative studies have tended to focus on small sample sizes of mainly White participants, which limits generalisability. Hence, in terms of adult resilience, there is much to be learnt about the way adults deal with and react to terrorist attacks, particularly within the non-White population.

Hence, Bonnano et al. (2006) decided to examine PTSD symptoms six months after 9/11. They utilised a random sample of adults living in or near New York at the time of 9/11. Through the use of telephone interviews, they found that demographic categories

such as age, race, marital status and place of residence impacted upon resilience to PTSD. This has been supported by DiMaggio and Galea (2006). Increased resilience was demonstrated by males, those over 65 years of age, those who were classified as “Asian”, those who were married and those who lived in New York. However, there are methodological constraints to the research including a restricted definition of what constitutes “resilience” and the use of telephone interviewing and translation devices. This may have impacted upon clinical judgements of functioning and the presence or absence of PTSD symptoms. In relation to the current research proposal, this raises questions for the researcher about if young, Asian men living in London have been affected by the London Bombings in other psychological ways apart from displaying symptoms of PTSD.

The picture also becomes more complicated as the development of PTSD symptoms and well-being may also be affected by other factors. These include exposure to the attacks (including extensive media coverage), the extent to which individuals identify and share values with those directly affected by the attacks, the person’s evaluation of threat to themselves and others, pre-existing individual characteristics (such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, history of mental health problems), negative beliefs regarding oneself and the world, and parental mood and support (Gil-Rivas, Holman & Siler, 2004; Nixone & Nishithe, 2005).

In their meta-analysis, DiMaggio and Galea (2006), included 61 quantitative studies examining the behavioural consequences of terrorism, focusing primarily on the prevalence and correlates of PTSD. They state that terrorist attacks, such as 9/11 and 7/7, have highlighted the threat of terrorism and this highlights a need to examine the mental health consequences of terrorism. Alongside the prevalence of PTSD, other post-

terrorism consequences were identified including depression, stress, anxiety and substance abuse. They also found that individuals who viewed media images of terrorist incidents were twice as likely to be assessed as having PTSD, which was time dependent. However, one limitation of the studies included, was that there was an insufficient focus upon the impact of PTSD on individuals from the Asian Subcontinent, ignoring the local and cultural aspects of the diagnosis of PTSD. The findings of DiMaggio and Galea have been supported by Gershoff and Aber (2004) and Aber, Gershoff, Ware and Kotler (2004) who found that direct exposure to terrorist attacks predicted change in levels of social mistrust, whereas the amount of media exposure predicted PTSD symptoms. In terms of social attitudes, they also found that direct exposure to the attacks led to greater prejudice and mistrust towards immigrants. In relation to this research proposal, this raises questions around if Asian men, in particular Muslim men, who may resemble the terrorists may have experienced greater feelings of prejudice and social mistrust. These findings indicate that terrorist attacks have both immediate and long-term effects. Hence, although the prevalence of PTSD may decrease over time, individuals may still experience different reactions to the attacks over time and the attacks may affect different individuals in different ways over time. This is something the researcher hopes to explore further.

However, in opposition to Arber et al.'s findings, a study conducted by Grieger, Waldrep, Lovasz and Ursano (2005) in relation to the 9/11 attacks found that 2 years after the attacks those who had directly experienced the attacks were more likely to have PTSD and depression, whereas individuals indirectly exposed to the attacks through the media were not more likely to have PTSD, depression or distress. Hence, the evidence remains mixed. However, Snyder and Park (2002) state that the level of emotional response to an event is more important than geographical proximity to the attack in

determining PTSD. Moreover, there are limits to the conclusions that can be drawn from this research as there was no baseline for measuring PTSD prior to the attacks.

Hence, even though indirect exposure may not lead to PTSD, individuals may still experience stress reactions, such as depression, fear, feeling unsafe, re-experiencing the event, psychic numbing, sadness, upset and anger (Snyder and Park, 2002). They may utilise a number of different ways of coping in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, including talking to others, turning to religion, becoming more spiritual, participating in group activities, reframing adverse events in a positive light, utilising positive emotions and thinking, emotional expression, denial, disengagement, focus on and venting emotions, seeking emotional and instrumental support, distraction or information avoidance and utilising tranquilisers, alcohol or cigarettes as specific methods of coping (Bleich, Gelkopf, & Solomon, 2003; Fischer, Greitmeyer, Kastenmuller, Jonas & Frey, 2006; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003; Greenberg, Craighill, Greenberg, 2004; Liverant, Hoffman & Litz, 2004; North, Tivis, McMillen, Pfefferbaum, Cox, Spitznagel, Bunch, Schorr & Smith, 2002; Plante & Canchola, 2004; Wadsworth, Gudmunson, Raviv, Ahklivist, McIntosh, Galena, Rea & Burwell, 2004.) Interestingly, PTSD is often associated with substance abuse (Greenberg, 2002) and long term anxiety is often predicted by maladaptive coping strategies such as a constantly focusing on and venting negative emotions or avoidance around exploring feelings (Levine et al., 2004).

These findings are interesting for Counselling Psychologists as they indicate that, although people may not display symptoms characteristic of PTSD, terrorist attacks may affect them in different ways. Hence, it is important for Counselling Psychologists to be mindful of the many possible ways that an individual may be affected by a terrorist attack. In addition, coping by talking to someone about the impact of a terrorist

attack seemed to be an adaptive coping strategy and, hence, these individuals may find it useful to talk to someone, like a Counselling Psychologist, about the impact of the attack on them or how to cope with issues related to this, such as anxiety. This raises questions about how to make psychological services more accessible to individuals in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

It has also been found that certain demographic groups may be more susceptible to the negative psychological consequences of terrorism, such as those of a non-White ethnicity, those living near the attack at the time, those who were exposed to more media coverage of the event and those with previous mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety (Charlesworth & Chinkin, 2002; Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus & Gordijn, 2003; Gould, Munfakh, Kleinman, Lubell & Provenzano, 2004; Henry, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2004; Philips, 2004; Silver, Holman, McIntosh, Poulinm & Gil-Rivas, 2002; Walker & Chestnut, 2003). This highlights that although previous studies (such as DiMaggio and Galea (2006)) have shown that Asians may be more resilient to experiencing PTSD symptoms, they may still exhibit long term stress reactions to terrorist events. For example, Rubin et al (2007) found that only a small proportion of the population will develop PTSD and clinical depression following a terrorist incident, however, even though they may not meet the levels for a formal psychiatric diagnosis, they report higher levels of general anxiety and stress related symptoms than the general population. Hence, Counselling Psychologists need to be mindful of the possibility that for certain demographic groups research suggests that substantial stress reactions may be more prominent. This indicates that the impact of terrorism may be unevenly distributed across society and the current researcher hopes to examine the impact on young Asian men further. Walker and Chestnut (2003) suggest that non-White individuals may be more likely to question their faith and spirituality

because of religious explanations for terrorist attacks such as 7/7, which may make them more susceptible to psychological trauma.

1.3.3: Research into the London Bombings

Unlike the large amount of research conducted on 9/11, to the researcher's knowledge, only two research articles have so far been conducted into the psychological and behavioural impact on the London Bombings, which indicates a huge gap in the literature around this phenomenon. Increased stress levels, decreased feelings of safety, heightened perceptions of threat and behavioural changes have all been noted in communities following a terrorist attack (Bleich, Gelkof & Solomon, 2003; Huddy, Feldman & Capelos, 2002; Schuster, Stein & Jaycox, 2001) In their study on 7/7, Rubin, Brewin, Greenberg, Simpson & Wessley (2005) examined the impact of the bombings on stress levels and the travel intentions in London's population, utilising a cross-sectional telephone survey based on random digit dialling. 101 participants aged 18 and above took part between the 18th and 20th of July 2005. Thirty-one percent of this sample reported substantial stress and thirty-two percent reported an intention to travel less by bus, tube or train. These findings were correlated with being female, being aged between 18 and 35, being non-White, being Muslim and being religious. Hence, being Muslim was associated with greater levels of substantial stress. For sixty-two percent of this sample, Rubin et al. (2005) state that these results may be reflecting a response bias with "Muslim respondents attempting to maintain a distinction between themselves and the bombers" (p.6). Thus, it may be hypothesised that part of the participant group that the researcher is trying to study (who are young, Asian and Muslim) may have a greater probability of having experienced substantial stress reactions in the aftermath of the London Bombings.

However, caution should be drawn to the fact that only nine percent of the sample was Muslim. Hence, these findings could be replicated with a larger proportion of Muslims, and the impact on non-Muslim Asian men could be examined. Rubin and Wessely (2006) expanded on this further and suggested that although the participants demonstrated short-term psychological stress reactions, there was uncertainty around the long term psychological impact. Replicating the research at this stage, nearly one and a half years after the bombings may lead to new insights into people's reactions and the way they coped in the aftermath of the bombings. Rubin et al. (2005) state that the "psychological effects of the attacks remains unknown" (p.1). In their study, which was conducted 11-13 days after 7/7, one percent of the respondents sought professional support for the negative emotions and seventy-one percent found that it had been beneficial to talk to someone about how they felt. Hence, support networks seem to be important after experiencing a traumatic event. This has therapeutic implications as individuals may seek counselling in such circumstances, and so it is important for professionals like Counselling Psychologists to be aware of such issues which may be present in clients affected by terrorist incidents, such as 7/7.

In a follow up to their 2005 study, Rubin, Brewin, Greenberg, Simpson and Wessely conducted another study that was published in 2007 in order to assess the medium-term effects of the London Bombings and to identify any potential risk factors that could lead to persistent effects. Participants were defined as having persistent effects if they gave positive answers in both studies in relation to substantial stress, sense of threat to self and sense of safety while travelling. Their second study was conducted seven months after the attacks took place and involved the researchers contacting the participants who were involved in their 2005 study by telephone. They employed the same methodology as their 2005 study.

In their second study it was found that the symptoms of substantial stress were present in eleven percent of their participants (in comparison to thirty-one percent in their 2005 study). They also found that having experienced a personal threat and fear of being injured in the attacks or having felt that a loved one may have been killed or injured in the attacks was linked to participants' negative changes in the perception of the world and persistent stress. In addition, it was found that, although being Muslim was not associated with substantial stress (as found in their 2005 study), being Muslim was a significant predictor of negative changes in view of oneself. Rubin et al. (2007) postulated that this was as a result of the perceived negative portrayal of Muslims in the media and wider society in the aftermath of the bombings. However, it should be noted that in their follow up study Rubin et al. (2007) stated that the participants were more likely to be White and less likely to be Muslim. They did not give breakdown of the ethnicities, but noted that sixty-nine percent of the respondents were White. Only six percent of the respondents were Muslim, which may not provide us with much insight into how Muslim Asians were coping in the aftermath of 7/7 and if they were experiencing persistent psychological reactions, such as persistent stress and feeling under threat.

There are also other considerations that should be taken into account when exploring the results. Rubin et al. (2007) note that there was some bias in the second study as the participants involved were significantly less likely than the non-respondents to have experienced substantial stress in 2005 and to have felt under threat. Hence, they state that the results from the second study are likely to be underestimates. They also stated that they did not research participants who did not report stress reactions in 2005 but had developed them by 2006. Although their findings are insightful, they still do not tell

us much about the detailed experience of Asian men in the aftermath of the bombings, something that the researcher is hoping that a qualitative study may help to begin to address. It is also worth mentioning that all of the studies to date that have focused directly on the psychological impact of the London Bombings have been conducted by the same authors, so the hope of the current research is that, by tackling the same issue by using a different methodology and approach, this may bring new insights into the psychological impact of 7/7.

1.3.4: The changing sense of identity among British Asian men.

Examining the impact of 7/7 on Asian men seems to be important as research has indicated that non-White individuals are disproportionately affected by terrorism (e.g. Brewer et al., 2005). According to the 2001 British Census (which was the last one to be conducted in the UK) forty-five percent of the UK's non-White population is concentrated in London, with fifty-four percent of the UK's Bangladeshi and nineteen percent of the UK's Pakistani populations living in London. Within the Asian category, Indians comprised the majority of the UK's population in 2001, followed by Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and then individuals from other Asian origins. Although the largest faith was Christian, among the other faiths the largest groups were Pakistani Muslims, Indian Hindus, Indian Sikhs and then Bangladeshi Muslims. Hence, it is likely that Counselling Psychologists, especially those practising in London, are likely to come into contact with Asian men. The statistics also state that, in 2004, eighty-three percent of Indians identified themselves as British Asians. This ties in with work by Hussain and Bagguley (2005) who examined citizenship identities and found that second generation British Muslim Pakistanis who were born in Britain had a strong British identity. They saw themselves as British citizens and felt that they had the natural rights of a British born

citizen as well as a right to be different because of their connection to Islam. Hussain and Bagguley refer to this as a hybridity of universality and difference.

These findings are mirrored in a qualitative study on ethnic identities by Modood, Beishon and Virdee (1994) who found that several second generation young Asians utilised hyphenated labels to describe their identity (for example, British-Pakistani), as they wanted to retain some of their core heritage in an adapted form and live in ethnically mixed way. Modood et al. also found that a minority of the British Asians involved in their study felt alienated from British culture which they perceived to be hostile to their family-centred and religious values. These findings are important as, in other studies, high ethnic identity scores have been found to correlate with high life satisfaction, better psychological adjustment and higher self-esteem (Phinney, 1990; Robinson, 2003). Lifton (2007) states that a diffused identity (where the person does not seem to have an affiliation to a particular group) is particularly marked in young men of South Asian origin as they often seem to have hybrid identities. In accordance with this, he postulates that a sense of low status, identity confusion and lack of direction is common among young British Asian men. Ghuman (2003), however, highlights the differences in the identity of second-generation Asians. He found that Muslim participants were more likely than Hindu and Sikh participants, to emphasise their distinctive Muslim identity. Hence, it appears that religion, alongside ethnicity, may have an important influence on how identity is defined. As a majority of these studies were conducted before the London Bombings it would be interesting to explore whether Asian men's sense of national identity and "Britishness" has changed since. This is one of the areas that the researcher hopes to explore.

Further research conducted by an independent research agency called MORI on the 23rd of July 2005 gathered information from 282 Muslims aged 16 years and over about their attitudes to being British and the London Bombings. The interviews were conducted on the street and in people's homes. It was found that eighty-six percent of the participants felt that they belonged to Britain either fairly or very strongly and ninety-five percent felt that they belonged to Islam very or fairly strongly. Eleven percent of the sample felt they were discriminated against, eighty-two percent did not feel that the Koran justified the suicide bombings and fifty-one percent felt that 7/7 made other non-Muslims view Muslims less favourably. Although providing valuable insights into the way some Muslim Londoners perceive their worlds, it does not tell us about the way non-Muslim Asian men may perceive their world. In a study conducted by Ipsos MORI in October 2005 with 1014 Londoners aged 18 years and over, sixty-two of the participants felt that the London terrorist attacks would make it harder for different ethnic communities living in London to get on together, indicating a degree of segregation within the London community.

This is reiterated in an article by Vanderveer and Munshi (2001) examining the effects of the media of 9/11 on British Muslims. They felt that a polarisation had developed between the "West and Islam" (p.230) and that fear, anxiety and resentment were beginning to be provoked by the "Muslims within" (p.230) which had led to a distinction being made between "them" (Muslims) and "us" (the blameless victims). They also state that people who may be *like* the perpetrators, including Arabs, Sikhs and others with "swarthy" complexions (p.323) may also be punished. Hence, other ethnic minorities, especially Muslims, may be portrayed as the "enemy within" (p. 323). Allen (2001) states that this can be linked with the British media's portrayal of all Muslims as extreme, fanatical and terrorists. This ties in with Alexander's notion of Muslim young

men being encapsulated into the image of the gang (Alexander, 2000, 2004), where Asian masculinities are presented as a collective that is dysfunctional and dangerous. This idea is expanded upon by Ramji (2005) who states that there is a widespread perception in society that young Muslim men's religious identity is connected with a 'problem' status. Muslim men's cultural background is seen to clash with mainstream British society (Taylor, 1976) and so religion is seen as a problem, especially if you are Muslim (Ramji, 2005).

This also indicates that other Asian men may be affected by the aftermath of 7/7 in similar ways to Muslim men, which is an area the researcher hopes to explore further. This idea can be illustrated further in an article by Sharma (2006), in a British Asian newspaper called the Eastern Eye, entitled "Do Muslims trust cops?" where one of the respondents stated "I think after July 7, the police have done whatever they want to anyone who has a beard" (p.26). In another article written by Sharma in the Eastern Eye on July 2006 on the London Bombings, one of the respondents states, "do we have an identity as Muslims living in Britain and do we need one? Was anything that happened to do with me...But should Muslims be copping the blame if what happened was nothing to do with them?" (p.24). This links with Moore's report (2002) which showed that, after 9/11, Muslims were portrayed as the "brown-skinned enemy" and "others" in relation to the US society (p.33) and attitudes to ethnic groups that resembled the people most closely involved in the attack on the World Trade Centre received less favourable ratings from American respondents (Traugott, Brader, Coral, Curtin, Featherman, Groves, Hill, Jackson, Juster, Kahn, Kennedy, Kinder, Pennel, Shapiro, Tessler, Wier, & Willis, 2002).

Therefore, it seems as if identity may be important in trying to understand British Muslims' experience of their world. Inayaat (2002) asked the question "what does it mean to be a Muslim in the aftermath of the Twin Towers episode?" (p.25). She utilised discourse analysis in her interviews with five British Muslim women who had agreed to take part in a semi-structured interview as part of their counselling process. The aim was to examine their construction of reality. The common themes that emerged throughout the transcripts were loss (in relation to the loss of life in the attack and a loss of a stable understanding of what it means to be a Muslim), confusion around their identity as a Muslim and a need to be different from the perpetrators. However, as these interviews were conducted four weeks after 9/11, the long-term implications are not clear. The researcher hopes to extend the research to explore Muslim and non-Muslim men who have not necessarily accessed counselling support. She also aims to gain some insight into the long-term implications of 7/7, a comparable traumatic event, which will help to understand the inside world of young, British Asian men.

1.3.5: The contextualisation of Asian men as a problem

1.3.5.1: Asian men as a "problem"

Although one of the Bombers involved in 7/7 was a Black Muslim convert, the researcher has chosen to focus upon the impact on Asian men in particular. This is in order to explore the influence of the re-invention of the perception of the Asian masculine identity within British society.

Alexander (2000) describes the notion of the 'Asian gang' where all young Asian men are viewed as villains and, thus, they are implicitly deviant and outside the realms of law and citizenship. Within this framework, all cultural, historical and individual attributes are erased in favour of a racialised framework where all young Asian men are

viewed as all the same, all as bad as each other, a menace to society and equally to blame. Within British society there seems to be a growing concern about the ‘problem’ of Asian youth with a particular focus on Muslim young men. This indicates a change in perception of British Asian young men, where they have shifted from a position of being largely invisible in society to being the focus of suspicion and a ‘problem’(particularly after 9/11 and 7/7).

She claims:

“The Asian gang marks a re-imagining of Asian communities in Britain around the nexus of gender, generation and class. The gaze is now on a re-invented ‘Other’ – young, male, working class , or underclass – increasingly fuelled with the spectre of religious ‘Fundamentalism’. Asian youth identities are increasingly unimaginable in any other terms , characterised by unremitting negativity and multiple pathologies.”
(Alexander, 2000, p.13).

Alongside this, West (1993) described Asian youth as having a lack of cultural and political power to “contest the bombardment of negative, degrading stereotypes” (p. 210). The current study aims to give its participants a platform on which to voice some of their thoughts and feelings around the impact of political events, such as 7/7 on their experience of their world.

The terrorist events and previous political events such as the Salman Rushdie affair seem to have had two broad effects: they led to a distinctions being created in the Asian community (previously viewed as being undistinguished) largely been based on religious difference (Modood, 1992) and it has brought the issue of youth to the

foreground (Alexander, 2000). The term 'Asian' has become linked with Muslim communities and an emerging Pakistani and Bangladeshi underclass.

Alexander (2000) speaks about how the media have created racialised images of Asian youth which parallels representations of African-American gang culture and the demonisation of African-Caribbean youth where they are perceived to be violent and dangerous, indicating a shift from Asian male youths being well behaved to perpetrators of violence. She also states that issues around 'race' and 'class' are often utilised by the media to support this demonisation as Asian youth are often described as being stuck between a culture clash, inter-generational conflict, cultural alienation and an economic breakdown/economic deprivation as they are seen to be stuck in a ghettoized subculture of poverty (including poor quality housing, poor education and long term unemployment) that leads to deviance criminality and violence. Alternative options are rarely explored as this seems to be the 'common- sense' perception of Asian male youth that is widely held. Benson (1996) has argued that studies of Asian communities in Britain have been largely dominated by an anthropological gaze, which has constructed these groups as homogenous, bounded and autonomous entities (Ballard, 1994; Shaw, 1998; Werbner, 1990). The current researcher has chosen to involve both Muslim and non-Muslim Asian men in order to challenge this homogeneity and highlight some of the complexities and differences, as well as some of the similarities, of the experience of young British Asian men. Alongside this, previous research has tended to divide Asians along a Muslim/non-Muslim axis and see them as distinct cultural communities so each research would be based on one 'community' divided on the basis of religion, such as Sikh, Hindu or Muslim (Alexander, 2000; Baumann, 1996; Modood, 1997). The current research wanted to explore the similarities of the struggles that may be experienced by young Asian males in general as, even

though they may be separated along religious lines, they also belong to the broader label of the 'Asian community' so it is possible that they may have similar as well as different experiences. Brah (1996) states that the current academic fascination with Muslim-ism and Islamaphobia has served to dislocate Muslims from the broader history of the Black/Asian struggle and experience.

1.3.5.2: The issue around Asian masculinity:

Within academic research and the media, there has been a recent shift in the perception of Asian masculinities from being passive and hyper-feminised (with the focus traditionally being around marriage and family) towards an association with violence and a highly visible hyper-masculinity, through focussing on ideas such as Asian youth being violent and dangerous (Alexander, 2000; Brah, 1996; Wilson, 1978). This mirrors the initial conceptualisation of Britain's African-Caribbean communities as being male, threatening, violent and dangerous and sees young Asian men as experiencing their masculinity as being 'in-crisis' (Alexander, 1996). In addition, for young Muslim and Asian men, they have the additional factors of ethnicity, religion and 'underclass' status contributing to their formulation of their identity. Goodey (1999) states that the emergence of Islamaphobia can be viewed as a reaction to the perceived new found assertiveness of young Asian men. Goodey argues that the effect of this change has two main consequences; it homogenises and demonises Asian men externally as well as internally threatening Asian men by promoting intra-group tensions and fear. Therefore, on the one hand, Asian men may be experiencing a degree of power as they have developed a new 'tough' collective identity and on the other hand the White population may perceive Asian youth as being a threat against their order and against them.

1.3.5.3: Asian youth as a 'problem'

Alexander (2000) argues that implicit in the ‘Asian men as a problem’ approach is that the groups that are most often perceived to be ‘in crisis’ are younger men. Sharman Hutnyk and Sharma (1996) stated that until recently, Asian men have been virtually invisible in the literature and the focus on Asians has seemed to be on the experience of Asian women, in relation to issues such as arranged/forced marriages and other stereotypical experiences perceived to be linked in with being Asian. Giroux (1996) stated that within the British society the term ‘youth’ is equated with a problem status and rebellion. It has been argued that this definition of youth has been resistant to change when exploring Black youth identities, and in particular Black youth masculinities. When exploring this, academic research has mainly tended to focus on the peer group/ ‘gang’ as being an important influence on these identities, self-esteem, security and status (Alexander, 2000; Klein, 1995; Macey, 1999). Keitha (1995) states that in Britain, this notion of ‘the gang’ has been associated with Black and Asian youth identities (in particular for Black and Asian men) in order to naturalise this homogenous uniform label of Black and Asian men being dangerous and in conflict. The current research hopes to look beyond this stereotype of British Asian men in London and highlight some of the complexities of their day-to-day experience.

1.3.5.4: The historical context around Asian men as a ‘problem’

Tahir Abbas (2006) analysed British Muslim Identities, particularly in light of 7/7. He discusses issues such as the migration and settlement of Muslims into Britain and debates regarding the assimilation, integration and multiculturalism in relation to British Muslims. He also explores how radical political Islam has developed globally and how it has impacted upon the local British context, both pre and post 7/7.

The British Muslim population has grown from about 21,000 in 1951 to 1.6 million at present within the UK (Peach, 2005). The Muslim population in London is

approximately 1 million (out of a total of 7.2 million) and this is dominated by people from South Asia, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims. 50% of the Muslims currently in the UK were born in the UK.

The inequalities in relation to Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims in the UK and the rest of the population cover areas such as education, employment and housing. In terms of education at university, it has been found that ethnic minority candidates, particularly those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, were less likely to be offered a place at university than a White candidate (National Statistics of the labour force, 2000). In terms of employment, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are two and a half times more likely than the White population to be unemployed and nearly three times more likely to be in receipt of low pay (Modood and Shiner. 2002). In terms of social inequalities in relation to housing, it has been found that 43% of Bangladeshis live in council or other housing association properties, which is 50% higher than the national average (Peach 2000). The 2001 census showed that the rates of unemployment were higher among all South Asian groups in comparison to the White population (Kalathil, 2008).

Within the UK there seems to have been a sociological shift in the race paradigm from talking about 'colour' in the 1950's to 'race' in the 1960's and 1970's to 'ethnicity' in the 1980's and 1990's. Currently, there seems to be a trend in focusing on religion (Abbas, 2006).

1.3.5.6: The history of Islam within British Society

Abbas (2006) states that up until the 1980's, Muslims were seen as quiet, peaceful, law-abiding and inward-looking citizens. He claims that ever since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Muslims across the globe have become a focus of attention. This Revolution is

also known as the Islamic Revolution and it refers to events involving the overthrow of Iran's monarchy under Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and its replacement with an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who was the leader of the revolution (Kurzman, 2004). Abbas goes on to propose that the Salman Rushdie affair in 1989 raised issues in relation to religious minorities, cultural tolerance, blasphemy laws and incitement to racial hatred as this incident revealed how British South Asian Muslims were shown to be weak and intolerant when in fact they were merely expressing their opinions in relation to the publication of the Satanic Verses. Within the Muslim community, the novel caused great controversy for what some Muslims believed were blasphemous references to the Koran and the prophet Mohammed.

Abbas (2006) sees the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1989 as another significant event as this led to a shift from geopolitical equilibrium (balance of political power) to a clash of civilisations as there as the power is less evenly distributed between states and there is perceived to be one superpower. Alongside this, other political events have been significant including the first Gulf war (between 1990-1991), the genocide in Bosnia-Hertsovina (1993-1996), The Oklahoma Bombing (1995), the Taliban infiltrating Afghanistan (1997-2002) and the War on Iraq (2003) as Abbas sees these events as having all played a part in creating a transnational Muslim solidarity where there is a genuine and conscious identification with others of the same religion. He states that these events and, more recently, the 'war on terror' (a response to 9/11) and the events of 7/7 have led to a process of acute economic, social, cultural and political marginalisation of British Muslims and other South Asian men who may be perceived to be Muslim. Abbas states that 7/7 has changed how Muslims will be regarded, considered and treated for the foreseeable future.

1.3.5.7: Political discourse:

Questions about the loyalty of Muslims to Britain as well as the notion of ‘community cohesion’ (Abbas, 2006; Cattle, 2001) have been raised as a result of 7/7 and 9/11. The notion of community cohesion, indicates that ethnic conflict within the UK was a consequence of deep-seated physical and cultural ethnic segregation which had led to a profound lack of shared values, mutual respect and understanding between ethnic groups. This critique went further, suggesting that the policy approaches of the past twenty years had encouraged and privileged separate ‘ethnic’ identities, focussing on notions of ‘equality’ for different ethnic/religious groups whilst profoundly neglecting the need to promote respect and ‘good relations’ between those different groups (Cattle, 2005). The suggestions that ethnic segregation is growing in the UK, and that it is the cause, as much as the effect, of racial conflict are highly contested, with critics focussing on the apparent sidelining of structural racism as an explanation (Kundhani, 2001).

This ties in with Allen’s (2007) findings that the negative attitude towards Islam in the West has a relatively long history and 9/11 and 7/7 in particular, have contributed to the significant presence of Islamophobia in the UK today. Abbas (2006) feels that this negative perception has been fuelled by the mass media, popular culture and the leading political forces within the world and that the idea of a ‘community of communities’ is a way of representing the position of ethnic minorities as a whole within Britain today.

Abbas (2006) states:

“British Multiculturalism is a distinctive philosophy that legitimises the demands on unity and diversity, of achieving political unity without cultural uniformity, and cultivating amongst its citizens both a common sense of belonging and a willingness to accept and cherish deep cultural differences. Muslims in Britain are considered by

their religion first and foremost. But at the same time, Muslims in Britain are disempowered, disenfranchised, disenchanting, disaffected groups at the margins of economy society and polity” (p. 35).

Abbas (2006) also identifies that young people are marginalised, ostracised, subjugated and oppressed on a number of scales including economic (through poorer access to education and the labour market), social (due to inter-generational issues and issues around masculinity), political (through a lack of representation in mainstream politics), cultural (through issues around defining identity and citizenship) and religion (through Islamophobia being present at local, national and international levels).

Young people in general of South Asian origin are affected by ethnic, cultural and religious prejudice, discrimination and racism which leads to a process of alienation. This alienation can encourage young Asian men to seek alternative forms of expression and it can lead to problems of identity crisis, particularly amongst Muslim men as they may either shift towards a more radical and political Islamic identity (through a loss of their British identity) or they may make greater attempts to integrate their Muslim and British identities.

Fennell (2009) claims that there has been a process of ‘othering’ British South Asian men, forcing them to live parallel lives and Vasta (2009) believes that it is this inequality that acts as a barrier to integration and social cohesion as integration requires feeling a sense of belonging. Fennell states that it is this ‘othering’ that led to the riots in Oldham and this is important to be aware of as the current research highlights that the South Asian men involved in this study feel a sense of isolation and stigmatisation, which can have important social and psychological consequences and is something that

needs to be addressed in society to reduce the risk of further terrorist events. Parekh (2001) states that racism and discrimination is present within society and is fuelled by structures within the internal community and the structures that shape society as a whole. He develops his notion of a multicultural society by suggesting that there is a need for a common sense of belonging within society which is developed through each culture being able to challenge each other.

1.3.6: Experiences of discrimination in the aftermath of a terrorist attack

It can be argued that the meaning of being a British Muslim has been influenced by an increase in discrimination towards Muslims (Islamaphobia) after September the 11th and 7/7 (Allen, 2001, Sheridan, 2006). Fox (2000) states that the process that leads to discrimination is influenced by religious factors and the causes of religious discrimination are different to other types of discrimination. The term Islamaphobia can be used to refer to a dread or hatred of Islam and a fear or dislike of Muslims (the Runnymede Trust, 1997). In his presentation, Allen (2001), examined the portrayal of Islamaphobia in the British Media since 9/11 and commented that the press and wider media in Britain had attributed a spectrum of negative characteristics to all Muslims such as “extremist”, “fundamentalist” and “terrorist” (p.6). He claims that this is central to Islamaphobia as it creates a “them” and “us” divide, which seems to be becoming more natural within the British society (Runnymede Trust, 1997). Hence, Muslims may be seen as traitors to Britain due to their religion alone.

Sheridan (2006) examined the presence of Islamaphobia pre and post 9/11 utilising a sample of 222 participants who described themselves as Muslim and filled out a questionnaire. It was found that the levels of implicit or indirect discrimination rose by eighty-two percent and overt discrimination rose by seventy-six percent, suggesting that

9/11 may have led to prejudice towards Muslims. Hence, as well as race and ethnicity, this indicates that religion may be an important factor influencing discrimination, as the sample reported being regularly ignored, stared at, overlooked, insulted, treated with suspicion and physically attacked. It was also found that mental health was associated with religious discrimination as thirty-five percent of the participants suffered mental health problems as a result of the discrimination. This indicated that an abusive incident, especially when associated with higher degrees of implicit and explicit discrimination, may lead to depressive symptoms. This is something that warrants further investigation and Counselling Psychologists should bear this in mind when dealing with Asian, particularly Muslim, clients who may be experiencing mental health issues such as depression.

Another important finding was identified by Allen and Nielsen (2002), who found that a likely predictor of religious discrimination was if a person's visual identity suggested that they were a Muslim, for example, one such indicator would be that person having a beard. As a result, other ethnicities who had a resemblance to the stereotypical assumptions around the Muslim religion were also targeted, including Sikh men who wore turbans (as they may have resembled Osama Bin Laden, one of the chief suspects in the attack on 9/11). Hence, they claim that what appears to be important is whether attackers perceive their victims to be Islamic or not, regardless of whether they actually are. Therefore, the possibility remains that Asian men may be targeted because they fit a religious stereotype, for example being stopped and searched on the London Underground as a result of racial profiling (Gillborn, 2006). This is why the researcher has decided to include both Muslim and non-Muslim men in this study. The researcher feels that this will also be important in advancing knowledge of young Asian men's experience. Archer (2001), for example, states that in contrast to the fascination with

Muslim men, young Indian men remain somewhat absent in the academic literature.

There seems to have been a focus on the problematisation of the Asian/Muslim identity through studying young Bangladeshi and Pakistani men in particular (Alexander, 2000).

This concept of perceived discrimination has been termed racial microaggressions by Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzales and Willis (1978) and has been used to describe “subtle, stunning, often automatic and non-verbal exchanges which are put downs” (p. 66). This was explored further by Solorozano, Ceja and Yosso (2000) who describe racial microaggressions as “subtle insults (verbal, non-verbal and/or visual) directed towards people of colour often automatically or unconsciously” (p.60). In relation to this, Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and Esquilin (2007) highlight that modern day racism is often covert, disguised and ambiguous and it has evolved from the old fashioned displays of racism which were publically displayed. Hence, it can be difficult to identify a microaggression as other explanations may be possible and so the individual may be left with a feeling that they have been attacked or disrespected or a sense that something is not right (Franklin, 2004; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003).

Alleyne (2004, 2005) has explored microaggressions in the context of black identity and workplace oppression by utilising a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews. Her findings suggest that conflict in workplace relationships were common and were frequently initiated by comments and behaviour that targeted aspects of that individual’s race or cultural identity. Over time, this repeated treatment contributed to longer periods of hurt, shame and demoralisation and she felt that this often left workers traumatised. She also found that this led individuals to question aspects of their identity. She notes that one of the limitations of her study was that there was a small number of men and Asian participants involved in this study. Alleyne (2005) postulates that

although her papers focus specifically on the experience of one racial group, the findings may also be of value to other minority ethnic groups whose experience of societal prejudice and discrimination is similar or problematic. This links in with the aims of the current research, which is to shed light on the experiences of young Asian men and to explore if they have experienced discrimination or societal prejudice in the aftermath of 7/7. This may lead to new insights into the widespread psychological impact of terrorist attacks.

It is possible that perceived discrimination and the “them” and “us” dualism presented in the media could have an effect on the identities of young British Asian men. Archer (2001) states that race, gender, religion and cultural discourses are all intermeshed in young Muslim men’s identity construction. Hopkins and Kahan-Hopkins (2006) state that the ways minorities, such as British Muslims, experience interactions with majorities is likely to be dependent on the goals and strategies of the majority. They postulate that the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1972, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1989) is a useful explanation as it, in brief, states that groups form a basis for identity and our conceptions of ourselves and our social group overlap and so people are motivated to maintain a positive image of their group (Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005). Therefore, other events that may involve other group members may be relevant to the self and so Muslims could potentially feel shame when perceiving the negative act of the London Bombings as being portrayed by fellow Muslims. They may equate this as being a core aspect of their identity and so may feel the need to psychologically distance themselves from the perpetrators of 7/7 (Johns et al, 2005). Hence, 7/7 highlighted the powerful impact that social identity as a part of a group may have on an individual. It is important for Counselling Psychologists to be mindful of the significant influence of belonging to a group and the impact this may have on an individual. They should also be attentive to

the various influences that may be having an impact on an individual and the emotional significance that belonging to a group may have on an individual (depending on the value they place on belonging to a group), and how this may influence their well-being.

1.3.7: Summary of the existing literature

The research discussed indicates that terrorist attacks, such as 7/7, and their portrayal in the media could have potentially huge psychological effects, including PTSD, depression, substantial stress, anxiety, fear, sense of discrimination and changes in identity, and people may have different ways of coping with these tragedies. The researcher hopes to extend the existing knowledge in the academic literature, especially around the impact of the London Bombings. The impact of the London Bombings on young British Asian men will be extended to include both Muslim and non-Muslim men. The hope is that this will aid Counselling Psychologists to gain insight into the world of these men, the way they have coped with terrorist attacks and the medium to long-term psychological impact it has had on them.

1.4: Implications for Counselling Psychology

One issue that is pertinent to the field of Counselling Psychology is how gender and ethnicity may impact upon access to counselling. Kalathil (2008) states that socio-economic status (which is linked in with a person's experience of life and their sense of identity and belonging within British society), along with their levels of cultural and institutional exclusion/participation has been linked with vulnerability to mental health problems. There is also a well established link between racism and mental health distress . Kalathil describes how studies around this topic within the last few decades have shown that the social experience of racism is a causative factor in the development of mental health issues, whilst racism within mental health services results in

inappropriate and inadequate service provision. In addition, she describes how complex issues around the mental health of the South Asian communities within Britain today are further fuelled by the changing societal perceptions of these communities, such as animosity towards Muslims as a result of 7/7. In line with this, media accounts of terrorism have implications on the increase in the number of racist incidents targeting individuals from the Asian community which has a detrimental impact on their mental health (Clancy, Hough, Aust and Kershaw, 2001). This is a pertinent concern for the current researcher and raises issues around how to improve access to psychological therapies (which will also be discussed further in the discussion section).

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations are under-represented among those accessing psychological therapy services, despite the increasing recognition that counselling can be beneficial in preventing the deterioration of positive mental health and services such as the NHS expanding their access to psychological therapies (Alexander, 1999; Commander, 1999; Daines, 1997; Hussain, Waheed and Hussain, 2006; McLeod and McLeod, 2001; Ness 2007). The 2001 census shows that over half of the minority ethnic population within the UK is of South Asian origin. Bhui and Bhugra (2002) argue that a substantial body of research indicates that the Asian population as a whole does not access mental health services and treatment as much as the general White population (Lloyd and Moodley; Bhul, 1997). They state that this is due to a number of factors including the cultural appropriateness of mental health services, attitudes towards services, stereotypes held by service providers, previous experiences of utilising services and culturally defined lay referral systems (Goldberg, 1999). Goldberg also argues that different societies have different patterns of help-seeking, for example, preferring to access support to traditional healers as opposed to the Western medical system and medicine. Ness (2007) elaborates on this point by

stating that psychological services that are delivered to BME communities are currently perceived to be delivered from a White British perspective of mental illness that BME communities may not necessarily identify with. However, contrary to this Netto et al (2006) found that for the British Asian participants that they involved in their study, the Western origins of counselling did not appear to prevent the majority of the clients from experiencing positive outcomes following their counselling intervention. Therefore, they argue that stereotypical assumptions of what may be needed be set aside and service users should be treated in a more individual and needs based way.

Gray (1999) argued that another important influence on accessing mental health services is the influence of gender, with men being less likely to access services. Kalathil (2008) also states that South Asian men have not been the focus of many studies exploring mental health. Alongside this, Patel (1999) found that the cultural views of General Practitioners can influence the assessment and clinical management of mental health disorders, including referrals to mental health services. In addition to this Bhui and Bhugra (2002) state that the non-recognition of mental illness by healthcare professionals may represent a mismatch between the patient's cultural expression of distress and the signs and symptoms that the clinician may be looking out for in order to diagnose the condition. However, as Kagan (2003) states, individuals from the Asian community may often present with physical symptoms for psychological problems and therefore, their underlying psychological symptoms often go unrecognised. Jacob, Bhugra, Lloyd and Mann (1998) also note that there may be a lack of awareness within Asians born in the UK about the role of GP's as a source of support for mental health issues.

There may be a stigma or fear associated with accessing mental health services for Asians as there may be unique and complex cultural taboos attached to having a mental health need including the perceived threat of social exclusion. In Netto et al's (2000) study, their participants described a fear of being labelled as having 'lost it'. Davies, Thornicroft and Lease (1996) found that Mental Health Act detention for assessment and treatment was more common among Black and Asian ethnic minorities and, in addition to this, Black and Asian males were more likely to be detained than Black and Asian females. This could be linked in with signs and symptoms of distress not being recognised in time by the practitioner (a lack of early intervention), so the patient only engages with mental health services when they are in a crisis state (McKenzie, 2005). As with African-Caribbean men, Asian men have a high incidence of compulsory admissions to psychiatric institutions, low levels of referrals for talking treatments such as counselling and psychotherapy and a low uptake of aftercare services (Kalathil, 2008; McKenzie, 2005).

Netto et al (2006) argue that it is important to make mental health services more accessible to Asian men as they found that once Asian men understood the nature of counselling, they were mainly positive about the service and engaging in counselling led participants reporting beneficial outcomes such as improved self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with problems and the confidential element of the counselling service was highly valued by the participants. The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) guidelines (2009) also highlight the importance of the social inclusion of Asians into the mental healthcare system as isolation is a key component of depression and social integration can have positive benefits for the individual and the wider community. In her study, Kagan (2003) found that for individuals from the Asian community, it can often be difficult to admit to problems as the individuals may not

always trust that the professional will adhere to the principles of confidentiality. The participants from Netto et al's study also felt that increased attentions should be paid to publicising the nature, existence and range of counselling services including through the use of outreach work into the BME communities. Some additional suggestions that have been offered in order to try and make psychological services more accessible to the Asian community have included making health promotion materials available in relevant languages, having a diverse and culturally appropriate workforce, utilising community psychology and outreach training with cultural and religious groups, utilising service user feedback to improve services, the promotion of self-help within the local communities and developing a dialogue and networking with BME communities in order to identify their needs and build trust in mental health services (IAPT guidelines, 2009; Ness, 2007). The current study will address these issues further within the discussion section.

Furthermore, Counselling Psychologists will be likely to come into contact with Asian men in their practice. The outcomes from this study could be critical in terms of practice for these professionals as they may gain insight into the ways that Asian men perceive, view and experience their worlds and hence may be able to react in more culturally appropriate ways in relation to the types of issues that these individuals may present with when they come for counselling. As highlighted in the review of the literature, there is a gap in the literature in the way that Asian men responded to the London Bombings and, as Asian men represent a large proportion of the London population, research into this area could provide valuable insights into the various social and psychological dimensions that influence young, British Asian men. The outcome of this research may help us to understand some of the experiences that this group may go

through and how they perceive their world which can extend our knowledge and advance our professional development.

1.5: Aims of the current research

The overall aim of this research is to look at the psychological impact that the London Bombings have had on Asian men to see what ‘themes’ may arise. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be utilised to gain insight into the way British Asian men may view their worlds.

In particular, this study will explore the following areas:

- The men’s immediate reaction to the London Bombings
- The psychological impact of the London Bombings
- The impact of the media
- Perceptions and reactions of others towards the men in the aftermath of the London Bombings
- The men’s beliefs / identity / sense of self and if these have changed as a result of the London Bombings
- The coping mechanisms that the men may have utilised in the aftermath of the London Bombings
- Any other areas which the men perceive to be important in order to understand their view of their world in the aftermath of the London Bombings.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1: Research Design

This study utilised the qualitative methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which employs a small sample design. IPA is an inductive approach ('bottom up'), it does not test hypothesis and prior assumptions are avoided (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005). IPA aims to capture and explore the meanings that participants attach to their experiences.

2.2: Rationale for a Qualitative Study

The researcher explored the impact that the London Bombings have had on young Asian men living in London. There has been limited research around this specific topic and the data that has been collected (Rubin et al., 2005; Rubin and Brewin, 2006, Rubin et al., 2007). Specific studies around the impact of the London Bombings have employed a quantitative methodology and were carried out between 1 week and 6 months after the London Bombings had taken place. They all illustrate that there can be long term stress reactions in individuals who are indirectly influenced by such terrorist attacks. In Rubin et al.'s (2005) study, it was also found that being Muslim was associated with higher levels of stress. However, there was no comparison to non-Muslim Asian men and how they may have been affected. Furthermore, no specific detailed data on how this affected the men psychologically, their particular experiences in the aftermath of the bombings and how they coped in the aftermath of the bombings was gathered. The long term impact of the bombings also remains unknown. Hence, although these studies provide valuable initial glimpses into this phenomenon, there are still limits in our understanding around the specific experiences of Asian men in the aftermath of the London Bombings and how they attached meaning to this experience.

The researcher chose to employ a qualitative methodology as she hoped to explore the meanings and perceptions of this experience from the perspective of the participants (Ritchie and Lewis, 2004) facilitating further understanding of this phenomenon. She also recognised that she would need to acknowledge her impact on the research process and data that she gathered, as she became more aware of her preconceptions throughout the research process (Smith, 2003). To facilitate this understanding of the participant's world, a semi-structured interview was utilised as this can be seen as a flexible data collection instrument (Smith and Osborne, 2003). Therefore, this may enable more complex information around emotions and meanings to come to light, which may not be accessible through the sole use of a pre-designed questionnaire (Robson, 1999; Smith, 1995).

The researcher decided to focus on Asian men in particular, as she felt that this topic was significant for this group as the suicide bombers implicated in the terrorist incident were young British Asian men. She was interested in the psychological impact on Asian men in general through being negatively associated with the bombers and the London bombings. She wondered whether Asian men felt that the way that they have been perceived by others and by society has changed in the aftermath of the London Bombings. As Counselling Psychologists are likely to come into contact with young Asian men, it is important for them to be aware of such issues that may influence the way that they view their world. The researcher hopes that the findings will add to the dimensions that we consider to influence this group in society.

2.3: Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

Ashworth (1995) states that qualitative research is concerned with human experience and how each individual perceives these experiences. IPA is one form of qualitative research which was formalised and recognised as a specific approach to qualitative research by Smith in the mid 1990's (Eatough and Smith, 2008). He created a dual aim which was to provide an in depth exploration of people's lived experiences and to provide a close examination of how people make sense of this experience (De Visser, 2006). However, it is also important to highlight that IPA has a longer history which is rooted in phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography.

2.3.1: Phenomenology

IPA is rooted in phenomenology, which originated with Husserl's attempts to construct a philosophical science of consciousness. Phenomenology is the study of our experience and it is concerned with how things appear to us in our consciousness and how individuals perceive and talk about objects and events (Smith 1996). Phenomenological psychological research attempts to clarify subjective situations lived through in everyday life. This is in contrast with the attempt to produce an objective statement about the object or event in itself and examining the event or object in terms of pre-existing conceptual or scientific criteria (Smith, 2003).

Phenomenology can be seen as a fluid, dynamic and quite a contentious body of work (Willig, 2001). It focuses upon experience and subjectivity (Willig, 2008). The phenomenological movement grew out of a desire to break away from the positivist position which was present in psychology at the time. This focused on externally observable testing on a range of human thinking such as attention, perception, thought and memory (Eatough and Smith, 2008; Smith, Jarman & Osborne, 1999; Willig, 2001). These tests typically involved manipulating aspects of the environment in order to test

predicted responses and observe measurable variables. In contrast, phenomenology was concerned with returning to the things themselves as they were actually experienced. The phenomenon, hence, became the thing itself as it appeared to the individual (Ashworth, 1995). IPA has also been significantly influenced by symbolic-interactionism which emerged in the 1930's and was also developed through an explicit rejection of positivism. Within a symbolic interactionist perspective, the meanings that individuals ascribe to events are of a central concern. It is believed that these meanings can only be obtained through a process of social engagement, and interpretative activity is required to make sense of them (Smith, 2003).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is regarded as a key figure in the development of phenomenology (Moran, 2000) and he developed its core principal, which is concerned with focusing on the experience in its own terms. Hence, the focus is on one's experience of events and occurrences with less of a focus on external and physical reality. His aim was to return to the 'things themselves'.

One of the first and most basic organizing principles of research is the set of core beliefs that inform the paradigm that underpins it. A positivist paradigm stems from the belief in a real world which can be objectively studied in order to gain knowledge and understanding. In contrast, IPA is representative of a non-positivistic approach as it is concerned with individual experiences rather than universal laws. Instead of a realist ontology IPA adopts a relativist ontology which emphasises the multiplicity of interpretations that can be applied to the world. The individual is therefore actively working to construct their world.

These differences in understanding of knowledge and the world also give rise to the distinction between idiographic and nomothetic methods in research, which will be discussed further in section 2.3.3. These are terms coined by the Kantian philosopher Windelband (1984/1998) to describe two distinct approaches to knowledge. Within qualitative psychological research idiographic methods are concerned with studying and valuing individuals themselves and acknowledging the properties which set them apart from other individuals. Idiographic research is therefore more concerned with the study of a cohort of individuals, although each individual may be seen as representing a class or population of similar individuals. So, as in IPA driven research, the experience of the individual participant is valued for its own sake or is used to illuminate some aspect of the group from which the individual derives, and Windelband placed an emphasis on the conscious experience of objects, people and things encountered in the world (Willig, 2001). Transcendental phenomenology is, hence, concerned with the phenomena that appear in our consciousness as we engage with the world around us (Willig, 2001). In this philosophy, experience is seen as a system of interrelated meanings, or a gestalt, which is bound up in the person's life world (Ashworth, 1995; Moran, 2000).

Husserl then expanded this concept a step further to eidetic phenomenology as he recognised that each individual may have many perceptions of the same thing, or each of us may perceive the same thing in different ways (Smith, Jarman & Osborne, 1999). In this way, Husserl was attempting to make a distinction between traditional scientific understandings of humans and the phenomenological theory which he was proposing.

In contrast to Husserl's views, Heidegger emphasised the worldly aspect of phenomenology (theory of experience) and was not so concerned with epistemology (the theory of knowledge). He proposed that, alongside Husserl's thoughts of the things

themselves being important, the human being is *a Dasiën* which can be referred to as “*being in the world*” (Eatough and Smith, 2008, p. 180). This diffuses the distinction between the person and the world, as individuals are enmeshed with things and others in their world.

This idea has been extended by Merleau-Ponty (1945, cited in Eatough and Smith, 2008) as he was concerned with the concept of worldliness and our engagement with the world, with a particular emphasis on the embodied nature of that engagement. He felt that we are connected or engaged with the world through our bodies, and everything that happens to our body impacts on our phenomenological experience of the world. He also talked about subjective points of view, something which IPA is very conscious about. IPA also takes into account that the individual’s experience of their world is socially and historically contingent and is affected by context (Eatough and Smith, 2008).

This indicates that there are very different emphases in phenomenology, and IPA draws on these theories selectively and judiciously. IPA accepts the broad core principles of going back to the thing itself, concern with experience, attending closely to the lived experience and trying to bracket out overtly theoretical and scientific concerns. IPA is therefore in line with a number of phenomenological positions and is also influenced by hermeneutics as it emphasises the interpretative features of analysis (Eatough and Smith, 2008).

2.3.2: Hermeneutics

A second important theoretical influence for IPA is hermeneutics which is the study and theory of interpretation (Smith, 2003; Eatough and Smith, 2008; Willig, 2001).

Hermeneutic inquiry is concerned with people as interpreting and sense-making individuals. IPA recognises that research is a dynamic process and the researcher has an active role as they aim to achieve an insider perspective and stand in the shoes of the participant (Conrad, 1987). Essentially hermeneutics involves an attempt to understand things from the perspective of someone else and to be aware of the social, cultural and other forces which may have influenced their outlook. In addition hermeneutics is concerned with using this understanding to discover more fundamental meanings.

Schleiermacher was one of the first to stress the importance of the researcher in the process of interpretation. He felt that the researcher's understanding was an essential element in the process of interpretation as a whole (Smith 2007). Gadamer (2004) describes the process of interpretation as the fusion of one's own horizon with the horizon of the text. The philosopher Ricoeur (1970) argued that any human action may be regarded as a text that can be interpreted. He defined two types of hermeneutic study:

1. The hermeneutic of meaning-recollection which aims at a faithful account of an experience.
2. The hermeneutics of suspicion which aims to offer a deeper level of interpretation by going beneath the surface account.

Although most qualitative psychological research will involve meaning recollection it could be argued that not all of it will necessarily involve the hermeneutics of suspicion.

So while phenomenology is the study of consciousness experienced subjectively, hermeneutics acknowledges the input of the other in the process of understanding.

Furthermore, while phenomenology seeks to set aside assumptions about the object of

enquiry and to build up a comprehensive description of the object itself, hermeneutics is focused more on context, thus often placing the focus of enquiry into a historical, social or cultural perspective.

Smith (1995) suggests that IPA is phenomenological in that it seeks to explore how individuals make sense of their personal and social world, it attempts to understand human experience and it assumes that there is an interactive relationship between the person and the world. At the same time, IPA is also hermeneutic and interpretative as it recognises that access into the participant's personal world is not direct or complete as it is dependant on the researcher's own conceptions and their interpretative activity of the participant's world. Therefore, Smith and Osborn (2003) state that IPA involves a double hermeneutic or a two-stage process of interpretation as "the participants are trying to make sense of their world and the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (p.51).

The hermeneutic circle describes the process by which one's understanding of a phenomenon as a whole is established by reference to its individual parts. Conversely, ones understanding of each individual part is a result of reference to the whole. Thus, neither the whole nor the individual parts can truly be understood without reference to the other. Finlay (2003) proposes that in the hermeneutic circle the researcher meets the participant in a dynamic circular relationship. Throughout the research process, the researcher is temporarily leaving their world behind and entering the world of their participant and it goes through this circular movement a number of times. The researcher can be a number of points of distance from the interviewee throughout the research process. The researcher is aiming to attend as closely as possible to the life-world of the participant and leave as far behind as possible their foreunderstandings or

preconceptions. The idea is that when we leave the participants' world and come back to our own then we are changed in light of this process (in terms of our thinking and interpretations) and this essentially is what analysis is.

The concepts of the double hermeneutic and the hermeneutic circle can be seen to be closely related to the concept of reflexivity as used in qualitative research, as they both embody the notion that the total is greater than the sum of the parts. Reflexivity aims to make the processes used in analysis and in the production of research material as explicit as possible. Thus topic, design and process, as well as the personal journey of the researchers themselves, are all reflected upon and evaluated throughout. In this context, Wilkinson (1988) talks about personal reflexivity (which is where the researcher is transparent and makes their individuality and its effect on the research process clear) and functional reflexivity (which relates to one's role as a researcher and the effect that this may have on the research process). Willig (2007) proposes that a phenomenon cannot be understood without the researcher examining their intentionality and personal involvement in the research.

IPA acknowledges the researcher's reflexivity and seeks to make their impact on the process of research as explicit as possible. What the researcher brings to the process is valued and commented upon rather than seen as interference which must be screened out. There is no claim to objectivity, rather the researcher aims to get as near as they can to the participant's account, including them taking into account how their own subjectivity has influenced the process of research (Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001).

2.3.3: Epistemology of IPA

IPA is also a strongly idiographic approach concerned with the detailed analysis of a single case by itself or utilising this single case to move on to similarly detailed analyses of other cases. Before looking at idiography in more detail, it is important to mention how epistemology (the theory of knowledge) influences the research process, and in particular the relationship between 'the knower' and the 'known'. As in all research, our epistemological stance should guide our choice of methodology (Smith, 1995). An important aspect of research is the set of core beliefs which inform the paradigm which underpins it. As previously mentioned, IPA is representative of a non-positivistic approach inasmuch as it is concerned with individual experiences rather than universal laws. It adopts a relativist ontology which emphasises the multiplicity of interpretations that can be applied to the world. The individual is, therefore, actively working to construct their world (Eatough and Smith, 2008; Willig, 2001).

These differences in understanding of knowledge, and of the world, also give rise to the distinction between idiographic and nomothetic methods in research (Windelband, 1894/1998). These terms describe two distinct approaches to knowledge (Moran, 2000). The nomothetic approach is related to a tendency to generalise and has been traditionally applied to research within the natural sciences. Nomothetic studies work at the group or population level to make probabilistic claims or predictions (De Visser, 2006). Informed by a more positivist approach nomothetic research would seek to formulate general laws and this has been the dominant approach in traditional psychological research dominated by quantitative methodology.

In contrast, the idiographic approach is based on the tendency to specify and is often used for research within the humanities. It focuses on the particular rather than the universal. Within qualitative psychological research idiographic methods are concerned

with studying and valuing individuals themselves and acknowledging the properties which set them apart from other individuals. Idiographic studies work at the individual level to make specific statements about those individuals (De Visser, 2006). The humanistic movement elevated the ideographic approach, where the individual was studied as a unique case (Ashworth, 1995). IPA is, hence, concerned with understanding meaning in the individual's life (Eatough and Smith, 2008).

Hence, idiographic research is more concerned with the study of a cohort of individuals, although each individual may be seen as representing a class or population of similar individuals. So, as in IPA driven research, the experience of the individual participant is valued for its own sake or is used to illuminate some aspect of the group from which the individual derives. This is linked with Warnock's (1987, cited in Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2008) notion that probing deeper into the individual may take us nearer to the universal. Idiographic methods may also explicitly address the subjectivity and complexity in human experience, which may lead to a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Eatough and Smith, 2008). Idiography does not argue against formulating general laws but argues that this process should be bottom up and driven by the data (Willig, 2001).

Behaviourism and cognitivism have also been traditionally regarded as sharing an underlying positivist position (Ashworth, 1995), however IPA disputes how cognitions have been conceptualised (Eatough and Smith, 2008). IPA views cognitions as an aspect of being in the world. Smith (1996) feels that IPA and social cognition both strive to unravel what people think (cognition), say (account) and do (behaviour) and so IPA and its roots in phenomenology, and hermeneutics may have an impact on the way that consciousness is studied. It is, therefore, evident that phenomenology has evolved

over a number of years and IPA is one of its branches that examines a phenomenon by exploring the psychological meanings that the individual attaches to their lived experience. Phenomenological analysis attempts to recognise the psychological essence of the phenomenon from examining the lived examples within the context of participants' lives (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003).

2.4: Limits of IPA

IPA can be beneficial in exploring participants' experiences and unravelling the meanings that they attach to these experiences. This can enable a phenomenon to be more deeply explored. However there are also limitations of the approach that should be outlined. Willig (2001) outlines four main conceptual and practical limitations; the role of language, the suitability of participants, outlining the nature of the participants' worlds and the role of cognitions. Each of these arguments will be outlined further below.

Firstly, the role of language within IPA can be seen to be problematic. As IPA works with texts, language is the main way that participants communicate their experiences to the researcher. Therefore, IPA relies upon the representational validity of language. However, it can be argued that language constructs rather than describes reality as the words we chose to describe a particular experience always construct a particular version of that experience. The same event can be described in various ways. Hence, language itself adds meanings thereby removing direct access to someone's experience.

Therefore, data from an interview tells the researcher how that person talks about the experience within a particular context rather than about the experience itself. An alternative view is that language precedes and, therefore, shapes experience so language may prescribe what we can think and feel. Some might therefore argue that IPA does

not adequately consider the constitutive role of language as language may not only facilitate but also block the expression of experience (Willig, 2007).

Secondly, phenomenological analysis aims to explore the quality of experience and to gain a better understanding of what it is like to live in a particular moment. IPA also tries to elicit experiences and meanings of an experience, rather than opinions about it. However, in practical research terms, this methodology is dependent on participants' verbal accounts. This limits suitable participants to those who can adequately articulate the richness, nuances and complexities of their experience. This is something that the researcher took into account when recruiting participants to take part in this study. However, even though language may be an issue to consider as there may be questions around meaning, it can be argued that transcripts of the interviews are sufficient to capture the quality of the interviewee's experience and the emotional tone of the interview, bringing to fore what might not be obvious (Giorgi, 2003; Willig, 2007). Indeed, this is a position which the researcher is aligned to.

Thirdly, phenomenological research is a relational approach as it focuses on how participants view the world. It does not comment on the nature of the world itself nor does it distinguish between the world and the participant. Willig (2007) argued that IPA does not try to explain why participants experience the world in that way, and that simply documenting their perceptions does not fully explain the conditions that create these perceptions. She postulates that this absence of contextual knowledge limits our understanding of participants' experiences. However, in line with Heidegger's position it could be argued that humans are "*being in the world*" (Eatough and Smith, 2008, p. 180), which diffuses the distinction between the person and the world as individuals are enmeshed with things and others in their world.

Fourthly, Smith (1996) states that IPA involves cognitions because it is attempting to understand what the participant thinks or believes about the phenomenon being explored. This can be seen to contradict the true essence of phenomenology, conflicting with the aim of avoiding the distinction between the person and the world, the knower and the known. IPA has therefore been criticised as a study of cognitions rather than an account of the way in which the world presents itself to the participant in a raw, pre-cognitive way. Lived experience, some would argue, is therefore curtailed by the exclusion of unarticulated aspects of experience.

Nonetheless, regardless of these limitations, the researcher decided to utilise IPA as the aim of data analysis is to capture the quality and texture of individual experience, but it recognises that such experience is never directly accessible to the researcher (Willig, 2001). Hence, even though IPA aims to explore the experience from the participant's perspective, it recognises that this will also be influenced by the researcher's own view of the world and the relational dynamic between the researcher and participant.

Therefore, the analysis will be the researcher's interpretation of the participant's experience (Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001). This indicates that IPA recognises that it is impossible to obtain direct, unmediated access into the participant's world. Hence, IPA aims to obtain some insight into the participant's thoughts and beliefs, in relation to the phenomenon being researched, through the researcher engaging with the participant's accounts in order to obtain an insider's perspective (Willig, 2001). Hence, Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) state that the analytic process can never produce a genuine first person account as this is always constructed by the participant and the researcher.

Hence, the objective of IPA is to produce a coherent, third person and psychologically

informed description which tries to get as 'close' to the participant's view as possible (Larkin et al., 2006, p.104).

2.5: Methodological considerations

Before choosing IPA as the methodology for this research, other options were also considered. Grounded theory was considered as an alternative as IPA and grounded theory have a similar approach to data analysis and share common techniques in producing data. Charmaz (2003) states that grounded theory methods offer a flexible set of inductive strategies for collecting and analysing qualitative data which emphasise building inductive theories through data analysis. This enables theoretical categories to be created that are directly 'grounded' in the data. Glaser (1992) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify several distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory methods. These include a simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of the research, constructing middle-range theories to explain behaviour and processes, sampling for theory construction to check and refine conceptual categories (theoretical sampling) and conducting the literature review after the analysis.

Charmaz highlights that grounded theory is rooted in positivism and contains both positivistic and interpretative elements. It utilises systematic techniques to study an external world (keeping with positivistic thinking) and it stresses how people construct actions, meanings and intentions (consistent with interpretative thinking). Although more recent developments in grounded theory have facilitated analysis to include experiential data, it appears that the theory that this approach created is based on the researcher's perspective (Willig, 2001).

In contrast, IPA is representative of a non-positivistic approach inasmuch as it is concerned with individual experiences rather than universal laws. This grew out of the humanistic movement which was led by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (Monte, 1991). Instead of a realist ontology IPA adopts a relativist ontology which emphasises the multiplicity of interpretations that can be applied to the world. The role of the researcher as well as the dynamic relationship between the researcher and participant is seen to actively influence the data. Hence, overall, grounded theory is utilised to generate a theory, whereas IPA is able to produce tentative theoretical formulations, based on participants' accounts (Willig, 2007).

Discourse analysis was also considered as it examines the psychological understanding of discourse between the participant and the researcher and facilitates the process of thinking about the role of discourse in the construction of meanings (Philip and Jorgensen, 2002; Smith, Jarman & Osborne, 1999). Most types of discourse analysis have tended to focus on the function of language within specific contexts and, like behaviourism, discourse analysis limits its focus to observable linguistic behaviour (Reid et al., 2005). However, discourse analysis appears to be more useful when exploring how people manage accountability and stake in everyday life settings rather than seeking to explore cognitive processes (Smith, Jarman and Osborne, 1999; Willig, 2003). Discourse analysis can be seen as a powerful deconstructive tool, but it offers limited viable bases for intervention in the world (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999; Reid et al., 2005; Willig, 1999). Hence, Reid et al. (2005) state that IPA can offer applied researchers, such as Counselling Psychologists, the opportunity to integrate research and practice.

Smith and Osborne (2003) state that IPA is especially useful when researchers are concerned with novelty and that an area of concern can be explored in a detailed and flexible way. Hence IPA, appeared to fit with the aims of this research study as it provided a means for addressing the psychological world of the participants that took part in this study. The researcher was also drawn in by the reflexivity that is required when utilising this approach. Larkin et al. (2006) suggest that it may be more appropriate to understand IPA as a stance or perspective from which to approach the task of qualitative data analysis rather than see it as a distinct 'method'.

2.6: The use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The researcher chose to implement IPA in particular as this facilitated examining the meanings that a relatively homogenous group in society attached to particular experiences, states or events. It can also facilitate an exploration of how people make sense of their social world (Smith and Osborne, 2003). From the review of the literature, it was clear that there was a gap in the research pertaining to the effect that the London Bombings have had on young Asian men. Hence, the researcher hoped that this research would shed some light on the experiences of this group in the wider society and lead to new directions in this area of research.

The researcher recognised that the research process is dynamic and that any form of qualitative analysis is a personal process. With IPA, this process involves the researcher taking on an active role when analysing and interpreting the transcripts in an attempt to understand the participant's world. This can be complicated by the researcher's own beliefs and conceptions (Smith and Osborne, 2003). Hence, the researcher feels that it is important that the reader understands the way that she views the world as a young Asian woman. The researcher has a particular interest in this field as she is surrounded by both

Muslim and non-Muslim young Asian males (family and friends) who have had personal experiences related to the London Bombings that have impacted upon them and in turn on the researcher. She wished to gain more insight into the way this phenomenon may have been affecting other Asian men like them.

In line with the idiographic approach to analysis (Smith, 2004), the researcher transcribed and looked at one interview at a time in detail before moving onto others. This process generated a list of general categorisations and themes.

Once transcribed, each transcript was read several times by the researcher so that she could become familiar with the context. The researcher utilised a margin on the left hand side of the page to note any interesting and significant points that were mentioned by the interviewee when talking about the impact of the London Bombings. Such points included the language used, her sense of who the person was, the feelings they may have been experiencing or expressing and contradictions in their experiences. By re-reading the transcripts several times, the researcher gained new insights into what was being said.

Once this was complete, the researcher re-read the scripts again and noted any emerging themes in a margin on the right hand side of the text in order to capture the essence of what was being said. This facilitated links being made between different transcripts whilst ensuring that these links were still grounded in that particular transcript. The number of themes identified was dependent on the richness of the data.

The next stage of analysis saw the researcher making an analytic connection between the themes that were emerging from the participants' accounts. This was done by

looking through all of the transcripts and looking for commonalities and differences between the participants' accounts. By doing this, the researcher found that some of the themes clustered together to form super-ordinate concepts. The connections made were always checked against the original transcript to ensure that they were grounded in the interviews.

The clusters were then given a name to represent the super-ordinate themes. These clusters were ordered and placed in a table of themes. An identifier for each theme (such as keywords and pages in the transcript) was placed in the table so that the analysis was appropriately organised and the researcher was able to link this identifier with the original source in the transcript. Shared themes across all cases were organised to make consistent and meaningful statements that acknowledges the participants' account of their experience, grounded in their own words (Smith, 2003). During this process of analysis some of the themes were disregarded either because they did not fit well with the structure and connections between transcripts or if they were not rich data then they may have been disregarded. The themes were not selected purely on the basis of their prevalence in the data. The richness of particular passages which highlight the themes and how these themes helped to illuminate other aspects of the account were also taken into consideration (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999).

The researcher involved other professionals in the research process, including her research supervisor, to check the links being formed in the analysis of the transcripts and to ensure that the themes identified were grounded in the data. This also helped to check the validity of the themes that the researcher identified and to see if any other emergent themes could be highlighted. The researcher then repeated this process with

the other transcripts in an attempt to highlight similarities and differences between the accounts of the men as well as to identify new emerging themes.

Once this interpretative process was complete for all the transcripts a final table of themes was produced, where the researcher decided which themes should be prioritised. The transcripts were reviewed in accordance with this final table of themes.

When writing up the analysis, the researcher probed into the underlying meanings of the men's experiences in relation to the themes identified, by translating the themes into a narrative account (Smith and Osborne, 2003), where the themes were expanded upon and explained. The researcher was cautious in distinguishing between her interpretation of the data and what the interviewee actually said. The researcher then utilised this data to make links with existing literature (readers are directed to the Discussion section of this research for an account of this).

2.7: Personal reflections on my process

Throughout the rest of this write up, I will be utilising italics to illustrate my personal reflections on the processes that were going on for me, as a researcher, as a counselling psychologist and as a person, throughout various stages of the research process. This is in an attempt to highlight the process of reflexivity to the reader throughout this research project, which may help to improve the evaluation of the data (Willig, 2001).

I was first interested in the impact of terrorism after the events of September the 11th, 2001 when the twin towers were destroyed. In my mind I felt that this destruction went beyond the physical collapsing of the towers and extended itself into the fabric of societies all over the world. Being an Asian and a Sikh, I remember the initial fear that I

heard from other members of the Asian community, a fear that there would be drastic changes in society that would occur as a result of this incident. I also became fearful in part as I heard of reprisal and revenge attacks against Asian men, in particular Sikh men, who wore turbans and may have been perceived to be members of the Taliban. This ignorance surprised me, but also intrigued me. What were people thinking and feeling and how were they coping with the aftermath of this big event? As time went on, these feelings and thoughts were put aside, outside of my conscious awareness.

The London Bombings in July 2005, then brought this mix of emotions closer to home. Somehow it felt more real. I could have been on that train. A lot of my friends were meant to be on that train at the time. Once again, the fear struck and I found myself being surrounded by Asian men who were suddenly more aware of themselves, how they looked and how others perceived them. It was almost as if they were thrust from being almost unnoticed members of society into the limelight. The media coverage was also very prominent and all of a sudden there were many television programmes documenting this event and Muslim Extremism. It's almost as if Asian men, in particular, were pushed to the fore of society. I wondered how this would affect them and their sense of self as I had heard a mix of emotions from the Asian men I knew such as anger, sadness, fear, confusion and feeling misunderstood.

Whilst conducting my literature search for my doctoral research, I began to recognise that there was a need to research into the London Bombings and how they had affected Asian men. Hence, my hope in conducting this research was to give my participants a voice and a chance to be understood and heard. I wanted to hear from them about how they viewed their world.

As Counselling Psychologists will be likely to come into contact with Asian men in their practice, the outcomes of this study could be critical in terms of practice for these professionals as they may gain insight into the ways that Asian men perceive, view and experience their world. Hence, they may be able to react in more culturally and gender appropriate ways in relation to the types of issues that these individuals may present with when they come for counselling.

2.8: Participants and sampling

Due to the aims of this research and as this study utilised IPA, the researcher tried to find a relatively homogenous sample. Therefore, she relied on purposive sampling (Smith and Osborne, 2003) where the participants were picked as they fit a more closely defined group for whom the research question will be significant. The process of snowballing was also in place, where participants were recruited through other participants who were involved in the research as well as word of mouth. The necessary criteria for this research was that participants were British men aged between 18-35 years who lived in London and perceived themselves to be 'Asian' (this included ethnicities such as Bengali, Indian and Pakistani). The researcher did not impose any restrictions on the basis of religion. Due to the need to verbally explore complex, emotional factors in the interview, there was a requirement that interviewees should speak English fluently.

The researcher aimed to recruit between 6 and 8 participants. Smith and Osborne (2003) state that for research utilising IPA 5 to 6 participants is a reasonable size, however, this is dependent on factors such as the richness of the data and the constraints under which the researcher is operating. The researcher ultimately recruited ten participants whose interviews have all been transcribed and utilised as a part of this research.

Through distributing the flyers and through snowballing, the researcher managed to recruit a total of ten participants. Eight participants were recruited through the use of flyers. Two participants were recruited through snowballing when one participant informed two of his friends about his experience of taking part in the interview and they subsequently decided to take part in the study. All of these ten participants met the inclusion criteria for the research and their data was all utilised in the final analysis. There seemed to be a low response rate to the flyers, as all of the individuals who responded were included. This may be because of the sensitive nature of the subject area and an uncertainty of what questions may have been asked in the interview. One recurring comment that came up in the interviews was that the participants were not sure about how valuable their input would be as they were not directly involved or direct victims of the London bombings. Such comments included “I was not on the train when the bombs went off so I’m not sure what to say”. In hindsight, perhaps the flyers could have detailed more specifically some of the areas that the interview may cover such as impact of the media and change in British society as a consequence of the bombings. Response to the project could also have been increased by advertising in the Asian media in London, through Asian radio stations, Asian magazines and Asian newspapers.

2.9: Procedure

Participants were recruited through the use of flyers (see Appendix A) that detailed the overall aim of the research, giving the researcher’s and supervisor’s contact details. Flyers were distributed in London near universities, colleges, community organisations, local shopping centres, and gyms.

Once ethical approval was granted (see Appendix M for the ethics release form), the researcher started distributing and emailing flyers in order to recruit participants. When potential participants contacted the researcher, either by email or by telephone, they were posted or emailed a letter of introduction (see Appendix B) and the research procedure and aims of the study were explained to them. If the participants agreed to take part in the research then they were asked to sign the consent form (Appendix C), consent to tape form (Appendix E) and the confidentiality form (Appendix D).

The researcher utilised IPA in order to analyse in detail the world of the participant. In keeping with the choice of methodology, a semi-structured interview was employed, which can be seen as a flexible data collection instrument (Smith and Osborne, 2003). According to Smith and Osborne, this type of interviewing allows initial questions to be modified as the participant and researcher engage in dialogue, so that the researcher can explore interesting and important area which may arise. Smith (1995) states that it is extremely important that the questions that are posed to the interviewee be non-directive and open ended (see Appendix H for a copy of the interview questions and Appendix I for the researcher's prompts).

The researcher arranged a mutually convenient time and place for the interviews to take place and the interviews lasted approximately 45 to 90 minutes. To ensure the safety of the researcher and the participant, interviews were conducted in a relatively public place, ranging from quiet coffee shops, a room booked at the researcher's university and the participants' places of work. On one occasion, an interview was conducted in the participants' home. The researcher ensured that when she was in the participant's home that she had safety measures in place as she made sure that one person knew her exact

whereabouts and she called this person when she arrived at the participants' home and when she left. All of the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder.

Deciding where to conduct the research was a dilemma that I faced throughout the research process as I was aware that I needed to feel safe, as well as ensuring that the participants felt safe and comfortable to talk about this sensitive topic. The meeting point was something that was discussed and negotiated with the participants and my research supervisor, who helped me to put safety plans and precautions into place when visiting interviewees in their homes. As it was both my first experience and the participant's first experience of being involved in a research interview, this highlighted to me the importance of participants feeling safe and contained (which I feel is where some of my counselling skills came into place, like talking about things at the participant's pace) and ensuring that boundaries around confidentiality and anonymity were in place.

Initially, the researcher piloted the interview with two potential interviewees in order to determine the comfort level of the participants taking part in the research and to ensure that the participants were not at risk of harm through taking part in the research (which is in accordance with the ethical principles of the British Psychological Society). The pilot studies provided feedback on the appropriateness of the flow, content, length and style of the interview. The feedback from these pilots was positive and participants did not feel that questions needed to be changed and hence alterations were not made to the interview schedule. Readers are referred to Appendices N and O for the feedback from the pilot interviews. The data from these interviews are included in the data analysis as the data was rich and the researcher felt that she had a responsibility to the participants

to make their experiences available to be heard, in line with IPA's stance (Larkin et al., 2006).

Before going into the first interview I felt nervous as this was my first real experience of conducting a research interview using qualitative methodology. I had a good response in the pilot studies with regard to the questions that I asked and the way that I asked them and I feel that I could go with the flow of the interviewee in the interview, which I enjoyed. From the feedback that I received, participants felt that they had enough time to think and answer questions at their own pace. I feel that my confidence grew after the initial interview and I feel that my counselling skills had helped me to be balanced in terms of being sensitive to the interviewee and probing for information. I found that I was active and engaged in the interviews as I felt that I needed to be alert and really listen to what the interviewee was sharing with me. This helped me to pursue new lines of enquiry from what the interviewees had said.

One thing that struck me in a majority of the interviews is that before starting the interview the participants did not feel that they would have much to say or talk about. This was because they did not feel that the London Bombings had affected them so much as they had not been a passenger on the train when the incident happened. However, all of the participants ended up talking for a considerable length of time. I feel that the interview helped the participants to make links in their own experience, indicating that an interview can be an intervention in itself as it can lead to a change within the person. It seemed to me at the time that the participants wanted the opportunity to let people know what it was like for them.

At the end of the interview, participants were given an opportunity to debrief (see Appendices F and G) and they were also given an information sheet of relevant services, should they require any professional support after the interview (see Appendix J for the information sheet).

I felt that a significant number of the participants were resistant to accepting the information sheet as they felt that there was “nothing wrong with them”, indicating the stigma they felt was associated with accessing counselling. Two of the participants felt that they would not be understood by a non-Asian person. This led me to question whether I would have gained the same insight and information from the men in these interviews if I was not Asian, reflecting upon my role within the research process. This highlighted the dilemma to me of what could be done to make psychological therapies more accessible to this group in society and what could be done to change perceptions around the role of Counselling Psychologists and the services that they can offer. I feel that this is a question that all Counselling Psychologists should be aware of and consider. I am still trying to find a solution to this dilemma myself. These issues will be explored further in the Discussion section.

The researcher also kept a research diary throughout the research process and utilised this diary after each interview to detail what happened during the interview and how the researcher felt the interview went. This also helped the researcher to make links throughout the research process. This is in line with IPA, which emphasises that the research process is dynamic and the researcher also plays an active role in this process (Smith and Osborne, 2003).

The audio tapes were locked away in a safe at the researcher's home and only the researcher had access to these. The tapes were transcribed utilising Microsoft Windows and the transcripts were saved onto a USB chip, which was also stored safely. The tapes will not be kept longer than is deemed necessary by the researcher.

2.10: Transcription

Transcriptions were done in the order that the interviews were conducted in and pseudonyms were utilised to identify participants. IPA does not require prosodic features of talk (speech rhythms) as is required by conversational analysis, but does require all the words spoken to be seen, including false start, pauses, laughs and features that are worth recording (Smith, 2003). Engagement with the text and a process of interpretation was then followed in accordance with the spirit of IPA, which was outlined in section 2.6 in this chapter. Excerpts of the material will be utilised in the analysis section of this research to illustrate themes.

I found the process of transcription very useful as it helped me to get in touch with the participants' feelings and also my own process, as I attended to my inner feelings as I listened to the transcripts. Although tedious at times, I enjoyed transcribing the interviews as I feel I got a deeper sense of understanding in relation to the participants' emotions, feelings and thoughts. This also made other aspects of the interview come alive for me and highlighted instances in the interview that I had not noticed whilst I was conducting the interview. This also helped me to start to formulate a list of themes as I listened to the similarities and differences within the participant's accounts. This process of transcribing the data also made me aware of the moral, social and ethical responsibilities that were upon me in terms of how I presented the data. I wanted to present the data accurately in a positive light, in a way that may encourage unity rather

than further divisions in society. I wanted to remain true to the data and offer a platform where the participants' voices could be heard. In doing so I also hoped that this may help to advance our knowledge around young Asian men's experience within the field of Counselling Psychology.

2.11: Thematic analysis

2.11.1: Themes

Transcripts were read and re-read several times, whilst I noted down interesting thoughts or observations that came to me in the left hand side margin. Emergent themes were then taken from these notes and what the participant had actually said, and written down in the right hand side margin. This was in an attempt to ensure that the developing themes were grounded in the data. Connections between the themes were made in a chronological fashion and once all the data from the transcripts had been checked several times then the data ordered into super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. The researcher wanted to highlight all of the important issues that emerged from each transcript by utilising an iterative process between text and analysis then repeating this process over all the transcripts to complete the analysis.

I enjoyed reading through all of the participant's interviews again and I feel that each time I read them, I picked up on something new. I was struck by the depth and insightfulness of the data and I began to develop a sense of deep admiration for my participants' through hearing about the experiences that they had decided to share with me. This brought up a mixture of emotions for me as it felt as if I was re-living the actual interview with the participants and was entering into their world again. I felt a deep sense of connectedness to my participants throughout the research process and the development of the themes. I also found the process of developing themes daunting as I

was faced with so much data and I was often left wondering which quotes to use. I felt that a lot was also lost in developing and illustrating the themes as there was no way that I would be able to illustrate the nuances, subtleties and depth of each individual within the framework of this study. This led me to wonder if ten participants was too great a number for an IPA study. Nonetheless, I did find this process exciting and rewarding as I could see the interviews coming together and I consolidated the connections between the transcripts in my mind. I am pleased that the readers will get the opportunity to hear some of the participants' direct quotes and I hope that this will enable them to see how I developed my interpretations of the themes.

2.11.2: Analysis

In line with this methodological approach, transcripts were cautiously read through several times. Themes were then built by re-reading through each transcript and the highlighted data and conducting a more psychological analysis of the data. These themes were then noted down separately and were utilised to construct a list of superordinate themes. Themes were grouped according to prominent connections and data from within the transcripts was then used to support each theme. Subsequent interviews then either built on these themes or were changed through an iterative process of analysis which highlighted differences as well as the common themes that emerged (Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001).

Here is a paper trail of the account:

- The first interview was utilised to develop a list of all the themes that the researcher had identified.
- This list was then divided into super-ordinate themes. The headings of the super-ordinate themes utilised descriptive words which captured the essence of what participants were saying in their accounts as closely as possible. The super-

ordinate themes were also representative of the sub-ordinate themes that clustered underneath them.

- This process was then repeated for each transcript and new themes were added after each of the transcripts were analysed.
- A list was constructed to record all of the developing themes and themes from each transcript were added to this list. Where necessary new super-ordinate themes were developed when new themes were discovered.
- Line numbers were utilised to connect the themes with the descriptive narratives that were used by the participants in their transcripts. This made it easier for the researcher to monitor how the themes had been developed.
- The researcher analysed one transcript at a time and then the data was re-analysed across all of the interviews.
- After this analysis, only the themes that had enough evidence to support them from all of the interviews were included in the final analysis. Themes which overlapped were collapsed. This process also helped to highlight the similarities and differences in participants' accounts across all of the themes.
- A review and re-organisation of the super-ordinate themes was also undertaken after the researcher considered how these fit with each other. Where super-ordinate themes overlapped, they were also collapsed.
- A final list of the super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes was developed once the researcher was satisfied that the themes were grounded in and representative of the data.

I found the process of trying to find titles for the super-ordinate themes that would reflect the breadth and depth of the participants' accounts under each theme quite difficult and time consuming. For me, the process of analysing the themes was a long

process as I was very mindful of wanting to portray the participants' comments and voices accurately but also in a positive light. I was also quite protective of the data and felt that I wanted to portray it all to the readers, which is obviously not a feasible task for a study of this magnitude. I found choosing quotes difficult too and had questions around which quotes would be the best ones to use and how long the quotes should be. I struggled with the lengths of the quotes as I wanted the reader to see what I had heard, but inevitably they will only see a snippet. I was very aware that I wanted my interpretations to be grounded in the data and having my themes reviewed by my supervisor and professional peers helped me to distance myself from the data, be open to new interpretations and view the transcripts and themes with fresh eyes. I am aware, however, that this is my interpretation of the transcripts and another researcher who analyses the data may have other interpretations and themes to offer.

2.12: Improving the validity of the data

The researcher utilised a number of measures in order to validate the themes. Firstly she had regular meetings with her research supervisor and peers (DPsych counselling psychology research students) in order to check through and review the themes that were emerging from the data. As a result of this some themes were disregarded if they were not grounded in the research participants' data. The researcher also changed the names of some of the super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes as a result, so that they encapsulated more of the data.

As also mentioned in section 2.9, the researcher utilised pilot interviews with two participants in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the questions asked. The feedback from these pilots was positive and so the researcher discussed this with her research supervisor. It was felt that changes did not need to be made to the interview

schedule as a result, as the researcher felt that, due to the flexibility of the interview schedule, she would be able to adapt the interview schedule to the answers that the participants gave.

2.12.1: constant comparison and deviant case analysis

When transcripts had been coded, this data was compared by moving from the singular case onto other cases. This enabled emerging themes to be compared for deviations. This process was repeated again when new cases were added. Going over transcripts this way helped to identify deviant cases and ensures that analysis is thorough and themes are grounded in the data (Silverman, 2000; Willig, 2001).

2.12.2: Paper trail

The researcher kept a paper trail of all the data that was utilised in the building of codes, themes and superordinate themes as well as a field diary of the research process at various stages in order to track developments in the research as well as allowing for further reflexivity. This is in accordance with good practice in qualitative research (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Willig, 2001).

2.12.3: Triangulation

Smith (1996) states that the essential rationale for triangulation is that if a number of different methods or sources of information are utilised to tackle a question then the resulting answer is more likely to be accurate. In line with this, Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindell (1995) state that investigator triangulation is one way of enriching the data and interpretations that arise from the data, as by using more than one researcher, a multiple number of viewpoints are employed when analysing the data. In line with this, the themes from this research were reviewed by my supervisor and other

professionals on my Counselling Psychology course in order to validate the findings and for the purpose of triangulation (Ritchie and Lewis, 2004). This was utilised to process, sort and select themes to utilise in the final analysis and also to make sure that the themes were grounded in the data. Some of the themes were dropped or collapsed as a result.

As a means of further triangulating my data, I presented a poster on my research at the British Psychological Society's Annual conference (June 2008) which was run in conjunction with the Division of Counselling Psychology. I feel that this helped me to add to the rigour of my IPA research as the poster session aided me in getting feedback from professional colleagues (mainly Counselling Psychologists) and gain alternative perspectives on my data. I feel this adds to the validity of my data.

I feel it is important to highlight this event and my associated thoughts, feelings and experiences of the event as it has influenced my subsequent analysis of the data. This has helped me to shape my conceptualisation and framing of the data. What follows is my account of the conference.

I felt very nervous putting my poster up and watching people's reactions. At times I felt as if I couldn't actually watch. It felt quite exposing leaving my research on display for everyone to look at. This was perhaps due to some of the very personal nature of some of the accounts as they portrayed my thoughts and feelings, whereas a majority of the other posters that were on display were quantitative in nature and so, to me, it felt as if the researchers were not baring as much of their soul. I wondered if this is how my interviewees felt when talking to me. Or perhaps it was something to bear in mind when writing up my results section and putting some of the transcripts in. I was quite

concerned about how 'outsiders' (those not directly involved in the research process and possibly non-Asians) would view my research and what they would think of my topic area. Would they understand why I was researching this area and topic? Would they really care about Asian men's voices being heard? It also perhaps felt exposing and made me nervous as it feels like a sensitive topic, which seems to be out of the box of convention, in relation to some of the other poster topics which seemed to focus on topics that were overtly and explicitly related to the field of counselling psychology. Topics such as the impact of cognitive behavioural therapy, body image and the impact of the ending of therapy sessions. My topic seemed to be slightly more abstract and I wondered if people would truly 'get it'. I wondered if the topic was an intimidating one as it was sensitive. I also wondered if individuals were intimidated by me, as a young, British Asian female. I was very aware of how I presented myself, if I stood next to my poster, whether to strike up conversations with individuals looking at my poster or whether to allow them the space to explore it at their own free will and make myself available for the questions that they may have, whether to stand next to my poster, away from my poster or to sit down. I could feel my mind boggling with numerous questions as I almost over-analysed the current environment that I was put into. An unfamiliar environment.

However, my research was met with openness and interest which further made me believe that my research was worthwhile and people did seem to 'get it'. I was struck by the respect that I received for choosing such a 'brave' topic. For me, however, I didn't feel that the topic was necessarily brave, I felt it was important to give young Asian men some kind of platform and voice. I wondered if I found this easier to do as I was young and Asian so was on some kind of familiar territory with my participants. There were a couple of conversations that truly stuck with me. The first conversation was with a

White, Irish male, probably in his 40's. He also felt that it was a 'brave topic' and he mentioned that, for him, the experience of young Asian men in London at the moment, paralleled the experience of Irish men in London when the IRA were involved in terrorist bombings during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. However, he also highlighted a key difference in these experiences as he mentioned that he was in London during this time, but seemed to have a relatively positive experience as he felt that the only time that he was differentiated from the rest of society was when he spoke and his Irish accent was apparent. He felt that the situation in London was worse for Asian men as they are immediately noticeable due to their 'facial characteristics' so are faced with a more hostile environment. This paralleled my thoughts of Asian men being pushed to the fore of society almost overnight and I wondered how this would have affected their developing sense of self and identity.

Another interesting conversation that I had was with a Caribbean female, probable aged in her 30's. She mentioned that she was born in the UK and had lived here until 5 years ago. She was now living in Jamaica and was at the conference as a visiting lecturer. In her eyes, she felt that east London had changed since she had moved. She had noticed that the environment seemed more hostile and that there were more CCTV cameras in the streets. She had also noticed that there seemed to be a lot more Asian youth hanging out in groups, which she felt was a way that young Asian men may get a perceived sense of safety through the identification with similar others and displaying a shared sense of solidarity. She likened this to her sense around young African Caribbean men's experience over the past few decades and she felt that 'brown is the new black', as Asian men seemed to be experiencing similar struggles to those that African-Caribbean men had been through before them. This raised important questions

for me in terms of the changing identity of young Asian men and the perception of young Asian men within the British society.

I feel that these conversations help to illustrate that these professionals, although from differing backgrounds to me and from each other, have a similar perspective on this topic and can also see the benefit in investigating this research area. For me, this helped to further solidify my research in terms of its potential worth.

2.12.4: Transparency

In line with good qualitative research (Smith, 2003), the researcher has presented all of the steps that she has gone through in the analysis process and has reflected on her process throughout various stages of the research, in order for the reader to be able to follow the process from beginning to end.

2.13: Ethical considerations

Before conducting the research, ethical approval was gained from City University, London which is the institution where the researcher is based (Punch, 2005). The researcher adhered to the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Terrorism Act (2000) at all times and the researcher's practice was in accordance with the ethical and good practice guidelines of the British Psychological Society.

2.13.1: The use of Data and Transcriptions

Pseudonyms were utilised to identify individual participants and any identifying details were changed in the transcripts, in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. All the audio tapes and transcripts were kept locked away and only the researcher had

access to this material. On the first hearing of the audio material any identifying or personal information was erased immediately.

Before consent was given, participants were notified that quotes taken from the transcripts may be utilised in future publications, with the omission of any personal or identifying details. They were asked to indicate their agreement to this on the consent form, if they wished to take part.

2.13.2: Consent

Participants were given an information sheet containing information about the research and what they would be expected to do at least one week before the research interview was scheduled. Each of the points on the consent form were discussed with the participant before they signed it. The aims of the research were fully explained to the participant to avoid deception, including why and how they had been chosen to take part in the study. Written consent was gained from the client in order for the researcher to tape the sessions. Participants were informed that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent at any time and did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to, that the audio tapes would not be kept longer than was deemed necessary by the researcher and that the research was in line with the BPS code of ethics. Participants were also informed about the circumstances under which confidentiality could be broken, before they gave their consent. The participants were invited to contact the researcher or the researcher's supervisor if they had any queries or concerns.

2.13.3: Managing Distress

Participants were given the option to stop the interview at any time, without the risk of any adverse consequences) and they were also informed that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to. There was also time for verbal and written debriefing at the end of the interview, however there was some flexibility around the timing of this debrief in case participants became distressed during the interview. The researcher gave the participant an information sheet at the end of the interview of counselling services that the client could access if anything in the interview process had affected them.

ANALYSIS OF THE THEMES IDENTIFIED

This chapter will highlight the development of the super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. This will ensure that there is transparency in the data and that the reader would be able to replicate the analysis if they wished. Each of the super-ordinate themes and the sub-ordinate themes that cluster beneath them will be discussed in turn. Quotes from the participants will be utilised to ground the themes in the data from the interviews and illustrate how the super-ordinate themes and sub-ordinate themes were created. Readers are referred to Table 1 (page 265), which outlines the demographic information of each participant. This is in an attempt to situate and contextualise the sample and to determine the relevance and applicability of the findings (Elliot et al., 1999; Willig, 2001).

The analysis of the data led to the development of eleven super-ordinate themes:

- i) Initial reactions to the bombings
- ii) Reflecting upon societal impact
- iii) Perceptions within British society
- iv) Participants' feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings
- v) Fear/Threat
- vi) Other key emotions
- vii) The media
- viii) Connections, links, associations
- ix) Dimensions that influence identity / sense of self
- x) Ways of coping
- xi) Making new meaning of one's existence

The development, description and illustrations of each of these themes and the subordinate themes that define them will now be discussed in turn. The theoretical implications for each of these themes will be explored further in the Discussion section (See chapter 4).

Super-ordinate theme 1: Initial reactions to the bombings

This super-ordinate theme highlights the significance of the participants' initial experiences in the aftermath of the bombings and the various components that influenced their initial reactions. Two sub-ordinate themes follow, which each explore some dimension of the participants' initial recollection of the event.

These recollections portray the participants' immediate responses when asked about the bombings. It seems that it is this first recollection which has influenced participants' experiences, emotional reactions and ways of coping in the aftermath of 7/7. Therefore, it seemed important to examine this theme first before exploring the many layers that may underpin participants' experience of the bombings, but may have been initially hidden from their conscious processing.

Theme 1.1: Vivid memory of the bombings

When the participants were asked how they felt when they first heard about the bombings, they all seemed to recall the day of the London Bombings easily and freely. Their descriptions were often comprehensive and vivid as they recalled where they were at the time that they found out about the events and how they were thinking and feeling.

Sajid commented:

“I was very shocked, very shocked to hear, especially as I was meant to be on the train near Ealing Road. My sister had actually just returned from holiday that morning, I think very early in the morning, about 6/7 and I picked her up and she was very ill so instead of going to, to university that day I went to, I took her to hospital... I came home and found out that the bombings and stuff so it was very very alarming to hear that, I think, uh, I think I considered myself very lucky that I wasn't on that train.” Sajid, line 45.

Mustafa reported:

“I wasn't feeling too well so I didn't go into work that day, and I started getting text messages from my friends saying are you alright?...there's been these massive explosions and everyone at that time everyone was thinking gas mains it's electrical explosions and no-one's thinking terrorist attack and but you know we live in a 24 hour news society so TV goes on what's going on in London, and I realised that was my tube line, I went to Edgware Road every morning so I was thinking, damn that's close!...” Mustafa, line 76.

The excerpts also highlight the importance of the participants' sense of familiarity with the places where the bombs took place, the mode of transport and the potential threat to themselves. This seemed to be instrumental in contributing to the long-lasting impact of their memories of the bombings. This is exemplified in the following excerpt from Sumit:

“I remember the day quite vividly, uh...I remember being at home and, uh, and when I heard the news reports, realising that actually that the stations that were

involved um, or rather the area that was involved, was where I would routinely go, where I would routinely go for work, I would routinely go for my previous university and, um, in fact the time it would have, the time it happened was when I would have typically, um, been there so although I was at home and although I didn't go to those areas anymore, because I'd finished with that university, um, I was it was quite close to home..." Sumit, Line 50.

Theme 1.2: Shock versus relief

The participants also seemed to experience a range of emotions in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, including shock, relief, anxiety and feeling under threat.

Deepak's account indicates that it was the scale of the impact and the potential threat that were most salient to him:

"I think I was very shocked, it took a while for it to hit me. I had to listen to the news a couple of times to sort of realise that it was happening. It wasn't something that you would obviously see everyday or nothing. Yeah, it was a big shock because obviously its something that you're not expecting to hear or to see throughout the day cause you're normally always hearing about killings, or shootings or something like that, not something that's public and related to a bomb..." Deepak, line 43.

This is also mirrored in Anish's account:

"Yeah it was very shocking. A major shock, um, I've never seen it before so something of this nature was quite devastating..." Anish, line 64.

Amar talks about his sense of shock and the accompanying anxiety that he felt:

“I was shocked. Surprised. Um, yep, those were the main two things, shocked and surprised when I heard it over the radio. I was at work at the time when it happened so there was a problem with me getting home as well. Yeah I was more worried about how to get home , yeah that actually affected me...” Amar, line 49

This intense sense of initial shock was contrasted with participants feeling a sense of relief as they were not directly involved in the attacks. Sajid recalled:

“I was very shocked, very shocked to hear about it, especially as I was meant to be on that train...I think I considered myself very lucky that I was not on that train...”
Sajid, line 87.

This sense of relief was also reflected in Sumit’s account when he realised that he was safe from a sense of threat:

“It was shock and relief. Shocked because, um, we’re on alert mode now. Um, relief because as close to the situation as I could have been, I was actually in the comfort of my home and away from the danger...” Sumit, line 89.

For Arun, a sense of shock and being under threat translated into an anxiety for the future and concern about the safety of his loved ones:

“ Um, yeah I just felt, family and stuff, I just thought of friends and family who were in London at the time and I thought, what if they have been affected or hurt by the bombings? My initial concern, just concern for people I knew...” Arun, line 101.

Therefore, the participants' accounts indicate that they experienced sense of shock in relation to the unexpectedness and the scale of the attack and this shock was also accompanied by anxiety for the safety of their loved ones. They participants also felt relief as they were safe on the day and were not directly involved in the attacks.

One of the conflicting points in the participants' accounts revolved around their expectations. They felt intensely shocked to hear that the bombings had taken place and, at the same time, they had a sense of expecting a terrorist attack in London as this seemed inevitable due to the political climate at that time.

Jagpreet commented:

“I was at work, I clearly remember the day and where I was, I was sitting at the desk, laptop was on and then, I can't remember if there was an email, I think it was the guardian said there's been something going on on the tubes, some bomb or something, I didn't really believe it the first time I heard, well actually in the back of your mind, after, in the back of your mind actually before it happens, you always think there's something, something's going to happen sooner or later, this is before the bombings you know, everyone knows, I think everyone in their back of their minds knew something was going to happen in Britain because of 9/11 without a doubt...um, when it happened it was,, I don't know, numbness I guess, just numbness, it wasn't it was, there was n shock, no shock at all the only shock was

that, one of the only shocking things was that the bus being hit the tubes, I had assumed that the tubes were definitely a target ...” Jagpreet, line 204.

Mustafa also highlighted this sense of inescapability of a terrorist attack in London:

“Where the impact is, is the fact that it happened in your own city and you, you’d never think it would have happened in the way it happened but it was a certain inevitability that Britain would at some point have some sort of attack. I think it was the fact it was home-grown, that’s what shocked people the most.” Mustafa, line 105.

The comments indicate that, even though the political climate of London at the time suggested that there was a threat of terrorism, the method utilised by the bombers, the perceived sense of familiarity with the areas where the attacks took place and the bombers being British were all shocking aspects of the attacks.

Super-ordinate theme 2: Reflecting upon societal impact

Participants relayed many thoughts and feelings about the way that British society and their world around them had changed as a result of the London Bombings. Three subordinate themes emerged, each exploring some dimension of this change.

Theme 2.1: Change in the perception of the world

This theme highlights participants’ sense that Britain as a society has changed as a result of the bombings. This was mainly linked to a sense of threat being present in society that was affecting their perception of safety and creating feelings of fear. The

fear of terrorism was particularly evident in Sajid's comments and his accompanying anxiety is expressed through a concern for the level of safety in London and the world:

“ I'm angry about the peaces being disturbed. I remember when my parents first came to this country to escape from Africa it was a place where London was so safe that you could leave your door open, you know, and you could walk over to school and everything was fine but now, it's like, not even just about terrorism but the general safety level, a lot, there's a lot more angry people in society...so the world is becoming a much more dangerous place, yeah there's a threat of terrorism...terrorism is one of the inputs because it's society that's making it particularly prevalent. I think, I think everybody felt something inside of them, you know, when those attacks happened, you know, because you hear about it happening in America, you hear about it happening in Afghanistan, in civil wars in different countries and you think that London is still safe and all of a sudden your world came crashing down so I think that was something that drastically changed people's minds...and people are thinking well if it can happen in London it can happen in France, it can happen here, it happened in Madrid, so, really it's, it's like where is safe? What's going to happen next? It's very unpredictable...” Sajid, line 205.

Jagpreet expressed his feelings that this fear in society had become an inescapable and universal issue and that it had been accepted as a part of living in a modern day Britain:

“Everyone from White, Black, yellow, whatever is more cautious, careful ... proper scared than they were before, especially living in the major cities, if you live out in the sticks somewhere I don't know, like Gloucestershire or something like that, you,

you think you'd be alright, but places like London, Manchester, Birmingham, people are more cautious in a way of heir surroundings... ” Jagpreet, line 285.

It seems as if London in particular is seen as being under more of a threat, in comparison to the rest of Britain. Hence, it may be perceived that Londoners are living in a heightened sense of fear which has become a natural part of life. However, Amar felt that alongside this fear, there was a sense of Londoners being more tolerant in general. He linked this to there being a large population of Asians within London which suggested that Londoners were somehow more exposed to and used to interacting with Asians on a regular basis. Hence, familiarity on another level also seems to play a key role in Amar's experience in the aftermath of 7/7 and how he felt that he was perceived. It seems as if the large presence of Asians in London enabled Amar to feel a sense of security. He commented:

“In London, because there's more of a diverse mix, there's maybe more, uh, understanding of different cultures, the fear was still there and I think they're still fearful but there is more understanding within London because people have seen, uh, for want for a better word, brown people, you cant go anywhere without seeing us, you know, so we're quite a dominant part of society...” Amar, line 132.

In opposition to this perceived security, Ahmed seemed to be struggling to comprehend this heightened sense of threat in society and this had appeared to change his whole perception of the world from a safe place to an unsafe place. This was fuelled by him living near an airport and the sense that he was living in a constant state of fear as his house could be a potential threat for terrorism. So for him, this was a very real sense of fear and danger from which he felt he had no escape. Moreover, his sense of threat and

subsequent change in his beliefs were not just limited to London, he perceived there to be a global threat:

“It’s quite, um, scary, but I mean now, especially where we live, and the world we live in, it’s, it’s crazy, war and stuff going on it’s just crazy, absolutely crazy, the whole world has gone mad...” Ahmed, line 107.

As the participants felt that London had gone from being a relatively safe to an unsafe place, this also led them to feel that the world in general was also an unsafe place.

Alongside participants feeling under threat, their sense that Londoners may be more tolerant of Asians helped them to feel safer. I feel that this was linked in with participants being conscious of the perceptions of others and having a fear of being viewed negatively by society, which had consequences for their everyday interactions.

Theme 2.2: Consequences for everyday interactions

From the participants’ accounts it became apparent that the changes that they perceived in society, largely due to a heightened sense of fear, were impacting their everyday life in a variety of ways. Arun felt that there was a negative attitude towards Muslims in British society which also had an impact on non-Muslims:

“I think, just the level of fear in people, um, and um, just the, I don’t know if you can call it hatred towards Muslims but just, there’s just more attention towards Muslims nowadays, Muslims are highlighted, when 90% of them are probably innocent, it’s just, that can be a big problem cause anybody can be mistaken for a Muslim...”

Arun, line 167.

It seems as if the prospect of being identified as a Muslim was posing a threat to Arun and putting him in a state of fear. This sense of innocent Muslims and Asians being targeted by the UK community was also mirrored in Deepak's account:

“Knowing that the London Bombings were carried out by Muslims, you know, I think they're probably going to end up pointing out a lot of Muslims, a lot of Muslim boys anyway, and Muslim boys will be targeted by a lot of people who are from here... I mean I to to be honest with you, I guess a lot of people who are not, who are not Asians...” Deepak, line 221.

Deepak thus saw young Muslim boys and Asians in general being a potential target of negativity from non-Asians, highlighting a sense of fear around how he may be perceived by others. Ahmed's comments indicate that Asians, through being perceived as Muslim in the first instance, go through similar experiences regardless of religion. He also felt that there has been a shift in the perception of Islam from a neutral to a negative stance within British Society:

“Even Sikh people are getting mistaken for Muslim, so yeah, that's bang out of order... so everyone is seen as the same, I'd probably say people probably thought that all Muslims are the same, I mean, it's crazy cause I don't think people, before this happened, I don't think they particularly thought Islam was like this, but all this happened a lot of views changed for a lot of people, so you know people thought that yeah, you know, they're all bad...” Ahmed, line 264.

Jagpreet also felt that the impact of the bombings has affected all Asians in general. He explored how a shared race with the bombers had created negative perceptions of

Asians in general and led to a loss of rapport between Asians and non-Asians within the British society. It seems as if he was experiencing unspoken feelings of loss, fear and anger in relation to this. He also explored a sense of ignorance in society as he felt that all Asians were likely to be perceived as being the same, regardless of the distinctions between Asians:

“the initial reaction was numb as I how can this be happening, but slowly after a couple of days later you get to the realisation that this aint going to only affect Muslims, this is going to affect all of us. So it’s not just the people with long beards and uh short hair and stuff like that and it’s going to be actual Sikh people and everything. The general White man doesn’t know the difference between a turban and, um, probably see we know the difference. But you get, you start thinking of what if, because of one of the terrorists, someone is walking down the road and someone kicks up a fuss of what’s happening and takes it out on them? I don’t know if it’s, maybe possibly a bit of anger or yeah, just sort of over the last 40 years Indians themselves have come over to this country and built themselves up and I know it was hard work for people and it takes one incident like this which knocks that all down, positivity surrounded the next generations, but a couple of bombs go off and not only do innocent people die, but all the rapport that we built up, that our parents built up, gone. Yeah, we’re getting painted with the same brush as other people when we’re a completely different race but apparently we have the same values...” Jagpreet, line 243.

Mandeep took this fear a step further and explored the fear that other people in society felt which he had linked to his actual experiences in the aftermath of 7/7 which were linked to him being perceived as a Muslim, viewed negatively with suspicion and being

covertly discriminated against by non-Asians. This theme was also mirrored in other participants' accounts:

“You know it was, it was kind of daunting being an Asian person on the train because people were looking at me with suspicion, um you know even though your not doing anything, you're just kind of, you know, using the train same as everyone else. I think being Asian had a definite impact on the way people viewed me. I remember like going on the train, uh, the next day and um, I was with a group of friends and we got on the train and um, literally, within two stops the carriage cleared, um, everyone I think got really scared because we had bags and stuff on us, we had rucksacks and so forth you know everyone just kind of looked at us and yeah, by, they just started clearing the carriage. I mean, I find that mainly Caucasians look at me and and a lot of the times are quite intimidated um, you know when I'm, you know, I'm just a normal passenger on the train, like anyone else, but, they seem, you know, they look at me with suspicion, I feel that they're looking at me with suspicion...” Mandeep, line 384.

This sense of being targeted had led Mandeep to feel segregated and excluded from British society, as if he does not belong. He speaks of others' perceptions of him, particularly in relation to his 'Britishness':

“People are going to view me as Asian first and foremost rather than view me as British, or as English or, you know, even though I hold a British passport, they're never going to accept me as being a British person or they're going to accept me less...” Mandeep, line 427.

Theme 2.3: Divisions within society on the basis of race and religion

The participants felt that there had been divisions created in society as a result of the bombings on two levels; on the basis of race and on the basis of religion. Firstly there appeared to be divisions between Asians and non-Asians, mainly on the basis of race.

This is illustrated by Ahmed's statement:

“Whereas London used to be very cosmopolitan, suddenly people's views have changed, even in the big cities where people have grown up with Asians and been in the same classrooms and workplaces, now, because of these bombings, Asians are looked at differently, so ignorance is not just in one place it's everywhere, but I think it's down to the individual to kind of judge for themselves really. I mean, there was a time you'd see people of different ethnicities socialising together, but nowadays it's rarer to see people of mixed ethnicities going out and having a good time and it's always like, oh Asian people stick together and White people stick together and African-Caribbean people stick together and, um, you know, it's sad, it's sad that it's caused so much division in our society...” Ahmed, line 398.

Mandeep's statement expresses his sense that Asians are being isolated from wider British society:

“I mean the the (sigh), the industry I work in is predominately run by Asian people so I don't face prejudice everyday but I face, because the industry I work in is Asian run, we've been totally cut off from certain aspects of the industry, um, and people don't want to know about some of the work I'm doing because it has that Asian stigma attached to it. Uh, you know, cause basically, yeah the impact the whole, the whole London bombings has had is kind of put Asian people in that negative light

and it's, uh, again it's caused divisions and it's more like them and us now. I think Asians have been pushed into a corner a bit more and told to stay in that corner and it's like, across this barrier is Asian-ness and across this barrier is British and you cannot, we don't want you on this side, you know, but likewise I think a lot of Asian people are turning round and saying, actually we don't really care about being British now, we're Asian, and we're proud of being Asian and we're going to stick to being Asian, and stick to being, or British Asian in fact, but we really, we're not bothered if you don't accept us anymore, um, because we're still here and we're going to stay here and we'll work within our own community. It's divided, like I said, you know, a lot of, a lot of people don't want to be associated with being Asian because, it the, you know, the way it's being portrayed, it's they're looked at in a certain way but, you know, there's on the street there's no hiding the fact that you're Asian because a person will just look at your appearance..." Mandeep, line 786.

Mandeep shows feelings of defiance and rebellion against being British and also highlights a newfound sense of identity more closely linked with his Asian roots.

Mustafa takes this a step further and voices his anger around the government's actions. Hence, it seems as if Asians are perceived to be excluded from society on a number of different levels. His statement also has an underlying sense of empathy towards the bombers and other Asian men who he feels are being excluded from mainstream society. It seems as if he is processing the event in order to try and make sense of it:

"What's been shocking is the government's approach, the government have become more hard lined and not realised that by doing that you exclude more people, more

people feel excluded and you alienate people, whereas what you're supposed to be trying to be doing at this point, include them and try and find out why these guys were so disenfranchised that they did something so dramatic..." Mustafa, line 642.

Secondly, in addition to divisions within British society on the basis of race, there seem to be divisions within Asians created mainly on the basis of religion. This would appear to fuel the divide in society between Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, Amar commented:

"Basically this stereotyped the whole population, you know as far as I'm concerned because of a few individuals, the whole faith, culture, everyone got blamed pretty much, they created a lot of animosity between the different races as well, you know, um, that's like, people like myself, people like my friends who wear turbans and stuff, we, we tried to distinguish ourselves, so in, in a way we, uh, we, uh were also separating ourselves from the Muslims, we're, we're not all Asians, we're Sikh, we're Indian, we're Hindu..." Amar, line 407.

From the transcripts, it seemed that it was the non-Muslim men who seemed to draw this distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims, hence creating a religious divide between Asians. On the other hand, the Muslim participants seemed to voice a sense of connectedness and perceived similarity to other Asians regardless of their religion and seemed to draw some comfort from this connectedness. This will be explored further when discussing super-ordinate theme 3.

Super-ordinate theme 3: Perceptions within British society

Participants portrayed a sense that society's perception of them has changed as a result of the bombings and the accompanying societal changes. Within the following themes, participants' experiences of societal perceptions and attitudes towards Asians and Muslims are highlighted and the impact on the participants is explored.

Theme 3.1: Societal perceptions of Asians and Muslims

The general consensus between the participants was that a negative view of Asians has been created in society. This view seems to be fuelled by a negative view of Muslims and is based on the assumption that brown skin = Muslim = terrorist. Hence, it seems that being Asian, in general, and Muslim, in particular, is associated with a sense of fear and threat.

Arun comments:

“Anyone that's brown can be Muslim, and anyone in Western Society I'd call it will be worried about Muslims and the threat...” Arun, line 372.

Sumit's account also mirrors this:

“I think generally, there was negative stereotypes being associated with Muslims and Asians, I mean, I think it was pretty much, the media were saying Asians and Muslims are pretty much the same word, stereotyping everybody together, basically everyone with a brown face was a terrorist...” Sumit, line 643.

Similarly Jagpreet commented:

“The general White man does not know the difference between say Muslims and Indians and Hindus or whatever you want to say, if you’re brown, you’re an extremist...” Jagpreet, line 382.

This sense of threat is explored further in Deepak’s account. He identifies how this fear may translate in interactions with Asian men and the scrutiny that Asian men may feel constantly under:

“To be honest with you, I think a lot of people probably look at them [Muslims] twice now, I think they’d look at them and then look at them again and think hang on, this is the sort of person that committed a terrorist act, you know, they’ll probably look at what he’s wearing, you know, just look at him in a more negative way, what does he look like, what has he got near him, a backpack, a briefcase...”

Deepak, line 329.

Therefore, it appears that Asian men in general and Muslim men in particular have come to represent fear within British society and the participants felt that they were viewed negatively in light of this change in the perception of ‘brown skin’ within British society.

Theme 3.2: Feeling dismissed by non-Asians

There was a sense that non-Asians would not seem to be able to comprehend what it was like to be a young Asian man living in London, creating a sense of Asian men being separated and alienated from the rest of society. The fear of others’ negative perceptions seemed to be driving a sense of anxiety. This led them to be very aware of how they presented themselves in their everyday interactions and also, at times, to

consciously change their behaviour. Participants were much more aware of their environment and of the possibility of being judged by others. Sumit's following quote seems to encompass this. In this context, he has just finished watching a film about 9/11 with his White girlfriend and her family. He was in Ireland and due to take a plane back to London the following day:

“I was the only Asian or person of colour watching this film and was feeling a similar sense to the tube scenario thinking, God this looks really bad, um, and I was actually unshaven, and I wasn't concerned about not being shaven in front of my girlfriend and her family, but getting on the flight the following day, I was like I cant get on the flight unless I've properly shaved, so in that circumstance I was very conscious having watched that movie and have it really hit home to me how I can be perceived when I go through the airport, um that was you know. And everyone was like don't be silly, her family was like don't be silly. In the end I had a shave in order for me not to feel like I was in any way more susceptible to being stopped or being considered, you know, a potential threat.”

His account highlights that his feelings around being judged in a negative way and sensitivities to being Asian in that context were not understood by the non-Asians that he was with. This theme was also mirrored in the other participants' accounts.

Theme 3.3: Personal experiences in British society

All of the participants described personal experiences in the aftermath of 7/7 where they felt that they had been judged negatively by others. These incidents were often covert and could not be described as overt discrimination or prejudice. At times, it was just a

felt sense and they could not be certain if they had been the victim of discrimination.

For example, Arun mentioned:

“I’ve experienced, quite a bit of, I wouldn’t call it direct racism but, um, prejudiced against the fact that I’m brown and because I’m brown I could be a Muslim, an Indian of some type or anything from the Middle East to Asia and it’s struck fear in a lot of people who are White in this country. Um, even though I don’t have a religion people now are making judgements, because of colour I believe, instantly believing everyone is a Muslim and is a threat and, like I can give you one example, when I was on the train with some of my fellow band members we, got into a carriage and it was the whole train was actually really busy and, I don’t know if this was, obviously there’s no way of me proving this, but literally as soon as we sat down a lot of the people actually moved away from us, we had a lot of bags on us cause we were going to a gig and naturally there was a lot of fear and there was another situation on the train where I had a bag on me and, um, I literally got up and must have taken literally two footsteps away from my bag to go and show someone, a friend of mine, an article in the newspaper and, um, a guy freaked out and actually thought, well he actually, he goes excuse me sir is that your bag? Do you not think it’s irresponsible of you to leave your bag there? Accusing me of something which I haven’t even done, it’s not even an accusation, it’s just, I felt that this would have never have happened if the London Bombings didn’t happen...”

Arun, line 538.

Sumit, made a connection to his past experiences of prejudice, illustrating how these subtle forms of discrimination can form the basis for the re-experiencing of past traumas and resurfacing of subconscious thoughts and feelings.

“Well I was a victim of direct racism when I was younger and that was a very scary experience...so I guess my sensitivities to being under attack have been heightened and my sensitivities to feeling, to feeling the colour of my skin even, it’s almost like it’s been engrained from the way that I’ve been brought up, um, that it’s on automatic processing, whereas some of my White friends have told me that the colour of their skin is not something that they really think about...” Sumit, line 429.

Participants suggested that prejudice towards them was most likely to be displayed by individuals who have less contact with Asian people and those who are unaware of the differences between Asians. Some associated education levels with ignorance and negative assumptions about Muslims and Asians. This is illustrated in the following quote by Anish:

“Well, I think in some ways the education levels of people in society and those who are not educated are just going to view me as a Muslim person and probably pick a fight with me or something like that..” Anish, line 210.

Similarly, Mandeep notes:

“I was in the BNP capital of London on the set of a video shoot and a lot of White kids from the council estate started shouting, um, you know, White power, pakis go home and this kind of stuff to us and you know it was quite frightening and uh, we had to resort to calling the police actually because we thought they might attack us you know, so there is ignorance, definitely, you know the reason, I mean, just them shouting paki go home and none of us are Pakistani! You know that just shows how

ignorant people are. They're not going to shout Indians go home or brown people go home, they'll just shout Paki, you know, because they see you as a brown person and they automatically assume you're a Paki or Pakistani or whatever it is, you know, it's a derogatory term these days so. The media is a big, you know, a big, uh, source of kind of people's views because, apart from the big cities and the big towns, there's no Muslim people or Asian people in most parts of the UK, so, obviously London's a bit more of a cosmopolitan place and, you know, society is a bit more integrated, I go to places where there's not many Asian people sometimes and they look at me and start, they look at me with suspicion straight away because the only message they're getting from the media is that, oh, you know, look at look at these brown people, these Asian people, these Islamic people they they've come here and they've bombed our country, so automatically I would be looked at a certain way... ” Mandeep, line 519.

The participants described many experiences of covert discrimination in the aftermath of the London bombings, which they felt had been brought about by the change in society's perception of Asians. Hence, although race may have been an issue for some of the participants before the London bombings (as illustrated by Sumit's account where he talks about his experience of direct racism before the bombings), it appears that the London Bombings had made the participants and other members of society more aware of brown skin as this was a characteristic that had developed a negative association with the bombings.

Super-ordinate theme 4: Participants' feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings

From the participants' accounts, it became apparent that these men have experienced various conflicting feelings towards Muslims. It also became apparent that the men seemed to be processing the way that they felt about themselves in relation to the way that they felt about Muslims, through their conflict of being same but different. For the Muslim participants this conflict was through being the same as but also different to the bombers (through a shared religion) and for the non-Muslim participants, this conflict was highlighted through being the same as Muslims (through being Asian) but also being different (on the basis of religion).

Theme 4.1: Anger towards Muslims

Anger expressed by the interviewees was twofold. Firstly all of the participants expressed a sense of anger towards the bombers. Secondly, the non-Muslim participants expressed a sense of anger towards Muslims in general.

In line with the first point, all of the participants felt a sense of anger and resentment towards the London bombers. Mustafa commented:

“It was a totally senseless attack against ordinary people” Mustafa, line 463.

Amar's comment also highlighted the participants' feeling that the actions of the bombers have had repercussions for all Asians:

“Well it was kind of like they've just gone and spoilt the name of all British Asians, I felt let down and I felt a bit angry...” Amar, line 996.

In addition, the non-Muslim participants also felt anger towards Muslims in general as they felt that they had been associated with them by wider society through the perceived commonality of race. This was illustrated by Jagpreet's remark:

“This Muslim guy came and sat next to me on the train and I just felt really angry towards him because I thought that everyone would think that we were the same, you know, probably think we were terrorists, but I'm not Muslim and I don't want to be perceived to be Muslim, you know, being classed as the same through our ethnicity makes me angry...” Jagpreet, line 990.

Therefore, alongside feelings of anger, Jagpreet's account also highlights his underlying feelings of anxiety he felt in relation to the possibility of him being viewed negatively within the British society as a result of the bombers' actions.

In summary, although both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants felt angry towards the bombers, the non-Muslim participants' anger was also extended to Muslims in general. This appeared to be because of the fear of encountering negative responses within the British society due to the non-Muslim participants being associated with the bombers through their race.

Theme 4.2: Frustration towards Muslims

Both Sumit and Mustafa expressed frustration. For Sumit his frustration came from the fact that he was automatically being perceived as Muslim by non-Asian people and feeling resentful about this. He comments:

“I was on the train and sitting next to this Muslim woman and I was reading the front page of a newspaper which was about the bombings, and here’s me a fellow Asian and I’m feeling really annoyed with this woman...because everyone is reading the same material and looking at me and this person next to me” Sumit, line 227.

For Mustafa, his frustration was centring around the way that the Muslim community responded in the aftermath of 7/7. He felt that the Muslim community damaged the reputation of Muslims and Asians through not challenging the stereotypes that were being created around Islam in the aftermath of 7/7. His account indicates that he feels a disservice had been done to Muslims as he did not perceive the Muslim community to be proactive in challenging the extremist version of Islam that had been portrayed in society in the aftermath of 7/7:

“I think the Muslim community did not help themselves...because rather than go no that’s not the case, they shut up shop...” Mustafa, line 575.

Once again, it appears that Muslims and non-Muslims had differing feelings of frustration in the aftermath of the bombings. The non-Muslim participants seemed to be frustrated about being viewed negatively by others by them automatically thinking that they were Muslim. On the other hand, the Muslim participants expressed frustration in relation to how the Muslim community communicated with the wider British society in the aftermath of the bombings. Nonetheless for both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants it seems as if their frustration was being fuelled by their concern of being negatively evaluated by others.

Theme 4.3: Empathy towards Muslims

This theme was expressed more by non-Muslim participants as they felt that they could understand how young Muslim men in Britain might be feeling, as they too had often been on the receiving end of covert prejudice and discrimination. Amar's extract highlights this:

"I actually feel really bad for them, in the sense that there must be millions of innocent Muslims who just want to go about their daily business...and if I'm feeling persecuted and I'm not even someone of the Muslim faith...if I was putting myself in their shoes I would hate to have to walk and live my life as they must have to do, taking on board all of this hate..." Amar, line 386.

The similar experiences of these men in the aftermath of 7/7 have served to create a sense of perceived connectedness and a shared understanding among 'fellow Asians'.

Theme 4.4: Empathy versus disagreement

Both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants expressed some empathy towards the bombers and could understand in some level (through identifying with them as young British Asian men) why they felt angry and wanted drastic change. However, their accounts illustrate that, although the participants understood their cause, they strongly disagreed with the attacks and the way that the bombers chose to fight their cause. Sajid comments:

"Historically, anyone who poses a threat or intimidation can be seen as a terrorist...I think what you have to do is get into the minds of these people..." Sajid, line 184.

This is mirrored in Mustafa's account:

"It's the fact that the bombers were home-grown...I totally disagree with the attacks...people feel excluded and you alienate people, whereas what you're supposed to be trying to do at this point is to include them, find out why these guys were so disenfranchised that they did something so dramatic..." Mustafa, line 272

Hence, it seems as if participants were experiencing a complexity of emotions and confusion between empathising with the bombers and feeling angry towards them.

Theme 4.5: Sameness versus difference

This was on two levels. Firstly, through the participants being Asian, they identified with the bombers through their connected race but they also seemed to be differentiating themselves from the bombers through distancing themselves from defining their identity in terms of being 'Asian'. Secondly, the Non-Muslim participants seemed to connect with Asians as a whole but differentiate themselves from Muslims in general, whereas the Muslim participants seemed to connect to other Muslims through shared religion but differentiate themselves from the bombers.

Firstly, the participants could identify with the bombers through being young Asian men themselves and had some awareness around how the bombers may have been feeling and why they may have chosen to attack Britain. In doing so, the participants also tended to challenge what the term terrorism meant. This often highlighted the conflict in defining themselves as being Asian as they did not want to be associated with the bombers.

“I guess what the British and Americans are doing in some people’s eyes is terror...one man’s terror is another man’s patriotism, I mean being in this country and being Asian I’m looked at in a certain way cause this message has been given to everybody. I can kind of understand why they did what they did, but the way they did it was wrong and it probably hurt their cause, in fact it’s hurt all Asians and now they are choosing to define themselves in terms of their religion and not in terms of being Asian...” Mandeep, line 332

Amar explored this changing sense of defining identity further:

“I think a lot of people are saying don’t call me Asian now...they don’t like the association of being Asian now, cause they feel that Asian in general has a stigma attached to it...” Amar, Line 359.

Secondly, a different conflict was demonstrated by the non-Muslim participants.

Whereas the Muslim participants tended to identify with all Asians through the connection of race, the non-Muslims seemed to identify and empathise with fellow Asians but also felt the need to differentiate themselves from Muslims on the basis of religion. This is highlighted in Mandeep’s excerpt:

“A lot of the terrorists were of Pakistani descent...and I mean, obviously India and Pakistan were one country before so a lot of Indian and Pakistanis look the same...so a lot of Indians have now turned around and said I’m nothing to do with Pakistan, I’m Sikh or Hindu or whatever...when we are literally the same people from the same land...” Mandeep, line 450

Muslim participants, also felt a need to differentiate from certain Muslims, but this was in relation to distinguishing themselves from the bombers rather than disassociating themselves from the religion entirely. The Muslim participants tended to regularly express their disagreement with the attacks throughout the interview, as if to disassociate themselves from the bombers. For example, Ahmed commented:

“To me, I mean, everyone has got the same colour blood whatever the colour of skin, but like I said, what these people, who are doing the bombings and all that, you know, I am a Muslim but I will never agree with all that...” Ahmed, line 244.

Therefore, it appears that both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants could identify and empathise with the bombers’ cause and what may have led them to carry out the attacks through the sameness of their race and shared understanding of what it is like to be a young British Asian man. However, the non-Muslim participants seemed to differentiate from the bombers and Muslims in general through asserting their differing religions. The Muslim participants, on the other hand, tended to differentiate from the bombers through stating their disagreement with how the attacks were carried out.

Super-ordinate theme 5: Fear/Threat

Threat and fear seemed to be a dominant part of the men’s experience in the aftermath of 7/7. This influenced the connections that they made, in terms of what constitutes a threat and how they process the potential threat around them. What I found interesting is that, even though the interviews were conducted between a year and a half and two years after the bombings took place, all of the participants still expressed feeling under threat, which seemed to be accompanied by a heightened sense of awareness of their environment and feelings of anxiety. This fear is extended to encompass feeling under

threat as a result of the potential negative perceptions that others may have towards these young, Asian men in the aftermath of 7/7. The three themes under this superordinate theme each explore various dimensions of the participants' perceived threat.

Theme 5.1: Heightened awareness

It had become apparent that the participants had become more hyper vigilant and aware of their surroundings since the attacks had taken place. They also demonstrated a change in their perceived sense of safety in the world as they feared that the world was under threat and the threat of terrorism was still rife. Anish said:

“Well I suppose we’ve got to be a bit more vigilant nowadays, so we know that there is a threat out there at the end of the day and it can happen to anyone else...”

Anish, line 40

This was linked in with feelings of helplessness and loss of control which impacted upon the coping mechanisms that the participants utilised:

“I try not to get the train so much...sometimes you do get that odd feeling, you know. am I on a dodgy train or bus, especially as there was another bombing after the London bombings...I think it’s a lot more difficult to strike but then again, anyone can strike at any time...” Sajid, line 108

Concern for loved ones due to the feelings of lack of safety in the world were also a dominant feature of the participant's accounts:

“I try and make sure that the people who are close to me don’t use the trains as much, unless they’ve really got to...I’ve just become more worried for them...”

Deepak, line 303.

Therefore, the attacks seem to have challenged the participants’ beliefs that the world is a safe place, leading to the participants being more aware of their surroundings as a result.

Theme 5.2: Symbols / Indicators of threat

In their interviews, the participants spoke about a number of symbols which had become associated with indicating a potential threat. For example Arun mentioned:

“Yeah I think it’s being brown and also carrying a bag which could be a bomb...”

Arun, line 112

This was mirrored in Jagpreet’s account:

“The current criteria is short hair and goatee..” Jagpreet, line 552

The beard as a symbol of threat was also raised in Amar’s account:

“brown face and, um, some sort of Muslim clothing, carrying bags...having a beard... I think men are also seen as more threatening...just having a brown face is enough to do it...” Amar, line 79

Overall, from the participants' accounts symbols of threat included brown skin, being male, having a beard and wearing Islamic clothing. There seemed to be a heightened sense of awareness in relation to these potential triggers.

Theme 5.3: Fear of others' perceptions

Due to their race, participants felt anxious about being perceived negatively by others through the association of brown skin = Muslim = terrorist. Arun commented:

“The first impressions, because of colour I believe, is that instantly everyone is a Muslim and a threat...” Arun, line 75.

Anish commented:

“I've been aware of how I present myself and how I look because, you know, whether it's your fault or nor, there may be issues and situations you come into where you might be under attack...” Anish, line 240.

This was linked in with their fear for their personal safety as they feared they may be attacked if somebody thought that they were Muslim. This fear had become a routine part of the participants' everyday life. For Ahmed, this fear had led him to cautiously choose whether he disclosed that he was Muslim or not:

“Another thing was the backlash resulting from the bombings, sometimes when people ask me what religion I am I think should I say I'm a Muslim or not, I don't know what would be their reaction if they found out I was...” Ahmed, line 275.

The sense of threat that the participants were experiencing seemed to be affecting their everyday interactions with people and the world. This appeared to make them more aware of their surroundings, their sense of other's perceptions of them and their race, which had implications for how they chose to present themselves to others.

Super-ordinate theme 6: Other key emotions

Super-ordinate theme six illustrates the variety of emotions that the participants have experienced, that go beyond the emotions they faced in the immediate aftermath of the events. Theme six is divided into four sub-ordinate themes which highlight the variety of these emotions. Their accounts seem to bring to light that they are processing their emotions on a number of different levels, against the backdrop of a changed British society. It appears that their acceptance of the changes in society may be a way of enabling them to cope in their day to day lives.

Theme 6.1: Unspoken anger

Alongside the emotions of shock, sadness, confusion, fear and helplessness that the participants expressed, there were also unstated emotions that I got a sense of when listening to the taped interviews. Anger, in particular seemed to be the main emotion that was underneath the participants' stories but did not appear to be consciously recognised. Sumit commented:

“Emotionally, I guess I feel a mixture of emotions, sadness as it's not a particularly nice world that we live in...and potentially I'm being accused of what's going on in the world...” Sumit, line 359.

This unspoken anger was mirrored in Mandeep's interview, in relation to the potentially negative views that others may have towards him on the basis of his appearance:

"I know people who have actually gone and shaved their beards off and got a clean haircut because they don't want to be looked at as a terrorist and I'm not going to go and shave my beard for anyone just because, you know, they've got an ignorant view, I'm not an ignorant person and I don't expect people to be ignorant with me..." Mandeep, line 792.

This expression of anger seemed to be in opposition to the way that the participants expressed their anger in relation to the bombers, which is highlighted by Sajid's statement:

"I'm angry...about the peace being disturbed..." Sajid, line 133.

Therefore, from the participants' accounts, it appeared that they felt more liberated in freely and overtly expressing their anger in relation to the bombers' actions and categorically expressing their disagreement with the attacks. However, it appeared that when expressing their anger towards the potential negative attitude that they may be faced with in their everyday interactions, this expression seemed to be subtle and covert, mirroring their experience of covert discrimination.

Theme 6.2: Empathy with victims

Empathy with the victims seems to be a consequence of anger towards the bombers. The participants felt that it was always the innocent that suffer. The empathy was on two levels. Firstly, there was empathy for the victims who were directly involved in the

attacks. Secondly, non-Muslims empathised with Muslims who were also seen as innocent victims who were suffering as a consequence of the bombers' actions.

In line with the first point, Anish commented:

"I feel for those people that actually did sustain injuries or got disabled..." Anish, line 134.

Mandeep's account highlighted the sense of unfairness he felt around innocent people being the victims of the attacks and the potential for the consequences of the attacks to be far reaching and go beyond those innocent people who were directly involved in the attacks and lost their lives. He saw this as a ripple effect which would spread out into the rest of society:

"I feel sad for the people that lost their lives and sad for the members of the community who will have to face the consequences of it, because of these people's actions...the effect will definitely spread to the rest of society..." Mandeep, line 1001.

Secondly, and interconnected with Mandeep's point, the non-Muslim participants tended to empathise with Muslims as they were also perceived as innocent victims who have been singled out and targeted as a result of the bombers' actions. Sumit reflected on the potential difficulty and conflict that Muslim men may be experiencing as a result of their religion being targeted and persecuted:

“I suspect, in fact I don’t suspect, I know that Muslim men feel that the world is watching them...I was on the bus and I saw some Muslim men going to the mosque and I actually felt really bad for them as there must be millions of innocent people that belong to the Muslim faith” Sumit, line 377.

Therefore, it appears from the participants’ accounts that not only are those who were directly involved, injured or killed in the attacks victims, but the innocent also includes those individuals who are experiencing the consequences of the bombers’ actions in the aftermath of the bombings as they may be scapegoated by society and feel under threat. The participants felt that this was more likely to be Muslim men and the non-Muslim men could also empathise with these innocent victims through their shared experience of feeling under threat and singled out.

Theme 6.3: Feeling segregated from wider British society

Overall, the participants felt that they had been singled out from the rest of society. They described a number of incidents where they felt that they had experienced covert discrimination based on their race. They felt that they had experienced a sense of negativity towards Asian men as they had been targeted and singled out by the rest of society in the aftermath of 7/7. For example, Sajid commented:

“perhaps some people subconsciously look at the colour of my skin and think of me negatively...racism isn’t necessarily alive but there’s still some elements here and there and its associated with brown people, which is a sad thing to say, it creates a bigger divide...after the attacks it wasn’t just Muslims who were being hated on, Sikhs were being hated on, you heard of Hindu temples being gunned down, you know, serious serious stuff here...” Sajid, line 448.

Arun explored this further and mentioned that although discrimination may have been there previously within the British society, it had been exacerbated since the terrorist attacks:

“I think people have always been judged according to their religion and race, but now it’s just become more apparent and just become, I think the London bombings and 9/11 have just given some sort of excuse for people to battle each other, it’s just given everyone a reason to stand up for what they’ve always believed in but never actually put forward...” Arun, line 234.

This perceived sense of being discriminated against had led the participants to identify more with other Asians:

“This isn’t just going to only affect Muslims, this is going to affect all of us Asians, because we’re all going through the same thing and being judged in the same way...” Jagpreet, line 344.

Mandeep felt that this identification was fuelled by the ‘them and us’ distinction that had been formed within British society between Asians and non-Asians:

“The impact the London Bombings have had is that it’s put Asian people in that negative light and caused divisions, it’s like them and us now...it’s like across this barrier is Asian-ness and across this barrier is British...” Mandeep, line 647.

This importance of this perceived connectedness to Asian men as a whole seemed to be more dominant for the Muslim participants as it provided a sense of belonging. Mustafa commented:

“I think people’s perceptions of Asian guys has changed because of four guys...I think what it’s done is it’s made more Asian men visible and I guess we all have to stick together...” Mustafa, line 501.

Ahmed also highlighted the shared experience of Asian men as a whole:

“they’re [the bombers] are causing more grief because of the backlash that other people are getting...the mosques and stuff were getting bricked and people walking down the street were getting spat on, Muslims and even Sikh people being mistaken for Muslims and that was bang out of order...” Ahmed, line 412.

Therefore, from the participants’ accounts, it appears that they have all experienced some form of discrimination in the aftermath of 7/7 and they have felt a sense of being alienated from the rest of the British society. Although it should be recognised that the participants may have had previous experiences of feeling singled out based on their religion and race before 7/7, this event has seemed to further highlight the dimensions of race and religion and to fuel negative perceptions of Asian men within the British society. Hence, it appears that the participants have shared similar negative experiences in the aftermath of the bombings. For the Muslim men, in particular, this seemed to have created a sense of unity with other Asian men.

Theme 6.4: Acceptance

The participants described two main forms of acceptance. Firstly, there was the acceptance of other people having negative perceptions of them and, secondly, participants had accepted the threat of terrorism as a part of everyday life.

In terms of the participants accepting other people's negative perceptions of them, Jagpreet comments:

"I guess I just have to be a bit more accommodating of people's views...and get the point across that I'm proud of being British" Mandeep, line 619.

Secondly the potential threat of terrorism had also been accepted as a way of life as mirrored in Ahmed's account:

"I don't think these people are going to stop, it's never going to stop, it's a part of life and, I do get worried but it's probably never going to go away..." line 531.

However, whereas Ahmed's account seems to highlight an underlying anxiety around the potentiality around terrorism becoming a way of life, the other participants' accounts seem to highlight a sense of resilience and them moving forward with their lives:

"I think there's been something about the accumulation of these [terrorist] events and the bombings being close to home...so there's been some processing because of these incidents and events which have brought death closer to home which then

makes me have to process it to the extent where now I have to be happy to walk out of my home and whatever comes my way feel liberated and free...” Sajid, line 932.

This indicates that, through his processing of the events and the impact of life, he has been able to re-evaluate his life and arrive at a place where he feels comfortable in living with the potential threat. This is mirrored in Mustafa’s comments when he displays a change in his attitude towards life and re-evaluates what he thinks can and can’t be controlled:

“You have to be pragmatic about it and, kind of, if it happens it happens and not let it dominate your life...you can’t live your life in fear of it” Mustafa, line 218.

Overall, the participants’ accounts indicate that they are starting to accept the possibility that others may have negative perceptions of them and also that the threat of terrorism may still be a reality in a modern day Britain. However, alongside this acceptance is also a sense of resilience through the participants’ willingness to want to move forward and carry on as normal, living their lives as they did before the London Bombings. Their accounts also indicate that there has been a transformation in their attitude towards life through their various experiences in the aftermath of the London Bombings.

Super-ordinate theme 7: The Media

Participants felt that the media had a major role to play in shaping values and attitudes in society and this, in turn, has consequences for the well-being and experiences of the participants. This super-ordinate theme was divided into three sub-ordinate themes, which each explore some dimension of the impact of the media.

Theme 7.1: Media's impact on society

There were negative representation of Muslims portrayed in the media in the aftermath of 7/7 which the participants felt had translated into British Society. Participants felt that the media was key in forming the stereotype of Brown = terrorist. Mandeep comments:

“whenever you'd hear something about the bombings it was always Islam this, Muslim that, Asian extremist...” Mandeep, line 762.

The participants seemed to have a general negative view of the media. They felt that the terms Asian and Islam were heavily present in the media accounts of the bombings.

Theme 7.2: Differences in media types

The participants seemed to perceive some media types as being more trustworthy than others and they talked about the difference between tabloid newspapers and broadsheets in relation to how they presented information on the bombings. Participants often felt suspicious about if they had been given accurate information, via the media, in relation to the London Bombings. Jagpreet commented:

“newspapers have got to sell papers, that's what they do, they don't quite balance the opinions, whereas I find that maybe TV news stories possibly may do that, as your getting various views which is more representative, whereas with newspapers you're just reading what the person thought and what the editor's approved...you never know if the tabloid newspapers have carried out research whereas the broadsheets probably give you a more politically balanced opinion, so it's difficult

to take your judgements from newspapers, I think you have to make use of all media... ” Jagpreet, line 696

Mustafa also talked about the development of citizen journalism and immediate access to the bombings through survivors of the attack filming the immediate aftermath of the attacks in the trains on their mobile phones. He stated:

“what sticks with you is the initial images...the bus in Tavistock square, for example, you will never forget that it was ripped apart like that, another thing, I suppose. is seeing how the internet has developed, or mobile phone technology has developed, you had real citizen journalism, you had people on the trains...it was the dawn of a new way of looking at the world, you’re seeing it through the eyes of the people...”
Mustafa, line 354.

The media’s coverage of the events in general was met with some scepticism from the participants. However, it did appear that the vivid use of imagery and mobile phone footage had a lasting impact on the participants.

Theme 7.3: Media as a source of education and informing people’s beliefs

The participants highlighted both the positive and negative implications of the media. On the positive side, the media enabled the participants to keep up to date with what was happening in relation to the bombings. This was especially useful at the time when the bombings had just taken place. Deepak commented:

“they broadcast the information as soon as they got it, they kept us up to date with what was going on and who they found and what was happening and stuff so I think the media covered the events really well...” Deepak, line 143.

On the negative side, the participants expressed a distrust of the media and felt that the stories had been sensationalised. Arun reflects on this in his account:

“I think the media may have exaggerated a lot to create fear in people, again, they need to make money do that was a big story and it’s affecting a lot of people, the only form of information we have is the media and everything we see or read we have to believe, well, sorry we don’t have to believe but that’s all we’re given so obviously it’s our choice but how do we know what’s true and what’s not, everything was covered, but it was over-covered...” Arun, line 158.

The participants felt that an extremist stereotype of Asians and Islam was presented in the media. This is highlighted in Mandeep’s account:

“the way that the media has portrayed it, the moment someone says terrorist you assume, you know, that you assume that it’s an Asian or Muslim person involved, which is the way that it’s been put forward in the news and the media...so people have a very narrow perception...” Mandeep, line 142.

It appears that the participants felt that the impact of the media was most positive in the immediate aftermath of the bombings as it enabled them to keep up to date with what was happening. However, the negative impact of the media seemed to surface in the aftermath of 7/7, once the stories seemed to focus around Asians and Islam. The

participants' felt that there was a general negative perception of Asians in the media. This is divided further into negative and extremist portrayals of Muslims and Islam within the media. As discussed previously, the participants felt that these negative perceptions have had a negative knock on effect on Asians, as the participants felt that they were viewed negatively within society.

Super-ordinate theme 8: Connections, links and associations

“Connections, links and associations” was the 8th super-ordinate theme to emerge as the participants' accounts exemplify the various associations that they have made in their minds as a result of the terrorist attack. This includes the associations that they made with other worldwide events, their past experiences that were brought up and re-experienced as a result of the attacks and the sense of connectedness that the events led them to feel with other individuals. Participants also described experiencing a strengthening of their association with other Asians and their cultural roots, which had an influence on their sense of self and developing identity. This super-ordinate theme was divided into four sub-ordinate themes, which each encompass a facet of the connections that were made.

Theme 8.1: Connection to historical and cultural context

This sub-theme only seemed to be relevant for the non-Muslim participants involved in this research. It is linked in with colonialism and historical divisions between Asians on the basis of religion. This was prominent in Jagpreet's account:

“I used to be more proud of the fact that I'm British...being Asian in Britain is not the same now, being Asian in Britain is being looked at as a second class citizen, I believe anyway by the majority of people...I'm not fully British no, I mean even

though I hold a British passport, I was raised in a country which was under the British rule for a long time and my heritage is from a country which was under the British rule for a long time ...” Mandeep, line701.

This is mirrored in Sumit’s comments when he explores the historical context of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims, present in his parents’ generation as a result of the division of India and Pakistan in the 1940’s:

“my mother is quite, um, I would say that she is highly prejudiced against Muslims and it’s very much born out of the division of India, they were there when the British were leaving, so they’ve had particular experiences where my mother has residual feelings of anger...and now it seems like there’s a conflict again in this generation and it’s interesting because the conflict is not really in this war on terrorism or the London bombings, it’s never really been counted as Hindus versus Muslims because in a sense it’s almost like Muslims against the rest of the world...” Line 420.

Hence from the accounts of the participants, non-Muslim participants felt that the London bombings and subsequent aftermath had created a ‘new battle for this generation’ and a ‘new source of conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims’.

Theme 8.2: Connection to roots

For the non-Muslim participants, 7/7 put the participants more in touch with their ‘Indian-ness’ as they questioned their sense of Britishness and where they belonged.

This is apparent in the following account:

“knowing where you come from and knowing what’s happened before you is important, as sometimes you feel maybe, possibly lost and you wasn’t to know a bit more about who you are and where your parents are from...the questions about the bombings have actually brought about some thoughts, British Indian, Indian British I don’t know which way round it goes...” Jagpreet, line 214.

On the other hand, for the Muslim participants it made them feel a sense of connectedness to their religion and develop an urge to learn more about the religion.

In Ahmed’s case the bombings have directly influenced his sense of being Muslim and trying to identify what this means for him. He states:

“I don’t know when my children grow up if I will sit down with them and let them know about religion...the bombings brought up questions about if this is the way that religion is supposed to be... because actually I don’t know much about my religion, but that really brought up issues, you know, is the Islamic faith good or is it bad? Um, but I did do a bit of reading up on it and I thought, well ok, it’s not all bad...before all of this happened I really didn’t know what was what but since it happened it made me think and it highlighted something in my identity definitely...in a way if none of this would have happened, I still wouldn’t have really known anything...” Ahmed, line 252.

Hence, it appears that, although participants may have previously experienced some turmoil around defining their ethnicity and religion, 7/7 has served to highlight this conflict and has brought it to the attention of these young men. Ethnicity was more of a prominent issue for the non-Muslim participants and religion seemed to be a more pressing issue for the Muslim participants.

Theme 8.3: Connection to past experiences

The participants all made links to their past experiences of prejudice and discrimination through the experience of covert discrimination in the aftermath of 7/7. One participant commented:

“I guess in relation to 7/7, there were things that did happen when I was growing up that made me aware of the colour of my skin, for example, I was waiting at the bus stop once and I looked for maybe one second too long and this White guy who was walking down the street walked up to me and he said what are you looking at and he then smacked me round the face with a barrage of racial comments and that probably has an element of pain...” Deepak, line 1057.

This indicates that the covert discrimination the participants experienced in the aftermath of 7/7 served as a trigger which led them to re-experience past events and the feelings associated with them.

Alongside the participants re-experiencing their own experiences of prejudice, another strand of this re-experiencing was related to them remembering the 22nd of July 2005 when Jean Charles De Menezes was mistaken for a suicide bomber and shot by police. This seemed to be a prominent event that deeply affected the participants and reinforced a sense of them being a potential target for police and being under threat. This is evident in Mustafa’s account:

“I think what was more shocking was when Jean Charles De Menezes was shot, when there was that double threat, um, am I going to get blown up or am I going to

get shot in the head running down the platform, I always had a habit of running down the platform...I've got to admit, some days I don't want to go in to work because I was worried about the journey in..." Mustafa, line 169.

This indicates that the London bombings served as a reminder which triggered participants' feelings around previous traumatic events that they had either experienced themselves or had been affected by as it reminded them of the potential threat that they may be under and their own mortality.

Theme 8.4: Connection to other terrorist attacks

Participants had also made the link between 7/7 and other worldwide political events, which they feel has contributed to the global impact and threat of terrorism. This is highlighted by Anish's when he says:

"if someone is going to invade their country then they're obviously going to do something about it...for every action there is a reaction..." Anish, line 99.

As previously mentioned, these global events had also led to an expectation of a terrorist attack in London. The participants' expressed a sense of anger in relation to these wider political events which they felt had led London to be put into a state of threat. These worldwide political events had also led the participants to question the definition of the term terrorist. This can be seen in the following statement:

"what the British and the Americans are doing in some people's eyes is terror as well but obviously we don't see that side of it as well because in other countries they

are doing far worse things than what some terrorists are doing here, so one man's terrorism is another's patriotism..." Amar, line 325.

Therefore, it appears that the participants have framed the terrorist attacks within the political climate of a changing world and the London bombings were not seen to be stand alone terrorist events, but were seen to be linked in with other global terrorist events. Hence, it was not only the participants' sense of Britain that was changing, it was also their perception of the world.

Super-ordinate theme 9: Dimensions that influence identity/ sense of self

Throughout the participants' accounts, they seemed to be exploring their sense of who they were as a person and how they felt that others perceived them. This seemed to be indicating that their identity was fluid and open to various external influences. It seems as if their sense of self was, at times, thrown into turmoil as a result of their experiences that were connected with the London bombings. It felt as if the participants were re-evaluating their sense of self, who they thought they were and what they felt were important aspects of their identity. This super-ordinate theme is divided into three sub-themes that explore the internal components that the participants thought were important in defining who they were, the external factors that influenced the participant's conceptions of themselves (including their experiences in British society post 7/7 and the way they felt that they were perceived by others as a result of 7/7) and the resulting conflict that participants felt between their internal conceptualisation of self and others' perceptions of them.

Theme 9.1: Internal influences on identity

The participants felt that their ethnicity and religion were very important to them and made up an important part of their identity. For example, Sajid commented:

“being Asian is very important, especially in this multi-cultural society, it’s very important that you remain true to that culture, that religion, especially when your exposed to different things all the time...” Sajid, line 27.

This sense of wanting to hold on to culture and let it remain an important part of identity was mirrored by Mandeep when he talked about the importance of him being east African Asian:

“it’s very important, it’s my identity, my heritage, my culture, my background...it gives me a sense of direction in life...” Mandeep, line 26

There is an important sense of not wanting to lose the Asian side of their selves, whilst trying to incorporate it with their British side. This can at times lead to a conflict between being British and Asian. Ahmed comments:

“I’m proud of being British, but I’m proud of being Asian as well, um, I embrace my heritage and I embrace my culture...” Ahmed, line 619.

Hence, it appears that the participants’ ethnicity and religion seem to play an important role in defining their identity and also has an influence on how they live their day to day life and perceive their world.

Theme 9.2: External influences

The perception of others seemed to play an important role in the way that participants presented themselves and how they defined aspects of their identity, such as their ethnicity and religion. There was a sense that even though they may feel British and count this as an important part of their self and identity, they may not be accepted in Britain as being British:

“it’s weird because when it [7/7] happened you become more Indian, you use the stance from your family and culture and who you are to get you through it to be honest because, um, you can’t become more British, simply because if you go out there and try and be more British, they’re just going to say you’re brown anyway...” Jagpreet, line 774.

They assumed that people would automatically perceive them negatively, based on their religion and race. This made the participants much more sensitive to their race and ethnicity.

“I think there are some Muslim extremists who are very strong in their views, but there’s a lot of people in society who get it because they are associated to looking like them, I guarantee you that there are people in this university with beards and people look at them and think of the stereotype of a terrorist, it’s like brown people have lost their uniqueness and credibility...” Sajid, line 474.

This sensitivity was also heightened by the covert prejudice that participants experienced in the aftermath of 7/7. The participants’ accounts also highlighted that they may disown a part of their British side and lean more towards the Asian side of

themselves, as they have expressed a sense of feeling more connected to this side of themselves by being isolated by British society. Amar talks about this when he says:

“when you go out on the tube or you drive somewhere, you might just happen to catch someone’s eye and they’re looking at you because of who you are, you know why they’re looking at you, you know it straight away, and those are the kind of situations where you kind of put a cloak over you, something that’s kind of protective, you use your, I guess your Indian-ness to kind of become more within yourself...” Amar, line 813.

Amar’s account highlights that the participants may withdraw from mainstream British society and from expressing their Britishness if they felt that they may be perceived negatively. This often led them to assert their Asian side as this is where they seemed to feel a sense of belonging (through associating with fellow Asians who have been perceived to have been through similar experiences) enabling them to cope in such situations.

Overall, it emerged that the participants’ identity was fluid and how they formed and expressed their identity was dependent upon the situation that they were in. The importance of their race and religion was also context-dependent.

Theme 9.3: Conflict between internal world and external world

Participants expressed that they felt that internally as a person they were the same and they did not feel that they had changed as a result of the terrorist attacks. Arun comments:

“I haven’t changed since 7/7, I’ll always be myself, the same person...” Arun, line 221.

However, the key is that although they felt that they were still fundamentally the same, the way that others and wider British society perceived them had changed. This can be seen in the following account:

“I don’t think that my identity has changed, how people see me may have changed...” Mustafa, line 477.

Ahmed took this a step further and commented:

“people obviously would have a lot of different opinions, but I think if they didn’t know me they would probably think, oh look he’s probably another suicide bomber or a fanatic...” Ahmed, line 493.

Therefore, it appears that although the participants felt that they were the same people, others’ perceptions of them and their world had changed as a result of the bombings.

Super-ordinate theme 10: Ways of coping

Coping in the aftermath of the bombings was identified as another super-ordinate theme. This includes both the conscious and subconscious coping strategies. Coping strategies seemed to take two forms. Firstly, participants utilised coping strategies that seemed to fit in with their beliefs and view of the world. Secondly, various forms of avoidance were also employed in the aftermath.

Theme 10.1: Adaptive coping strategies

The adaptive coping strategies that were utilised by participants in the aftermath of 7/7 helped them to process their thoughts and feelings about the bombings in various ways. These coping strategies took many different forms including turning to religion and spirituality, communicating about the events with their loved ones and friends, using music to process thoughts and feelings and (for the Muslim participants only) gaining knowledge about their religion.

Religion seemed to be a major source of support for most of the participants, apart from Arun who felt that he was not a religious person. Sumit commented:

“I used to seek solace through prayer...” Sumit, line 1026.

Communication also seemed to be beneficial for the participants to help them to process the events in the aftermath of the bombings and also to help them to feel connected to others who understood how they were feeling and who they felt safe with. This is illustrated in Amar’s comments:

“it helped to talk about it with the people that I felt safe with, my family and friends, where we could, in a similar way to what I’ve been talking here, just be very open with what’s going on, so it’s being able to vent without having to be so aware of who I am and how I’m presenting myself...” Amar, line 829.

None of the participants accessed professional support in the aftermath of the bombings, but instead they preferred to discuss their thoughts and feelings with people that they felt close to. It seemed as if it was the unconditional positive regard that they felt which

helped them to communicate with these individuals. Given their feelings of persecution at the time and the fear that they felt from the possibility of being perceived negatively by others, having this space to process where they did not feel judged or viewed negatively seemed to be invaluable. This indicates that a therapeutic relationship that embodies the core conditions could prove beneficial in helping individuals to process their feelings after a terrorist attack, such as the London bombings. However, the men also mentioned that they would be unlikely to access professional support, such as counselling, due to a fear of being stigmatised and misunderstood. This raises the question of how to make counselling and psychological services more accessible to young Asian men, which is something that will be explored in the next chapter.

Overall what seemed to be salient from the participants' accounts was that they were utilising coping strategies that seemed to fit in with their beliefs and world views as these seemed to be the most adaptive in helping them to process the events.

Theme 10.2: Avoidance as a way of coping

Avoidance seemed to take two forms: avoidance of taking the trains and an avoidance of media coverage related to the London Bombings.

Firstly, the participants spoke of a general avoidance of taking the train in particular as this was seen to be a source of threat. Sajid illustrated this point in the following comment:

“I adjust my everyday life, I won't travel [on the train] during peak hours, so I either travel at like six in the morning or I'll drive or go back much later so I don't take the train...” Sajid, line 323.

Secondly, some participants chose to cope by distancing themselves from media and limiting their exposure to news coverage related to the events:

“we don’t know if the media are telling us the truth or not, there will be certain restrictions in the media, so the best thing for me is to just know about certain things and then keep away from it, keep my distance...” Anish, line 469.

Both of these ways of coping seemed to have been methods that the participants employed in order to try and manage their fear and anxiety around a sense of threat in the aftermath of 7/7 and seemed to be a way of participants feeling like they had some sense of control over managing a potential danger.

Theme 10.3: Consciously changing behaviour

This served as a way of participants trying to gain some sense of control over their world and, in particular, seem to relate to trying to elicit a positive perception from others. This was also a further attempt on the participants’ part to differentiate themselves from the bombers. Mustafa comments:

“when I travelled on the tube the next day [after 7/7], I didn’t take a bag with me and I went in a light jacket, I just thought, ok right, lets try and not raise attention..”

Mustafa, line 141.

The participants seemed to adapt their clothing, chose not to carry bags and rucksacks on the train and made a conscious effort to shave when travelling by tube or plane.

Super-ordinate theme 11: Making new meaning of one's existence

The last theme to be discussed explores the existential thoughts and beliefs that arose for the participants as a result of them processing the London Bombings and its' aftermath. This also seems to be linked with the coping strategies that the participants employed in the aftermath of 7/7. This theme highlights various aspects of the participants' internal processing and how this has influenced their beliefs and attitudes towards life.

Theme 11.1: Transformation of attitudes towards life

The bombings and the participants' experiences in the aftermath had led them to question the purpose of life and re-evaluate what was important to them. Deepak had started to question life through being faced with the possibility of losing a loved one. He comments:

“the fact that some of my loved ones were meant to be on that train, it has made me think what if?...” Deepak, line 126.

Most participants expressed this sense of questioning the meaning of life and challenging the meaning of life and their existential beliefs. This is also mirrored in Ahmed's account:

“my family life has become more important to me, I mean you never know what can happen, you could go somewhere one day and die the next which has definitely changed me...” Sajid, line 343.

This processing of life and death was also apparent in Anish's account:

“I think back in the day you could have said I’m just going to get old and die but now you can’t say that 100%...your perception of life will definitely change and you will say to yourself life is too short, you can’t take it for granted...” Anish, line 288.

This process of re-evaluation of their life was also linked in with a reinforcement of previous beliefs that the participants has thought were important. For example, for Jagpreet, his family values had been reinforced:

“these people [the bombers] probably didn’t have a supportive family and I think it comes down to family and upbringing as your parents influence you and tell you what’s right and wrong...” Jagpreet, line 918.

This was linked in with his beliefs that the terrorists were weak minded and vulnerable and may not have had a stable family background, which may have led them to be susceptible to the messages of extremists.

Alongside this re-evaluation of their lives and through the fear of loss the participants encountered, when the bombings highlighted that they or a loved one could have been seriously hurt or killed, the participants seem to have developed an appreciation for life. This is highlighted in Jagpreet’s comments:

“I’m lucky, I’m really lucky and God knows what could have happened...but this does kind of bring it home and say look you’ve got stability whereas a lot of people out there haven’t got any...” Jagpreet, line 938.

Therefore, it seems that through the participants processing the events and the potential loss that they could have encountered, they began to question what the meaning of life was, which reinforced some of their previous beliefs and led them to re-evaluate their lives in terms of what was important and gain a new found appreciation for life.

Reflections upon the interview experience

In line with the spirit of IPA and as part of being a reflective practitioner, I felt that it was important for me to highlight both the participant's experience of the interview process and my own observations in relation to the dynamics in the interviews with the participants.

Overall, when asked how they felt after they had taken part in the interview, the participants expressed that they had a positive experience of the interview process and they felt that they were able to process and express their feelings. Mandeep commented:

“um, yeah I mean it's it's great, kind of, reminder for me about the whole, about the whole incident and, um, it's kind of refreshed some of my feelings about it, and kind of made me get a lot of my chest really, in a way in general and air my views, it's good that I've been allowed to air my views and and, you know, it's made me think about things that I wasn't aware of before...” Mandeep, line 1283.

Sajid said:

“I feel good, I feel, not good but in the sense that, you know, you reiterated a lot of old feelings and emotions towards the situation, I think after it happened, I dealt with it then and I put I in the back of my mind, but perhaps maybe today I'll think

about it again, um, maybe then tomorrow it will just become a memory...” Sajid,
line 924.

The participants’ accounts also highlighted their internal thought processes in relation to their developing identity and sense of self against the backdrop of a changing society. They seemed to be questioning their identity and who they were as people. It also seems as if the societal consequences of 7/7 have had a lasting impact. This can be seen in Mustafa’s account:

“I think in the last couple of years, I’ve, everyone’s thought about it. I think maybe I’ve thought about it more than other people, one, because I’ve studied politics and, you know, I’m kind of involved in the media so that’s been kind of like an issue. Um, I’ve also, um...I suppose I’ve thought about it more because the thing is it was young, British Asian men who committed the atrocity, so I’m a young, British Asian man but I don’t identify with them at all. So I’ve thought about it in that way and I think that’s why, I mean, I suppose I’ve got things to say about it but I think now it’s a case of, it will always be an issue but you can’t let it dominate your life...”

Mustafa, line 985.

Similarly Amar stated:

“I feel, um, yeah, I feel alright, uh, I feel happy that I’ve taken part in it actually and given my views, um, yeah, I don’t know if it’s the general consensus and if that’s what everybody else feels, but it’s just what I’ve felt. It feels, it feels weird cause at the time you kind of just go into automatic mode and you just do, do what you think you should do, you know, but when you look back at it then you think, oh God, you

know, you did change quite a bit in those first few weeks straight afterwards, but, um, yeah, but I'd, looking back on it I did change quite a bit in the first few weeks, I mean we've gone back into our normal, everyday mode but, um, it's uh, it's enlightening..." Amar, line 1007.

This is also mirrored in Jagpreet's comments:

"I think it's been thought-provoking, definitely thought-provoking, not just only views of other people but views of myself as well, where I'm coming from, where I'm going, um, the people I work with, the people I relate with friends, family, the whole thing, it's thought-provoking and...I think it's going to get a whole lot worse before it gets any better, I think everyone thinks that anyway so, no I've enjoyed it, it's been good, I look forward to the next one..." Jagpreet, line 1427.

It seems as if Jagpreet's positive experience of the interview and communicating his feelings has led him to be more open to communicating in the future.

These accounts indicate that the interview process can be seen as an intervention in itself and it aided the participants in processing their subconscious feelings in relation to the events, the feelings that were hidden beneath the surface of their accounts. Through this expression, they seemed to be gaining an understanding of their unique feelings. The implications of this will be discussed in chapter 4, as researchers (e.g. Rubin et al, 2006; 2007) have stressed the importance of the role of communication in helping participants to be able to process traumatic events. This processing can help to defend them against long term psychological and emotional difficulties. This can raise

questions around how to make psychological services more accessible to young Asian men.

Whilst transcribing the interviews, I also became aware of two main points. Firstly, I noticed that the Sikh participants tended to identify with me in the interview. This was mainly through the use of a few Punjabi words and displaying a sense of perceived similarity through the use of terms “like us” and “you know how it is” when they were describing their experiences. I feel that it was my visual appearance and my name and surname that enabled participants to identify my Punjabi and Sikh roots. Secondly, I noticed that the Muslim participants, in comparison to the Sikh and Hindu participants, tended to re-state their disagreement with the attacks several times and feel the need to overtly differentiate themselves from the bombers. It almost felt as if, as Muslim participants saw me as being different to them on the basis of religion. Given all the negative assumptions that appear to be present in society about Muslims (as expressed in the participants’ accounts), they may have been afraid of being judged by me or concerned about my perceptions of them. Therefore, I feel that essentially, the Sikh participants saw themselves as being similar to me and the Muslim participants saw themselves as being similar to me one level (though the colour of our skin) but also different to me on some level (based on our religions). This indicates that in the interview, participants may describe aspects of their lives and identities based on the assumptions that they have made about the researcher through social comparisons between themselves and the researcher (Ramji, 2008). This can impact upon the data that is collected.

This throws into light complexities of cultural commonalities and difference and the difficulties that apparent sameness between the researcher and interviewee may present (Bhachu, 1991, 2003; Song and Parker, 1995). For example, Ali (2006) argues that

there will always be hierarchical relationships within the research process and Ramji (2008) states that matching for one social identity essentialises each social identity and fails to take into account the dynamic interplay of social difference and identifications. The example that Ramji gives is that even when researcher and the interviewee are matched on a common characteristic such as language, there are other factors that may have a significant influence on communication and the interpretation on meaning, such as a differing religion.

I feel that it was my apparent sameness through my 'Asian-ness' that facilitated my ability to access the somewhat unresearched population of young Asian men. Although I feel that being Asian initially served as a point of commonality for me and my participants, and enabled me to gain access to their accounts and form an initial bond of trust and rapport, it seems as if religion was one dimension that seemed to serve as a source of difference. Ramji (2005) states that religion is an important marker of differentiation amongst the British Asian community. Hence, I feel that in the interview process I occupied a position of both sameness (through being a British Asian and Londoner) and difference (through being Sikh and female). Therefore, In Ramji's (2008) words, I was neither an insider nor an outsider in relation to my participants. This will be discussed further in the next section.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

4.1: Aims of the Discussion

The discussion section will explore the results from the research in more detail, in relation to linking the results in with existing literature and examining the clinical implications of such research for counselling psychologists. The limitations of the study and the methodology utilised as well as my reflexive account of the research process will also be examined. This will lead on to an exploration of areas for future research, followed by the conclusions of this study.

4.2: Summary of results and links to existing literature

The aim of the research was to explore the ways that the London bombings in 2005 may have affected young Asian men who live in London, both emotionally and psychologically. Surprisingly little direct research had been conducted into the London Bombings at that point, despite it being an unexpected terrorist attack, and previous research on a similar terrorist attack in America on September the 11th 2001 indicating that such events had potentially huge psychological and emotional consequences which is important for counselling psychologists to be aware of. The researcher decided to focus on this group as the perpetrators in the attack were young British Asian men and surprisingly, the consequences of this had yet to be represented in the literature.

The analysis yielded eleven super-ordinate themes. A general outline of these themes and an exploration of the sub-themes that define them have already been described in the analysis section (readers are referred to chapter 3 for a more detailed analysis of the themes).

The 11 super-ordinate themes identified were:

- Initial reactions to the bombings
- Reflecting upon societal impact
- Perceptions within British Society
- Participants' feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings
- Fear / Threat
- Other Key emotions
- The Media
- Connections, links, associations
- Dimensions that influence identity/sense of self
- Ways of coping
- Making new meaning of one's existence

Whilst examining the super-ordinate themes in the analytical process, the researcher noticed that they seemed to highlight four key areas that may have important consequences for counselling psychology:

- the question around the participants' changing sense of identity, in relation to the issues that participants had around defining their sense of self and their identity
- The psychological impact of experiencing covert discrimination and how this may influence the participants in the long term
- the impact of the coping mechanisms that were employed by the participants and how this may influence the psychological wellbeing of the participants
- long term implications of stress reactions – and impact on the participants

Below is an illustration of which specific super-ordinate themes seem to fit with which overall area:

Area 1: the question around changing sense of identity - the issues that participants had around defining their sense of self and their identity

Dimensions that influence identity/sense of self

Area 2: The psychological impact of experiencing covert discrimination – and how this may influence the participants in the long term

Initial reactions to the bombings

Reflecting upon societal impact

Perceptions within British Society

Participants' feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings

Area 3: the impact of the coping mechanisms that were employed – and how this may influence the psychological wellbeing of the participants

Ways of coping

Making new meaning of one's existence

Area 4: long term implications of stress reactions – and impact on the participants

Fear / Threat

Other Key emotions

The Media

Connections, links, associations

In the discussion section, these four main areas will be explored as the super-ordinate themes seem to be categorised into these areas and these areas. The clinical implications of this will be explored further in section 4.3.

4.2.1: The question around a changing sense of identity

The findings of this research indicate that the men were questioning their identity and sense of self as a result of the London Bombings. They felt that the way that others perceived them had changed in the aftermath, even though they felt that they were the same people internally. When asked an initial demographic question about what they considered their ethnic origin to be, the men utilised hybrid identities, the most common one being “British-Asian”. Only Deepak defined his ethnic origin in terms of his religion. Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that the men were experiencing some conflict around defining their identity and sense of self as, through feeling isolated from the wider British society, the men often felt less British. During the times when the men experienced feeling threat from negative perceptions of others they often tapped into more of and aligned more strongly to their ‘Asian’ side. Hence, at times, their “Asian-ness served the purpose of being like a protective barrier for their sense of self.

However, it is important to highlight the fluid nature of the participants’ identity as they moved on a continuum between positions of being Asian and British depending on the context that they were in. Religion was also placed on this continuum at times as it was seen as an important part of their identity and often was utilised to replace the term ‘Asian’. Hopkins (2007) states that the theorisation of hybrid identities has given researchers the space to question traditional approaches to understanding identity and ethnicity and they stress the importance of a new identity that “is not confined to an ethnic group but is an amalgam, neither purely religious nor specifically ethnic, that

may be linked to forging identity as a culture of resistance (Anthias, 2001, p. 626). Hence, it appears that the men in this study were developing their own unique identity and sense of self. This also links in with Hall's notion of cultural identity as he sees it as neither being static nor essentialised, but rather in constant negotiation (Hall, 1992). Hence, although he sees cultural identity as being defined as a set of norms and values shared by a group that may be based on a shared history, common homeland, religion and language, the boundaries around any shared culture will be differently drawn by each individual. Therefore, there can be a myriad of identities that comprise British Asian-ness (Burdsey, 2007). Brah (1996) also makes an interesting point when he states "it is quite possible to feel at home in a place and, yet, the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations as the place as home" (p. 193). This ties in with Hussain and Bagguley's (2005) notion of South Asian men seeing themselves as belonging to Britain but also being excluded.

Burdsey (2006) states that a direct consequence of the London Bombings was that the identity of British Asians, particularly Muslims, has become subject to rigorous political and public debate. There has been much written about the changing identity of Asian men within British society. For example, Alexander (2004) states that there is a conception of Asian male youth as a 'gang' within modern British society and this "draws up common sense ideas of Asian masculinities as collectively dysfunctional and as newly dangerous – most notably in its links of Britain's Muslim communities within religious fundamentalism" (p.532) and this in turn fuels [mis]conceptions around Asian and Muslim identity. This ties in with the current research and the participants' perceptions that, since the London Bombings, they have come to be seen in a negative light and as a source of threat.

The current research also indicates that Asian men (both Muslim and non-Muslim) have been subject to negative stereotyping and discriminatory practice which can have an impact on their developing sense of self. The rise in indirect forms of discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11 and 7/7 has been well documented. For example, Abbas (2006) comments that in the aftermath of 7/7 there was considerable evidence of direct and indirect discrimination towards individuals and communities, particularly those who were obviously connected to Islam (for example, through their visual appearance) or individuals who were of an Asian appearance. He states that this creates fear and distrust of major society.

Therefore, it can be postulated that Asians have become a stigmatised group in society. This was mentioned by Mandeep in his interview when he talked about a stigma that had been attached to Asians in Society. Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) state that the ways minorities, such as British Muslims, experience interactions with majorities is likely to be dependent on the goals and strategies of the majority. They postulate that the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981, Tajfel and Turner, 1989) is a useful explanation as it, in brief, states that groups form a basis for identity and our conceptions of ourselves and our social group overlap and so people are motivated to maintain a positive image of their group (Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005). Gillborn (2006) states that the London Bombings can provide evidence to support the Critical Race Theory where “White supremacy is conceived as a comprehensive condition whereby the interests and perceptions of White subjects are continually placed centre stage as assumed as normal” (p. 318). Gillborn states that the aftermath of the London Bombings provides an example of how the experiences, feelings and lives of non-White groups were readily sacrificed to protect a version of reality that took for granted and reinforced the supremacy of the White subject.

The social identity theory is an outcome of the social and psychological processes that shape people's understanding of themselves, their ingroups and their outgroups and their relationship with other groups. This indicates that events that involve other group members can have an impact on the self and these acts may be equated with being a core aspect of that person's identity. Stereotyping and intergroup differentiation can lead to a psychological distance between that majority and minority groups (Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2006). A negative portrayal of ingroup members can also lead an individual from a stigmatised group to psychologically distance themselves from their ingroup members in an attempt to maintain their self-esteem and well-being (Johns et al., 2005).

The current research seems to be mirroring this as it seems that, in order to protect themselves from marginalisation and keep the core aspect of their identity in tact, the Muslim participants seemed to be continually differentiating themselves from the bombers involved in 7/7. It also appears that the Muslim and non-Muslim participants seemed to be differentiating themselves from a general stigmatised 'Asian' identity and moving more towards an identity that is defined more in terms of religion. This ties in with research from Hopkins and Kahan-Hopkins (2006), who found that Muslims have come to redefine their experience of marginalisation so rather than conceptualising themselves as Asian and accounting for their marginalisation in terms of anti-Asian prejudice, Muslims have increasingly come to define themselves and their discrimination in terms of their religious identity. This research finding is interesting as it seems to contradict the finding within this research that Muslims and non-Muslims tended to identify with each other on the basis of their shared ethnicity (being "Asian"). This highlights the ambiguity of the participants feeling the same but different and

associating with each other but also disassociating with each other. This serves to highlight the complexity of the research findings and they do not seem to point to a clear definitive answer, in relation to group membership of the participants.

Hence, 7/7 highlighted the powerful impact that social identity as a part of a group may have on an individual. It is important for Counselling Psychologists to be mindful of the significant influence of belonging to a group and the impact this may have on an individual. They should also be attentive to the various influences that may be having an impact on an individual and the emotional significance that belonging to a group may have on an individual, depending on the value they place on belonging to a group and how this may influence their well-being. Walters and Simoni (1993) suggest that the role of a Counselling Psychologist is to enable the individual to become more comfortable with their social identity by challenging their negative assumptions and which can lead to increased self-esteem and self-worth in the client.

4.2.2: The psychological impact of experiencing covert discrimination

Another important area which was prevalent in the participants' interviews was them *feeling* targeted and singled out. They felt that they were now under threat of being perceived negatively by others and talked about a sense that they had of being discriminated against. Some common examples included feeling that they were being looked at suspiciously on the trains and being stopped and searched by police under the terrorism act. They attributed this sense of being singled out to their race. However, participants often mentioned that they could not *prove* that they had been discriminated against as the actions of others were often subtle and covert. It was just a sense that the participants had experienced of feeling different and standing out from the rest of

society. This behaviour seems to link in with Pierce et al.'s (1978) term 'racial microaggression'. Sue et al. (2007) describe racial microaggressions as:

“brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults towards people of colour, because they belong to a racial minority group.” p. 271

Sue et al. (2007) describe a changing face of racism and emphasise that modern racism is more likely than ever to be disguised and covert and, therefore, difficult to qualify. It can take various forms such as snubs, dismissive looks, gestures and tones and are often common and automatic in daily interactions. This links in with the participants' accounts as none of them mentioned experiencing direct racism in the aftermath of the London Bombings but just a felt sense that they were being discriminated against. Crocker and Major (1989) state that with microaggressions, there is always the nagging questions of whether it really happened as there may always be another plausible explanation for people's behaviour and the recipients often describe a vague feeling that they have been attacked, disrespected or something does not feel right. In line with this, Allen (2007) states that in the contemporary climate of Britain, anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim discourse is less obvious and has become more hidden and, through this, Muslims are being contextualised and positioned as being in opposition to what can be perceived as the liberal ideas and values of a modern day British society. Hence, he felt that racism was shifting away from more radical versions which focus upon skin colour to a new racism that focuses upon “difference in all its myriad of forms as defined or conceived as being that which went against or counter to that which was 'normative' and 'normal' of being 'British'” (Allen, 2007, p. 9). He feels that in this way, Islam and

Muslims have been positioned so that they are portrayed to be incompatible with what it means to be 'British'.

Solorzano et al. (2000) state that this form of discrimination, which may have the potential to remain almost invisible, can be potentially more harmful to the well-being, self-esteem and standard of living for people of colour than traditional overt forms of discrimination. Solorzano et al. found that microaggressions can lead to self-doubt, frustration and isolation on the part of the victim. As the effects of microaggressions are cumulative, over a period of time the victim may experience "diminished mortality, augmented morbidity and flattened confidence" (Pierce et al., 1989, p281). Alongside these effects, microaggressions can also create high levels of mistrust in society (Sue et al. 2007). Franklin (2004) sees microaggressions as being harmful as they can impair the performance of people of colour in a multitude of settings by harming their psychic energy and creating inequalities, which impedes harmonious race relations.

Solorozano et al. (2000) state there is a lack of research around microaggressions that explores how they can be handled and processed in an adaptive form for people of colour. They also suggest that future research could explore suggestions of how to increase the awareness and sensitivities of Whites to microaggressions so that they accept responsibility for their behaviours and changing them. In line with this, Sue et al. (2007) have stated that "mental health professionals face a challenge to make the 'invisible' visible" (p.281) by openly engaging in dialogue about race and microaggressions.

Hence, Sue et al. (2007) explore how racial microaggressions may impair the therapeutic relationship as they state that therapists are integrated into society and those

who are unaware of their own biases and prejudices may unintentionally create impasses in the counselling relationship with clients who are of a different racial background. They feel that this may help to explain why clients may terminate therapy early or underutilise psychological services. This is mirrored in the current study as the men involved mentioned that they would not be likely to seek professional support, even though communicating with loved ones that they trusted was beneficial, through a fear of being judged negatively and misunderstood by an individual who was not Asian. Therefore, the concept of a practitioner being trustworthy and offering unconditional positive regard seem to be particularly important in helping to establish a therapeutically healthy relationship. Sue et al. suggest that therapists should make an effort to identify and monitor racial microaggressions within the therapeutic context.

Further research on microaggressions has been conducted by Alleyne (2004, 2005). She conducted qualitative research, by utilising semi-structured interviews, with 30 black participants (including two Asian women). The interviews took place over a period of 6 months and she was exploring black identity in relation to workplace oppression, with a particular emphasis on black/white relations. She found that the conflict often manifested itself in the form of subtle comments and behaviour that targeted aspects of the individual's race and cultural identity. Alleyne (2005) found that over time, this treatment contributed to "longer periods of hurt, shame and demoralisation, often leaving workers traumatised...which eventually wore them down and led to erratic or lengthy periods of sickness absence" (p.5). She mentioned that, alongside experiencing microaggressions, the participants' also experience stigmatic stress by the person anticipating that they will re-experience shame and hurt. Alleyne (2005) comments that stigmatic stress arises from being singled out for unfavourable and discriminatory behaviour and this pushes the person into a state of hyper-vigilance and oversensitivity

as well as preparedness for criticism and attack leading to “considerable negative effects to that person’s emotional well-being and physical health as a result of this ongoing stress.” (p.6). Some of the physical symptoms that she describes includes irritability, insomnia, poor concentration, fluctuations in weight, tearfulness, aches and pains, hypertension, chronic fatigue syndrome and clinical depression, indicating that microaggressions and stigmatic stress can have very real emotional and physical effects on individuals if repeatedly exposed to them over time. The responses of her participants’ suggested that the oppression that they had felt at work had led them to question aspects of their identity, paralleling the findings of this study. Alleyne (2005) also found that attacking a person’s identity can destabilise their ontology (nature of their being). She suggests that this can have implications for practitioners as she states that a central theme in therapy is dealing with issues of identity and to help minority groups overcome the impact of microaggressions, practitioners should begin to acknowledge the deep impact that these often invisible behaviours can have on the developing sense of self of their clients. She claims that, by offering such therapeutic support, this will help to heal, restore and reframe the clients’ life experiences. In terms of the generalisability of the findings, Alleyne (2004) postulates that, although the research was conducted with predominantly Black participants, the findings may also be valuable for other minority ethnic groups who experience a similar problem of societal prejudice.

Hence, it can be proposed that the Asian men involved in this study have experienced a more subtle form of discrimination in their everyday interactions, due to their race, and this can be termed microaggression (Pierce et al., 1978). Overall, research suggests that racial microaggressions are problematic and they can result in a number of emotional and psychological consequences for victims who experience them continuously over a

period of time. This has clinical implications for practitioners in terms of how they address the concept of microaggressions within the therapeutic relationship.

4.2.3: The impact of the coping mechanisms that were employed

The participants in this study appeared to cope in the aftermath of the London Bombings by either utilising coping strategies that fit in with their beliefs and view of the world (adaptive coping strategies) or by avoidance (of taking the train or avoiding news coverage of the events). These findings seem to mirror previous research carried out in relation to coping in the aftermath of a terrorist attacks (e.g. Bleich et al., 2003; Fischer et al., 2006; Ford, 2004; Fredrickson et al., 2003; Liverant et al., 2004; Rubin et al., 2005; Schuster et al., 2001; Snyder and Park, 2002; Wadsworth et al. 2004). This has important clinical implications as adaptive coping has been postulated as a buffer for stress and can also help to guard against psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Wadsworth et al., 2004). On the other hand, avoidance has been associated with worse psychological functioning (Wadsworth et al., 2004). However, one point to bear in mind is that how an individual coped with a prior traumatic incident may be a crucial element in determining distress and how they cope in a subsequent traumatic event, such as a terrorist attack.

In terms of the adaptive coping strategies utilised by the participants, five of the participants chose to cope through utilising spirituality or turning to religion. This has been mirrored in empirical studies that have explored how individuals have coped in the aftermath of 9/11 (e.g. Ford, 2004; Fredrickson et al., 2003). In previous research by Fischer et al. (2006) and Fredrickson et al. (2003), it has been found that turning to religion or spiritual beliefs can be considered an effective way to cope with stressful life events as religion can help people to find positive meaning in everyday life as they re-

frame adverse events in a positive light. It has also been shown that highly religious individuals report lower levels of anxiety, fear and concern about death in the aftermath of a terrorist incident as religion helps the individual to experience positive emotions, promotes emotional well-being and, therefore, helps the individual to cope with the threat of terrorism (Fischer et al. 2006). Fredrickson et al. (2003) showed that positive emotions, which were promoted by intrinsic religiousness, buffered individuals against depression in the aftermath of 9/11. However, Fischer et al. showed that although increased religiosity may help to maintain positive emotions, they may not buffer negative emotions.

This is mirrored in the current research as, although spirituality and religion helped the participants to cope in the aftermath of the bombings, they were still experiencing negative emotions, such as anxiety. Another dimension in the current study is that, for the Muslim participants in particular, their religion was a source of conflict for them as they identified with being a Muslim, but the bombings also led them to question what it meant to be a Muslim and on some levels they tended to disassociate from their religion in an attempt to differentiate themselves from the bombers. Previous research on coping in the aftermath of a terrorist incident has tended to focus on individuals who perceive themselves to have strong religious beliefs but does not tell us much about individuals who have diasporic religious identities. This is something that future research could explore more fully.

The importance of communicating in the aftermath of the bombings also seemed to come to light in the participants' accounts. They felt that it had been beneficial for them to talk to friends and loved ones about how they were feeling as this helped them to process the events. Sumit mentioned two key points in his account: firstly he had to feel

safe with the person that he was speaking to and, secondly, he had to feel as if he was not being judged when communicating his feelings about the event was important. This links in with Rubin et al.'s (2005) study where they found that most people turned to the support networks around them in the aftermath of the London bombings and they were unlikely to access professional support. Given the substantial stress reactions that may be present following a terrorist attack, such as fear and anxiety, the question still remains about what would make psychological services more accessible to those affected by a terrorist incident. Rubin et al. (2007) suggest that longer term support would be more beneficial than a single session of psychological debriefing in the aftermath of such a major incident. Kim's study (2007) suggested that in order to make psychological services more accessible to Asians, who he feels have less professional help-seeking attitudes, practitioners could host educational workshops in order to try and dispel some of the myths that they may have around counselling and to help them to cope with any potentially negative feelings that they may have around entering counselling.

Alongside the adaptive coping strategies that have been discussed, participants also utilised avoidance as a way of coping. This avoidance took two forms: avoidance of taking the tube and avoidance of the media.

A large proportion of the participants avoided taking the train in the aftermath of the bombings as they perceived it to be a source of threat. This is in line with Rubin et al.'s study (2005) where thirty-two percent of their respondents reported an intention to travel less on the tube and forty-six percent of Londoners reported not feeling safe when travelling by tube. Liverant et al. (2004) stated that, whereas adaptive coping was

associated with lower levels of distress, coping strategies involving avoidance is associated with higher levels of long-term global distress.

Another form of avoidance highlighted by the participants' accounts was an avoidance of the media. Previous research has indicated that levels of stress and anxiety are associated with the extent of exposure to the media, particularly television (e.g. Schuster et al., 2001, Snyder and Park, 2002). This was mirrored in the current research where participants described the media as being important in helping to keep them informed of new developments but they also described distancing themselves from the constant images from the media in the aftermath of the bombings as the way of managing their anxiety. Schuster et al. (2001) state that although it may be postulated that avoidance interferes with the emotional processing that is necessary in order to recover from a trauma, the unusual circumstances and continuous coverage of a terrorist attack may make avoidance in the short term a healthy response.

Hence, due to the lack of research in relation to specific coping strategies employed when dealing with terrorist attacks, such as the London Bombings, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about what constitutes positive and adaptive coping strategies in the short to medium-term from the literature on general trauma.

4.2.4: Long term implications of stress reactions

Previous literature in relation to terrorist attacks has highlighted that such attacks can influence those not directly present at the attacks, which can result in the expression of stress symptoms (Galea, Vlahov, Resnick, Ahern, Susser, Gold, Bucuvalas & Kilpatrick, 2003; Shuster, Bradley, Stein, Jaycox, Collins, Marshall, Elliott, Zhou, Kanouse, Morrison & Berry, 2001) and even clinicians who practise in regions that are

far from recent terrorist attacks should be prepared to assist people in dealing with trauma-related symptoms of stress (Schuster et al., 2001). Most of the research has tended to focus on the possible onset of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of such events and have found that those who lack social support are more likely to develop PTSD like symptoms (Shuster, Stein, and Jaycox, 2001; Silver, Holman and McIntosh; 2002). Exposure to the media has also been positively correlated with more profound stress reactions (Schuster et al., 2001). Other specific emotions that have been found to be present alongside stress reactions in the aftermath of a traumatic terrorist event (9/11) have included anger, sadness, fear and anxiety (Fredreickson et al., 2003). However, it must be kept in mind that these studies were conducted in America after 9/11 and therefore may not be representative of the UK population.

My research has paralleled such findings and has revealed that the participants had a vivid recollection of the events and they also seemed to experience a range of emotions in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in relation to finding out that the bombings had taken place, including shock, relief, anxiety and feeling under threat.

These findings also seem to be supported by previous research that has been carried out within the UK. To my knowledge, only two studies have been conducted in the UK in relation to the psychological impact of the bombings (Rubin, Brewin, Greenberg, Simpson and Wesseley, 2005; Rubin, Brewin, Greenberg, Simpson and Wesseley, 2007). However, these studies employed a quantitative methodology that utilised random digit sampling so the limitations of this method should also be kept in mind. In their 2005 study which was conducted 11-13 days after the terrorist attacks, Rubin et al (2005) found that thirty-one percent of Londoners had experienced substantial stress reactions as a result of the London Bombings and there were higher disproportionate

level of stress found in Muslim and non-White participants. They stated that the emotional reactions to terrorist attacks vary and whereas a small proportion of the population will develop well known disorders such as PTSD and clinical depression, other individuals who do not meet the criteria for a formal psychiatric diagnosis may still report higher levels of general anxiety and stress related symptoms. This is extended by findings from Rubin and Wessely (2006) who stated that less severe psychological reactions, such as distress, rumination, heightened concern for friends and family are more common than persistent psychiatric disorders (such as PTSD) in the short to medium-term period (usually within a year following an incident). These reactions are common for those who may not have been directly involved in the incident but who have been exposed to it in various other ways, such as through watching television.

In their follow up study, Rubin et al. (2007) attempted to assess the medium-term psychological and behavioural impact of the London Bombings as they state that such traumatic events can have implications for the way that individuals view themselves and the world around them. They utilised participants from their 2005 study and conducted their follow up study between seven and eight months after the bombings. Participants were assessed as having 'persistent effects' if they gave positive answers in 2005 and 2006. Eleven percent of the sample in the 2007 study showed persistent stress reactions, which Rubin et al. (2007) highlight is not a trivial amount. In addition, although perceived threat to self was reduced in the follow up, various threat levels remained high which were 52% of participants believing that the lives of loved ones were in danger, 43% believing that their own life was in danger, and 90% believing that London was likely to experience another terrorist attack. This indicates that perceived sense of threat can remain in the medium to long-term period after a terrorist attack and this can

be a source of stress for an individual. Alongside this finding, Rubin et al. (2007) found that being Muslim was associated with negative changes in view of oneself which Rubin et al. attributed to the perceived negative portrayal of Muslims in the media and wider society following 7/7. This mirrors the findings of the current research as participants felt that others had started to perceive them negatively due to their race and religion. However, the current research indicates that, alongside Muslim participants, non-Muslims also experienced a negative change in their view of the world.

Hence, it is important for practitioners to be aware of the many ways that a terrorist attack may impact an individual, as not all individuals will necessarily display PTSD symptoms or other clinical symptoms, such as depression. The research discussed indicated that these reactions can be present in the short to medium-term period following a terrorist incident. However, the current research also suggests that, at least for the participants involved in the study, that reactions such as stress and anxiety are also present in the longer-term period following a terrorist incident.

4.3: Implications for Counselling Psychology.

The rationale for conducting this research was that counselling psychologists would be likely to come into contact with Asian men in their practice. It was hoped that the outcomes from this study could be critical in terms of practice for these professionals as they may gain an insight into the ways that Asian men perceive, view and experience their worlds and, therefore they may be able to react in more culturally and gender appropriate ways in relation to the types of issues that these individuals may present with when they come for counselling. As was highlighted in the initial review of the literature (see chapter 1), a gap existed in the literature in terms of the way that Asian men responded to the London Bombings. It was felt that one of the outcomes of this

research would be to extending our knowledge which will advance professional development.

From the results it became apparent that the men were questioning their sense of identity and the general perception of Asian men within society seems to have changed. Hence it appears that the Asian masculine identity has now become synonymous with threat. It is important for practitioners to be aware of this changing perception of Asian men and how it may impact their developing sense of self, as identity is something that they may explore within therapy. Linked in with this, the exploration of microaggressions may be fostered within the therapeutic relationship and it is important for clients to feel that they are being heard rather than feeling dismissed. In line with this, Sue et al. (2007) suggest that practitioners should be aware of their own microaggressions as this may impact upon the process of therapy. Clients' experience of microaggressions could also manifest itself in physical symptoms or emotional symptoms, such as depression (Alleyne, 2005) so it is important for practitioners to be mindful of this as it may affect the type of symptoms that client presents with. Apart from being aware of the possibility of individuals developing PTSD in the aftermath of a terrorist incident, it is also important for Counselling Psychologists to be aware of the many other forms that stress reactions can manifest themselves in (such as anxiety, fear, depression) as clients may be more likely to display these symptoms if they were indirectly exposed to the attacks. Another prominent factor to bear in mind is if clients have had any other exposure to traumatic incidents in the past, as this may affect how they cope in the aftermath of a terrorist incident (Schuster et al., 2001).

When exploring the coping mechanisms utilised by the participants in this study, communication seemed to be an important adaptive way of coping in the aftermath of a

terrorist attack. Hence, practitioners could educate the general public, including members of minority communities, about the benefits of counselling (such as the non-judgemental and trustworthy therapeutic alliance) in order to try and break down some of the stigma that Asian men may associate with accessing counselling. Practitioners could also conduct focus groups where they speak to Asian men about counselling and what changes could be made in order to make psychological services more accessible to them. This may also help to dispel any myths that they may have around what counselling entails.

4.4: Reflections on the use of IPA and the limitations

I chose to utilise the method of IPA in my research as I wanted to explore the subjective experience of my participants in the aftermath of the London Bombings and the meanings that they had attached to this experience (Smith, 2003). IPA emphasises the experiences of the participants from their viewpoint. When creating and exploring each of the themes that emerged from the data, a balance was sought between what was expressed by individual participants against what was expressed collectively (Smith, 2003). Hence, commonalities as well as differences in the experiences of the participants, as expressed through their accounts, were highlighted.

IPA has been criticised in relation to the role of language as Willig (2001) states that the data that is collected can be seen as being representative of the way that the participants talk about an experience as opposed to their actual experience and IPA does not take into account the way that language can also shape experience (please see chapter 2.4 for a more detailed discussion of the general limitations of IPA). However, the participants' accounts from their interviews explored how the participants made sense of and attached meaning to their experience and this is what the current research focused on. Scott (2006) states that perceptions, however distorted from reality, are also avenues to

be understood in gauging how this affected participants' experiences. Other methods, such as discourse analysis were considered, however it seemed that these methods did not offer the opportunity to address questions about subjective experiences and gain insights into the participants' worlds and how they made meaning of their experiences (Willig, 2001), which were all aims of the current research.

Smith (2003) postulates that IPA is more flexible in its approach and it recognised that the researcher may not be able to directly experience the participants' worlds and so the researcher's perspective is utilised to construct further meaning of the phenomenon under investigation. Another strand, linking in with the credibility of the data is that the researcher does not impose their preconceived ideas onto the data and through the process of interaction with the data and the participant throughout the research process (in the interview and in analysing the interview) the researcher comes to recognise other previously unconscious preconceptions and the researcher is therefore also changed through the research process (my account of this is explored further in section 4.4). Smith and Osborne (2004) identified the double hermeneutic and the dynamic nature of the research process as they stated that the participants are trying to make sense of their world whilst the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their world. Access to the participants' world is complicated by the researchers' own conceptions. Through interacting with the data and recognising my preconceived thoughts, this made it possible for me, as a researcher, to be open to unexpected themes from the data and so I was not limiting the analysis to pre-constructed ideas of what I thought may emerge from the data.

Another potential limitation to mention was that the sample was dependent on time restrictions, homogeneity and availability of participants. However, a sufficient amount of participants took part for a study utilising IPA (Smith, 2003). Even though the

participants were homogenous in the sense that they all identified themselves as young, British Asian men, there were differences on the basis of religion. However, I chose to recruit participants of varying religious backgrounds as I was interested in the similarities as well as the differences in Asian men's experience and the experience of non-Muslim men had been fairly neglected in the literature around this phenomenon. However, in terms of homogeneity, it appears that all the Asian men in this study had been affected by the phenomenon under investigation and there was consistency in experience across the accounts as well as individual differences (which is important to highlight in a study employing the use of IPA). The number of participants may limit how far the findings can be generalised and how representative they would be for Asian men in general. However, the depth and breadth of the data generated may help readers to understand the experience for these men, which may be linked in with the experience of other Asian men and the meaning that they attach to their worlds and, as Reid et al (2005) express, the exploration of one phenomenon from multiple perspectives can help the IPA analyst to develop a more detailed and multifaceted account of that phenomenon which is also a form of triangulation. A general point to highlight in terms of the generalisability of the data, is that even though research can help to glean new insights into a phenomenon, the experiences of Asian men will vary, even though there may be some common themes that emerge. Hence, it is important that Asian men are not clustered into a homogenous group and expected to have the same thoughts, feelings and experiences. It is important for practitioners to be mindful of each person's individuality.

In terms of credibility, the research question yielded thick, rich data and eleven super-ordinate themes emerged. As part of the analytical process, the participants' accounts

were constantly being compared and differences as well as similarities were highlighted and explored within each of the themes (Ritchie and Lewis, 2004).

My research supervisor was consulted and was involved in the process of deriving the themes from the data and to help check that the themes were grounded in the data, hence supervision was utilised in the process of triangulation (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992). This helped to highlight any discrepancies in order to develop the themes and analytical process and to check any biases or blind spots in the themes that were being developed. Triangulation also took the form of presenting a poster of my research at the British Psychological Society's joint annual conference with the Division of Counselling Psychology in June 2008 and receiving feedback on my research from fellow counselling psychologists (readers are directed back to chapter 2 for a more detailed account of this).

In order to improve validity, the researcher made the research and process of analysis as clear as possible to enable the reader to draw comparisons in the data and offer them the opportunity to explore the development of the themes to check if they felt that they were grounded in the data (Smith, 2004). This should enable the researchers' conclusions to be replicated by the reader (Elliot, 1999). I wanted to be balanced in terms of representing the voices of the participants accurately (my internal thoughts and struggles with this task have been documented in chapter 2) and also develop my own interpretations based on the data that were used to create the eleven super-ordinate themes. Unfortunately, due to space restrictions, it was not possible to document everything that all of the participants had said so some of the nuances in the individual accounts of the participants may have been lost.

The plausibility of quotations utilised to support each theme were checked within supervision and with expert and non-expert readers of the write up to ensure that they were a coherent and representative account of the participants' views and were grounded in the data (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005). In order to increase the transparency of the data included in the analysis, each interpretation was supported by the data and each interpretation made sense to the readers of the write up (Silverstein, Auerbach and Levant, 2006). The rigor of the study was enhanced by the use of supervision which audited the paper trail from transcripts to write up (Elliot, 1999).

One issue that became particularly apparent for me when analysing the data was the issue of researcher and participant sameness. As mentioned in the analysis section, I noticed that the Sikh participants tended to identify with me in the interview when they were describing their experiences. I feel that it was my visual appearance and my name that enabled participants to identify my Punjabi and Sikh roots. Secondly, I noticed that the Muslim participants, in comparison to the Sikh and Hindu participants, tended to re-state their disagreement with the attacks several times and feel the need to overtly differentiate themselves from the bombers. It almost felt as if the Muslim participants saw me as being different to them on the basis of religion. Hence, I felt that the Sikh participants saw themselves as being similar to me and the Muslim participants saw themselves as being similar to me on one level (through our shared race) but also different to me (on the basis of religion).

In line with Oguntokun's (1998) account of her research process, my initial assumption was that my participants and I would be 'us' and not the 'other' to each other. I was seduced by the idea of sameness (Hurd & McIntyre, 1996). However, I became conscious of my position as a British Asian Sikh female researcher interviewing British

Asian Sikh, Hindu and Muslim men and the differences between us, which made me realise that not only may they be 'other' to me on some level, but they may also see me as 'other' (Oguntokun, 1998). Therefore, in Ramji's (2008) words, I was neither an insider nor an outsider in relation to my participants. This can highlight that within the research setting, there are multiple social and power relations between the researcher and the interviewee (Abbas, 2006).

There is some evidence to suggest that a match between the ethnicities of the researcher and interviewee could be beneficial as the researcher who shares this characteristic with the interviewee is less likely to pathologise or stereotype 'their own' (Abbas, 2006; Brar, 1992; Papadopoulos and Lees, 2002). There is also evidence to suggest that the greater the ethnic and racial similarity of the researcher and participants the more likely it will be that a more egalitarian and less exploitative research relationship will be developed (Ram, 1996; Ramji, 2008). However, Abbas notes that even in the same-ethnicity interviewing settings there will always be some inter-cultural mismatch and Ramji (2008) elaborates on this by stating that it is not realistic to have the dual categories of insider/outsider as, although the researcher and interviewee may be matched on one dimension such as ethnicity, they may differ on other dimensions, such as religion. Hence, she feels that the research relationship remains fraught with complex power relations as no singular identity of the researcher or interviewee can create common understandings or equalise the power relations between the two parties. Thus, regardless of 'sameness' versus 'difference' in the research process, the data will be dependent on the aspects of their lives and identities that the interviewees describe, based on the assumptions that they have made about the researcher through social comparison (Ramji, 2008).

4.5: My experience of the research process

In order to be a reflexive practitioner (in line with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analytic framework), I think it is important for me to explore my experience of the research process as a whole. I have highlighted my thoughts and feelings throughout the research and I feel that through interacting with my participants and their transcripts, I have also been changed throughout the research process (Smith, 2003). In line with this stance, Wosket (2003) proposes that one of the fundamental payoffs for the counsellor in undertaking research is that they learn about themselves through learning about the other. This process of reflexivity and the emphasis on self-reflection and self-monitoring can also be seen to parallel a practitioner's monitoring of countertransference in the process of therapy (Silverstein et al, 2006). I do not think that when I embarked on the journey of conducting my research that I thought that it would have such a profound influence and impact on me.

Throughout the research I have documented how I felt and the struggles that I was facing as the enormity of the task was highlighted for me. As the level of responsibility struck me, in terms of how I represented the data and the participants' voices I felt a sense of protectiveness over *my* participants and I feel that I had become emotionally attached to them on some level, especially through the analytical process as I felt that, through reliving the interview by reading the transcripts and listening to the taped interactions with my participants, I was entering their world and could feel what they were feeling in a sense. At times I found it hard to distance myself from their worlds as, on some level, I became enmeshed with the participants through the data. The interviews and analysis had brought up a wide range of emotions for me such as anger, sadness, helplessness, anxiety, admiration and determination. This is where supervision and the use of expert and non-expert readers became invaluable in helping me to

separate myself from the participants and gain a more objective view. This helped me to adopt a stance where I could be in touch with my participants, enter their world, feel what they were feeling but then leave their worlds and enter back into my world and be me with the added bonus of the participants' perspective. I have been profoundly moved throughout the research process and feel that I have developed a deeper understanding of the participants' worlds. I have a strong admiration for them and feel privileged that they shared their stories with me. I hope they will be happy with the way that their voices have been portrayed.

4.6: Potential future research

This study employed a qualitative methodology in order to provide rich, detailed and informative data on the experiences of young Asian Muslim and non-Muslim men in the aftermath of 7/7 to identify any psychological and emotional impact on the men, an area which had been relatively unexplored in the existing literature. Future studies that question a wider range of Asian men, within and outside of London, on a larger scale, in terms of how they define their ethnicity and religion may be able to increase the generalisability of findings to a wider variety of Asian men. It would also be interesting to see if the men are still having similar experiences of covert discrimination and questioning their identity and sense of belonging within Britain over three years after the attacks and if they still feel that they are living in a constant state of threat due to the possibility of another terrorist attack. This would add to the knowledge around the long term psychological impact of terrorism for those who were not directly involved in the attacks (Rubin et al, 2007).

Another possibility could be to conduct an in-depth study with Muslim men in general, from a variety of races to see if they have had similar experiences in the aftermath of

7/7 and if they face similar discriminatory behaviour on a day to day basis. This could help to highlight the similarities and differences in the experiences in British Asian Muslim men. As this study highlights that non-Muslim men also had negative experiences in the aftermath of the London Bombings, another interesting participant group to look at could be Sikh men who wear turbans as this is an outward symbol and expression of their faith. The turban had become synonymous with the Taliban after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001. I would be intrigued to learn more about their day to day experiences and how they define their identity and sense of self. I feel that these insights could aid practitioners in increasing their knowledge around the many dimensions that can influence young British Asian men on a day to day basis.

In line with this, it is important to note the broader global and political context after 7/7 and 9/11, which may be contributing to the feelings and shared experiences of the participants in this study. Kundani (2007) talks about globalisation as being the latest stage of imperialism as Western civilisation and its values are seen as being superior to all others and the Western world tries to impose these values on the rest of the world, by force if necessary. In line with this, the events of 9/11 and 7/7 have led to the so called “war on terror” which has served to create a worldwide popular anti-Muslim culture, which is based on the politics of fear and has led to a development of state racism. Kundani argues that this state racism fosters institutional racism and shapes popular racism within society. He argues that through the “war on terror” the notion of multiculturalism is demonised which undermines Britain’s previous stance of integration within society and between various cultures.

He argues that the “new spectres haunting the west” (p.1) are how ethnic minorities (in particular Muslims) can be integrated into society and how extremism, radicalisation

and terrorism can be prevented. He postulates that these issues have been brought to the fore at this time as they are a result of a deeper shift in global political geography and that they are a result of the 'globalisation' that Western governments have promoted. The Western governments are seen as being responsible for creating an aura of fear and anxiety around those that the West defines as 'aliens', which includes the notion of Muslim extremists.

Kundani writes :

“New forms of racism – linked to a systematic failure to understand the causes of forced migration, global terrorism and social segregation – have spread. The result is a climate of hatred and fear, directed especially at Muslim and migrant communities, and the erosion of the human rights of those whose cultures and values are perceived as ‘alien’...” (p. 180)

He states that the Western government does not recognise the part that they had to play in the development of global terrorism through creating a world of inequality and injustice. Instead, they define terrorism in terms of a fanatical Islam being positioned at odds with the Western world due to varying and distinct cultural value systems. This gives rise to conflict between the Western world (who is seen as symbolising wealth, freedom and liberation) and the Eastern world (which is seen to represent Islamic extremism and oppression) as they are seen as distinct entities with no overlap and no middle ground and “terrorism originates from the Islamic world with the West and its history contributing nothing to this process” (Kundani, 2007, p. 2). Therefore, the complexities of different societies and their relationships are ignored in this process. Kundani feels that this segregation is maintained through aggressively promoted stereotypes that reflect the anxieties of the West.

In addition to the anti-Muslim discourse in Britain before 9/11 (e.g. the Salman Rushdie affair) Kundani claims that after 9/11 and 7/7, ethnic minorities (Muslims in particular), were demonised and it was hypothesised that the tolerance of multiculturalism was to blame for extremism developing within British society. This led to a new emphasis on the integration of minorities and Muslims, in particular, were singled out as needing integration and needing to define themselves as British through pledging their allegiance to [ill-defined] British values. It was perceived by British society that the tolerance of cultural diversity has allowed Asians to separate and isolate themselves and live by their own values and rules, which gave rise to extremism and terrorism. Alongside this, Asian communities and Muslims were also blamed for refusing to mix with British society. Kundani states that the effect of this was that it developed a clear sense of “them and us/West versus East/modern versus backward” and this created a phoney Britishness rather than a genuine universalism. He explains that “the result is a worsening climate of racism and division and an end to liberal tolerance of ethnic and religious diversity.” (p. 7). Diversity was perceived to be threatening to social stability and the role of the state and the media in creating a climate of racism was ignored and hostility was normalised to be a natural consequence of the mixing of various cultures. This clear distinction between the West and the East does not seem to take into account the multi-faceted identity that a British Asian man may have, with differing faith, heritage and cultures that may be potentially conflicting. Kundani argues that a hierarchy is set up within British society in which various communities are ranked according to their distance from the British norms and the further away they are from these norms, the more ‘alien’ they are perceived to be. Kundani goes on further to argue:

“What is being produced is the opposite of an integrated society as young Muslims, and others whose values are deemed ‘alien’ become disenchanted with national institutions that are all too mixed up with a culture of supremacy.” (p. 140).

This can be applied to both Muslim and non-Muslim Asians, as the culture of the non-Muslim Asians may also be perceived to be ‘alien’ from pure British values. In addition, he feels that this vast and rapidly expanding accumulation of state power confronts young Asians, Africans, Muslims and non-Muslims, immigrants and British-born as, under the UK terror laws, they are seen as suspects who face mass stop and search with ‘reasonable’ suspicion (the UK terror laws perceive someone’s ethnic group as a valid reason), mass surveillance and the prospect of prosecution. He feels that these state powers were employed on the basis that they would target alien communities and not the general British population, leading to a climate of hatred and fear towards these alien communities and an erosion of their human rights. Therefore, it appears that racism has taken on a new form in current British society and it seems to be specifically directed to Muslims and others perceived as ‘alien’, which includes non-Muslim Asians.

If I had more time when conducting this research, I would have liked to have conducted some focus groups with both Muslim and non-Muslim Asian men as I feel that this would have yielded a different kind of data and would have told us something different about their experiences in the aftermath of 7/7 and the potential psychological impact.

For example, Kreuger and Casey (2000) state that the use of focus groups can add value when the researcher is trying to understand varying perspectives between groups and they may help to uncover factors that influence opinions, behaviour and motivation.

Focus groups have been shown to be compatible with an Interpretative

Phenomenological analysis framework (Davies, Greenfield, Ross and Eiser, 2005; Fade, 2004; Rabie, 2004; Roose and John, 2003; Vandrevalla, Hampson, Daly, Arber and Thomas, 2005), so conducting focus groups may yield data that sheds light on the results of this study.

Given the feelings of anger towards Muslims as expressed by the non-Muslim participants in particular in this study, it would have been interesting to see how Muslim and non-Muslim participants interacted with each other and if these negative views and feelings of anger would be expressed. Bryman (2004) mentions that alongside gathering in depth data around the exploration of a specific topic, the practitioner is also interested in the way that the individuals discuss a certain topic as members of a group rather than just as individuals and, therefore, the researcher is also interested in how individuals respond to each other's views and build up a view out of the interaction that takes place in the group. Hence, the data obtained may be beneficial in exploring how Asian men as individuals may collectively make sense of this phenomenon and construct meanings around it. However, linked in with this is one of the limitations of focus groups which is that in group contexts participants may be more likely to express culturally expected views when compared to individual interviews (Morgan, 2002). On the positive side, however, Bryman states that this does not question the validity of the group interview data as it may be precisely the discrepancy between privately and publicly held views which is of importance. I think that this would be something to bear in mind when conducting such groups with Asian men.

It could be a possibility that the focus groups may enable the men to have a platform to identify with each other through their shared experiences in the aftermath of the bombings which could begin to address the divide within young British Asians. This

could also highlight possible solutions to bridging the perceived divide that has been identified. The participants expressed a need for race relations to be rebuilt within the Asian community and within British Society as a whole. Summit mentioned specifically that focus groups may be an important step forward, in terms of bridging the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims as he stated that in his day to day life he did not have much interaction with Muslim men and focus groups could be an intervention to bring Muslims and non-Muslim men together to facilitate open communication between them.

Focus groups could also give Asian men a place to assert their needs and to express what kind of support they feel may be beneficial to them to help them cope in the aftermath of the bombings. They could also be utilised to explore why Asian men may be reluctant to access psychological services for support both generally and in the aftermath of major incidents and what could be done to make the services more accessible to Asian men, as from their interviews it became apparent that communicating and expressing their feelings about the events, particularly in the aftermath of 7/7 was beneficial for the participants in this study. These results could be beneficial when thinking about developing psychological services that are culturally appropriate for young Asian men. I feel that culture goes beyond just race and religion, but also encompasses the day to day culture of the world that they live in and how they fit in with the larger cultural framework of British society, as this can also bring up conflicts in terms of how Asian men define their identity, as expressed by the participants in this research. As Abbas (2006) states, giving a voice to marginalised groups in society does not suggest that they have been empowered as, for that, real change is required and not simply a development of an individual's knowledge.

4.7: Conclusions

This study's aim was to understand the psychological impact that the London Bombings may have had on young Asian men living in London. The analysis results suggest that, at least for the men involved in this study, the London Bombings have had consequences on their everyday life and the way that they view their world. It became apparent that, although they felt that they were still the same people internally (and their beliefs about life had not changed), the way that they felt that they were viewed by others had changed. The participants were conscious of others' perceptions of them and they feared that others would automatically view them in a negative light.

This was linked in with being automatically associated with the London bombers due to a visible shared characteristic which was their race. It was felt that brown skin and the terms Asian and Islam had become synonymous with terrorism within the British society and it was feared that they would be seen, initially at least, as a potential threat, an extremist or a terrorist. This was a shared perception for both the Muslim and the non-Muslim participants, helping to extend the existing literature on the impact of terrorism to encompass a non-Muslim viewpoint. They felt that this metaphor of brown skin = Muslim = terrorist had been fuelled by representations in the media and the media was seen as an important source of influencing people's beliefs and a source of knowledge for those individuals who did not have much contact with Asian men on a daily basis.

This had led to conflicts for the Muslim and non-Muslim participants in terms of their sense of self and how they identified themselves. It seems as if through feeling isolated and disowned by the British Society, the men were tending to distance themselves more from the British side of themselves and align more to the Asian side. However, it

appeared that this distancing was context dependent and was more salient when the men felt that their sense of self was under threat from others' negative perceptions. Hence, it appears that the participants' sense of identifying with being Asian had become a protective defence mechanism guarding their sense of self and helping to keep this in tact.

Through this conflict, divisions of 'them' and 'us' also emerged. This division was on two levels. Firstly, there was a divide created between Asians and non-Asians. This was experienced by all of the participants and the Muslim participants, in particular, seemed to identify and gain a sense of unity through feeling connected to other Asians. This sense of solidarity was in response to a perceived sense of having a shared experience of isolation and covert discrimination in the aftermath of the London bombings. The Muslim participants also felt the need to more strongly disassociate themselves from the bombers through constantly expressing their disagreement with the attacks throughout the interview. Secondly, the non-Muslim participants spoke of a divide within the Asian community in Britain, one that was between Muslims and non-Muslims. It seems as if the non-Muslim participants were moving between two alternative positions: a sense of feeling connected and empathising with Muslims as fellow Asians and a sense of dissociating from Muslims as, through the bombers' actions, the non-Muslim participants were now being perceived as a threat. Both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants were also starting to define their identity in terms of their religion. This highlights the complexity of the research findings as the participants seem to be caught between the confusion of identification with each other and differentiation from each other. Their definition of their identity also seemed to fluctuate in terms of defining their identity in terms of their ethnicity or defining their identity in terms of their religion.

One of the major research findings is that the London Bombings have led all of the participants to question their sense of self and identity, especially in terms of their race and religion. Of course, it must be highlighted that it is likely that questions around their sense of self in relation to their race and religion may have been issues for the participants before the London bombings and they all had some experience of either direct or covert discrimination before the aftermath of 7/7. However, as mentioned by one participant, Arun, the London Bombings served to highlight the issues of race and religion in society and made these issues more salient for the men, making them more sensitive to their race and religion. They felt that there had been a change in society and there was now a general societal perception that it was ok to be prejudiced towards Muslims and Asians. It should also be recognised that the participants felt that attitudes towards Muslims and Asians had been changing and becoming more negative since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on the 11th September 2001. However, the impact of 7/7 was more intense for the men due to the sense of familiarity the men felt with London and the places where the bombs were detonated. Hence, 7/7 directly affected the men more as it was closer to home. This indicated that the men's sense of self was changing in accordance with changing beliefs and attitudes in British society.

The men utilised various coping strategies to help them to cope in the aftermath of the London Bombings. The adaptive coping strategies included talking to friends and family, coping through utilising religion, spirituality and prayer, coping through music and coping through gaining knowledge about their religion. It became apparent that the adaptive coping strategies that they utilised were in accordance with their beliefs and worldview. None of the participants accessed professional support in the aftermath of the bombings, but instead they preferred to discuss their thoughts and feelings with

people that they felt close to. It seemed as if it was the unconditional positive regard that they felt which helped them to communicate with these individuals. Given their feelings of persecution at the time and their fear of being perceived negatively by others, having this space to process where they did not feel judged or viewed negatively seemed to be invaluable. This indicates that a therapeutic relationship that embodies the core conditions could prove beneficial in helping individuals to process their feelings after a terrorist attack, such as the London Bombings. However, the men also mentioned that they would be unlikely to access professional support, such as counselling due to a fear of being stigmatised and misunderstood. This raises the question of how to make counselling and psychological services more accessible to young Asian men.

Avoidance was also utilised as a way of coping, which included avoiding taking the trains and distancing themselves from the media and limiting their exposure to news coverage related to the events. The men also tried to gain some sense of control in the aftermath of the events, in an attempt to manage their sense of feeling targeted and under threat, through consciously changing their behaviour, such as not carrying bags and shaving when travelling. It appears that the men were living in a heightened sense of awareness and they felt that certain symbols had become synonymous with threat in British society, such as backpacks, beards and traditional Islamic clothing.

Overall, it appears that the men's experiences in the aftermath of the London Bombings have led them to re-evaluate the meaning of life and their sense of what is important as existential thoughts and questions have been highlighted. They have also pushed the issues of race and religion to the fore for the participants, through their experience of being perceived differently by society.

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PART C: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Title: Exploring the therapeutic relationship and the impact on my unique developing self: A client case study.

Exploring the therapeutic relationship and the impact on my unique developing self: A client case study²

Introduction

This client study is based on Arun, who I have worked with for eight sessions using a person centred approach. We are working towards an ending as he feels that he has made good progress. I chose this particular case for a number of reasons. Firstly, it gave me an insight into the psychological challenges faced by someone experiencing cancer. Massie, Holland and Straker (1990) assert that when an individual experiences cancer and their fears around facing death, this can drive them to examine problems that might otherwise have been tolerated. This seemed true for Arun as his diagnosis (and subsequent impact on his marriage) had led him to re-evaluate his world and his needs. Fler, Hoekstra, Sleifter, Tuinman and Hoestra-Weebers (2008) state that this is particularly true for men who have experienced testicular cancer as this mainly affects men in the prime of their life (between 15 and 45 years of age) and can be perceived as an invasive emotional event which can lead to a process of self renewal and restructuring as their outlook on life is challenged.

Secondly, it allowed me an opportunity to explore how a therapeutic relationship embodying the core conditions could enable a client to access feelings that had been buried under layers of “encrusted psychological defences” (Rogers, 1961, p.351). Linked in with this, I feel that this client study highlights the experience of a young Asian man with mental health issues, which may be useful in providing valuable insights as the young Asian men have not been the focus of many studies that explore mental health

² The client’s name and other identifying details have been changed in order to sufficiently protect his confidentiality and to ensure anonymity.

issues (Anand and Cochrane, 2005; Hussain and Cochrane, 2004). I feel that this study also indicates that even though it has been found that when younger men who have experienced testicular cancer may want to hide behind a brave façade and may not request emotional support or information on specific therapies (Boudioni, McPherson, Melia, Boulton, Leydon and Mossman, 2001; Moynihan, 1998), in Arun's case when he did access psychological support he seemed to find it useful in re-evaluating his life, discovering his needs and, as a consequence, improving his psychological wellbeing. Hence, this study may be able to add to existing literature and provide insight into the life of an Asian man who experienced cancer and, as a result, was diagnosed with depression.

Thirdly, this case challenged my formulation of Rogers' initial conceptualisation of person centred therapy as I initially saw it as a simple approach which I thought would be relatively easy to utilise with clients. The learning that I encountered from working therapeutically with this client has also led me to explore ways that I could make this approach my own and develop my unique style as a therapist, helping me to alter my concept of person centred therapy from a process of doing to a way of being.

Theoretical Orientation

Humanistic therapy is a paradigm that is influenced by existentialism and phenomenology, which assert the importance of viewing individuals as being capable of reflecting upon their experience (McLeod, 2003). The inbuilt actualising tendency is emphasised in this approach and Rogers (1951) suggests that this acts as a positive motivational force and a drive for psychological growth. Rogers (1986a) stated: "In client-centred therapy, the person is free to choose any directions, but actually selects positive and constructive pathways. I can only explain this in terms of a directional

tendency inherent in the human organism—a tendency to grow, to develop, to realize its full potential” (p.127). Rogers (1980) believed that individuals are always actualising himself as best as he can under the circumstances, however, if they are in unfavourable circumstances, then the actualising tendency can be hidden under layers of psychological defences (Rogers, 1961).

Clients often enter therapy with a poor self concept as they have established internalised conditions of worth (which are established through their interactions with others through their need for positive regard) and this can result in the development of “incongruence between self and experience” (Thorne, 1992, p.31). Mearns and Thorne (1999) postulate that if a person is largely dependent on positive feedback from others to gain a sense of self worth, then this could further fuel psychological disturbance. Therefore, conditions of worth are seen as an important influence in how a person constructs themselves and their relationships and this is a key mechanism through which therapeutic change can occur (Chantler, 2005).

Of central importance to person centred therapy is the nature and quality of the therapeutic relationship between the client and the therapist. The therapist adopts the stance of helping to facilitate the client’s process of discovering their inner resources (Thorne, 1992). Growth and therapeutic change can be encouraged within the client through the therapist’s embodiment of Rogers’ core conditions of empathy (sensing the feelings of the client and accurately portraying this to them), unconditional positive regard (acceptance and caring) and congruence (genuineness or realness). Hence, a relationally deep encounter between the client and therapist is facilitated by these core conditions continuing and existing over time (Mearns and Cooper, 2005). The role of the therapist is to attend to the client as a whole person by offering the core conditions

consistently to all the parts of that person, valuing each of these aspects of the client's personality equally, listening to each of them attentively and being congruent in their relationship with all of them (Mearns, 1995). Mearns (1996) proposed that the essence of a strong person-centred therapeutic relationship is that the therapist is both willing and able to move to deeper levels of relating through the manifestation of the core conditions to a high degree.

Bozarth (1998) postulates that the concept of empathy is central to the Rogerian philosophy. In my work with Arun, empathy seemed to present a challenge for me. Rogers' conceptualisation of empathy was criticised by Scott (1984) as he felt that there was conceptual confusion around the phenomenon which had led to varying definitions of empathy among researchers. This was largely attributable to empathy being an internal and unobservable state. Scott proposed that empathy should be viewed in line with Rogers' thinking, as a therapist's way of being as opposed to a communication skill. Although the core conditions are often presented as separate entities, Bozarth (1998) in fact argues that these concepts are inextricably linked and it is impractical to try and delineate them. Post modern perspectives on the person centred approach expand the conceptualisation of the requirements that are necessary for therapeutic change. Rennie (1998) states that alongside the core conditions, transparency, self disclosure, concreteness and cultural awareness also facilitate therapeutic change and Thorne (2002) also sees tenderness as being an important principle.

Context and Referral

I work for a charity which provides up to 21 sessions of one to one counselling for clients affected by a range of issues. As part of my placement, I am based at a GP

practice for a few hours a week. The administrator deals with referrals and passes the client onto a counsellor for an initial assessment. Although the initial assessment can be seen as being incongruent with this theoretical approach (as the authority about the person should rest with them rather than an outside expert) the policies of the setting may demand that an assessment be carried out (Bozarth, 1998). A number of researchers have postulated that diagnosis and assessment can be seen as inappropriate tools as the locus of evaluation is placed in the therapist as an outside expert (McLeod, 2003; Newnes, 2004; Pilgrim, 1992; Siebert, 2002). I am required to conduct assessments as part of my placement contract. I explored my sense of conflict around this in supervision as I felt that I wanted to be true to the essence of person-centred therapy but I also felt it was important for me to follow company procedure. After a discussion with my supervisor, I also felt that making the decision to deny my client access to the initial assessment could be construed as a directive act which could increase the power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship (Joseph, 2004; Tolan, 2005).

Arun was referred by his GP and it was arranged that he would be seen at the GP practice on a weekly basis. Arun had been referred due to 'relationship problems', 'depression' and 'difficulties in coping with life'. When Arun began counselling, he had been on antidepressants for 3 months.

Client background and genogram

Arun is a 37 year old British born Sri Lankan male. He was diagnosed with testicular cancer in 2003 and underwent chemotherapy. The cancer reappeared in 2005 and he underwent chemotherapy again, but it was unsuccessful and his left testicle was removed (orchidectomy). Also, whilst undergoing chemotherapy, he suffered a heart attack.

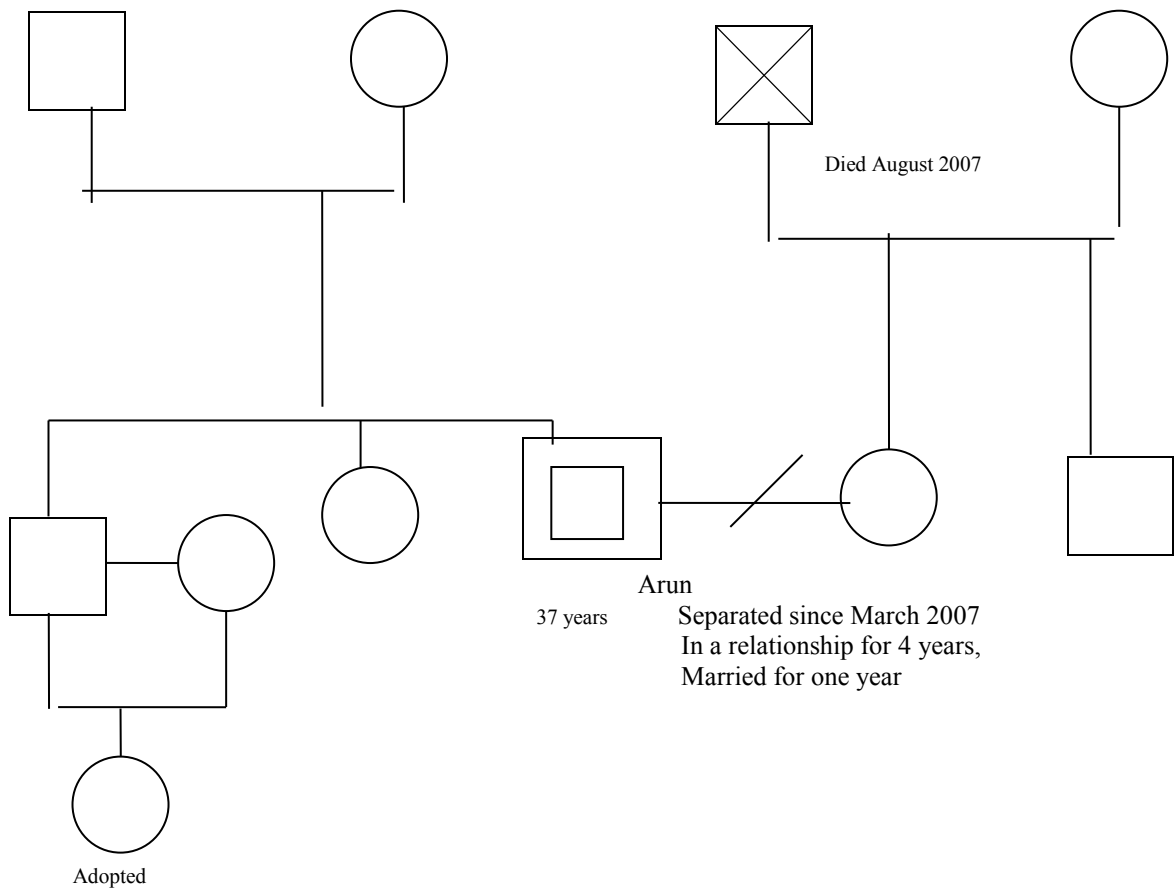
Arun felt that he had been unable to talk about how he was feeling or grieve for his loss.

He felt that this impacted on his relationship with his wife. He married a White British woman, which was opposed by his family as they wanted him to have an arranged marriage to a Sri Lankan woman. This had caused conflict between Arun, his family and his wife. Arun felt that his cultural values were very different to that of his parents. He separated from his wife in March 2007 and this was a very painful experience for him. He had hoped to rekindle his relationship with his wife, but she seemed determined to divorce. He was used to receiving pressure from his family who constantly told him to ‘forget about his wife’ and ‘move on’ but he felt unable to do this. As a result of this separation, Arun lived with his parents and found this difficult as he felt unable to express himself.

Genogram of family members as discussed by Arun³

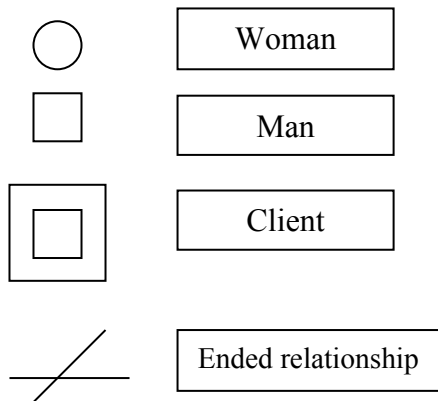
Sri- Lankan Family

White British family



³ Names and identifying details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the client and his family

Key



The initial meeting

In line with Tolan's thinking (2005) I felt that it was important to address the potential power imbalance between therapist and client and, to emphasis the equality and collaboration within the forthcoming relationship. Hence, I collected Arun from the waiting room and introduced myself to him rather than having him directed to the therapy room by a receptionist. He was smartly dressed, as he had come to the session straight from work. I was aware of the inconsistency between the way that Arun was dressed and the way that I perceived him. In opposition to the apparent sense of confidence portrayed by his clothes, he struck me as being quite fragile and he struggled to maintain eye contact with me throughout the initial session, glancing occasionally in my general direction as if to check if I was still engaged with him. I made my eye contact available to him to signal that I was willing to engage at a deeper level if he wished as Mearns (1996) states that in order for a strong person centred therapeutic relationship to develop, the therapist should be willing and able to move to deeper levels of relating by embodying the core conditions. He appeared to be on the edge of tears

throughout the initial meeting and towards the end of the session he became visibly tearful.

I made Arun aware that I knew a little bit about him through the referral that I had received from his GP and asked him if he could tell me about what had brought him to counselling. Arun described feeling ‘really down’ and he was finding it difficult to cope with being separated from his wife and moving back home with his parents. He occasionally felt ‘depressed’ and had a mild suicidal ideation which his GP was aware of. However, he felt that he would not commit suicide as he saw it as the ‘coward’s way out’. I conducted a risk assessment and it appeared that Arun had no clear plan or intention of committing suicide, nonetheless I informed him that it was my ethical obligation to liaise with his GP surrounding potential risk, which he accepted and understood. Arun had been diagnosed by his GP with ongoing depression and he had been prescribed 20mg of Citalopram daily, which he had been taking for 3 months under the supervision of his GP. Burns (1999) asserts that Citalopram is relatively free of side effects and I had no concerns that it would hinder the process of therapy.

Arun described having intense feelings of loss in relation to his orchidectomy and separation from his wife and he was tearful throughout the session. He expressed wanting to find the ‘old him’ and increase his confidence again. Even though Arun was unsure about what to expect from counselling and how it would help as he did not perceive himself to be “mad”, he also mentioned how he had been looking forward to having the opportunity to come to counselling, as this was something that he had not experienced before. His willingness to explore his own difficulties seemed to be a common theme throughout our sessions.

Initial formulation of the issue

After the initial session, my immediate impression of Arun was that he was trying to make sense of his life and struggling to find meaning in his experience of profound loss. He seemed to be questioning who he was and what his purpose in life was. It has been proposed by O'Connor, Wicker and Germino (1990) that an individual's search for meaning is often triggered after a cancer diagnosis. One of the striking features of the first session with Arun was his feelings of guilt in relation to his intense sadness around his loss and how he felt he 'should be over it'. This is indicative of the external conditions of worth which Arun had internalised through his experience of conditional positive regard from his family. According to Rogers (1957) conditions of worth affect a person's ability to self actualise and move towards their real self. This suggests that he may have been in a state of incongruence and this could have been leading to a psychological vulnerability which was making him anxious and confused (Rogers, 1959). Person centred theory proposes that when a significant event occurs and there is high incongruence present in the individual at that time, then this can result in the breakdown in the process of defence. As a result the client is suddenly brought into contact with the denied experience resulting in accompanying anxiety due to the threat to the current self concept (Nelson-Jones, 2006). As a working hypothesis open to amendment as therapy proceeded (as at the core of person centred therapy is the therapist being beside the client on their journey, in their frame of reference, and not imposing their own conditions on the client), I considered it possible that he had internalised conditions of worth as a result of conditional acceptance from his parents. They continually told him to 'forget and move on' but Arun felt unable to do this. This had resulted in him having an externalised locus of evaluation and Brodley (2006) states that a client with an externalised locus of evaluation is extremely vulnerable to the evaluations or conditions of worth that others place on them.

It also struck me that Arun's account of his depression seemed consistent with the symptoms of depression described in DSM IV-TR. His symptoms were also consistent with the idea of depression and low self esteem co-existing (Hallstrom and McClure 2005). Social factors can also influence the manifestation of depression including isolation and a lack of a supportive relationship with a partner (Hallstrom and McClure, 2005, Mearns and Cooper, 2005). I wondered if these experiences contributed to Arun's depression. However, I did not want to be too interpretative at this stage and wanted to follow Arun's lead, embodying the core conditions and trusting his ability and the process in line with Rogers' (1957) thinking. Hence, I accompanied him in his frame of reference.

Negotiating a contract

In the first session, I informed Arun of the BPS ethics which I adhere to, including issues around confidentiality and confirmed he understood the conditions around breaking confidentiality, as Jenkins (2002) states that this is an ethical and legal obligation for practitioners. He had been offered the standard setting contract of 7 sessions with a negotiable option for further sessions beyond this. We agreed to meet for an hour on a fortnightly basis (due to Arun's work commitments) and collaboratively agreed to review the work we had done together after 7 sessions.

Choice of therapeutic approach and therapeutic aims

According to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence Guidance on Cancer Services (2004), the type of psychological approach taken should be dependent on the type and severity of the client's problem.

During the first session, Arun and I explored the way that we would work together. We discussed the option of utilising a problem focused approach as opposed to an exploratory approach in order to facilitate some reconnection with his experiencing. Arun felt that he would like to work utilising a more explorative approach as he felt that he did not have a space outside of the sessions where he could talk freely and explore his thoughts, feelings, experiences and emotions. Thorne (2002) hypothesises that person centred therapy can be effective in time limited work as long as the client wishes to work in this way.

After discussing Arun with my supervisor, I chose to work within a person centred framework as I hoped that this might facilitate Arun exploring his inner experiences in his life that has been distorted and were inconsistent with his self concept. I adopted a person centred framework with Arun to enable him to develop a sense of worth not bound by conditions of worth. I believed, as Rogers did, that he had the capacity to change. I wanted to be beside Arun in his journey and offer him a safe, therapeutic space where he could explore his feelings and thoughts at his own pace, not bound by my agenda. I wanted to experience Arun for who he was. As Arun seemed to be searching for meaning in his life I hoped, by him developing a relationship that was grounded in the core conditions, that this might assist him in moving towards a reconnection with his inner organismic self and away from reliance upon external sources. For me, this highlighted Kalmthout's (1998) position where he sees the therapist as trying to maintain a position of avoiding directing the client but at the same time guides the client to assert the inner self as an autonomous agent distinct from external authority.

The overall aim of the sessions was to form a therapeutic relationship in order to facilitate change. I hoped to do this by embodying the core conditions and supporting

Arun in finding his own answers. He wanted to utilise the sessions to look at his feelings of loss, depression and low self esteem. During the sessions we worked together to determine how Arun wanted to utilise each session. This assisted in the process of empowering him and addressing the power differential in the therapeutic relationship, which Tolan (2005) sees as being vital for developing a therapeutically healthy relationship.

The content and process of therapy

The Beginning of Therapy

Before the assessment session, I remember reading the referral and being struck by the information that Arun had been diagnosed with testicular cancer. I felt slightly anxious at this point, wondering whether Arun would feel comfortable talking to a woman about an experience which was related to being a man and whether he would be responsive to counselling. I also wondered whether I would be able to truly relate to and understand his experience. However, Rogers (1998) states that when a client comes for counselling it is not the presenting issue that is of primary concern, but rather the person is motivated to get in touch with their real self. Dryden (2002) also states that person-centred therapy is effective with clients with a wide range of issues and it is the counsellor's embodiment of the core conditions which is of central importance. I wondered at this point whether the core conditions alone would be enough to facilitate change.

I found it easy to regard Arun positively as I experienced him as a warm and caring person and I felt a strong connection with him from early on in our work together. In our first meeting he struck me as being fragile and vulnerable, almost child like. His body language was closed and he was facing away from me in his seat. I noticed that he rarely made eye contact with me, instead averting his gaze to the floor or out of the window

that was behind me. In line with Mearns' thinking (1999), I kept my eye contact available to him to indicate that I was willing to relate a deeper level if he wished and I noticed that he occasionally looked up to make eye contact, almost to check if I was still with him.

In the first session he spoke about how his experience with of being diagnosed with cancer and having a heart attack whilst undergoing chemotherapy had changed his life. He had never expected this to happen to him and he expressed feeling completely numb and shocked when he was diagnosed. He mentioned that he had found it hard to come to terms with the idea that he had nearly died whilst undergoing treatment and expressed how he felt that this experience had completely changed him as a person and his world around him, leaving him feeling like a failure and unsure about what he wanted from life. Fler et al (2008) state that young men usually take their good health for granted and a cancer diagnosis may replace peoples sense that they have control over events and what happens to them with feelings of vulnerability and a fear of death. This can also lead to more negative beliefs about the world and a loss of meaning and life purpose, which seemed to be consistent with what Arun was experiencing.

The first session seemed to focus around the theme of loss, in particular, Arun's feelings around the loss of his relationship with his wife and Arun losing his testicle due to cancer. Arun was waiting for his wife to make a decision about whether she wanted a divorce, indicating that he felt a loss of control over his current situation as he was externalising his locus of control, He was experiencing immense feelings of sadness and anger but felt that he had not had a space to express these feelings. On some level, Arun felt that there had been a loss in his sense of manhood as his testicle was a part of himself that he had lost and that he had not been able to grieve for. He described how

this perceived loss in his manhood had impacted upon his sexual relationship with his wife and he had felt unable to express his feelings of inadequacy to her. He felt at this point that he had not really been able to grieve for his unexpected losses.

I attempted to embody the core conditions, UPR in particular, by allowing Arun to be with the feelings that he was experiencing. This seemed important to me as Arun felt that he had to keep his feelings inside him and could not talk to anyone about the feelings he felt that he 'should be over'. Rogers (1986) hypothesised that UPR is communicated through allowing the client to be whatever they are in the moment. I attempted to give Arun the space to explore his feelings, which resulted in him becoming tearful as he fully experienced his emotions around loss, sadness and anger. This was in relation to his experience of cancer and the breakdown of his marriage. He was feeling angry and questioning why this had happened to him. He also expressed feeling low and sad and was not sure what the purpose of his life was any more. This made me think of Kubler-Ross' (1973) explanation of anger and sadness in relation to her 5 stages of dealing with grief and tragedy as she postulates that these feelings are particularly prevalent for people who have been diagnosed with a serious illness.

Counselling appeared to be a different experience for Arun and over time he allowed himself to experience the feelings that he felt he should be over. I reflected the two conflicting parts of Arun; the part that was experiencing distress and sadness and the part which felt he should be over it. Mearns and Thorne (2003) state that, in order to work with the client in a relationally deep way, the therapist should be willing to accept all of the various parts of the client that they may express at varying points in therapy. In line with this, I hoped that reflecting and empathising with both parts of Arun would enable him to focus on them directly and experience them more fully, which would provide him

with an opportunity to move away from his state of incongruence. I feel that, through the use of reflection and paraphrase in the initial stages of therapy (e.g. 'not being able to express your feelings seems very hard'), I was able to demonstrate positive regard for Arun. He reflected in later sessions that this had helped him to feel valued and supported and I feel this enabled trust to build in the relationship. Stewart (2005) states that trust is a vital component in a therapeutic relationship and it evolves as the therapeutic relationship evolves.

As Arun explored his feelings of loss, I had a sense of intense loneliness and an image came to my mind of being in a dark, deep well. I perceptively shared my image with him, as Rennie (1998) states that utilising imagery can be a powerful way of expressing empathy, and Arun confirmed feeling 'trapped' and 'alone'. This metaphor provided both Arun and I with a sense of what he was currently experiencing and he frequently made reference to how he had felt constrained throughout his life, indicating the incongruence between his current self concept and his experiences (Thorne, 1992). The use of metaphors in my sessions with him seemed to be valuable and, in line with Tolan's (2005) assertion, I feel that these metaphors helped me to creatively communicate empathic understanding. Arun voiced his wish of wanting to move forward, find the 'old him' and increase his confidence again but he felt unsure about whether he would be able to do this.

I formulated that Arun was in Stage 5 of Rogers' (1981) seven stages of process, as his feelings were being freely experienced and this stage is characterised by a movement from internal rigidity to a loosening of this rigidity and a willingness to be open to new experiences, including experiencing feelings more freely. For example, Arun's feelings were accompanied by crying. At one point Arun was weeping, as he freely experienced

his emotions, and my eyes welled up with tears as our eyes met. This was one of our first expressions of shared empathic understanding. He also seemed to be getting in touch with his underlying feelings, which he could not do before as he did not have the right environment to explore. This includes feeling helpless and feeling inadequate as a man (as, to Arun, the loss of his testicle represented a loss in his sense of manhood), as well as Arun grieving for the loss of his marriage and relationship with his wife. It became apparent that as Arun allowed himself to experience whatever he was feeling then he no longer felt the need to deny and distort his real feelings (Dryden and Mytton, 1999). This was indicated as the sessions progressed as he described climbing out of the well and seeing a light of hope. This suggested to me that Arun was moving towards becoming more congruent within himself.

I remember feeling overwhelmed by sadness after exploring the theme of loss in the initial session with Arun. I feel as if I was picking up on the sense of vulnerability and desperation in the room as expressed by Arun's closed body language, lack of eye contact and tearfulness. I feel this was an expression of shared empathic understanding. Arun mentioned at the end of the session that he had found it beneficial to talk about his feelings. However, I was thinking 'how can I process all of this information?' and I carried this sense of feeling overwhelmed outside of the session, which was unusual for me. I took these feelings of stuckness and feeling overwhelmed to supervision with me. I feel I was experiencing anxiety around cancer, as in my mind I automatically associated cancer with death. I also had anxieties around trusting the process of therapy and whether the core conditions were enough to facilitate change. Mearns (1995) states that the therapeutic process may become stuck through the counsellor's fears or anxieties. It is also true that apparent stuckness can also be a part of the therapeutic process, hence, I felt it was important to explore this in supervision (Mearns, 1995).

When working at a relationally deep encounter, Mearns and Cooper (2005) describe empathy as “responding to the core of the client from the core of oneself” (p.39) and, reflecting on my process, I now feel I lost the ‘as if’ quality which should be present when embodying empathy; it was almost like I jumped straight into Arun’s world. It is possible that I was concentrating on how to “do empathy” (Bozarth, 1998, p.92) rather than being in the moment with Arun. Exploring these issues in supervision helped me to acknowledge my feelings and work through my anxieties. This enabled me to be more aware of my own process and to be more open to being in Arun’s frame of reference in the subsequent sessions. I feel I was able to move from a position of stuckness towards surrendering more of myself to the therapeutic process. This enabled Arun to move his process along and explore other areas of his life at his own pace. Supervision also helped me to challenge my views that the core conditions are separate entities that you can either ‘do’ or ‘not do’. This helped me to encapsulate and consolidate the idea of the core conditions being intertwined with the therapeutic process and not separate entities.

The Middle of Therapy

I noticed that in the initial sessions, Arun tended to spend a lot of time focusing on how his wife may have been feeling (for example, he mentioned how he was waiting for her to decide upon what she wanted) and how his parents were feeling (for example he mentioned that they did not want him to meet his wife and discuss their separation) and I was aware that I was not getting a sense of what Arun was truly feeling. These conflicting wants of others seemed to leave Arun confused within the session as he mentioned "I am not sure of what to do". His experience of putting other people’s needs before his own was being played out within the session. I found myself debating over whether to utilise Rennie’s (1998) idea of process identification to highlight this as I felt

that I did not want to be directive and take Arun out of his process. I feel at this point that I was holding onto a literal interpretation of person centred therapy that was developed by Rogers. I was finding it difficult to adopt Rennie's post modern take on this approach as it involved me stepping out of my comfort zone through adopting my own style and interpretation of person centred therapy. Utilising supervision to discuss my anxieties around becoming more transparent and baring more of myself helped to challenge me. I feel I was also experiencing a conflict in terms of whether it was acceptable to be directive, as traditionally person centred therapy is construed as a non-directive approach. Although Gazzola and Stalias (2004) argue that directivity can enhance humanistic approaches, Merry and Brodley (2002) argue that directivity implies that the destination is already known by the therapist who will also lead the most efficient way there instead of trusting the actualising tendency. However, I decided to lean towards Kahn's (2002) case for directivity as he sees it as a vehicle that facilitates the therapist to be congruent, therefore meeting the client's needs. He feels clients may benefit from some direction from the therapist to stimulate the process leading towards independent functioning and to deny this to the client may be construed as being directive.

Rennie (1998) proposes that process identification can be a useful way of helping the client to identify the process that is occurring and this may enable them to reconnect with their hidden feelings. Hence, I decided to utilise this technique to reflect Arun's process of focussing upon others within the sessions. I mentioned that "I seem to notice that I tend to hear a lot about what your wife wants or what your parents want, but I don't seem to get a sense of what you want". This appeared to be a crucial point in therapy as it made Arun more aware of the process and it enabled him to begin to focus more upon what he was feeling. This energised the therapeutic process as Arun started to

acknowledge and discover what his needs and wants were and started to value them as important. For example, Arun decided that he did want to meet his wife as he realised that he had questions that he wanted to ask her about their marriage and the marital breakdown. This indicated that his locus of evaluation was starting to become more internalised. Throughout the remaining sessions Arun made more eye contact and his body language was now more open as he turned to face me directly. He was less tearful throughout the sessions and said that he felt positive and hopeful for the future.

The theme of cultural difference also arose as Arun explored his negative feelings towards the Indian culture, such as there being 'double standards' and Indians being 'two faced'. I was able to explore his feelings with him around not identifying with the Indian culture even though he felt he should. He stated "I know I'm Indian, but I'm also British, I don't identify with my parent's culture as I was born and brought up here so I have my own culture but they just don't seem to get me". Through Arun being able to express his inner feelings this signalled that he was beginning to trust me and intimacy was developing in the relationship as he shared his feelings, thoughts and experiences in terms of his internal frame of reference and how he viewed his world. I hypothesised that he was generating self worth from an internalised dependence on the implied judgement of others and his self worth had become dependent on winning approval and avoiding disapproval. This became apparent when Arun explored feeling inferior in relation to his elder brother who he felt was everything a successful Asian man 'should' be. It became apparent that Arun had internalised gendered and racialised conditions of worth (Chantler, 2005). He described the difficulties he had experienced in living with his parents again and how he felt unable to talk about any of his feelings at home. He talked about feeling inferior in relation to his elder brother who had an arranged marriage to a Sri Lankan woman, was academic, had a child, was financially stable; all the things that

Arun thought he was not, but how a 'good Sri Lankan male should be'. As a result, Arun never felt good enough in comparison to his brother. This indicated to me that his self concept had been bound by conditions of worth. However, throughout the sessions he started to challenge these conditions as he recognised his individuality and that he was a separate person from his brother with different values. He started to think that his experience of cancer and facing death has given him a second chance in life where he could start to think about his life purpose and what he wanted his life to be like. The more he processed this, the more he started to separate himself from his brother and he realised that he did not want the life that his brother had.

Although being Asian meant that I may have some understanding of this culture, I did not want to make assumptions about what Arun's world was like. Although I may have had some awareness and sensitivity to some aspects of Arun's culture, there were also areas I may not have been aware of. Johannes and Erwin (2004) state that for clients who feel devalued, effective cultural empathy can facilitate their process of empowerment. For me, this also indicated that alongside Rogers' core conditions, other components are also necessary to help facilitate change, such as cultural awareness (Carkhuff, 1969; Rennie, 1998). It also made me reflect on who I was and how I viewed my culture.

I explored this process in supervision and I feel I was able to stay in Arun's frame of reference and I did not feel uncomfortable in doing this. I was able to separate my experiences from what Arun knew and felt. Perhaps I could have explored with Arun what it was like to have an Asian counsellor as I wondered on some level if he had negative feelings towards me. However, I did not share my thoughts and feelings at that time as I wanted to ensure this exploration was coming from Arun's frame of reference and not mine. It also felt like too interpretative a path to take as it may have led Arun

beyond what was recognised by him at that time. Supervision also helped me to recognise that I had moved from expressing primary empathy to advanced empathy (Egan, 1994). I feel that this enabled Arun to re-experience his feelings, increase his self awareness and make links in his experiencing in the subsequent sessions as he focused on the gendered and racialised conditions of worth that he had internalised (Brems, 1999; Chantler, 2005). This was linked to him exploring various aspects of his experience such as feelings of guilt, anger and blame and I noticed that throughout the sessions Arun was more able to fully engage with me in a non verbal way, through increased eye contact, a relaxed posture and a more assertive tone of voice. It appeared to me that Arun was changing and I no longer perceived him to be fragile; I felt as if he was slowly piecing himself together and becoming more whole.

I feel that, in the counselling room, Arun felt comfortable to be himself and his experience of the core conditions led him to feel deeply understood and accepted for the person that he was, which was moving him forwards towards a realisation that he was acceptable and capable of love, challenging the conditions of worth that had been placed upon him. This suggests that he was moving towards self actualisation, the process described by Rogers (1951;1998).

In doing so, Arun had begun to discover more of his denied attitudes as he said he realised he had never really been able to express himself, his feelings and be his true self in his relationships. He felt that he needed unconditional love and support from his relatives, which he had never had. I visualised this as Arun breaking free from the 'chains' of his conditions of worth, beginning to reconnect with his organismic valuing process and moving towards the freedom of his actualizing tendency as the need for positive regard from others had decreased in its importance (Mearns and Thorne, 1999;

Nelson-Jones, 1995). This also displayed a change in his locus of evaluation, shifting towards becoming more internal, which Nelson-Jones (1995) states occurs when an individual is in an environment which facilitated the process of self actualisation. Arun said he was finding it good to talk to someone without being judged as he perceived me to be neutral.

The End of therapy

Due to Arun's work commitments, the 6th session took place after a period of a month. It had seemed that in this time Arun had carried the therapy process into his life and he talked about the realisations that he had come to in the break, such as he wanted to start a course in plumbing as this was always something that he wanted to do with his life but had not felt capable of doing so before. He was also saving money so that he could move out of his parents' house. He appeared livelier, happier, more positive about life and more self assured. His outlook on life was beginning to become more positive and he was starting to feel more positive about the future and felt that in time it was possible for him to move on with his life. He expressed how he had utilised talking to me about his feelings in the sessions as a template to begin to talk to his family members about how he was feeling. He had spoken to his parents about him moving out of the house as he felt that he needed his own space to re-evaluate what he wanted from life. He also mentioned that he was able to express emotion in front of his father and cry when he was talking about the breakdown of his relationship with his wife. He was also beginning to start to look at his situation in terms of what his needs were as he was beginning to recognise that needs were also important, indicating that he perceived himself as having more worth than he originally thought.

In the 7th session Arun described feeling ‘proud’ of himself and the way he had coped with the breakdown of his marriage and his experience of cancer. Mearns (1995) states that if a client continually experiences UPR, then they are faced with the hypothesis that they may be a person of value. This could also indicate that he was starting to challenge his self concept as he was recognising that he was an individual with his own needs. Arun came to a number of realisations such as ‘I am important too’, ‘I need to express my needs and my feelings; that’s one of the things I have learnt from this experience’. This may also indicate that as he was getting used to receiving the core conditions, he was starting to embody them. Hence, Arun was more able to accept himself for who he was, was less likely to look for external regard and his locus of evaluation became more internal rather than being based on conditions of worth and he also started to empathise with himself more, creating a desire to improve the quality of his relationships. Nelson-Jones (1995) states that when a client consistently receives the core conditions, he begins to embody them and believes that he is worthy of love and unconditional positive regard and he also develops the ability to empathise with himself more.

I feel that, in line with the person-centred principles developed by Rogers (1951; 1957; 1968; 1998), Arun was starting to discover his true self through the therapeutic relationship, where he felt safe and free to explore his experience and recognise the deep contradictions he was discovering. This also signalled a move towards independence and self-actualisation as Arun’s sense of worth and regard increased and he became more self aware. I feel his realisations were assisting him in moving towards greater personal congruence. We collaboratively decided to stagger the next sessions on a monthly basis, indicating mutuality within the relationship. Rennie (1998) asserts that staggering the counselling sessions can be functional in helping clients to increase their experience in

functioning on their own whilst feeling that they have the security of their connection with their therapist.

Challenges in the work and the use of supervision

I feel that supervision provided me with a space to concentrate more on the process and the relationship within therapy as opposed to purely focusing on the content of my sessions with Arun. This helped me to build a strong sense of connection with Arun as I was able to surrender myself more freely to the process of therapy as opposed to getting caught up in how to 'do' therapy. This indicated a shift towards me beginning to develop my own style as a therapist.

Working with Arun also made me more aware of my cultural background and, although in this case it had a positive effect, as Arun perceived me to be similar to him and felt that he could trust me, another client may have felt unable to explore or express their negative feelings towards a culture that they perceived to be similar to my own. I agree with Chantler's (2005) assertion that we need to be aware of the way that our own ethnocultural heritage may affect the way we practice and not make assumptions about the client's frame of reference based on perceived similarity, as we will not have an awareness of all aspects of that client's culture. Hence I realise that mutuality in the relationship and me being open to clients teaching me about their world (Chantler, 2005; Mearns and Cooper, 2005). I need to be open about being impacted by a client in order to facilitate working in a relationally deep way (Mearns and Cooper, 2005), which involves me being aware and receptive to the individuality of each client.

Reflections on the case and learning

Initially I thought person centred therapy was a simple approach, which was relatively easy to put into practice. However, I discovered that for me the reality was very different. Through my therapeutic work with Arun, I have begun to expand upon my original understanding of Roger's person centred therapy and have begun to incorporate post modern thinking into my practice and change my position from one of 'doing' to one of 'being'. I feel as if I am becoming more open to Mearns' (1996) position, which is that in order for a therapist to work with a client at a level of relational depth, they need to fully project themselves into the client's experiencing. In line with Mearns' hypothesis, I feel that this will be beneficial in helping me to foster my congruence and move from a position of conscious competence to unconscious competence. I have also discovered that the core conditions are not separate entities and, hence, by fostering the presence of my congruence then this may facilitate the development of the other core conditions that Rogers hypothesised were necessary and sufficient for change.

However, in line with post modern thinking, I feel that other influences can affect therapeutic change, such as cultural awareness (Carkhuff, 1969). I am intrigued by Rennie's (1998) assertion that the counsellor's style is also of importance and there is room for directivity within the therapeutic relationship. This is something I struggled with when deciding whether to implement process identification with Arun as I was aware of directing the process, which is against Rogers' stance of non directivity.

However I am open to the post modern accounts as I feel that, if the therapist's knowledge is used for the good of the client then this can have benefits for their process and ability to reconnect with their organismic valuing process. I feel that my use of process identification with Arun assisted him in accessing his feelings that had been hidden by his psychological defences and helped him to begin to reconnect with his actualising tendency. I also found the creative use of metaphors useful when working

with Arun as it enabled me to communicate empathic understanding. I feel that this learning will be useful in my sessions with other clients.

I feel that this study also highlights the complex issue of loss and mortality in relation to a cancer diagnosis. For Arun, it seemed as if his cancer diagnosis was accompanied by a sense of loss in relation to his manhood and this had impacted upon his social world, subsequently leading to an impact upon his psychological wellbeing. This focus on mortality in the prime of his life led him to explore deeper existential issues within the therapeutic process, such as the meaning of his life, which then led him to re-evaluate and make new meaning of his life. This is in line with previous research (e.g., Fleer et al 2008) which states that testicular cancer threatens people's sense of meaning as life-threatening illnesses and dying do not fit in with young men's outlook on life. They also state that the process of re-establishing meaning is an important part of coping with negative life events. I feel that therapy and the therapeutic relationship enabled Arun to have a space to process these existential issues and make meaning of his life, through addressing his own needs, leading to increased psychological wellbeing. This may add to existing literature on men's experience of testicular cancer as this confrontation with cancer can raise existential issues (Fleer et al 2008) for which emotional support in the form of therapy may be useful in beginning to explore. It may be useful to challenge misconceptions around counselling, as well as normalising issues around mortality and the meaning of life following such a life changing event, to make it more accessible to younger men who have experienced testicular cancer so they may consider emerging from hiding behind a brave façade (Moynihan, 1998).

In addition, this study may be able to add to the literature around young Asian men accessing psychological therapy, as they seem to have been under-represented in the

literature (e.g. Anand and Cochrane, 2005; Hussain and Cochrane, 2004). There have been a number of reasons stated for this including stigma around accessing counselling, negative attitudes within the Asian community towards those with mental health issues and the expectation that Asian men perceive coping with distress as a part of their expected response to adversity (Bhui, Chandran and Satyamoorthy, 2002). I feel that Arun's experience of therapy indicates that Asian men may also find the therapeutic process a beneficial one for exploring their experience, realising their needs and making meaning of their life which raises the question of what can be done to improve access to psychological therapies for Asian men. One suggestion could be to hold focus groups with young Asian men in an attempt to breakdown the barriers that they may face in accessing psychological therapies which may be issues around stigma (including feeling that other people may perceive them negatively), misconceptions of counselling and fear around accessing services (such as the fear of being institutionalised).

I am looking forward to continuing to develop my unique style of applying the person centred approach with clients and developing as a reflexive practitioner. I am fascinated by Worsley's (2002) phenomenological reading of Rogers' theory and the idea of the therapist making the theory their own through the production of a "synthesis of therapist-with-Carl-Rogers" (p.123). This increase in reflexivity is something that I am striving towards, moving away from a literalist interpretation of Rogers' theory to a position of 'Rina-with-Carl-Rogers' in order to create my unique identity as a therapist. I hope to become more myself as "a thinking, feeling, researching, experimenting, person centred therapist" (Worsley, 2002, p.125). As Worsley and Rennie (1998) state, perhaps the role of reflexivity was not given enough precedence in Rogers' original work.

I feel that by looking inside myself, becoming more aware, challenging myself and working through my struggles, I will be better able to accompany clients in their struggles. Self development work will lead me to have a greater self acceptance of the thoughts and feelings I have when offering therapy to clients (Mearns and Cooper, 2005). I feel that as a counselling psychologist, my aim is to establish a collaborative, safe relationship with my clients where I can be beside them as they explore their subjective experience of their inner world and try to make meaning of it.

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PART D: LITERATURE REVIEW

Title: An exploration into the Social Identity Theory, in relation to self esteem, and its implications for Counselling Psychology.

An exploration into the Social Identity Theory, in relation to self esteem, and its implications for Counselling Psychology

1.1: Aims and overview of the literature review

The aim of this review is to explore self esteem in relation to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) to examine how this may impact upon Counselling Psychologists in their work with clients, especially for clients for whom self esteem may be an issue. It is argued that social identity, although not always explicit, is an important part of the self (Brewer, 1991) and, hence, its possible impact on self esteem should not be ignored by Counselling Psychologists, both within their individual sessions with clients or with respect to dynamics within group therapy. This review will explore the lively debate that exists regarding the validity of the self esteem hypothesis (Abrams and Hogg (1988) as well as the impact on self esteem following an individual's social identity being threatened. The impact of belonging to a stigmatised group will also be explored. It is argued that the Social Identity Theory is useful in terms of thinking about influences on self esteem and the mixed evidence for the impact of social identity on self esteem will be explored as it may reflect methodological, operational, conceptual or level of analysis issues or a combination of all (Hogg and Mullin, 1995). This review will seek to examine the impact that belonging to a group may have on an individual's self esteem as this may provide new clinical insights for Counselling Psychologists.

1.2: The importance of groups

Brewer (1991) states that within theories of the self, there has been a lack of attention given to the importance of the cognitive and emotional aspects of belonging to a group and the way this impacts upon an individual's functioning. She feels that this has been particularly true within American social psychology where highly individuated

conceptualisations of the self are utilised and valued. This literature can tend to overlook the importance that belonging to a group can have for an individual as, from an evolutionary perspective, the human species is highly adapted to live in a group and is not well equipped to survive outside a group context (Brewer, 1991). Vignoles, Chryssochoou and Breakwell (2000) state that positively identifying with a group can have positive consequences for self esteem. Recent political and social events (including terrorist acts such as the London bombings in 2005), have highlighted the powerful impact belonging to a group and a person's social identity may have on an individual. Such events may also make an individuals sense of belonging to a group and their social identity more salient and Counselling Psychologists should therefore be mindful of the potentially powerful influence of social identity upon their clients. The concept of identity in itself is complex (Breakwell, 1992; Freeman, 2001; Hewitt, 1991) as on the one hand social identity is defined in terms of the processes that are operating at the social structural level (such as class, occupation and ethnicity) and are not open to an individual's interpretation, whereas, on the other hand individuals exhibit considerable agency in conducting their social identity (Freeman, 2001).

1.3: The social identity theory

Tajfel and his colleagues (e.g. Hogg and Williams, 2000; Tajfel, 1972; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982) developed the social identity theory in order to provide some insight into intergroup behaviour and in redefine the social group into the collective, rather than the individual self. This was a backlash against European social psychology at that time, which was defined in terms of being "overly individualistic, reductionist and asocial (Hogg and Williams, 2000, p.81), as well as being ignorant to the impact of culture, history and language on the individual, which had led to a calamity of confidence in social psychology (Hogg and Williams, 2000). As a

Counselling Psychologist, it is important to be sensitive and attentive to various influences within an individual's social world which may have an impact on them..

The social identity theory was developed post World War II to focus on the collective self, namely people's interactions with one another as members of social groups rather than unique individuals (Hogg and Williams, 2000). The term 'social identity' was developed by Tajfel (1972) to examine how intergroup contexts and social categorisation impact upon the definition of the self and "creates and defines an individual's own place in society" (p.293). Tajfel (1972, p. 292) defined social identity as that part of the individual's self concept which derives from his "knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership". Hence social identity can be seen as one answer to the question 'who am I?' that is based on membership in a social group or category together with evaluative and effective connotations (Freeman, 2001, p. 292). This may be an important issue for clients coming into therapy as they may be utilising the process in order to find their 'real self'. Tajfel also referred to the sense of belonging reported by people who are a part of a social group. Hence, the social group becomes part of the self (Brewer, 1991). Consequently, it is important for Counselling Psychologists to be aware of the possible emotional and psychological significance that belonging to a group may have on an individual, and the possible effects this may have on their psychological well being, including self esteem.

A social group is a set of individuals who share a common social identity or view themselves as members of the same social category (Stets and Burke, 2000). Social identity both describes and prescribes the attributes that members of that category should possess, including how members should think, feel and behave (Hogg, Terry and

White, 1995). It would, therefore, seem important to consider the possible effect that a sense of not belonging to a social group may have on an individual. For example, not feeling, thinking or behaving like other members of the group, may also impact upon and lower an individual's self esteem.

Festinger (1954) hypothesised that there is a drive within individuals to compare themselves to others in order to evaluate their own opinions and abilities and individuals have an upward drive towards achieving greater abilities. He also stated that if an individual stops comparing themselves to others then this can cause hostility and deprecation of opinions. His hypotheses also stated that a shift in the importance of a comparison group will increase pressure towards uniformity with that group. However, if the person or comparison group is too divergent from the evaluator, the tendency to narrow the range of comparability becomes stronger (Festinger, 1954). To this he added that people who are similar to an individual are especially good in generating accurate evaluations of abilities and opinions (Suls, Martin, & Wheeler, 2002). Lastly, he hypothesized that the distance from the mode of the comparison group will affect the tendencies of those comparing, therefore, those who are closer will have stronger tendencies to change than those who are further away (Festinger, 1954). Hence, the social comparison theory assumes that people see themselves and their group in a positive rather than a negative way and positive attributes are more likely to be perceived as ingroup attributes. He proposes that this is because individuals are motivated to gain and preserve a positive self esteem. In addition, it is argued that if the individuals cannot leave the group, they will deny the negative characteristics of the group or re-interpret them into positive self concepts in order to maintain a high level of self esteem (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982). It has been proposed that social comparison processes are understood to be most stable and most effective for enhancing self esteem

if the target is moderately similar to oneself of the dimension of comparison (Vignoles et al., 2000). Tajfel (1972) extended Festinger's (1954) notion of social comparison, as he believed that the social value of a specific group membership and satisfaction with one's social identity only acquires meaning when compared with other social groups. Thus, through the process of social comparison, the ingroup is defined as people who are similar to the self and are therefore categorised with the self, and the outgroup consists of people who differ from the self (Stets and Burke, 2000). Therefore, defining one's social identity can be seen not merely as a prescriptive and descriptive process, but also a self-evaluative process.

Consequently, the two important processes involved in social identity formation can be seen as self categorisation and social comparison. Self categorisation focuses on how individuals characterise themselves and it is where the perceived similarities between the self and other ingroup members are accentuated and the differences between the self and outgroup members are also accentuated. Secondly, the process of social comparison, guided by self enhancement, so that the ingroup norms and stereotypes largely favour the ingroup (Abrams and Hogg, 1988; Stets and Burke, 2000). These processes are underpinned by an individual's motive for self-enhancement in the form of self-esteem (Turner, 1975; 1982). It is believed that people have the basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to others (positive distinctiveness) and that if this is achieved then self-esteem is elevated (Abrams and Hogg, 1988). Within groups that have low self-esteem and for whom positive distinctiveness is not an option, members may be motivated to leave that group physically or disassociate with it psychologically, aspiring instead to be members of a higher status group (Tajfel, 1982). Counselling Psychologists should be mindful of clients who have either psychologically or

physically disassociated from their social group and the way this may impact upon their social identity and threatened self-esteem.

This ties in with Breakwell's Identity Process theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988) which was originally developed in relation to individual identities but it can also be utilised to explore collective identities (Sullivan, 2000). This theory conceptualises identity as the interplay of four identity principles (maintaining uniqueness or distinctiveness for the individual, continuity across time and context, efficacy and self-esteem) which all serve the purpose of maintaining the most positive self-view available. Breakwell (1988) states that these principles provide a "socially-established set of criteria against which identity is measured"(p. 107). One of the main principles is that self esteem is maintained by establishing positive distinctiveness, which is related to the process of self enhancement. (Breakwell, 1986). Hence, threat to identity will prevent an individual from maintaining optimum levels of self-efficacy or self-esteem and individuals may seek a coping strategy in this instance and they will prefer to compare themselves with others from who they feel positively distinguished (Breakwell, 1988; Crocker McGraw, Thompson, & Ingerman,(1987). Breakwell (1988) states that positive distinctiveness has an important place within the social identity theory as it serves to enhance self esteem.

1.4: Social identity versus personal identity

Identity can be seen to flow on a continuum from personal identity to social identity and the social identity theory makes an important distinction between these two constructs.

Personal identity is perceived as the self concept being defined in terms of idiosyncrasies, close personal relationships and the characteristics that differentiate individuals from one another in given social situations (the individuated self or "I")

(Turner, 1982; Brewer, 1991; Hogg and Williams, 2000). Social identity, on the other hand, categorises the individual into social units (such as group membership) where the self is depersonalised and “I” becomes “we” (Brewer, 1991, Hogg and Williams, 2000). Hence, the self is no longer perceived in terms of a “unique person” but rather an interchangeable social category (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherall, 1987). Hence, Hogg and Williams (2000) state that group and intergroup behaviours will occur when social identity is the salient determinant of self-conceptualisation within a particular context. Therefore, the collective self (“we”) is associated with group phenomena and the interpersonal self (“I”) is associated with interpersonal phenomena, indicating that group processes can not be understood in terms of interpersonal phenomena (Hogg and Williams, 2000). Hence, Counselling Psychologists who may be facilitating group therapy should recognise that it is various aspects of a person’s social identity may be highly salient within that social context which may be impacting upon the therapeutic process as the collective identity (sense of ‘we’) is formed within the group. According to the Social Identity Theory, individuals will try to maintain their self-esteem by viewing their social group positively. Turner (1978) argues that individuals tend to structure their perception of themselves and others by utilising abstract social categories, which then become aspects of their self-concepts and it is that that ultimately produces group behaviour.

Brewer (1991) states that as social identity is dependant upon context, the self concept can be seen as being able to expand and contract across different contexts and different levels of social identity. At these differing levels, the self and the basis of self evaluation are continually being transformed and these changes also lead to changes in the meaning of self interest and self-serving motivation. In any given situation, different combinations of the self concept will be central to the individual, producing different self images.

1.5: The self esteem hypothesis

Abrams and Hogg (1988) developed the “self esteem hypothesis” (SEH), which makes two main propositions. Firstly, that intergroup discrimination leads to increased self esteem and, secondly, low or threatened self esteem leads to increased intergroup discrimination (Hunter, Kypri, Stockell, Boyes, O’Brien and McMenemy, 2004). Empirical research has generally utilised the minimal group paradigm, in which individuals are divided into two groups based upon trivial or arbitrary distinctions (Crocker and Luhanthen, 1990). It is generally found that people still show bias in favour of the ingroup and will evaluate the ingroup members more favourably than outgroup members, even if boundaries are meaningless, when the self is excluded from evaluations, when the self does not benefit from rewards and also when there is an absence of conflict between the groups (Crocker and Luhanthen, 1990). This may be explained by Breakwell (1986) who states that threat does not have to be direct or obvious, it can be any feeling, action thought or experience that has the potential to challenge an individual’s personal or social identity. Hence, the ingroup members may maintain positive distinctiveness in order to keep their self-esteem intact. Hogg and Mullin (1995) state that the minimal group paradigm has provided a continuous method of exploring the basic social cognitive mechanisms underlying group processes, something very pertinent to the broader concept of social identity theory.

Evidence for the role of self esteem in social identity processes has, however, been mixed (Abrams and Hogg, 1988; Hogg and Abrams, 1990; Hogg and Mullen, 1995; Long and Spears, 1997; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998), leading some researchers to challenge the central role that the SEH may play in the social identity theory (Hogg and Abrams, 1993; Brown, 1995; Hunter, Kypri, Stockell, Boyes, O’Brien and McMenemy, 2004). However, the counterargument is that the research conducted has

been clouded by conceptual and methodological issues and that it is therefore too early to discount the SEH (Hunter, Platow, Howard and Stringer 2004; Hunter et al, 2004; Long and Spears, 1997; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998, among others).

1.6: The corollaries of the self esteem hypothesis

The SEH was initially tested by Oakes and Turner (1980) utilising the minimal group paradigm where only half of the participants were categorised. The categorised participants showed discrimination (favouring the ingroup) and were also found to have higher self esteem than the non-categorised participants. Abrams and Hogg (1988) highlighted two major problems with the Oakes and Turner study. Firstly, there was no categorisation non-discrimination condition and, as self esteem is relative rather than absolute, there was no answer to what self esteem is elevating in comparison to. The second concern centred around the validity of mixing three separate self esteem scales together. Abrams and Hogg (1988) proposed that the main problem with the Oakes and Turner (1980) study was that it did not reflect the theoretical assumptions of the SEH. From this Abrams and Hogg (1980, p.320) proposed two corollaries of the SEH. Firstly, successful intergroup discrimination will enhance social identity and self esteem as people feel better about themselves after having treated the ingroup more favourably than the outgroup (Brown, 2000) and, secondly, low or threatened self esteem will promote intergroup discrimination because of the need for positive self esteem. Brown (2000) stated that more than 20 years of research has not provided definite support for either corollary, however, there has been more evidence for corollary 1. Abrams and Hogg also pointed out that the conceptual nature of the SEH needed to be better defined and boundaries placed around it in order to yield interpretable results. Rubin and Hewstone (1998) state that research examining the SEH has tended to focus either on corollary 1 (e.g. Chin and McGintock, 1993; Hogg and Turner, 1985; Hogg, Turner, Nasciemento-Schulze and Spriggs, 1986, Oakes and Turner, 1980) or corollary 2 (e.g.

Hogg and Abrams, 1990; Brown, Collins and Schmidt, 1988; Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990, Long and Spears 1997), whereas relatively few studies have focused on both corollaries simultaneously.

For example, Lemyre and Smith (1985) was one of the first studies to find evidence in favour of corollary 1. Utilising the minimal group paradigm, it was found that ingroup favouritism led to self esteem being restored in categorised participants. However, although providing support for corollary 1, this study did not provide a test of corollary 2 by examining the motivating factors which led to an elevated self esteem. Chin and McGlincok (1993) also found evidence in favour of corollary 1 as their participant's collective self-esteem was highest when they were forced to discriminate against an outgroup member in favour of an ingroup member. This highlighted the psychological meaning of minimal group membership for the participants, even in a laboratory setting as, the social identity they gained from group membership was affected when they engaged in intergroup discrimination and this affected how participants felt about their membership in different groups, in relation to their race, religion, gender, nationality, ethnicity and socioeconomic class. Hence, although social identity may not always be expressed explicitly, it can impact the psychological impact of such variables on an individual and, as a Counselling Psychologist, it is important to be aware of those dimensions that may be impacting upon a client, even though they might not be explicitly expressed by them.

Evidence in favour of corollary 2 includes the experiment by Cocker and Schwartz (1985) where participants were divided into low and high self-esteem groups based on their scores on the Rosenberg Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). They were then divided into minimal groups and asked to rate the personality of ingroup and outgroup members. They found that participants who had lower self-esteem had a stronger tendency to rate outgroups negatively. These findings were replicated by Crocker, Thompson, McGraw

and Ingerman (1987) and Verkuyten (1997), who extended Crocker and Luhtanen's (1993) study to utilise measures of collective rather than personal self-esteem and found that in participants with lower collective self esteem (CSE), discriminating against the outgroup led to higher and more positive momentary self feelings. However, Verkuyten states that the relationship between group evaluations and self esteem is complex and social motivations related to self esteem needed to be examined further.

However, as mentioned by Rubin and Hewstone (1998) in a meta-analysis of 31 studies, a limitation of previous research is that corollaries 1 and 2 have been examined separately and this makes these studies limited in their predictive power and does not enable any conclusive evidence of the SEH to be drawn. In their meta-analysis they were able to find only four laboratory (Hogg et al., 1987; Hogg and Abrams, 1990; Hogg and Sunderland, 1991; Lemyre and Smith, 1985), and four real group studies (Branscombe and Wann, 1994; Mendyl and Lerner, 1984; Verkuyten, 1997; Wagner, Lampen and Syllwasschy, 1986) that tested both corollaries. Overall evidence in favour of corollary 1 was weak. However, only the Branscombe and Wann (1994) study measures CSE and Rubin and Hewstone state that there has often been a mismatch between the type of self esteem measured in investigating the SEH and the type of self esteem which should be measured in accordance with the social identity theory's hypotheses (this will be discussed further in the next section).

A classic study by Branscombe and Wann (1994) found limited support in favour of both corollaries. They categorised participants on the basis of their nationality (US citizens versus Soviet Union citizens). The rationale was that Americans and Russians had a clear history of competitive social comparison. Global CSE was measured both pre-test and post-test. American participants watched a film of a boxing match between an American and a Russian fighter. In the identity threatening condition, the American fighter lost the match, whereas in the non-threatening condition he won. Before the

experiment, participant's level of identification with their nationality was determined. Following the video, participants were given the opportunity to derogate outgroup members and, consistent with corollary 2 of the SEH, low self-esteem resulted in higher derogation, but only in the threatening condition and, consistent with corollary 1, higher outgroup derogation in the threatening condition led to an increase in CSE, particularly for participants who identified highly with their ingroup. This highlights the impact that threat may have on self esteem and also leads to questions about the possible strategies people may utilise to maintain or enhance self esteem (this will be discussed later in this review). However, Houston and Andreopoulou (2003) state although this study is one of the most influential to date, it is difficult to disambiguate the finding as the researchers utilised derogation (negative evaluation of the outgroup) rather than ingroup bias (favouring the ingroup over the outgroup). As mentioned previously, it is also important to bare in mind that individuals may have multiple social identities and, hence, the Branscombe and Wann (1994) study may only be tapping into one aspect of the participants' social identities.

Houston and Andreopoulou (2003) expanded upon Branscombe and Wann's study by utilising an adapted version of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) CSE scale. No support was found for corollary 2 of the SEH as ingroup bias was not found to be moderated by self esteem and self esteem had positive relationships with both evaluations of the ingroup and the outgroup. This ties in with other research (e.g. Abrams and Hogg, 2001; Brewer, 1991, Turner, 1999) and highlights higher self esteem leading to increased positive judgements of a group with intergroup differentiation or bias. It is also suggested that studies should examine evaluations of both the ingroup and the outgroup. Consistent with corollary 1, regardless of prior level of self esteem, group members who engaged in more positive differentiation experienced higher CSE.

Moreover, it was found that both ingroup enhancement and outgroup derogation independently elevated self esteem and greater favourability towards the ingroup enhanced CSE. Hogg and Abrams (1988) feel that these findings provide clarification of previous research (which has utilised a mixture of methodology) and is consistent with a social identity theory analysis of the motivational processes surrounding intergroup bias.

One of the biggest gaps associated with the SEH is that it does not adequately represent the meta-theoretical framework of the social identity theory (Hunter, Kypri, Stockell, Boyes, O'Brien and McMennamin (2004). Turner (1999) is more critical and argues that "social identity theory does not actually contain these corollaries, in fact in many ways it specifically rejects them" (p.24) and although the theory assumes that there is a need for positive self-evaluation, this need is not equated at an individual level. Turner goes on to stress "self esteem is an outcome of social psychological processes of self categorisation and social competition in the context of group values and ideologies" (p.35). Hogg and Trinsdale (2001) respond by stating that, although they agree that social identity is a social psychological phenomenon, they feel that articles written on the social identity theory in the 1970's and 1980's specify that self esteem is an important motivator affecting intergroup behaviour. Turner (1999) also acknowledges that intergroup discrimination can affect particular forms of self esteem and intergroup discrimination can be heightened by other variables, such as an insecure status.

Hewstone, Rubin and Willis (2002) state that the SEH can be qualified in a number of ways by the social identity theory. Firstly, social competition (intergroup discrimination leading to social change) should be explored. Secondly, intergroup bias is seen to be related only to specific social state self esteem. Thirdly, it is only individuals who

identify strongly with their group who will have fluctuating self esteem as a result of intergroup bias and, lastly, only intergroup bias that brings about social change will increase self esteem. Hewstone et al. (2002) argue that since researchers have tended to ignore these qualifications, the role of self esteem in intergroup bias has not yet been adequately tested. In the present world climate, for example, it may be interesting to explore how self esteem has been impacted in a person who derives a sense of positive self esteem from having a strong social Muslim identity and identifying strongly with the Muslim community (ingroup) as a result of the social change in the perception of the Muslim community (from being a relatively positive to a relatively negative perception), following the terrorist incident of the London Bombings in 2005.

Another major problem with research in this area concerns the measurement of self esteem and Rubin and Hewstone (1998) have stressed the importance of distinguishing between the type and locus of self esteem measured. Turner (1999) highlights that much of the research testing the corollaries has utilised measures which examine personal and trait rather than collective and state self esteem. Hence it appears that the corollaries of the SEH have not yet received a fair trial and should not be discounted at this stage.

1.7: The impact of threat and stigmatisation on an individual's level of self esteem

Another area of social identity research which may help to shed light on the mixed evidence for the SEH is the examination of the impact of threat on self esteem and the strategies that individuals with high and low self esteem may utilise within a group situation. When describing the social identity theory Tajfel (1972a, p.296) stated that within an intergroup "social comparisons...are focused on the establishment of distinctiveness between ones own group and other groups". Hence, the social comparison process is driven by an individual's need for self enhancement, which is achieved by processes that accentuate differences between groups in favour of the

ingroup, leading to positive distinctiveness and a positive social identity (Hogg and Williams, 2000). Within the group context, true positive distinctiveness can not be realistically achieved by groups who maintain low self esteem so members of these groups may utilise other strategies to re-evaluate their social identity and self esteem (Hogg and Williams, 2000). The choice of strategy employed is mediated by the individual's level of self esteem and the understanding of social belief structures (such as the nature of relationships between groups). Individuals with low self esteem are most likely to try and make their ingroup look good in comparison with outgroups and this will enable them to elevate their self esteem (in line with corollary 2 of the SEH, Long and Spears, 1998). Researchers (e.g. Aberson et al., 2000; Brown, et al. 1988; Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990) propose that individuals with high and low self esteem seek self enhancement within the intergroup context, but in different ways and utilising different strategies. Brown et al (1988) identified two forms of enhancement strategies: direct (the self is directly linked to positive identities and outcomes) and indirect (the self is linked to positive identities indirectly through their association with others).

In Brown et al.'s (1988) study, individuals with high self esteem exhibited a greater bias when they participated in the group (direct bias), whereas individuals with low self esteem showed a greater bias when not involved in the group task (indirect bias). These findings have been supported by other researchers such as Long et al. (1994), Seta and Seta (1992) and Seta and Seta (1996). However, this is in opposition to arguments made by Crocker and Luhtanen (1980) and Crocker et al. (1987) who argued that only individuals with high self esteem exhibited ingroup bias in order to elevate their self esteem and positive social identity. Aberson et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis of 34 studies, which examine the importance of self esteem as a predictor of ingroup bias, concludes that even though individuals with low self esteem may not utilise as many strategies, individuals with high self esteem utilised measures of direct ingroup bias, whereas

individuals with low self esteem utilised indirect strategies of ingroup bias (which may not have been as effective as bolstering self esteem). Hence, both individuals with low and high self esteem show bias, but in different ways. This indicates that previous reviews and empirical studies may have failed to clarify the link between the SEH and ingroup bias as the consistency between the dimensions of evaluation and a person's self concept may not have been taken into consideration (Aberson et al., 2000). Hence, further research utilising consistent measures needs to be conducted.

Another line of investigation which has been examined is how an individual's threatened social identity influences their self esteem. Deitz-Uhler and Murrell (1998) states that when a person identifies strongly with a group, and defines themselves in terms of a group then they gain positive self esteem from it as they usually seek out groups which are positively valued. This can have implications for Counselling Psychologists as, for example, individuals may chose specific groups to attend for group therapy in order to gain positive self esteem from them. Hence, if an individual's positive group identification is threatened, the individual may react by feeling badly about themselves or the group. For example, Branscombe and Wann (1994) managed to successfully manipulate CSE by varying the degree to which their national identity was manipulated. Participants whose identity had been threatened had lower CSE and displayed higher levels of outgroup derogation. This derogation then subsequently elevated their CSE. These findings have since been supported (Aberson et al., 2000; Bergami and Bergossi, 2000; Gagnon and Bouris, 1996; Hunter et al. 2005; Long and Spears, 1997; Negy, Shreve, Jensen and Uddin, 2003; Petersen and Blank, 2003; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998).

These findings confirm the prediction of the social identity theory that a threatened identity and lowered self esteem produces intergroup discrimination and supports Crocker et al.'s (1993) suggestion that individuals with low CSE will derogate the

outgroup. However, Long and Spears (1997) make clear that CSE should not be viewed as a stable trait as a person's CSE (which is dependent on the positivity of a person's social identity) is contextual, according to the dimension of comparison or the relevant outgroup, which may have been overlooked by previous studies (e.g. that by Branscombe and Wann, 1994). Another factor is that identification with the ingroup and holding negative attitudes towards the outgroup seems to be key in individuals restoring their self esteem by outgroup derogation (Florack, Scarabb and Gosejohann, 2005). These factors are new developments which have not always been considered by previous research which may account for some of the mixed evidence in relation to the SEH and threat to self esteem. Clearly, more research is needed in this area.

Long and Spears (1998) affirm that it is important to consider how an individuals personal and collective self esteem may operate and interact in group contexts. In their study (which found support for corollary 2) it was found that both personal and social self esteem influenced intergroup comparisons. In line with social identity theory's predictions, CSE was most appropriate measure and predictor of intergroup differentiation however, it was stressed that it was important not to overlook the influence of personal motives at this level as intergroup behaviour may be driven by personal agendas under certain circumstances.

This indicates that people react defensively when their group is threatened, especially if they identify highly with their group, in order to restore or protect their self esteem. Individuals will utilise a variety of strategies, influenced by their level of self esteem. Deitz-Uhler and Murrell (1998) suggest these findings can be applied within a clinical setting, and this review proposes they can be utilised by Counselling Psychologists in their clinical practice, particularly in group therapy. For example, individuals with low self esteem could be encouraged to think about their group membership (e.g. the ingroup being recovering alcoholics in a relapse prevention group) and focus on those

group memberships linked to their social identity which they feel positive about to enhance their social identity (perhaps belonging to this relapse prevention group may emphasize that their social identity has changed from being an alcoholic to a recovering alcoholic which may be viewed as being more positive). Isobe and Ura (2006), propose that individuals can make upward social comparisons within their group, designed to motivate ingroup members to avoid threat from the ingroup, leading to increased state self esteem (e.g. recovering alcoholics in the relapse prevention group could be encouraged to make upward comparisons with members who may have maintained sobriety for a longer period of time). Deitz-Uhler and Murrell (1998) suggest that within a clinical setting (like group therapy), individuals with low self esteem could learn to make self serving attributions or to engage in group level affirmations, for example, by learning to attribute negative feedback to external factors and positive feedback to internal factors, or affirming another aspect of group membership when individuals receive negative feedback about their group, to enhance or protect their self esteem (for example, alcoholism may be viewed negatively by society, however, group members in therapy may be able to identify positive elements of their group, such as wanting to maintain sobriety and group members making positive changes in their lives).

One interesting finding is in relation to stigmatised groups (whose members feel that they are the target of discrimination) and self esteem. For stigmatised individuals who highly identify with their group, negative stereotypes about their group can be stressful as they have important outcomes at stake and so they may have concerns about conforming with negative stereotypes (Steele and Aronson, 1995). The Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals will try to maintain self esteem by viewing their social groups positively, however, this may not be possible for members of stigmatised groups, unless they are able to positively view other individuals who are co-members of

their stigmatised groups. Eccleston and Major (2006) found that if a member of a stigmatised group perceives themselves to be a victim of discrimination, then this threat will have a direct, negative effect on self esteem among members of stigmatised groups.

Overton and Medina (2008) argue that individuals who experience mental health issues are amongst the most stigmatised discriminated against, marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society. This ties in with the Social Identity Theory as it indicates that individuals may utilise social constructs to judge or label someone who is perceived as different and use social norms as a marker to indicate whether that person fits these norms. Goffman (1963) proposes that stigmatised individuals will form a virtual social identity when they become disfavoured in the eyes of society. This can be a process linked in with individuals who have mental health issues as Goffman argues that mental illness has often been viewed as a character flaw. Hence, a stigma around mental health is created as the individual's actual societal identity does not meet an ideal identity defined by societal norms. This can lead to low self esteem within the stigmatised individual, for example, due to the negative connotations and stereotypes attached to mental illness. Overton and Medina (2008) state that clinicians can have an impact on increasing the self esteem of this stigmatised group by challenging some of the stigma and misconceptions associated with mental illness. Another way to increase self esteem could be to highlight cases to clients with mental health issues of other individuals who have been able to positively manage and cope with their mental health issues. This would give these client a chance to start to broaden their awareness of their collective identity and start to view other co-members of their stigmatised group more positively which can help to elevate levels of self esteem in that individual.

In addition, according to a stress and coping framework, perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination is a potentially stressful life event, which has clinical implications as this event can affect a person's general well-being and increase levels of depression and

anxiety amongst stigmatised groups (Eccleston and Major, 2006). Therefore, it is important for practitioners to be aware of how individuals may appraise the significance of discrimination for their well-being as well as how much they identify with the group that is the target of discrimination (Eccleston and Major, 2006).

1.8: Mixed evidence for the self esteem hypothesis in relation to the Social Identity

Theory

Although it is proposed that the self esteem hypothesis is useful theories in terms of understanding social identity, the shortcomings but also be recognised. Hogg and Mullin (1995) state that the mixed evidence for the role of self esteem in social identity may reflect methodological issues alongside conceptual, operational or level of analysis issues. This section will explore some of the methodological issues impacting upon the social identity theory and the SEH.

Brewer (1991) has criticised the minimal group paradigm, which has governed most of the research examining the link between the social identity theory and self esteem. Within this paradigm, the consequence of belonging to a social group, such as the effects of increased ingroup favouritism leading to positive self esteem, is examined when a social identity is assigned to research participants through experimental instructions or by manipulating the distinctions that occur within natural groups. She argues that although research has examined the consequences of belonging and identifying with an ingroup, there is a significant lack of research into how and why social identities are developed (Abrams and Hogg, 1988; Diose, 1988; Brewer, 1991). She argues that membership in a group may be voluntary or imposed whereas social identities are chosen by the individual dependent upon the choice of social categorisation available to them. Hence, social identity should not be equated with membership in a group. Also, specific social identities may only be activated at certain

times. Brewer proposes that a causal relationship between identification with a group and a positive evaluation cannot be drawn by the available research and argues that ingroup bias may be a method of extending rather than achieving self esteem at the group level.

Rubin and Hewstone (1998) state that deficiencies lie in the social identity research rather than in the theory itself and the theory offers the potential for explaining social change and stability. They examined the claim that the SEH has received little empirical support. Although some researchers (e.g. Rubin and Hewstone, 1998; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar and Levin, 2004) have found ambiguous support for the SEH, Hewstone, Rubin and Willis (2002) propose that the SEH is qualified in a number of ways by the social identity theory, which has been largely ignored by researchers indicating that the SEH has not yet been tested in an appropriate manner. They propose inconsistent results could have been obtained for a number of reasons. Firstly, there may have been a failure to control for realistic competition (driven by personal self interest) and consensual discrimination (where members of high status groups will show ingroup favouritism, whereas members of low status groups will show outgroup discrimination) as well as social competition, which may be related to self esteem. Secondly, there has been a use of imprecise tests of the SEH that do not utilise specific social state self esteem, which is referred to by the SEH (Abrams and Hogg, 1988; Rubin and Hewstone, 1998, Turner, 1999). Only successful social competition, which leads to an increase in relative group status should lead to an increase in self esteem (Turner, 1999). Insensitive tests of the SEH have been utilised where the perceived success of social competition has not been taken into account. Thirdly, ignoring the process of ingroup identification (a measure of the SEH) has led to inaccurate tests of the SEH (Branscombe and Wann, 1994; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Lastly, experiments equating low self esteem with a high need for self esteem are inconsistent with social identity theory's assumption that the need for

self esteem is independent of current self esteem. Individuals with low self esteem may be motivated to enhance their self esteem, whereas those with high self esteem may be motivated to protect their self esteem (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Brown, Collins and Schmidt, 1988).

A mismatch has also been highlighted between the type of self esteem measured to examine the SEH and the assumptions of the social identity theory (Branscombe and Wann, 1994; Chin and McGlintock, 1993; Hogg and Abrams, 1990). Rubin and Hewstone distinguish between three categories of self esteem: global versus specific, trait versus state and personal versus social. Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach and Rosenberg (1995) suggest that the apparent lack of predictive power of self esteem in relation to behavioural outcomes is partly due to researcher's failure to take into account the global-specific distinction. Global self esteem is a person's esteem in relation to their overall self image, whereas specific self esteem is the esteem a person holds over a specific self image (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Fishchben and Ajzen (1975, cited in Rubin and Hewstone, 1998) state that related specific behaviour can be best predicted by specific measures of self esteem and hence, when measuring the SEH, measures of pre-test self esteem should be made specific to the group under question. An individual's self esteem can also be comprised of two components at any time; trait self esteem (an individual's self evaluations over a relatively long period of time) and state self esteem (an individual's self evaluations in the immediate present, Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Rubin and Hewstone claim that self esteem scales have regarded self esteem as being a stable trait and fluctuations have been ignored, however, these fluctuations could reflect self esteem being updated by constant re-evaluations of the self based on new experiences. In relation to the SEH, state self esteem seem to be more appropriate in detecting short term changes in self regard, for example, when utilising

the minimal group paradigm. Oakes, Haslam and Turner (1994, cited in Rubin and Hewstone, 1998) state that the degree of discrimination is influenced by the immediate salience that being an ingroup member has on a person's self image. Hence, Long and Spears (1997) specify that self esteem should be examined in the immediate context of the experimental conditions, rather than over time. Also, specifically related to the minimal group paradigm is the notion that social categorisation is more likely to influence state self esteem, as group membership is can be perceived as being something new and momentary (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998).

Lastly, a distinction can be made between personal and social self esteem, which reflects the distinction between social and personal identity. Rubin and Hewstone (1998) describe social self esteem as group member's self esteem of their shared self image which makes up their social psychological ingroup and their collective self image, tying in with the idea of positive distinctiveness. Personal self esteem can be utilised to fit in with an individualistic theory of intergroup behaviour (Long and Spears, 1997), but is not appropriate for use within the minimal group paradigm and the SEH (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Hence, Rubin and Hewstone propose that the SEH can only be quantified appropriately by utilising measures of specific social state self esteem, however there are a lack of appropriate scales currently available. This may be important for Counselling Psychologists to bear in mind, particularly if utilising self esteem scales in their practice or research, as different scales will be tapping into different types of self esteem. The majority of the studies seem to focus on global personal trait self esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) and these scales have been tended to be empirically validated (Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990).

Social self esteem was tested by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) utilising the CSE scale (Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990). The CSE examines membership esteem (evaluations of

the self as a good member of the group), private self esteem and identity esteem (evaluation of the subjective importance of the ingroup) (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). They propose that intergroup discrimination may be motivated to enhance collective self esteem (which makes up an important part of an individual's self concept). Significant low correlations were identified between CSE scale and RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) measuring personal trait self esteem. They claimed this indicated that although related, the constructs of personal and collective self esteem are empirically and conceptually different.

However, Long and Spears (1997) claim that, due to the problems associated with the scale, the CSES is not the most beneficial instrument for testing the SEH (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Firstly, only the private self esteem subscale taps into social self esteem as conceptualised by the social identity theory. Secondly, the CSES is designed to measure long term trait self esteem, which may not be present when utilising the minimal group paradigm. Thirdly, global rather than specific self esteem is measured as participants are asked by the scale to consider global concepts such as their gender, race, religion and socio-economic status (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Crocker et al. (1994) argue that due to this global nature, the scale can be applied to many new groups within the minimal group paradigm. However, Abrams (1992) states an individual's evaluations of all the members in their ingroup may not be equally positive and the positive evaluation of the ingroup as a whole is not specifically attributable to specific members. On the other hand, Luhtanen and Crocker argue that their scale is robust and flexible enough to be applied to specific ingroups whilst keeping the psychometric properties intact. This has been supported by other researchers (DeCremer, 2001; Hunter et al., 2005; Long et al. 1994; Verkuyten, 1997).

Hence, there appears to be a gap in the research in relation to the method of testing self esteem in an appropriate manner that reflects the assumptions of the social identity

theory. Rubin and Hewstone (1998, p.44) claim that “no purpose built measures of either specific social trait or specific social state self esteem exist”. However, recent developments documented by Harris and Cameron (2005) state that multidimensional measures of social identity have emerged (Cameron, 2004, Ellemers et al. 1999) which illustrate that various cognitive and affective aspects of social identity can be empirically distinguished. This is sure to be an important development for improving the accuracy and predictive power of research in this area.

1.9 : Social identity and self esteem: The implications for psychological wellbeing and Counselling Psychology

Self esteem, in relation to an individual’s social identity is an important construct for counselling psychologists to be aware of, as self esteem has been shown to be linked with various aspects of psychological wellbeing (Cameron, 1999; Lee and Robbins, 1998; Marmarosh, 1999; Marmarosh and Corazzini, 1997; Rosenberg et al., 1995). For example, Rosenberg et al. (1995) found that an individual’s global self esteem (their positive or negative feeling of the self as a whole, implicated in feelings of self worth), including their group membership, societal categories (such as race) and social identity, is a good predictor of their psychological wellbeing, including factors such as depression, anxiety, general anxiety, tension, resentment, irritability, life satisfaction, happiness and negative affective states (Cameron, 1999; Cameron and Harris, 2005). Crocker et al. (1994) also found that a person’s global self evaluation was positively associated with global self esteem and life satisfaction and negatively associated with depression. Cameron (1999) empirically supported the notion that believing in the power of one’s group to achieve future goals was related to their psychological wellbeing and self esteem adjustment.

Lee and Robbins (1998) who looked at the relationship between social connectedness, anxiety, self esteem and social identity. They state that isolation, loneliness and alienation are among the common psychological feelings of individuals seeking counselling, who describe feeling persistently out of touch with the social world around across time and social contexts. This lack of a sense of internal belonging can be described as a lack of social connectedness. Counselling can be an opportunity to provide such individuals with a chance to develop a sense of belonging and to experience interpersonal closeness with other individuals in the group (Lee and Robbins, 1998). It has been found that individuals with high levels of social connectedness can better manage their own needs and emotions and so are less prone to low self esteem, anxiety and depression (Lee and Robbins, 1998). This ties in with social identity theory's notion of the sense of belonging people gain from their social identification with a group, supported by Lee and Robbins (1998) who found that individuals with a high level of connectedness also had high social identity scores and this was associated with higher levels of social state self esteem and low levels of trait anxiety. However, the limitations of this study should be kept in mind. For example the minimal group paradigm utilised may have been perceived as being artificial by participants so they may not have invested in or been affected by the groups. Also, the sample size was small and only involved college women, questioning the generalisability of the results.

These attributes of psychological wellbeing in relation to social connectedness have implications for counselling psychologists in their clinical research and practice. Lee and Robbins (1998) propose that, in light of their findings, a client's level of connectedness should be determined prior to counselling beginning. Clients who are presented as being "lonely" or have a "lack of belonging" are often provided with group

psychotherapy in order to facilitate a positive social experience for the client (Yalom, 1995). Yalom (1995) proposed that the group member's perception of liking and belonging to the group is one of the basic factors necessary for change to occur in psychotherapy groups, as group self esteem is interrelated with personal self esteem (paralleling the work of Long and Spears, 1998) and reduces the negative personal self esteem of group members. However, for those with low connectedness, there is a possibility that the social experience may enhance their sense of "not belonging" and so they may drop out of group therapy or not benefit from the experience. This area of research could be expanded upon by Counselling Psychologists to examine whether other aspects of social identity may be implicated in clients not getting the most out of a therapeutic group experience.

On the other hand, when the therapeutic group is incorporated into a person's social identity, they may utilise the group to form and protect their self concepts and Marmarosh and Corozzini (1997) postulate that these social identities provide group members with resources that they can draw upon outside of the therapy, particularly in stressful times. Their study applied the social identity theory to group psychotherapy and examined the effectiveness of teaching group members how to utilise their group identity outside of the therapy session. Clients were asked to "take the group in your pocket" and to utilise this group identity to reinforce the psychological impact of the group in their everyday activities and in stressful times. Those group members that utilised this intervention had higher levels of CSE and considered the group to be of greater value to them personally. This was regardless of the amount of time they had spent in group therapy. Personal and collective self esteem were correlated, suggesting that as the value attached to an individual's group increases, the value attached to the individual also increases. Hence, social identity theories assumption that groups are an

important part of an individual's identity was supported. These findings have also been replicated (e.g. Crocker et al. 1994).

Individuals struggling with low self esteem often seek psychological services in the form of individual counselling or group therapy. Cameron's (1999) findings can be of use to counselling psychologists, as they demonstrate the importance of being in a salient group where the individual feels supported, feels a sense of belonging and feels positive affect (Marmarosh, 1999). Hence, when working individually with clients, counselling psychologists may utilise this research and recommend group therapy to increase their client's psychological wellbeing and self esteem. They may also utilise this understanding to explore their client's possible anxiety and feelings towards not joining groups, which may maintain a sense of not belonging. Groups may provide an environment for dispelling stereotypes and nurturing positive group identities (Walters and Simoni, 1993).

This idea that social identity is an integral part of healthy psychological functioning and is an important variable in the counselling process (Walters and Simoni, 1993) can be utilised and extended to minority groups. In their study with members of the gay community, Walters and Simoni reinforced the social identity theory with their findings that negative attitudes about one's group may detrimentally affect one's self esteem and psychological functioning. They suggest that counselling psychologists should have an awareness of the developmental process of social identity experienced by minority groups in society, as internalised negative attitudes highly present in the early stages get disregarded in the later stages, as the client achieves congruence between their real and ideal selves leading to self actualisation. They suggest that the Counselling Psychologist's role is to enable the individual to become more comfortable with their

social identity by challenging their negative assumptions, which leads to increased self esteem and self worth in the client, as the client comes to terms with their identity and internalises the positive feedback. However, they stress that this developmental process is not linear. Counselling Psychologists should distinguish between intrapsychic and environmental issues to prevent colluding with the client. This indicates how social identity and self esteem may be salient in Counselling Psychologists' individual work with clients.

Another reason why group membership and self esteem is linked may be that groups provide individuals with emotional and instrumental support and individuals with stronger social relationships cope better with stressful situations (Wright and Forsyth, 1997). Hence, group therapy can be important support for its' members and facilitate members' development in order to enable them to form positive relationships with individuals outside the group. Wright and Forsyth (1997) found that the prestige and the satisfaction with the group led to increased self esteem and groups that provided the members with most insight were rated as being more satisfying. This has implications for Counselling Psychologists and the nature of their therapeutic groups as the satisfaction individuals derived reflected the fulfilment of their instrumental needs and the prestige they gained reflected a fulfilment of their emotional needs, such as a positive social identity. A fulfilment of these needs led to increased self esteem. Hence, this reaffirms the importance of groups and their value in providing positive resources for an individual, such as an increased sense of self esteem and a source of support for individuals encountering stressful experiences which can lead to healthy psychological functioning.

1.10: Summary and Conclusions

Social identity is an important part of an individual's identity and refers to their sense of belonging to particular societal categories, impacting on that individual's sense of who they are (Deitz-Uhler and Murrell, 1998). The self esteem hypothesis states that people are motivated to maintain a positive social identity in order to maintain or enhance their self esteem. This review has explored the mixed findings around the SEH and concludes that it is too early to discount the hypothesis as the mixed findings are more attributable to flaws in the research, such as the methodological, conceptual, operational and level of analysis issues, rather than a defect in the theory itself. Hence, there is a need for more research in this area before any conclusive argument can be drawn. This review argues that the social identity theory and the SEH have important implications for Counselling Psychologists as self esteem has been shown to correlate with psychological wellbeing and affect the success of group therapy. The impacts of threatened and stigmatised social identity on self esteem are also important concepts that clinicians may be faced with, both in their individual and group sessions with clients. Hence, the awareness of the possible implications of social identity on individuals may benefit professionals working with clients who have self esteem issues.

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Table 1: Table of participants' demographic information⁴

Pseudo-nym⁵	Age	Educational Qualification	Current Occupation	Marital Status	Number of Children	Area of Residence	Ethnic Origin (as described by the interviewees)	Religion (as described by the interviewees)
Mandeep	28	Professional Diploma	Freelance Audio Engineer	Single	None	North West London	East African Asian	Sikh
Amar	29	Degree	Financial Officer	Married	None	South East London	Indian	Sikh
Ahmed	29	BTEC	Aircraft Technician	Married	Two	West London	Indian	Muslim
Sumit	28	Masters	Therapist and Supervisor	Single. In a Relationship	None	South West London	Indian British	Hindu
Arun	25	Degree	Musician	Single	None	North West London	Mixed – Half Asian and Hal Middle Eastern	None
Anish	34	Tertiary Qualification	IT Technician	Married	None	West London	Hindu (he described his ethnic origin in terms of his religion)	Hindu
Deepak	21	Professional Qualification	Electrician	Single. In a relationship	None	West London	British Asian	Hindu
Mustafa	29	Masters	Journalist	Single	None	South East London	British of Asian Origin	Muslim
Sajid	21	A Levels	Studying at degree level	Single	None	North London	Asian	Muslim
Jagpreet	31	Masters	IT support	Married	None	West London	British Indian	Sikh

⁴ Any details that may make the interviewees identifiable have been modified, but are in line with their original responses. ³ Interviewees were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms

Appendix A

**Are you an Asian
man aged between
18 and 35?**

If **yes, then I would like to
hear your view of the impact
that the London Bombings
have had on you**

**This is part of my doctoral research at
City University, London.**

**Call or text [REDACTED] or e-mail
[REDACTED] to find out
more or to take part in the research.**

**The research is supervised by Dr.
Susan Strauss who can be contacted
by email on [REDACTED]**

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction

The researcher plans to send this letter to participants before the interview takes place and also plans to bring copies to the interviews.

Rina Bajaj

C/O Dr. Susan Strauss
Department of Counselling Psychology,
City University,
Northampton Square,
London,
EC1V 0HB

[Date]

Dear [Name of interviewee],

Thank you for your response to my advertisement and for agreeing to take part in my research project as part of my doctoral research at City University, London. I look forward to meeting you on

For your information, my research is focusing on young Asian men's responses to the London Bombings in relation to the impact that they have had on them. So, I am interested in your experiences in relation to this, as a young Asian man. This will involve your taking part in a semi-structured interview, which will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. I would like to keep the interview format flexible to allow you to comment on topics or areas in more or less detail, depending on how important they are for you. As a participant in this project, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time and your anonymity will be protected.

If you have any questions about the interview or the research project, then please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Rina Bajaj

Appendix C

Consent Form

By signing this consent form, I am agreeing to take part in the research project entitled “The London Bombings: How have they impacted young Asian men living in London?” I understand that this research is being conducted by Rina Bajaj, who is a trainee counselling psychologist at City University in London and that this research is being supervised by Dr. Susan Strauss, of the counselling psychology department at City University.

I understand that the research will involve me taking part in a semi-structured interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes to one hour, regarding my experiences in relation to the London Bombings. The research in turn will be guided by the British Psychological Society’s Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles.

In signing this consent form I also understand the following conditions:

1. My identity will remain anonymous throughout the research, even if research is published in journals or reported to scientific bodies.
2. The interview will be taped for subsequent data analysis.
3. Data, including audio tapes of my interview and transcripts, will be kept securely and separate from the research in a locked file and will be destroyed when no longer needed.
4. My participation in this research is voluntary and I may withdraw at any stage without necessarily providing a reason and with no consequences.
5. I will be invited at a later date to comment on the researcher’s interpretation of our interview.
6. This project is not expected to involve any risks of harm that are greater than those experienced in daily life, and the researcher will do her best to minimise any potential risk.

I may contact the researcher by telephone on [REDACTED] or be email on [REDACTED] if I have any questions about the research procedure.

Signed: _____

Name (Block Capitals): _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

By signing this consent form I understand that, although the information gained from the research interview is confidential and my identity will remain anonymous throughout the research process, there are limits to confidentiality.

Confidentiality may be broken in the following instances:

- If the researcher feels that lives may be in danger
- If the interviewee discloses specific details of a criminal offence, particularly if this information breaches the Terrorism Act (2000).

Signed: _____

Name (Block Capitals): _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Confidentiality agreement on the use of audio tapes

By signing this agreement I understand that I, as a participant in this research, give the researcher, Rina Bajaj, permission to tape the research interview based on the following conditions:

- I can withdraw my permission to tape the interviews at any time.
- Rina Bajaj will utilise the tapes purely for the process of analysis.
- Rina Bajaj will be the only person who will have access to and hear the taped material.
- The taped material from this interview will be kept securely and will not be retained longer than necessary for the research purposes.

This agreement is in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines of the British Psychological Society and the law of the land.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name (block capitals) _____

Appendix F

RESEARCHER'S DEBRIEFING FORM

- Thank you for your participation in this research project. I really appreciate your help and input.
- Your responses have been most helpful.
- I'm wondering how you feel now that you have taken part in this study.
- Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?
- Is there anything else that you would like to say to me?
- If you would like to know the results of the research then we could arrange that now or you could contact me in the future to arrange this.
- I will leave you with a list of telephone numbers of counselling services that you could contact, in case you have experienced any difficult feelings throughout this interview that you would like to deal with afterwards.

Appendix G

DEBRIEFING FORM

- Thank you for your participation in this research project. I really appreciate your help and input.
- I'm wondering how you feel now that you have taken part in this study.
- If you would like to know the results of the research then please tick the yes box below and we can arrange that now or you could contact me in the future to arrange this.

Yes

No

- I will leave you with a list of telephone numbers of counselling services that you could contact, in case you have experienced any difficult feelings throughout this interview that you would like to deal with afterwards.

Appendix H

Researcher's interview guide

Firstly, I'd like to get some basic demographic information about you for research purposes. Your identity will remain anonymous. However, please remember that you do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- How old are you?
- What is your educational qualification?
- Are you currently working? (if no, then what was your previous occupation)
- What is your current legal marital status?
- Are you currently in a relationship?
- Do you have any children? If yes, then how many?
- What area of London do you live in?
- How would you describe your ethnic origin?
- How important is your sense of being [ethnicity] to you?
- Do you consider yourself to have a religion?
- How important is your sense of being [religion] to you?

Ok, so now I would like to move on to explore some specific questions in relation to the impact that the London Bombings have had on you.

IMMEDIATE REACTIONS

- Do you remember how you felt when you found out about the London Bombings?
- Do you remember your reactions to the London Bombings?
- What has been your experience in the aftermath of the London Bombings?
- What effect have the London Bombings had on you both emotionally and psychologically?

(Researcher's prompts could include emotional and psychological terms such as anger, sadness, frustration, depression, anxiety, fear, security/safety, stress etc. The researcher may explore further with the interviewee topics that arise from answering this question).

IMPACT OF THE MEDIA

- What do you think about the way that the media covered the events in relation to the London Bombings and their aftermath?
- Is there anything in the media coverage that stood out to you?
- Do you feel that the media coverage of this event has had a large impact on you? In what way?
- What impact / effect do you feel the media coverage of the London Bombings has had on wider society?

SENSE OF SELF / IDENTITY / BELIEFS

- Do you think you have changed as a person since the London Bombings?
- Has the way you view yourself changed since the London Bombings? In what way?
- Do you feel your identity has changed since 7/7?
(e.g. sense of “Britishness”, racial/cultural identity)
- Have the London Bombings impacted upon the way you feel about yourself?
- As a result of the London Bombings would you change anything about yourself?
- Has your sense of what’s important to you changed since the London bombings?
Why do you think this may be the case?
- Do you feel the London Bombings have impacted upon your beliefs and values
(e.g. cultural, religious, spiritual)?
- Could you give me an example of this change?

PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS

- Do you feel that the way you are viewed by others has changed since the London Bombings?
If Yes:
- What is it about you which you feel may be contributing to this change in perception by others? (e.g. gender, ethnicity, religion)
- What do you think people’s first impressions of you are?
- In what ways, if any, do you think people respond to you or view you differently since the London Bombings? (e.g. discrimination, prejudice, suspicion, racial profiling)
- Would you be able to give me an example of this change in perception towards you?

COPING MECHANISMS

- Are you aware of any coping mechanisms that you have adopted in order to deal with the effects of the London Bombings (e.g. use substances, avoid travelling, become more/less religious or spiritual, change habits etc.)?
- Have you changed your regular routine or habits since the London Bombings?
- Have you sought professional support or help since the London Bombings (e.g. counselling).

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- Are there any issues that you would like to mention that we haven’t discussed yet, that you think are important to this topic?
- Are there any areas/issues that you feel require more research?
- Researcher to debrief interviewee (see appendix ---- for researcher’s debriefing form, participant debriefing form and information sheet).

Appendix I

Interviewer's Prompts

- In what way?
- What's that like for you?
- What do you mean by that?
- Could you tell me more about that?
- Is there anything else that you'd like to say?
- How important do you feel that is?
- Why do you think that may be the case?

Appendix J

INFORMATION SHEET OF COUNSELLING ORGANISATIONS

The British Psychological Society (BPS)

<http://www.bps.org.uk>

Here you can find a database of psychologists who are chartered with the society.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

<http://www.bacp.co.uk>

Here you can find a database of counsellors and psychotherapists who are accredited with the Association.

United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

<http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk>

Here you can find information on Psychotherapists in your local area.

MIND

0845 766 0163 or <http://www.mind.org.uk>

They have many local branches that provide free or very low cost counselling.

Muslim Youth Helpline

0808 808 2008 or <http://www.myh.org.uk> A confidential telephone and e-mail counselling service for young people. It also operates a community support scheme within the Greater London area.

Vishvas

0207 928 9889 or vishvas@cio.org.uk

Vishvas is a culturally sensitive and accessible mental health service offering information, support and counselling services to the South Asian community.

Nafisiyat (N7 6NE)

They offer free short term counseling and therapy for people from ethnic and cultural minorities. They can be contacted on 020 7686 8666

Qalb Centre

Provides counselling and complementary therapy to Asian people with mental health problems. They are based in Walthamstow, London (E17 8BY). They can be contacted on

Tel: 020 8521 5223

Your Doctor

Many GP's now employ their own counselors. Your GP can also refer you to counseling/psychotherapy services within the NHS and provide urgent medical/psychiatric attention and referral.

Careline

Offer advice and information on any issue. Telephone them on 0208 514 1177

Tavistock Clinic Young People's Counselling Service (NW3 5BA)

They offer a free and confidential counseling service within the NHS for 16-30 year olds. Self referral only and counseling sessions are by appointment only. You can contact them on 0207 435 7111

The Men's Centre

They offer individual counseling or psychotherapy for men with sexual, gender and relationship problems. Charges are based on income. They can be contacted on 0207 267 8713

The NHS Trauma Response (London bombings) Screening Team

Offers free and confidential advice, help and treatment to anyone with emotional problems as a result of the London bombings. The Screening Team is staffed by mental health professionals and is open between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. The Screening Team can be contacted by telephone number 020 7530 3687 or by NHSTraumaresponse@candi.nhs.uk

The Samaritans

Offers a 24-hour helpline for those in crisis Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Cruse

Bereavement Care – Offers counselling, advice and support throughout the UK. Tel: 0870 167 1677. (Monday – Friday 9.30am – 5pm).

Disaster Action

Provides support and guidance to those affected by disasters. Tel: 01483 799 066

Assist Trauma Care

Offers telephone counselling and support to individuals and families in the aftermath of trauma. Tel: 01788 560800 (Helpline)

7th July Assistance

Offers a telephone helpline for emotional support for victims of the July bombings. Open 10am – 8pm weekdays and 10am – 5pm at weekends. Telephone 0845 054 7444.

Appendix K

Themes for interview with Mandeep

- very strongly identifies with his ethnic origin and sees it to be a part of his identity (line 25)
- strongly identifies with his religion (line 35)
- religion as a guideline to life (line 35)
- shock, surprise (line 43, lines 52-53, lines 60-61)
- identification with area and sense of familiarity (lines 43-44)
- sense of relief (line 46)
- London perceived to be under threat (lines 57-58)
- feeling unsafe (lines 65-67) fear/threat (line 242)
- reluctance, avoidance of trains as a way of coping (lines 69-70)
- anxious (lines 69-70, lines 72-73)
- feeling singled out (lines 75-76, line 201, 203-204)
- covert prejudice, suspicion (lines 75-76, 250-256 – link in with microaggression – lines 258-278)
- suspicion (lines 78-81, 244-250)
- perceptions of others was daunting (line 78, 280-282)
- Asians perceived as a threat (lines 78-81, lines 89-96, 106-107, 230-235, line 244-250, lines 258-267)
- Asians standing out in society (lines 78-81) – Asians perceived as different from the rest of society
- connection to experiences of prejudice in the aftermath (lines 84-96)
- symbols of threat: rucksack/bags (lines 89-90, line 169, line 192), Asian/Asian looking (line 96, 191), trains (191)
- sense of being discriminated against (lines 92-93, 101-104, 112-113)
- increased security linked to increased threat (lines 109-111)
- the term Asian and Islam heavily represented in the media (lines 117-118, lines 120-122, 130-132, 315-321, lines 377-392, lines 442-450)
- ignorance – brow skin = Muslim = terrorist (lines 125-128, lines 136-138, lines 151-158, lines 453-456, 469-472) – widespread belief in society (line 160, lines 188-192, lines 315-321)
- different perceptions of African Caribbeans and Asians (line 136-138, lines 417-435, lines 458-469)
- terrorism heavily linked to Muslims and Asians due to media coverage (lines 142-150)
- Asians a target of police (lines 174-187)
- understanding reasons for precautions/ fear of threat (lines 196-200)
- conflict between the two points
- sense of unfairness (lines 211-229, lines 315-321)
- internalising other's negative perceptions (284-286)
- feelings of anger and frustration (lines 287-288, 292-293) – trying to make sense of his experience
- the way others perceive him is incongruent with his beliefs (lines 292-299)
- feeling second class (lines 301-302, 304-306, lines 332-336)
- stereotyped (lines 30-306, lines 332-336)
- still an issue which is heavily present in society (lines 309-311)

- Media informs people's thinking and beliefs (lines 312-314, lines 393-395)
- link to political events (lines 325-330)
- divide between non Muslims and Muslims – 'them and us' (lines 335-351)
- divisions on the basis of religion (353-356)
- sense of loss (lines 38-340)
- the need for Asians to differentiate on the basis of religion (359-364) – change in Identity and what it means to be Asian (lines 359-373) – linked to stigma (lines 475-496)
- different experiences of prejudice for Asians and African-Caribbeans (line 401-413) – 'brown is the new black'
- negative perceptions of Asians in the media (lines 412-415, 562)
- links to historical context and colonialism (lines 498- 505)
- Pakistanis and Indians same but different (conflict) (lines 478-505)
- reactions of Asians to media portrayal (lines 512-516)
- resentment towards bombers (lines 515-537)
- inaccurate portrayal of Islam (lines 523-559)
- fuelled divisions within society on the basis of race (lines 564-577)
- internally he is the same, other's perceptions have changed (lines 582-589) – highlighted other's perceptions.
- conscious of how he presents himself (lines 591)
- Acceptance of other's negative perceptions (line 592, 624-628)
- Conscious of the way he presents himself (lines 591-598, lines 606-616)
- Disowning part of his Asian side (lines 592-598, line 618-619), conflict in holding the two sides of himself – conflict between being British and Asian (lines 621-622)
- Being Asian is not seen as acceptable (lines 592-598, lines 602-603)
- Asians perceived as a threat, Asian = terrorist (lines 602-603, lines 642, lines 860-861, lines 863-864)
- Feeling unaccepted / disowned by British Society (lines 612-618, lines 687-695, lines 1044-1052)
- Unable to escape from being Asian – Being Asian is the first thing that people notice (lines 609-616)
- Sense of acceptance within the Asian society/ a sense of shared understanding (lines 626-628, lines 891-905)
- Feelings of prejudice/discrimination (lines 627-628, lines 633-644, lines 690-692, lines 792-798 – links to ignorance – lines 813-821, lines 1046-1052))
- Feeling isolated/segregated from wider British society (lines 634-644, lines 655-656)
- Division of society (lines 646-648 – them and us) (lines 655-656, 658-663, lines 849-856)
- Defiance within the Asian Society/rebelling against the British Culture – getting more in touch with their Asian roots (lines 658-672, lines 703-716 – distancing himself from the British Society, lines 716-722)
- Symbols / physical representations of being Muslim: facial characteristics (lines 681-682) – "appearance is the first thing they see (lines 749-750), features (lines 752), skin one (line 752) beard (line 754), gender (lines 760) age (lines 760-761) Beard = Muslim = threat (lines 766-767)
- Prejudice challenging identity (lines 681-682). Brown skin = Paki (lines 811-814)

- ***conflict – disowning the Asian part of himself and distancing himself from the British society. Reformulation of his identity
- Links to colonialism and history (lines 720-722)
He is fundamentally the same person but the way that he is viewed/others perceptions have changed (lines 725-732, lines 739-744 – the way that he has to present himself has also changed as a result)
- Sadness around change (line 696)
- Defiance/anger/frustration (lines 772-779, lines 781-784)
- Links to direct experience of prejudice (lines 800-811)
- Feeling under threat (lines 809-811)
- Media as a means of education / breeding ignorance (lines 823-836) – big influence on people’s thoughts and views
- Prejudicial views not necessarily linked to contact with Asians (lines 835-836, lines 840-847)
- Change in ethos of London (lines 840-843, 849-856)
- Treated with suspicion (lines 863-864)
- Differences in how Asians are perceived by various races (lines 866-887) – changing Identity of Asians within society
- *** contradiction between the divide in the Asian community and sense of belonging/understanding within Asians (‘fellow Asian’)
- Processing thoughts and feelings through Music as a way of coping (lines 916-935)
- Feelings of loss (lines 934-935)
- Sadness (line 940)
- Shock (line 940) – linked to Bombers being British (lines 957-967) – seemed more threatening, incomprehensible, more real, closer to home (lines 980-994)
- Confusion (line 940)
- Unspoken Anger (line 943-944)
- Questioning why/searching for answers – challenging existential beliefs (lines 943-944, 946-952, 972-976)
- Fear of being associated with bombers (lines 990-994)
- Anger/resentment towards bombers (lines 997-997)
- Mixture of immediate emotions (line 999)
- Innocent are victims of attacks (lines 1001-1012 – ripple effect, negative consequences of attacks)
- Destroyed race relations/steps back (lines 1018-1031)
- Loss of opportunities in society/put Asians at a disadvantage in society (lines 1036-1041, 1042-1052)
- Feeling unsupported / alone in coping (lines 1059-1064)
- Taking to friends as a way of coping (lines 1065-1074) – sense of shared understanding
- Greatest influence of attacks on Asians (lines 1076-1083)

- ***interview gave him a platform to air his views and get things off his chest, sense of relief “its been good that I’ve been allowed to air my views”, processing his subconscious feelings and thoughts

Appendix L

Building up the super-ordinate themes

KEY of Colours utilised for each participant:

Sumit
Anish
Mandeep
Ahmed
Arun
Jagpreet
Amar
Sajid
Mustafa
Deepak

Initial reactions

- Vivid memory of bombings
- Initial reactions (shock, relief, danger, thankfulness, safety)
- Sense of familiarity
- News reports important
- Disagreement with attacks
- major shock
- expectation of reprisal attack on Britain, the way it was done was a shock
- shock, surprise
- identification with area and sense of familiarity (lines 43-44)
- sense of relief
- initial reaction of shock
- 7/7 closer to home – more identification with the attack
- vivid recollection of 7/7 and concern for wife
- Felt helpless on 7/7
- concern for friends
- frightening
- feelings of shock
- terrorism as a new war
- concern for loved ones
- vivid recollection of 7/7
- shock
- numbness
- shock and surprise, vivid recollection of the events
- vivid memories of the immediate impact
- worry and anxiety in immediate aftermath
- shock
- vivid recollection
- sense of familiarity/identification with place of bombings
- sense of relief/feeling lucky
- sense of a real threat/danger
- feelings of shock, anxiety an threat in relation to the news of bombings, unexpected event
- fear for family when he found out about the attacks
- vivid recollection of 7/7
- unexpected
- shock and anxiety
- sense of familiarity with tube
- sense of relief
- horror
- feeling lucky

- unable to comprehend attack
- impact of 7/7 was felt as it was closer to home (line 435)
- the attack on London was expected on some level, the shock was that it was done by British men and the tactics that they utilised
- shock
- upset initially
- close to home – concern for friends and loved ones
- London as a target came as a shock

Reflecting on societal impact

- Change in perception of the world
- Consequences upon everyday actions
- Divisions between Asians since 7/7
- Dismissed feelings by non-Asians
- targeted, stopped and searched, treated with suspicion
- Britain perceived to be under threat
- viewed with suspicion and misdirected hatred
- divisions and conflict on the basis of religion (religious war)
- covert prejudice, suspicion – link in with microaggression
- Asians a target of police
- still an issue which is heavily present in society
- fuelled divisions within society on the basis of race
- Feeling unaccepted / disowned by British Society
- Feelings of prejudice/discrimination – links to ignorance
- Division of society
- Change in ethos of London
- Destroyed race relations/steps back
- Loss of opportunities in society/put Asians at a disadvantage in society
- Greatest influence of attacks on Asians
- Asians being perceived as Muslim and viewed negatively
- 7/7 brought Islam to the forefront of Society
- shared global view of terrorism
- fear of “brown people” among “white people”
- feeling of general fear in society
- negative attention towards Muslims in society
- negative representation of Muslims also has a negative impact on non Muslims
- 9/11 and 7/7 have served to legitimise segregation and discrimination on the basis of religion and race. It has brought religion to the fore of society and acts as a justification to express negative views
- divisions within Asians
- expectation of threat
- realisation that all Asians would be affected
- perceptions of others-Asians will be viewed negatively
- loss of rapport with British society for all Asians
- loss of respect for the Asian culture due to the extremist’s actions
- Asian men more visible in society
- all Asians implicated due to colour of skin
- a picture of a divided Britain
- feeling of London returning to normal
- prevalence of suspicion not so high now
- all Asians perceived as a target
- still feeling some tension in society and uneasy
- still feels that he is viewed with suspicion
- feelings of fear in society
- animosity between races created
- separation within Asians on the basis of religion, “them and us divide
- Asians perceived as a dominant part of British Society, particularly within certain areas of London
- targeted and scapegoated by police - symbols of suspicion utilised as a justification for targetting Asians

- perceived as suspicious by others
- view of the world as segregated
- the bombings affected the whole of the British Society
- perception of Londoners as resilience
- divide in society between Asians and non Asians
- All Asians were under attack in the aftermath of 7/7 – it's a race thing not a religious thing
- extremes in London town – Olympics to bombs
- creating unrest
- aware of the change in environment and people around him
- London is moving forward
- distinctions being created within society
- attacks made Asian men more visible
- contradiction in Britain being a multicultural society
- segregation within the UK community
- non- Asians targeting Asians
- sense of London returning back to normal

Perceptions of British society

- Negative perception of Muslims and the British culture
- Differences in culture and education between UK communities
- Extremes in British Society
- Media/society take a narrow view of the situation and blame Muslims
- education is important and people's exposure to world events on the way this affects their lifeview
- negative perceptions of Muslims in British society is linked to a lack of awareness
- the "uneducated" will perceive him to be a Muslim (lines 210-214) common assumption that Asian = Muslim. perceived similarity between all Asians
- negative perceptions of Muslims in British Society
- suspicion
- perceptions of others was daunting
- Asians perceived as a threat
- Asians standing out in society – Asians perceived as different from the rest of society
- different perceptions of African Caribbeans and Asians
- Being Asian is not seen as acceptable
- Asians perceived as a threat, Asian = terrorist
- Prejudicial views not necessarily linked to contact with Asians
- Differences in how Asians are perceived by various races – changing Identity of Asians within society
- negative perceptions of Muslims in society
- All Muslims perceived to be the same
- extremist views in society – "all Muslims are Bad"
- assumption is that being brown = Muslim
- Brown = Muslim
- ignorance in British Society about the differences within Asians
- ignorance of differences between Asians
- brown skin = extremist
- creation of an extremist cult
- lack of understanding of differences in British society - ignorance
- all Asians perceived to be similar by British society
- still some element of covert suspicion towards Asian men, he felt that people were identifying him with the suicide bombers – imagined similarity
- perception of London being more tolerant
- "everyone with a brown face was a terrorist"
- perceptions of others has changed, brown skin = threat
- automatic association of brown = Muslim
- perception of British society as being angry
- All Asians perceived as being similar in British society
- judgments of all Asians being similar to bombers based on physical and facial characteristics
- government excluding Asians

- society and the government are alienating young British Asian men
- Asian men as a whole seen as a threat by wider society
- Innocent Muslims being perceived negatively and as a threat – targeted by the UK community
- Muslims viewed with suspicion in the British Society

Media

- Media's impact on society
- Differences in media types
- Media increasing awareness
- Negative impact of media (shock, hysteria, money, politics, labelling, propaganda)
- Anti-Islamic messages within the media
- media – accurate presentation of what happened in the aftermath
- media presented the facts
- Media coverage isolated the Muslims who were responsible
- media provided coverage on innocent victims
- media were objective in their coverage
- media as a source of education
- manipulation within the media – public being disillusioned
- narrow view presented in the media
- the term Asian and Islam heavily represented in the media
- terrorism heavily linked to Muslims and Asians due to media coverage
- Media informs people's thinking and beliefs
- negative perceptions of Asians in the media
- reactions of Asians to media portrayal
- inaccurate portrayal of Islam
- Media as a means of education / breeding ignorance – big influence on people's thoughts and views
- Television was perceived to be the main source of information
- media went overboard in reporting 7/7
- Islam heavily present in media accounts
- media coverage created fear and the sense of threat in society
- media portraying that it was ok to be prejudiced against Asians
- media attributed to fear in society
- media perceived to exaggerate stories
- media as a form of education and socialisation – media perceived by society to tell the truth
- Media perceived to have a big influence over people's thinking and beliefs
- media perceived as being untrustworthy
- events "over-covered"
- variations in media presentations
- reluctant to elaborate on media in the interview
- Media have created a Muslim identity based on a stereotype
- extremist Islam was blamed
- manipulation of religion
- distinction within Asians are not highlighted
- suggestion of Asians as a threat in the media
- media a strong influence on public opinion
- limited viewpoint presented
- media may be perceived as truth/source of education
- sensationalisation within the media
- suspicion of the media
- differences in media types
- depicted as a religious war in the media – simplified view
- negative perception of Muslims portrayed in the media
- stereotype portrayed in the media of all Muslims, all Muslims are extremists
- media created tension within society
- media as a source of information and education
- negative stereotypes in the media of Muslims and Asians
- media interchanged the terms Asian and Muslim
- media coverage divided society

- media created a fear of Asians within society
- Media perceived as untrustworthy
- Media as a source of miseducation
- manipulation of the events by media
- differences in reporting around the “western world”, differences in East vs. West
- sensationalisation within the media, hype
- media provoking fear and anxiety within Britain
- large influence of the media
- negative view of the role of the media, media as being untrustworthy
- inescapable images, vivid and strong images of the bombings
- terrorism prominent in the news
- power of the initial images of the aftermath of 7/7
- media coverage perceived as weak and untrustworthy
- a sense of being bombarded with initial images of the events
- comparison between British and American media
- sense of not actually knowing what happened on 7/7
- media emphasising Islamic radicalism
- Muslims singled out and linked explicitly to terrorism
- misconceived view of Islam reported
- media covered events well
- immediate access to event through the media
- the identity of bombers was salient in the news coverage
- media highlighted the events
- the media coverage of the events was engaging

Feelings towards Muslims as a result of the bombings

- connection between the broader Muslim community and the London Bombings
- Muslim = threat
- Anger towards Muslims
- Frustration towards Muslims
- Empathy towards Muslims
- Conflict between empathy vs. disagreement
- Conflict between sameness and difference
- Need to differentiate from Muslims (“them and us” talk)
- Need to dissociate from Muslims
- Muslims = perpetrators, innocent people = victims
- Muslims perceived as a target
- common assumption is that Muslim = terrorist
- asserting his acceptance of Muslims
- differentiating himself from the terrorists
- ignorance – brown skin = Muslim = terrorist – widespread belief in society
- divide between non Muslims and Muslims – ‘them and us’ divisions on the basis of religion
- the need for Asians to differentiate on the basis of religion
- Pakistanis and Indians same but different (conflict)
- resentment towards bombers
- Symbols / physical representations of being Muslim: facial characteristics – “appearance is the first thing they see, features, skin tone, beard, gender, age, Beard = Muslim = threat
- Fear of being associated with bombers
- Anger/resentment towards bombers
- need to differentiate from bombers through disagreement with the attacks
- feelings of anger
- the perception of innocent people as the victims of the attacks
- disagreement with attacks
- perceiving the bombers to have power and control
- bombers are selfish
- anger towards extremists
- conflicting feelings around the Muslim religion, fear around the Muslim religion
- initially the impact of 7/7 was to make him feel disconnected from his religion - initially had a negative view of Islam

- distrust of the preachers at the mosque
- anger at extremists
- Muslim = threat
- people who look like Muslims have been marginalized
- resentment towards bombers
- differentiating between bombers and other Muslims
- anger towards bombers
- extremists have been brainwashed , extremists perceived as being vulnerable and lacking control
- identification with bombers' sense of wanting a purpose in life and a sense of belonging
- conflict between identification with the bombers process but disagreement with the methods utilised
- week minded individuals are the extremists and members of society
- distinguishing himself from the bombers
- need to differentiate from Muslims
- All Muslims blamed for the attacks
- separation within Asians fuels the negative perceptions of Muslims
- conflict between empathising with Muslims and wanting to differentiate
- Muslim religion associated with extremists – narrow view of the Muslim religion within society
- automatic association between “symbols” and terrorism
- being Muslim is connected to being Asian (lines 105-108)
- perception of bombers as not being “typically” Muslim (based on their race)
- challenging the definition of a terrorist
- trying to understand the mindset of terrorists
- distinguishing himself from the terrorists, explicitly stating his disagreement with the terrorist acts
- terrorists perceived as selfish
- feelings of anger towards the terrorists
- “identification with “home grown bombers”
- feelings of anger an disbelief towards bombers
- anger towards bombers
- extremists gaining a sense of belonging through terrorism
- empathising with the bombers on some level
- bombers creating a new community / subculture
- dissociation from the bombers – another level of the “them and us divide”
- conflict between identifying with British Muslims and disassociating with them
- disagreement with the attacks
- frustration at the way the Muslim community dealt with the aftermath
- feeling that young Muslim men are being let down by society
- conflict between being a young British Asian man but not identifying with the bombers
- Muslims are more likely to be targeted
- Sense of identification with the bombers as normal Asian men
- the involvement of a black Muslim bomber was shocking
- unusual association of being Black and Muslim
- Being Asian is usually associated with being Muslim
- does not want to be perceived to be a Muslim – dissociation from Muslims
- making a conscious effort to differentiate himself from Muslims
- he perceives being Muslim as being something negative
- Muslims = terrorist

Connections

- connection to Muslims through being Asian
- All Asians affected by aftermath
- Historical/cultural context
- Shared experience of prejudice
- Connection to parents
- Connection to roots
- Connection to past experiences
- Connection to 9/11
- travel associated with threat of terrorism

- train is perceived to be unsafe
- connection to other worldwide political events
- terrorism is a reaction to other countries feeling under threat
- 7/7 backlash to political world events
- scapegoated while travelling– linking in with previous experiences of prejudice
- connection to experiences of prejudice in the aftermath
- link to political events
- links to historical context and colonialism
- Sense of acceptance within the Asian society/ a sense of shared understanding
- Defiance within the Asian Society/rebelling against the British Culture – getting more in touch with their Asian roots – distancing himself from the British Society
- Links to direct experience of prejudice
- *** contradiction between the divide in the Asian community and sense of belonging/understanding within Asians (‘fellow Asian’)
- bombings brought him closer to his religion
- link to historical context
- sense of connection and empathy for victims
- links with experience of prejudice
- attributing his experience of discrimination to his race
- conflict between the Western world and the Muslim world
- conflict is on the basis of religion (holy war)
- more overt discrimination since 7/7
- perceptions of power
- connection to roots and the importance of this
- connection to 9/11
- connection to political events
- sense of helplessness and powerlessness
- government and religion see as having control
- religion as a division between people
- sense of identification with roots and culture
- conflict between the West and East
- familiarity with the place of attacks
- connection with Jean Charles DeMenezes
- Asian men = perpetrators and targets
- connection to culture and religion
- connection to roots
- sense of belonging to his country of origin
- connection to 9/11
- sense of it being “Closer to home” – connection to London
- connection to Jean Charles DeMenezes
- comparing the London Bombings to other political events such as Iraq , role of the government
- sense of conflict in the world, perception of war being inevitable
- historical context
- innocent people are the victims of terrorism
- wider impact of terrorism (ripple effect)
- connection to other terrorist attacks
- 7/7 had a far reaching impact beyond the actual day
- strong sense of connection to Britain
- connection to family roots
- connection of religion to fear
- connection with the shock of Jean Charles DeMenezes being shot and sense of identification with him
- connection to 9/11
- conflict between the East and the West
- connection to 9/11 and the significant impact on him
- connection to terrorist act in Madrid

Fear/Threat

- Heightened awareness/hyper-vigilance (triggers – Muslim, public transport)

- Fear of being judged
- Fear of being identified as a Muslim
- Loss of control
- Symbols of suspicion (beard, clothing, Koran, airport, train, male, brown skin)
- Generalisation of context
- more vigilant
- Fear and anxiety around perceived
- living in constant threat
- London perceived to be unsafe
- heightened sense of awareness since 7/7
- feeling under constant threat of another attack, unconscious threat
- constantly evaluating surroundings
- feelings of suspicion
- fear of being attacked
- more vigilant since 7/7, heightened sense of awareness
- heightened level of violence
- the world is unsafe and under threat
- fear of being a victim of mistaken identity
- London perceived to be under threat
- feeling unsafe, fear/threat
- symbols of threat: rucksack/bags, Asian/Asian looking, trains gender, age, Beard = Muslim = threat
- increased security linked to increased threat
- internalising other's negative perceptions
- Feeling under threat
- in the aftermath: anxious, wary, cautious, fearful, hypervigilant
- link fear with public transport
- symbol of threat: bag, work environment - airport, jacket, crowded places, train
- more suspicious and cautious of people
- hypervigilance – looking for cues/symbols to indicate threat, aware of people's behaviour
- anxiety and fear is context dependent
- work (airport) is seen as a target/perceived to be under constant threat
- fear of another attack
- constant anxiety
- 7/7 heightened his sense of danger. World perceived as unsafe
- 7/7 heightened awareness of fear and threat
- concern and fear for wife
- scared
- scared for his children and their future
- fear children will be influenced by extremism
- increased awareness of his environment and the people that surround him
- fear of being attacked/feeling under threat in the aftermath
- fear of the consequences of 7/7 and the way that he may have been perceived by others
- fear of revenge attacks
- real experience of extremist action
- fear of extremists
- Perception of the world as an unsafe place, living in constant fear
- being brown in perceived as a threat
- symbols of threat: bag, brown skin, long beard or facial hair, male
- heightened sense of fear in London and England, "western world"
- Muslim = threat
- heightened sense of hypervigilance in the aftermath of 7/7
- negative association between fear and travelling on the train
- fear of more attacks
- Britain perceived as a threat
- tubes perceived as a threat
- fear of revenge attacks
- fear for family
- Asian men more likely to be perceived as a threat/likely to be singled out

- symbols of threat/a terrorist: short hair, goatee, Asian, male
- fear
- he's also adopted a stereotype for threatening people
- more vigilant
- avoids travelling on the train as a way of coping
- continuous threat
- cautious
- society as a whole is more cautious and scared
- perceptions of the world as an unsafe place
- Asians perceived as a threat
- situational factors and their connection to threat
- symbols of suspicion – Asian male, bags, brown face, hijab or Muslim clothing (gallabiyah)
- fear of being attacked
- heightened sense of awareness / hypervigilance
- Brown Skin is highly visible
- fear of negative judgements from others in society
- more fearful since 7/7
- resilience
- worry for family
- being male linked to being perceived as a threat
- anxiety, fear concern – links to train
- sense of safety being challenged, fear, change in worldview from London as being safe to unsafe
- feeling suspicious/ under threat/ fear of terrorism
- heightened sense of awareness/hypervigilance
- loss of control, fear of the unknown, loss of power
- symbols of threat – bags, beard being Asian, being male
- police perceived as a threat/source of anxiety
- changing perception of the world as safe to unsafe
- feeling under constant threat
- change in perception of the world
- fear of terrorism is prevalent in society
- Development of terrorism and fear of different kinds of attacks
- world view of London has changed to being unsafe
- feeling unsafe in the world, challenging sense of security, questioning his world
- fear, anxiety, hypervigilance, anticipation
- fear linked to trains
- avoidance linked to fear
- feeling unsafe and under threat on the tube
- fear of being judged by others
- symbol of threat: Muslim, male, beard, backpack
- fear of threat
- hyper vigilance/ heightened sense of awareness
- “double threat”
- fear of mistaken identity
- constant and persistent threat
- some sense of security and feelings of safety returning – less threat now
- fear and paranoia
- cautious, vigilant and suspicious of others on the train
- Asian perceived as threat
- feeling under threat
- Backpack as a symbol of threat
- beard as a symbol of threat and of being Muslim (lines 101-102)
- traditional Muslim outfits as a symbol of threat
- feelings of fear and anxiety
- feeling insecure/under threat
- hyper vigilant, increased sense of awareness as a result of feeling under threat
- backpack a symbol of threat
- hyper vigilant, more aware of the people around him
- fear for his loved ones

- worry
- change in perception of London being safe

Image/identity/self

- Identity is important
- Difficulty in defining ethnic origin
- Conflict between being British and Asian
- Conscious of the perceptions of others – the perception of others linked to the self
- Identity linked to safety – fear around identity
- Sensitivities to his race
- Differences between Asians and non Asians
- Prejudices incongruent with the self
- Spirituality is important
- defined ethnic origin in terms of religion
- strong sense of identification with being Hindu
- perceives himself to be essentially the same person
- very strongly identifies with his ethnic origin and sees it to be a part of his identity
- strongly identifies with his religion
- religion as a guideline to life
- the way others perceive him is incongruent with his beliefs
- change in Identity and what it means to be Asian – linked to stigma
- different experiences of prejudice for Asians and African-Caribbeans
- internally he is the same, other's perceptions have changed – highlighted other's perceptions.
- conscious of how he presents himself
- Disowning part of his Asian side, conflict in holding the two sides of himself – conflict between being British and Asian
- Unable to escape from being Asian – Being Asian is the first thing that people notice
- Prejudice challenging identity. Brown skin = Paki ***conflict – disowning the Asian part of himself and distancing himself from the British society. Reformulation of his identity
- He is fundamentally the same person but the way that he is viewed/others perceptions have changed (the way that he has to present himself has also changed as a result)
- strong sense of identification with being Indian
- does not identify very strongly with being Muslim
- the importance of being Muslim is context dependent
- contemplating what it means to him to be Muslim
- 7/7 challenged his conception of the Muslim religion
- lack of knowledge around the Muslim religion is making him feel confused. Questioning his religion * he refers to the Muslim religion as my religion, even though initially he said that he did not identify very strongly with being Muslim
- dissociation from his religion
- feeling of shame around being Muslim
- fear of the perception of others if he discloses that he is Muslim
- processing his sense of self/identity since 7/7
- has started to see the positive side of his religion
- has developed a more balanced view of his religion since 7/7
- trusting himself more in terms of belief
- assumes that peoples first impressions of him are that he is a terrorist
- sense of being of mixed heritage is important
- does not consider himself to have a religion and this is important to him
- religion perceived to be a form of control
- doesn't perceive there to be an internal change in himself
- he feels that he has not changed internally as a person
- he was also following the negative stereotypes of Muslims – he found this to be incongruent with his beliefs
- difficulty in defining ethnic origin
- ethnicity is seen as being context dependent
- being Sikh is seen as a strong part of his identity
- sees religion as movement
- religion is source of strength for him
- conflict between Sikhism being part of his identity and him rebelling against the religious aspect

- religion as a form of control
- positive view of his religion and the Sikh culture
- religion as a basis of defining your roots
- religion is part of his developing self
- importance of religion has developed with age
- identity as fluid/dual identity
- family values seen to be a big influence on identity
- questioning his sense of self
- conflict between feeling British but not feeling accepted in Britain
- various influences on identity
- strong sense of identification with being Indian
- strong sense of identification with being Sikh
- conscious of the negative perceptions of others
- Brown Skin is highly visible
- he perceives himself to be the same person before and after 7/7
- being Asian is an important part of his identity - identifies strongly with being Asian
- holding on to his religion and culture
- identifies strongly with being Asian
- strong connection and sense of identification to being Muslim – being Muslim is part of his identity
- conscious of the perception of others
- conflict between being British and Asian
- internally he is the same person but his identity is changing as a result of his environment
- identity as being fluid and adaptable
- various influences on identity
- being brown negatively impacts upon other's perceptions of him
- dual identity
- religion does not define his identity – negative perception of religion
- conflict between being British and being Asian
- indirectly changed by 7/7
- internally he is the same person, but peoples perceptions of him have changed
- sense of being British Asian is important
- sense of being Hindu is important
- strong sense of faith/belief in God
- conscious of the negative perceptions of others

Key emotions

- Feelings of persecution
- feeling singled out/different
- Resentment
- Sense of unfairness
- Embarrassment
- Shame
- Guilt
- Alienation
- Isolation
- Dread/Anxiety
- Helplessness
- Fed up
- Hopeful
- Extremes of feelings
- Mixture of emotions (sadness, anger, threat)
- Feeling unable to fully express emotions
- can understand why the attacks took place
- loss of control
- empathises with victims
- acceptance
- suspicion
- loss of control

- prejudicial experienced accepted as a part of modern life
- relief
- guilt
- anxiety, fear, threat
- concern for loved ones
- anger and frustration
- anxious
- feeling singled out
- sense of being discriminated against
- conflict between understanding reasons for precautions/ fear of threat and a sense of unfairness
- feelings of anger and frustration – trying to make sense of his experience
- feeling second class
- feeling stereotyped
- sense of loss
- Acceptance of other's negative perceptions
- Feeling isolated/segregated from wider British society
- Sadness around change
- Defiance/anger/frustration
- feeling he is Treated with suspicion
- Feelings of loss (lines 934-935)
- Sadness (line 940)
- Shock – linked to Bombers being British – seemed more threatening, incomprehensible, more real, closer to home
- Confusion
- Unspoken Anger
- Mixture of immediate emotions
- Innocent are victims of attacks (ripple effect, negative consequences of attacks)
- Feeling unsupported / alone in coping
- fear and empathy with the victims
- in the aftermath: anxious, wary, cautious, fearful, hypervigilant
- scared
- unable to understand the attacks
- sadness
- powerlessness
- acceptance of terrorism
- heightened sense of awareness
- confusion
- prejudice on the basis of race
- feeling discriminated against
- feeling targeted/victimised
- disgust
- conflict between understanding people's reactions and feeling disgust
- unsure of the impact of 7/7
- he feels that he has not changed internally as a person
- resilience and acceptance
- feelings of anxiety and worry – London perceived as a target
- no experience of overt prejudice, covert prejudice (e.g. looks), things not feeling the same
- acceptance of being singled out
- resilience
- not being accepted by society as being British
- sense of not feeling understood by non Asians, withdrawing from the non Asian society - microaggressions leading to withdrawal
- negative view of the world
- feeling targeted
- noticed the negative perception of others on the train
- treated with suspicion
- feeling tense and anxious in the aftermath
- acceptance of being viewed with suspicion
- understanding of societal suspicion towards Asians

- anger
- negative perception of others, feeling judged, sense of unfairness
- heightened sense of awareness around own behaviour
- feelings of anger
- empathy with victims of the attack
- feelings of upset and emotional distress
- acceptance of the situation
- feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, loss of control, despair
- trying to make sense of why the attacks were carried out
- sadness
- acceptance of the aftermath of the attacks
- sense of hope for the future
- preparing for future attacks – terrorism is inevitable
- relief for family
- covert discrimination within society towards Asians
- empathy and sense of connectedness to other Asians
- feelings of suspicion
- feeling exposed and vulnerable. Feeling targeted
- loss of control
- feeling persecuted and a constant target
- being the target of suspicion
- feelings of frustration and anger
- resilience
- hope
- other's perceiving him with suspicion on the train
- feeling targeted and angry
- empathised with British Asians that get the train
- British Asians treated with suspicion on the train
- being judged according to race
- relief
- feeling lucky
- feelings of fear and anxiety
- sadness
- empathising with the victims
- sense of anticipation

Ways of coping

- Coping using Spirituality
- Coping using prayer
- Communication as a way of coping
- Withdrawal/denial
- Distancing from media
- changes in travel in the aftermath
- avoids taking the train as a way of coping and gaining some sense of control
- group discussions with friends at work or family as a way of coping and a source of support
- religion as a way of coping
- avoidance as a way of coping
- reluctance, avoidance of trains as a way of coping
- Processing thoughts and feelings through Music as a way of coping
- Talking to friends as a way of coping (lines 1065-1074) – sense of shared understanding
- educating himself about his religion as a way of coping. More influenced by negative perceptions of Islam initially, now making a more informed choice
- acceptance and adaptation as ways of coping
- guarding himself against potential threats in the aftermath
- coped through his own internal processing
- connections to roots and culture helped him to cope
- family and friends as a source of belonging and support and a way of coping
- ways of coping subconscious
- adapting behaviour

- consciously changing behaviour as a way of protecting himself
- conscious change in behaviour in the aftermath of 7/7
- adapting behaviour to appear less suspicious
- behavioural changes as a way of coping – adjusting travel arrangements
- utilising coping strategies that fit in with his beliefs and world views
- avoidance of taking the trains
- changing behaviour consciously when travelling on the tube
- avoidance of the tube as a way of coping and adapting his lifestyle
- changed behaviour
- religion is seen as a source of support and safety
- religion utilised as a way of coping with stress
- avoidance of the trains as a way of coping and maintaining control

Making new meaning of one's existence

- Transformation of attitudes toward life
- Appreciation of life
- Acceptance
- strong family beliefs enhanced
- change in existential beliefs around life and death
- his positive beliefs about his religion have been enhanced – feeling content with his religion
- Questioning why/searching for answers – challenging existential beliefs
- change in what he perceives to be important in life
- more appreciation of life
- resilience and acceptance
- family values seen as important
- importance of discipline
- reinforced family beliefs
- appreciation of family
- appreciation for life
- realising his change through processing his thoughts and feelings in the interview
- appreciation for life
- impact of terrorism always in the subconscious mind
- acceptance – change in attitude to life and what can and cant be controlled
- acceptance of threat
- strengthened negative beliefs about religion
- become a way of life
- possibility of personal loss impacted him
- re-evaluating his life
- loved ones have become more important

Experience of the interview

- Connection to the researcher as a fellow Asian
- ***interview gave him a platform to air his views and get things off his chest, sense of relief “its been good that I’ve been **allowed** to air my views”, processing his subconscious feelings and thoughts
- interview helped client to process some of his thoughts and feelings, sense of relief, first and positive experience of talking about the events
- identifies with me in the interview
- positive experience of the interview
- he felt happy to take part in the interview and assert his viewpoint
- interview helped him to process his feelings in relation to the events