

Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs:
Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 1991
B.Ed., University of Victoria, 2000

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to better understand the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behaviour, and through honouring their struggles and their stories, better the capacity for counselling professionals to effectively support these at-risk students. Through exploring both the students' experience and the perceptions of those professionals who supported them, this research honoured the voice of a population that is often pushed aside in the education realm. Qualitative data analysis highlighted areas of commonality and difference between the two perspectives, ultimately demonstrating the importance of respecting student perspectives within professional decisions and interventions. The case study research took place at the Alternate Learning Program located within the Saanich School District. Participants included three adolescent males with behaviour designations, and the corresponding school professionals who supported these youth.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introducing the Population at Study

Adolescence represents a developmental time of significant complexity and change as youth begin the delicate shift from childhood to adulthood. Many youth embrace these challenges with a sense of readiness that seems to encourage and protect their growth. As a middle school counsellor, I witness students' exploration and commitment to new directions. Although there are times of struggle, these students accept risks and demonstrate resilience as they shape their emerging academic and social self-concepts. In looking more closely at the student population, I understand that this acceptance and resilience is not a shared experience for all youth. Some students stand aside, confined by their struggles with emotional and behavioural difficulties. These adolescents present behaviours in ways that mystify the professionals who support their growth. As a counsellor in the education system, this is the population that draws my attention and curiosity.

At-Risk Youth

Emotional and behavioural challenges cut across demographics of age, race, gender, and socio-economic status. Health Canada, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, participates every 4 years in the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey designed to monitor trends in health and related behaviours. The latest report, "Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada" (Health Canada, 2008), focused on data gathered using systematic single-cluster sampling from over 9500 Canadian youth in 2006. Although most students across Canada perceived themselves as having strong emotional health, HBSC results indicated that of students in grades 6, 7, and 8, 20-30% reported feeling depressed at least once per week, and 15-20% recognized themselves as being bad-tempered or irritable more than once per week. Girls

appeared to experience less stable emotional health than boys, and boys reported being involved in more physical and verbal bullying than girls. These HBSC findings noted an increased level of physical fighting since the previous survey in 2002. When boys fought, 50% of them had the altercation with a friend or an acquaintance, and 17% of them carried weapons. Parallel to this Health Canada research, the Adolescent Health Survey (AHS) III (Katzenstein, 2003) focused specifically on the health and related behaviours of BC youth. Regional results of the AHS III for South Vancouver Island directed attention towards disturbing social trends facing BC's youth. In comparison to the girls' rate of 17%, more boys, 38%, engaged in physical fights; less than 50% of students always felt safe at school; one in ten considered running away from home; overall life satisfaction decreased with age; and 17% of boys using marijuana did so an intense 20 times per month. These reports shed light on the challenges that face the wider youth culture within our middle and secondary schools, dynamics that become integral factors when working to support the academic and social-emotional development of at-risk students.

Recent empirical studies tracked the trends within youth culture, and noted in particular the heightened intensity of struggles facing male adolescents (Jackson 2002, 2003; Powelson, 2004; Weaver-Hightower 2003a, 2003b). Boys performed at lower standards than girls; were less likely to attend university; had higher rates of mortality from violence, accidents, and suicide; engaged in greater high risk activities (both sanctioned and non-sanctioned); were less likely to seek professional help for personal problems (Powelson, 2004; Watts & Borders, 2005); and were more likely to receive behaviour designations within the public school system (BC Ministry of Education Analysis and Reporting Group, 2008).

Behavioural issues, as well as social-emotional and mental health struggles, inevitably surfaced within school environments, particularly for male adolescents. Although research

reported girls having poorer emotional health than boys, adolescent females typically presented these concerns through internalized symptoms such as depression and isolation (Feder, Levant, & Dean, 2007; Newman, Lohman, & Newman, 2007; Pollack, 2006). Internalized problems were more difficult to detect and diagnose than the observable symptoms that were often evidenced in male adolescents (Beaver, 2008). Males typified their behaviour problems with a significantly high level of aggression and delinquency; conduct that was both overt and concrete, impacting the health and safety of those around them (Newman et al., 2007).

In the Saanich School District, teachers and support staff recognize the intensity and frequency of student difficulties, particularly the externalized and demonstrative problems frequently associated with adolescent males. The school staff refers these students to counselling professionals for appropriate interventions and classroom support. The students' behavioural struggles are documented and become formalized; the initial steps for moderate or intense behaviour designations. Heather Burkett, District Principal of Alternate Programs for the Saanich School District, communicated that in the 2007/08 school year, the Saanich district reported a total of 181 students with behaviour designations, 120 (66%) of which were male (personal communication, April 15, 2008). These district numbers were slightly less than the provincial data for this same year (72%), yet provided an overwhelming indication of the crises facing male adolescents in our public school system (BC Ministry of Education Analysis and Reporting Group, 2008). In this thesis, the researcher sought to better understand the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males with behaviour designations, and through honouring their struggles and their stories, better the capacity for counsellors to effectively support these at-risk students. In order to begin that exploration, the concept of behaviour designations must first be clearly defined in terms of British Columbia's procedures and criteria.

Behaviour Designations

British Columbia has two behaviour designations: students requiring Moderate Behaviour Support (MBS), including students with mental illness, and students requiring Intensive Behaviour Interventions (IBI), including students with serious mental illness. Students in the former category presented, over an extended period of time and settings, a “frequency or severity of the behaviours or negative internalized states [that] have a very disruptive effect on the classroom learning environment, social relations or personal adjustment” (BC Ministry of Education Special Education Services, 2006, p.54). Ministry guidelines further break down generalized student behaviours into specific criteria used for designation such as aggression, hyperactivity, and thought disorders (see Table 1).

Students who require IBI, or students with serious mental illness, are those small populations that are in need of combined school and community interventions through inter-agency involvement. Stringent Ministry requirements consider the disorder be of a serious enough nature to be known to school and district personnel, in addition to community agencies and outside services. The students’ behaviours must present serious risk to themselves or others that result in significant interference in their learning and interactions that go beyond the reasonable scope of a school environment (see Table 1).

The population within each designation is not homogenous; each intervention level captures a range of internal and external behaviours. The IBI category may not represent all students presenting extreme behaviours or mental health symptoms as it necessitates the involvement of community agencies. Schools are only able to recommend outside interventions, therefore the final decisions, and ultimately the designation type, rests with the families’ motivation or ability to seek external supports. A second determining variable is the referring

Table 1

Assessment Criteria Related to Student

Moderate behaviour supports or students with mental illness	Intensive behaviour interventions or students with serious mental illness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have documentation of a behavioural, mental health and/or psychological assessment which indicates needs related to behaviour/mental illness • Demonstrate aggression, hyperactivity, delinquency, substance abuse, anxiety, stress related disorders, depression, etc. • Severity of the behaviour or condition has disruptive effect on classroom learning, social relations, or personal adjustment • Regular in-class strategies not sufficient to support behaviour needs of student • Rule out other conditions which may be contributing to the behaviour • Mental Illness; the diagnosis must be made by a qualified mental health clinician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have documentation of a behavioural, mental health and/or psychological assessment which indicates the need for intensive intervention beyond a normal capacity of the school to educate • Demonstrate antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour/profound withdrawal, or other internalizing conditions in school • Behaviour or mental illness serious enough to be a risk to themselves or others and/or significantly interfere with academic progress of self and others • Behaviour or mental illness serious enough to warrant extensive interventions • Serious Mental Illness; diagnosis must be made by a qualified mental health clinician

Note. From *A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* (p. 60), by BC Ministry of Education

Special Education Services, 2006, Victoria, BC: Author. Copyright 2007 by Province of British

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professional's personal characteristics, classroom experiences, and management style (Maras, 1996). Teacher expectations, school demographics, and discipline policies shape the interpretation of behaviour, and thus the proposed designation. Designation procedures are grounded in the assumption that behaviours are easily recognized and objectively defined. In practice, the designation process becomes subjective as students are often identified according to biased professional perceptions and inherent policy limitations (Maras, 1996).

Kershaw and Sonuga-Barke's (1998) study on the usefulness of the label "Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties" (EBD) recognized a need for professionals to move away from reactive and generalized behaviour responses, and embrace more preventative and individualized interventions. Using cluster analysis, this study synthesized the results of teacher rated behaviour checklists for 254 boys in specialized EBD schools. Results indicated five behavioural categories that differentiated this population of EBD students: conduct problems, emotional problems, attention problems, comorbid difficulties, and no apparent problems. This research claimed a generalization to larger EBD populations; however, its specialized settings weakened the study's representation of integrated schools. Despite this limitation, results emphasized a need to critically explore non-specific behaviour designations, such as those used in British Columbia, in order to create rich understandings for the unique experiences of identified students.

Statement of the Problem

When interpretations of behaviour do not consider the students' voice, professionals may misunderstand adolescent experiences, and allow their expert interventions to remain as futile and misguided efforts. Qualified mental health physicians conduct student interviews when making clinical diagnoses, however, student interviews are not a requirement when school personnel are seeking district behaviour designations. Although designation tracking forms are

only completed by qualified student services personnel, elements of the process remain somewhat subjective and ultimately influenced by that person's interpretation of behaviour. Consideration for contextual patterns and student perspectives is pertinent in order for professionals to effectively mediate impeding emotional and behavioural struggles that challenge at-risk youth, and significantly impact their self-concept and future psychological well-being.

Social emotional development is multi-faceted and phenomenological in nature; growth is not directly observable, but inferred through adolescent behaviours and self-perceptions. Psychological and educational research commonly notes self-concept as a central and mediating variable for emotional well-being and academic achievement (Byrne, 2002; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Marsh, Parada & Ayotte, 2004). Its prominence in both empirical and popular literature often occurs without having provided a clear definition of the construct. Rather, its meaning is used interchangeably with references to self-esteem and self-determination (Byrne, 2002). Harter (1999) similarly spoke to the fluid meaning of self-representations, a term often linked to notions of self-perceptions and self-descriptors. Professionals need to communicate across a common conceptual definition in order to effectively share their understanding of the experiences of youth designated with behaviour.

Harter (1999) portrayed self-concept as a cognitive and social construction. Adolescents are beginning to cognitively differentiate their self-descriptions across distinct experiences. Their increased ability to discriminate self-evaluations dovetails with their initial creations of higher-order self-generalizations. Youth integrate general abstractions about the self through the use of trait labels (e.g. being smart because of an ability to demonstrate certain skills). These self-attributes are distinct from one another, reflecting the socialization processes within different relational contexts. Adolescents adopt the opinions that they perceive others hold, thereby

forming potentially incongruent generalizations. According to Harter, these opposites, such as being a good student and a troublemaker, exist as a result of thinking that is both abstract and compartmentalized. Self-perceptions often became extremely unrealistic and distorted as young people begin distinguishing between their real and ideal self-concepts.

Byrne and Shavelson (1996) unpacked the definition and structure of self-concept according to a multidimensional and hierarchical model. Their investigation supported self-concept's multidimensionality as consisting of separate and measurable facets (e.g. academic, social, physical, and emotional). According to their study's conclusions, a hierarchical structure was not strongly present in the adolescents' social self-concept, a finding supported by Harter's (1999) belief in the notion of a compartmentalized structure. Byrne and Shavelson offered their definition of social self-concept as an individuals' perceptions of their personal competency levels during social interactions; reflections based on their contextualized behaviours.

Self-concept, as defined by the researcher for the purpose of this study, reflects the propositions espoused both by Harter and by Byrne and Shavelson. Building upon these authors' frameworks, the working definition of self-concept for this study addressed adolescents' perceptions of their competency in social interactions and their behaviour within contextualized environments. Adolescents do not shape their self-concept in isolation from life's complexity. The nature of humans to build relationships and make meaning from experiences are dual forces that work to define, challenge, and redefine social-emotional self-concepts (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Counselling professionals within the school system have the opportunity to develop relationships with students. These interactions prove to be pivotal in effectively supporting at-risk adolescents through their struggles and challenges.

Research Purpose and Question

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore areas of commonality and difference between student and professional perceptions regarding the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural needs in the Saanich School District. Working within a middle school in the Saanich District, I witnessed student behaviour and wondered about the motivators behind what some adults determined as adolescents' lazy, inappropriate, or violent actions. I stepped into the role of an advocator for many troubled youth, and through these conversations heard the frustration in voices of other professionals and family members. I supported, and at times created, interventions and disciplinary actions that were in response to the externalized behaviour; behaviour that had been identified, labeled, and judged through adult perceptions and values. I wondered about the students' perception of these same experiences, the stories that these youths lived with, the reality that was defined in their world so differently than in mine. Students were designated as needing behavioural interventions, yet it seemed their needs were more complex than what this label inferred. Through the exploration of the experiences of male adolescents designated with behaviour and the perceptions of the professionals who supported them, it was hoped that this research would foremost honour the voice of a population that is often pushed aside in the education realm, and subsequently, through exploring themes of commonality and difference, highlight the importance of having understood and included student perspectives within professional decisions.

The primary research questions directing this study were: (1) How did adolescent males designated with moderate and intense behavioural needs experience their social interactions at school and express their social and behavioural self-concept?, and (2) How did professionals supporting these students understand social interactions and perceive their social and behavioural

self-concept? In order to thoroughly explore these dynamics, supplementary research questions further narrowed the study's focus: What thoughts and feelings framed the boys' perception of their school experiences? *What thoughts and feelings did school professionals believe framed the boys' perception of their school experiences?* How did the boys describe their school experiences and what did they identify as motivating factors for their social interactions and behaviours? *How did the school professionals describe the boys' experiences and what did they perceive to be motivating factors for their social interactions and behaviours?* How did the boys interpret the actions, and understand the role, of professionals who supported their behavioural interventions? *How did professionals perceive their own actions and define their supportive role with adolescents designated as needing behavioural interventions?* These questions framed the study's purpose, ensuring a rich description and interpretation of the youths' subjective realities.

Researcher's Theoretical Stance and Professional Values

Theory and practice, concepts intricately woven together within professional counselling, form a framework through which to explore human nature, motivation, and development. Some theoretical approaches maintain the counsellor as an expert, while others establish client struggles as problems needing definitive solutions. When supporting the adolescent population, this researcher's social constructivist perspective addressed youths' developmental needs and encouraged appreciation for personal agency, focus on relationships, dialogue about shared meanings, and respect for individual realities (Gergen, Lightfoot, & Sydow, 2004).

Building upon Person-Centered foundations of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding (Rogers, 1957), this researcher's theoretical perspective maintains the premise that all perceived realities are socially constructed as people seek meaning from relational experiences (Neimeyer, 1993). Meaning is acquired when people assimilate

personal perceptions of an event into significant, functional, and anticipatory patterns (Mahoney, 2003). People have many stories of meaning, with each narration true for that person's specific situation. Silence in a conversation, for instance, may be construed as condemnation, disinterest, or acquiescence depending upon the context and social milieu of shared language. These interpretations become an organized internal frame of reference for understanding the world, and a motivating force for holistic self-determination.

As a middle school counsellor, my professional practice reflects a view that youth seek proactive agency over their perceived realities while following a basic motivational drive towards affiliation and communication with others. The need for belonging governs social interactions and has the power to shape belief systems as youth often adopt and present behaviour that aligns with the values of their subculture. When adolescents identify with the patterns they present, and adopt this representation as a definition of self, problems begin to become fused with the person, and this dominant story is internalized as the person's reality. Through following a constructivist orientation, my counselling practice seeks to respect and incorporate adolescents' self-understandings into the creation of a dialogical platform for my professional perceptions, discussions, and interventions.

Overview of Thesis

This initial chapter introduced the foundations for the research; it familiarized the reader to the population at study; defined terminology; established the research problem, purpose, and questions; and acknowledged the researcher's theoretical orientation and professional values. Chapter 2 brings the thesis forward to a critical review of the literature. Relevant empirical studies highlight current knowledge in the areas of adolescent psychosocial development, contextual background, behavioural difficulties, and counselling implications. This literature

review lays the groundwork for current research to elucidate the experience of male youth designated with behaviour needs in our local schools. The third chapter of this thesis report addresses research methodology. This section includes: rationales for a qualitative approach, entering researcher assumptions, process of inquiry (selection strategies, data collection, analysis procedures), and ethical considerations. Chapter 4's data collection provides rich descriptions of each case study, documenting the information gathered from observations, student-professional dyad interviews, and student case files. This database becomes the foundation for analysis in chapter 5. Case studies are carefully examined for emergent themes across student, professional, and dyad comparisons. The researcher analyzes areas of commonality and difference between the perspectives of students and professionals, dynamics that ultimately impact on the effectiveness of professional interventions and relationships. A final discussion of the research, its limitations, insights, and future considerations, concludes the thesis in chapter 6. References and appendixes follow for further accountability and examination.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Understanding the experience of adolescent males designated with emotional and behavioural concerns began with first exploring dynamics inherent within their developmental and contextual environments. This review of the literature critically explored research discussing adolescent self-concepts and the related influences of family, school, and peer culture. The researcher highlighted gaps of knowledge within the literature, creating a foundational basis for this research. A focus on studies concerning student and professional perceptions of behaviour and the resultant implications for counselling professionals then concluded this chapter.

Developmental Background

Adolescence represents a time when youth experience dramatic change and growth across physical, intellectual, and psychological domains. This developmental period has long been characterized as one of anti-social conduct and emotional turmoil. In the 1880's, Granville Stanley Hall referred to it as a time of "Sturm und Drang", or storm and stress (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). Erik Erikson was one of the first to have theorized about the lifelong nature of identity development; he recognized the importance that others had on its growth, and focused on the strong impact of psychosocial factors (Phoenix & Rattansi, 2005). He saw continuity in identity constructs as he emphasized the social attributes of development, and the meaning that people's past gave to their future (Corey, 2005). Erikson described adolescence as a critical phase when identity had to be established in order to cope with adult responsibilities. He believed that at each developmental stage, people faced a crisis, a turning point with the potential to either move forward or regress. At adolescence, youth confronted the developmental task of

identity versus role confusion (Corey, 2005). As they attempt to find their own identity, youth struggle with testing limits, breaking ties, and wrestling with moral issues.

Values and beliefs that had been automatically endorsed in childhood begin to be challenged by the adolescent spirit for individuality and independence. Youth begin to look towards their relational and contextual environments as guideposts for developing their personal belief and value systems. Their emerging self-concept, as defined in chapter 1, refers to the adolescents' perceptions of their competency in social interactions and their behaviour within contextual settings. Although difficult to tease apart, as one aspect of emotional development is intertwined with another, the scope of this research directed attention to the particular nuances at play in the development of youth's social-emotional and behavioural self-concepts.

Social-Emotional Self-Concept

Adolescents experience changes to their social-emotional self-concept as they learn to navigate new demands made on them by parents, teachers, and peers. An increased cognitive ability to think abstractly heightens youths' sensitivity towards others' perceptions (Bergman & Scott, 2001). Adolescents examine their self-perceptions and behaviour through the lens of how people perceived their actions. Fine's (2004) year-long ethnographic study involving a participant observer and interview design, described adolescents as sometimes emulating children and sometimes adults. Through this awkward middle ground, an emergent self-image initiated the formation of youths' private selves and public identities (Fine, 2004).

Chu (2004) built on the notion of public and private selves through emphasizing boys' active role in the construction of their self-concepts. Her ethnographic study explored the dynamics of self-knowledge and self-concept with 58 adolescent males in a private boys' secondary school. Data analysis showed a recurrent theme concerning the boys' perceived

discrepancy between how others saw them and how they saw themselves. The development of these public and private personas was dependent upon youths' acceptance and internalization of others' views or, alternatively, their resistance and dismissal of others' perceptions. Results indicated that the way in which boys experienced relationships significantly influenced how they interpreted other people's perceptions. Youth who felt misunderstood and marginalized in their relationships tended to internalize public perceptions more easily than adolescents who felt understood and supported. The population in Chu's study developed and defined their self-perceptions through individual relationships and societal interactions.

The notion of multiple selves was similarly described in Harter's (1999) developmental perspective on the construction of self. She theorized that adolescents differentiated their abilities across domains, and began to compare their experiences with other youth. Cognitively, youth were unable to integrate these often opposing opinions into one generalization of self; instead they dismissed the incongruence and compartmentalized the formation of different selves for different relational contexts. As Bergman & Scott (2001) articulated, youth experience an increased sensitivity to the opinions and standards that they feel in diverse social settings. Through socialization experiences within these environments, adolescents adopt the opinion that they perceive others to hold, using this reflection as a mechanism to define their sense of self. When validated, youths' overall sense of self-worth is enhanced, and they experience an authentic self-image. Harter noted that, "in the search for his/her image in the social mirror, the child may well gaze through a glass darkly" (1999, p. 13). Faulty self-images become a working model of a self that is unlovable, inadequate, and unworthy.

Behavioural Self-Concept

Schools are often the primary site for adolescents' socialization. Pressure to conform to implicit curriculum and hegemonic masculinity shape how male youth perceive their self-concept (Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004). Negative school experiences such as arguing with staff, failing tests, or fighting with peers lead youth to internalize these messages and to identify with being "bad" (van Welzenis, 1997). In order to balance this negative perception, male adolescents seek belonging and affirmation through their peers, orienting their self-concept towards the feelings of success and prestige found in delinquent group behaviour (van Welzenis, 1997).

School experiences influence and help construct self-concepts, as evidenced in Reichert and Kuriloff's (2004) research. Survey data for 382 adolescent students, with grade point average as the dependent variable and levels of gender conflict as the independent variable, demonstrated that students' social background and degree of anxiety are related to self-concept levels. Greater social uncertainty increased anxiety and reduced self-concept scores. Using sentence coding, thematic interview analysis explored how "culture's looking glass" impacted on the boys' self-concept. Data reflected underlying perceptions of needing to fit in, responding to social feedback with uncertainty, and changing self-concepts to mirror what youth believed others expected. Not receiving recognition for who they wanted to be generated a constant high level of social anxiety and weakened self-concepts. Boys felt "socially marginalized, ignored, and even ghettoized" (Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004, p. 562). These research findings highlight how distorted reflections within a school climate play an intense role in youths' self-definition.

Male adolescents who struggle in school develop their self-concept differently than other boys (Tremblay, Saucier, & Tremblay, 2004). School systems highly value and reward academic achievement, this priority inextricably shapes adolescents' sense of self-worth. In an attempt to

make meaning from these experiences, at-risk males identify with delinquent behaviour, consciously enacting self-worth protection strategies (Jackson, 2003). Masculinity research with adolescents in England support claims that negative implications from a lack of intellectual ability or “feminine” actions (e.g. studying, caring) are stronger motivators for behaviour than school achievement (Jackson, 2003). Boys in this study acknowledged their fear of failing and their use of protection strategies, stating that they would rather others perceived them as not trying or caring about their academic progress, than to know that they failed. In this way, any success appears to be a reflection of effortless ability, and any failure appears to have a natural excuse. Through avoiding the risk of perceived failure, and its implications, youth do not experience subsequent shame, anxiety, or isolation (Jackson, 2002). Difficult classroom behaviour patterns may have a purpose that, in the boys’ perspective, is more important than academic achievement. Through deflecting attention away from their learning, adolescents increase their status with peers and reinforce their masculinity (Jackson, 2003).

Contextual Background

An exploration of student and professional perceptions towards adolescent male behaviours must consider the contextual environments within which these behaviours exist. Adolescents enter new experiences supported through the influences of family, school, and peers. The different contexts move behaviour in distinct directions and pathways. These mediums create opportunities and define limitations for the emergent shape of youths’ self-concept. Professionals working within these environments similarly face contextual factors that direct and challenge their motivations, interventions, and perceptions.

Family Environment

Family structure, support networks, and parenting styles inevitably influence the range of adolescent behaviours witnessed by teachers and counsellors. Although the majority of literature focuses on adolescents' behaviour as an educational concern (Anderson & Evans, 1997; Connell, 1996; Maras, 1996; Martino, 2000; Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004), Weaver-Hightower (2003a), in his discussion of research's current male emphasis, suggests that much of the drive for popular reading on boys' struggles (e.g., *Real Boys' Voices* by Pollack, 2000) came from white, middle class parents who recognized what he termed a "crisis of masculinity", and worried for their son's future. A rich understanding of the impact of family dynamics on adolescent male behaviour is central to the parallel interests of both parents and professionals.

Dekovic (1999) studied the impact of family risk and protective factors on the development of adolescents' behavioural difficulties. This quantitative research hypothesized that the two greatest family risk factors included high parental strictness and low parental support. Conversely, the strongest family protective mechanisms were thought to reflect parents' high levels of attachment and close monitoring. Analysis of results from 508 families in the Netherlands supported these research assumptions, and demonstrated the influence parenting styles, or the lack thereof, had on student behaviour. Any relation between families with high risk factors and students with behaviour designations was not made explicit in the literature, nor was the lived experience of these families addressed. Family dynamics were shown to have a less significant role in these students' behaviour than factors of self-esteem, academic achievement, and peer groups. In only exploring the influence of family dynamics on the general student population, this research failed to demonstrate the impact home environments had in the extreme cases, such as with those students identified as having a behaviour designation.

A longitudinal study conducted by Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, and Wong (2001) used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 1994-1996, to further explore the connection between family and school. The researchers sampled over 13,000 adolescents to examine whether attachments to family and school reduced the frequency, prevalence, and intensity of deviant behaviour. The study defined family attachments as being reciprocated emotional connections between parents and children, and school attachments as being a sense of belonging indicated through academic motivation and social competence. Quantitative regression analysis indicated that attachments to family and school decreased the overall frequency, prevalence, and intensity of deviation. Although a large sample size may have inflated this study's positive effects, there was a consistency of results across smoking, use of alcohol, use of marijuana, delinquency, and violent behaviour. The data showed no variations and thus supported the strong influence of healthy family attachments and connections on adolescent behaviour (Dornbusch et al., 2001). The implications of these findings for youth with low emotional connections, academic motivation, and school competence were a cause for concern.

School Dynamics

The public education system shapes and interprets behaviours within the school context, regardless of any precipitating family influence. A sense of belonging and school attachment is repeatedly shown to enhance the likelihood for greater academic achievement, psychological well-being, and positive behavioural outcomes (Anderman, 2002; Carter, McGee, Taylor, & Williams, 2007; Dornbusch et al., 2001; Powelson, 2004; Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004). In their web-based survey of 14-17 year olds, Carter et al. (2007) found that school engagement was strongly related to decreased health compromising behaviours, and increased health promoting behaviours. More so than the influence of family or peers, school engagement appeared to be a

protective agency for the students, the adolescents' lack of belonging was directly related to their increased presentation of troublesome conduct.

Adolescent males often struggle to find a place for themselves within the school's peer culture. Distorted reflections of their public and private personas add to this challenge, and impact on the manner in which schools accept and recognize particular students (Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004). The adolescents' need for belonging represents an inherent drive within human nature. As did Dornbusch et al. (2001), Anderman (2002) analyzed results from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health questionnaire and interview data, this time looking for connections between an overall sense of belonging and the factors of social rejection, school problems, and grade point average. Data analysis provided support that in schools where the overall sense of belonging was high for most students, a small number of the school population, such as those designated with behavioural needs, experienced heightened levels of social rejection. Support perceived positively by the majority of the student body became a disadvantage to those adolescents with opposing experiences of exclusion and negativity.

Anderman's research focuses attention on the schools system's continuing attempts to desegregate students from traditional groupings of gender, race, and ability. Although policies such as the BC Ministry of Education's diversity report (BC Ministry of Education Standards Department, 2004) exists as philosophical guideposts, inherent structures within the institutional systems remain in operation, and continue to subtly influence students' development. Connell (1996) suggests four types of relationships as pivotal to the continuation of schools' gender regime: power relations, division of labour, patterns of emotion, and symbolization. Among both teaching staff and students, males often demonstrate positions of power and control. Whether it were male principals evaluating teachers, or a group of boys dominating the soccer field, there is

an underlying sense of inequitable power relations. Division of labour in the specialization of teachers, in courses such as woodwork and home economics, often reflect and reinforce gendered roles. Even within the classroom, male students may be called upon to carry heavier objects, and female students to assist with younger peers. Patterns of emotion and symbolization, the final two categories, represent unwritten codes or rules that reflect embedded cultural expectations (Connell, 1996). The manifestation of these gender relationships in schools can be formal (e.g., separate bathrooms, separate sport teams) and informal (e.g., value of masculine characteristics, degree and type of punishment). The resulting influences became part of the institutional context in which adolescents and professionals perceive behavioural struggles.

Alternative school settings provide at-risk students with the smaller numbers, individual support, and flexible, relevant instruction that they are often not able to find within a traditional school environment (Foley & Pang, 2006; Lehr & Lange, 2003; Raywid, 1994). These characteristics build a sense of community and belonging, increase active participation in student learning, and ultimately provide a foundation for greater academic success (Saunders & Saunders, 2002). In Saunders and Saunders' (2002) study on student perceptions of school environments, youth indicated that they left traditional school settings because of high absenteeism, low academic performance, suspensions or expulsions, classroom behaviour problems, and issues with drugs or alcohol. Students rated their school experiences in these traditional environments as being poor to fair. In comparison, they rated their experiences while in an alternate setting as being very good to excellent. For this at-risk population, a change in education service delivery resulted in positive feelings of success and community.

British Columbia's education policies encourage the implementation of intervention programs within students' home schools; yet they also acknowledge circumstances in which at-

risk students, peers, or service providers need to access specialized services in alternate learning environments (BC Ministry of Education Special Education Services, 2006). This provincial practice reflects a more national trend that is witnessing a significant increase and diversity in alternate public education programs (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999; Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2003; Foley & Pang, 2006). Raywid (1994) delineated three types of alternatives that dominate the public system: popular innovations, last chance programs, and remedial focus programs. Popular innovation schools center on a theme, such as fine arts, and are a school of choice for students and their families. Conversely, last chance programs are not entered through choice, and maintain behaviour modification as their central purpose. Programs with a remedial focus encourage social-emotional growth, address rehabilitation, and work towards reintegrating students into their home school. This latter mandate most closely reflects the supports available to students within the Saanich School District's Alternate Learning Program (Children's Development Centre, 2006). Home schools refer youth to the district program when resources at the school level are not meeting the needs of the whole child's academic and social-emotional challenges. Raywid attributes the success of these types of programs to the provision of an organization and structure that is necessary to sustain community and engage learning, ideals in promoting access to quality education for all students.

Peer Culture

Beyond the focus of schools as an institution, there lays another contextual factor: the students themselves. Peer culture reinforces images and gender definitions through daily interactions and interpretations. The growing surge of boy's research frequently explores masculinity ideology, writing from a basis that variations in masculine ideals exist both within and between cultures. Qualitative research influences this area of study as theorists critically

explore youths' experiences in relation to masculinity's hierarchical order, and the social or psychological consequences of dominant masculine behaviour (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a).

Merging theoretical and practical research creates a framework for understanding gender. Differing values and beliefs create multiple masculinities, ideals that compete within a hierarchy of valued ideologies. The most culturally dominant characteristics, though not necessarily the most common, became the hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1996). Hegemonic masculinities are highly visible and influential (e.g., the heterosexual sports hero), representing an image that other males internalize, idolize, and endorse (Jackson, 2002; Martino, 2000).

The construction of masculinity is active and layered; boys continually redefine who they are as new social experiences bring unique meaning to their development (Connell, 1996). As a basis for creating an authentic scale for masculinity internalization, Chu, Porche, and Tolman (2005) completed an ethnographic study with 65 adolescent boys from three diverse school settings. Results showed conventions of masculinity to be toughness, emotional invulnerability, and heterosexual dominance; ideologies that became regulating codes of behaviour amongst adolescents. Researchers interviewing 11 students aged 14-18 years also recognized the notion of an unspoken code (Watts & Borders, 2005). Interviews with the diverse students described themes of restricted affectionate behaviour and restricted emotionality that were closely adhered to and quietly understood by the male adolescents.

An Australian research report analyzed how adolescent boys connected to one another and responded to their experience of school (Martino, 2000). Semi-structured interviews unveiled that adolescent males in this study accepted the normative practices and judgments that surfaced from particular modes of relating. The boys understood that if they behaved in a certain manner, they acquired a particular form of masculinity, whether hegemonic or otherwise.

Research findings reframed rebellious behaviour as a conscious rejection of traditional education. Analysis connected this value statement to the intricate process of fitting in and proving masculinity. Students in this study described their perception of peers' bullying behaviours (e.g., putting down others) as a desire to be a part of the dominant social group.

Adolescent males vie for control over hegemonic masculinity and often become gatekeepers for what is deemed "cool" and appropriate behaviour (Martino, 2000). Some adolescent males conform to cultural expectations and institutional demands, while others rebel. Male youth struggling with emotional and behavioural difficulties often view traditional discipline as a challenge, particularly when they sense that images of aggression and strength may heighten their social standing amongst peers (Connell, 1996). The manifestations of these behaviours are diverse, as individuals operate from their unique social positions and roles within the school community. Farmer, Farmer, and Gut (1999) suggest that behaviour may elicit maintenance-type responses from the social context (e.g., deference, praise, scapegoating) or, alternatively, the social context itself may act as the supportive mechanism (e.g., peer support, elevated social status). Peer culture holds a complex influence over students' experience of their environment, and thus how intricate details combine to shape behaviour difficulties. Individual experiences intrinsically weave with broader group perspectives, highlighting the subtle and perceptible worldview differences that lie between professionals and students. Current literature on gender roles and peer interactions reflect boys' experiences, but do not, however, narrow their scope to the self-perceptions of males designated with behaviour, or to the impact this cultural lens has on professional interventions and interpretations.

Behavioural Difficulties

Popular discourse on boys' struggles tends to centre professional discussions on perceived limitations to the adolescent males' ability to recognize, assess, and manage their emotions. (Thompson & Kindlon, 1999). Thompson and Kindlon claimed that boys were ill prepared to function as emotionally healthy adults, lacking the language and understanding necessary to precisely identify and communicate their feelings. Chu (2004) countered this presumption, using ethnographic evidence to demonstrate how one grouping of adolescent males developed their sense of self through relationships: fully aware and expressive about how they were critically viewed by others. The youths showed themselves to be cognizant of their personal thoughts, feelings, and desires; sensitive and responsive to the dynamics of their relationships; and aware of the realities enacted within their social context. Chu's research supported this researcher's professional observations that, although seemingly dysfunctional, at-risk behaviours become engrained patterns that serve the adolescents' expressed needs and behavioural goals.

Externalized Behaviours

Studies frequently identify externalized behaviour patterns as being more common amongst adolescent males than females (Feder et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2007; Pollack, 2006). Newman et al. (2007) studied the relationship between peer group membership and behaviour problems. In their study, girls self-reported significantly more internalized behaviour problems, such as depression, and boys identified significantly more externalized behaviour problems, such as aggression and delinquency.

The reasoning behind this gender difference may stem from childhood socialization processes. Traditional masculinity ideology emphasized toughness, aggression, dominance, and a restriction of emotional expression (Feder et al., 2007). Within this paradigm, males have learned

to hide their inner selves, and to separate themselves from vulnerable emotions. Pollack (2006) identified this phenomenon through his understanding of “an early silencing of boys’ genuine expression of an interdependent, humanly vulnerable self or voice” (p. 1). Male youth mask their internal problems with socialized behaviours that are considered masculine (Pollack, 2006). Pollack believes that as the boys age, the more pressure and identity confusion they feel, leaving them to externalize and distort their behaviour in order to appear strong, confident, and masculine. Beneath the mask, however, male youths’ beliefs and values remain misunderstood and their deeply internalized symptoms lay undetected.

Beliefs and Values

Adolescence marks the developmental shift from blindly accepting familial and societal belief systems, to exploring alternatives, creating judgments, and making personal value-based decisions. For youth with emotional and behavioural difficulties, peers step into a guiding role; settings standards for behaviour that reinforce shared experiences and test independence. An ethnographic study conducted by Anderson and Evans (1997) observed a behaviour support group of 12-15 frequently suspended students in order to explore these students’ self-identity, at-risk behaviours, and school attitudes. An inductive thematic analysis provided common sentiments towards school, family, and peers that were representative of these boys’ belief systems and emerging self-concepts.

Participants in Anderson and Evans’ (1997) research consistently voiced extreme and negative attitudes toward school. According to their observational data, teachers and students made quick assumptions about one another without any attempts to first discover the other’s meaning or intention. The researcher observed the support group’s counsellor initiating discussions about teacher decisions and actions, assuming the role of mediator between the two

parties. In supplemental questionnaires, students expressed similar negative relationships with parents, and in particular, mothers. A dominance of single-parent families may have contributed to the data's identification of mothers as the most stressful familial relationship. Negative family interactions suggest that parents of these at-risk students may not be a governing force in these youths' social-emotional development, leaving them open to influences from peers and other adults. Anderson and Evan's study supported the negative impact that students had on one another's behaviour. Students identified boys with high suspension rates as being close, or best, friends with whom they shared experiences of smoking, drinking, fighting, and staying out late. Boys in this study reported positive self-images, likely a result of strong peer bonds. They were acutely aware, however, of the negative image perceived by others in their school community.

Behaviour Goals

Adolescent risk-taking behaviours often appear spontaneous and irrational to those outside of the youth culture. Yet to the adolescents themselves, their behaviour is borne from a relational process that communicates goals and values to other youth (Gergen et al., 2004). Goals for behaviour patterns, whether deviant or conventional, exist through the maintenance and reinforcement of peer values and social experiences (Farmer et al., 1999). Through repeated experiences, adolescent males learn which actions bring desirable results. Some youth discover that behaviour deemed maladaptive, such as fighting, serves their purpose well and meets social goals for prestige and masculinity more effectively than adult endorsed methods. Self-worth protection strategies become motivating goals for some behaviours (e.g., procrastination and work refusal) that in a classroom appear counterproductive and problematic (Jackson, 2002, 2003). It is easier for males to publicly present a lack of value for education, than to risk failing and appearing incapable of success. All behaviour is purposeful and meaningful, whether it

achieves a need for survival, belonging, love, power, or fun. Successful counselling interventions need to observe the seemingly dysfunctional behaviours at a surface level, and then critically explore the underlying social goals that perpetuate its frequency and intensity.

Motivations for risk-taking and problem behaviours are complex. Antecedents powerfully influence adolescents' behaviour. Literature defines antecedents according to three classes of events: discriminative, establishing operation, and setting (Gresham, Watson, & Skinner, 2001; Kern, Choutka, & Sokol, 2002). Discriminative antecedents are variables that signal a particular behaviour to occur (e.g. a student receives a math assignment and reacts in a volatile manner). Establishing operations are events whose presence or absence mediates the reinforcing properties of another event (e.g. inadequate amount of sleep and a difficult assignment precedes a tantrum). The final antecedent class is a setting event. With this antecedent, the behaviour is more likely to occur than if the event were absent (e.g. a fight on the way to school precedes noncompliance with teachers). Antecedents precede behaviour and although they are associated with its purpose, these events do not ultimately describe the function of adolescents' behaviour (Gresham et al).

Moving beyond a reflection of antecedent events and negative contextual influences (e.g. difficult family backgrounds), risk-taking interactions serve to establish youth identities in relation to one another. Gergen et al. (2004) supported this social constructivist perspective, reframing deviant behaviour such as drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, and vandalizing property as the "symbolic, communicative process that demonstrates who they are" (p. 394). Behaviours take the form of organizational structures that, along with markers such as clothing and music, reaffirm students' self-concepts. Risk-taking strengthens a sense of community within peer groups, providing opportunities to retell stories with shared meanings that become cultural dialogues and celebrations (Gergen et al., 2004). Addressing behaviour in isolation from

youths' beliefs, values, and goals negates a critical examination and understanding of its motivating purpose. Until the adolescents' voice is heard and wholly valued, professional interventions will be met with fierce resistance and disenchantment.

Implications for Counselling Professionals

Counselling male students designated with behavioural needs embraces the diversity that entwines their shared experiences and unique realities. Effectively supporting these youth begins with the professionals' ethical self-reflection on the perceptions and biases that influence their practice. In addition to personal characteristics, professional training and experiences also shape the lens through which counsellors view students with behavioural designations (Nagel, Scherer, & Lee, 2000; Tatar, 2001a). Individual education plans reflect these expert beliefs and strategies, ideologically in direct involvement with parents and students, but in practicality, along a continuum of collaboration (Pearson, 2000). In school environments where there are several competing demands on staff time and energy, an emphasis on format over process results in little or no input from the identified youth and differential treatment for "good" versus "troubled" students (Butera, McMullen, & Henderson, 1997; Pearson, 2000). Through letting go of assumptions and stepping into the adolescents' world, counsellors commit to deepening their understanding of the boys' perspective and to fully informing their professional practice.

Counsellor Perceptions

Few empirical studies explored the dynamics of a counsellor-student relationship through the perspective of the professionals. Tatar (2001a; 2001b) undertook to open this door by researching the comparative views of adolescents and counsellors within Israeli populations. Tatar, in interviewing 421 students and 123 counsellors, explored the dynamics behind adolescents self-referring to school counsellors for support. In this population, both counsellors

and students cited trustworthiness as a key factor in adolescents seeking help. Perceptions of secondary factors that guided self-referrals differed for the two populations. Adolescents voiced a need for counsellor expertise and appropriate experience, whereas counsellors indicated they perceived barriers to be an adolescent's personal characteristics and presenting issues. Tatar's study exemplified the gaps that lay between adolescents and counsellors, spurring questions regarding professional interpretations and counselling interventions, particularly amongst the male population of students designated with behaviour disorders in our local school systems. Cultural factors may have influenced the study's findings, however, Tatar's results provides an empirical understanding, and supportes the need for similar research across other cultures.

Tatar (2001a) continued to explore the perceptions of counsellors towards adolescents. Using both quantitative and qualitative methodology, Tatar sought to elucidate the implicit and explicit beliefs school counsellors hold regarding adolescent personality typologies and their subsequent prediction of student behaviour and attitudes. A factor analysis of 199 questionnaires showed significance in the counsellors' view of adolescence as a developmental stage in which school professionals have the ability to influence change and growth. The study further indicated that this population of counsellors believed adolescents to view counselling as more favorable than negative, a notion that supported the professionals' self-view as influential. In-depth interviews on perceived adolescent personality attributes were held with 41 of these counsellors. Two external judges then analyzed and categorized the qualitative data into five common personality typologies: intellectually-oriented, group-oriented, community-oriented, isolated, and drive-oriented. Youth identified as drive-oriented appeared to reflect the characteristics of behaviour designated students in terms of their tendency to be troubled, emotionally unstable, and non-trusting of adults. Counsellors in Tatar's study believed that drive-oriented students

perceived all school staff, including school-based counsellors, as a source of conflict and stress. Counselling relationships were referred to as peculiar and misunderstood, highlighting the need for carefully unobtrusive interventions. Although these results may not represent the views of counsellors in other cultures and education systems, they demonstrated the potential impact a professional's attitude and preconceived notions may have on counselling interventions. Further research, by different authors and across cultures, is needed in order to uncover critical pieces in the relationship between adolescent and professional perceptions, particularly with students at-risk for emotional and behavioural disorders.

Counsellor Motivations

School professionals have the unique opportunity to view adolescents' behaviour across various environments and under differing social demands. This perspective, an important avenue for understanding behaviour, must be examined in order to critically explore all dimensions affecting the self-concept of boys designated with behavioural needs. Quantitative research that examined the perception of middle and high school counsellors in regards to the intensity of health compromising behaviours, focussed specifically on what factors motivated counsellor interventions (Nagel et al., 2000). This study defined health-compromising behaviours as substance abuse, delinquency, gang-related violence, risky sex, and sensation seeking. The research sample consisted of 271 counsellors surveyed from across the State of New Mexico. Research analysis viewed data through a foundational lens of protection motivation theory. According to the authors, this theory states that motivation to intervene increased when there was a perception of threat, likelihood of occurrence, and confidence in intervention effectiveness. Research results reported differences in the counsellors' perceptions to the severity of particular risk-taking behaviours. The top ranking behavioural concern was substance abuse, a finding

highly correlated to the counsellors' intention for training and motivation to intervene. School counsellors were not alike in their perception of at-risk behaviours or counselling interventions. Struggles with conduct, attention, and emotional issues commonly represented how professionals differentiated students with behaviour struggles (Kershaw & Sonuga-Barke, 1998). The level of concern for each category was dependant upon its perceived severity. Nagel et al. (2000) demonstrated how diverse professional perceptions powerfully directed elements of counselling support, inadvertently influencing adolescents' self-concept and behaviour.

Summary

The empirical research reviewed in this chapter addressed the developmental and contextual dynamics that impact adolescent males designated with emotional and behavioural concerns. Multiple studies examined social-emotional and behavioural self-concepts (Chu, 2004; Fine, 2004; Harter, 1999; Pollack, 2006; Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004; van Welzenis, 1997), masculinity typology and implications (Chu et al., 2005; Connell, 1996; Jackson, 2002, 2003; Martino, 2000; Watts & Border, 2005; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a, 2003b), and contextual dynamics and influences (Anderman, 2002; Dekovic, 1999; Dornbusch et al., 2001; Powelson, 2004; Reichert & Kuriloff, 2004; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a, 2003b). Across the board, however, these studies did not differentiate between the general youth population and those who were specifically designated or diagnosed with behavioural needs. The experiences of designated adolescents were not highlighted, and their self-perceptions within the school culture were not explored. Research expanding on professional perceptions of adolescents, particularly those with behaviour designations, was negligible; the most relevant studies were conducted by the same author and in the same Israeli school system. This literature review directed attention towards the imperative need to explore adolescent and professional perceptions of youth's social and

behavioural self concepts; a critical dynamic in the creation of a rich and deep understanding for the experience of male students identified with behaviour designations in BC's public schools.

The next chapter incorporates this study's purpose, as explored through the literature review, into an outline of the study's research methodology. Chapter 3 connects the tenants of a qualitative approach to this study's intent, and establishes the basis for its research design.

Endorsing a multiple interpretive case study, the researcher describes her process of inquiry through discussion on participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. Careful attention is given to researcher assumptions and ethical considerations, factors that may influence and shape the researcher's fundamental suppositions and interpretations of data.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative research best reflected this study's research purpose and questions, satisfying its intent to create rich descriptions of student self-understandings and related professional perceptions. The characteristics of a qualitative paradigm mirror some of the theoretical qualities of a social constructivism orientation, the basis for this study, as it honoured each participant's story as unique and relevant. Furthermore, its subjective inquiry was appropriate for the intended research audience, providing a platform from which individuals counselling in educational settings may consider and critique their current practices with at-risk adolescent males.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research concerns itself with creating a deeper understanding of the meanings that define common and unique human experiences. Similar to characteristics of a counselling relationship, the qualitative researcher embraces a tolerance for ambiguity, an appreciation for the research process, and an exploration of data without preconceived hypotheses (Berrios & Lucca, 2006). The connection between counselling skills and qualitative methodology fit with the purpose of this particular study. Patton (2002) describes qualitative research's scientific elements as its ability to be systematic, analytic, rigorous, disciplined, and critical. Its artistic and creative aspects concern the manner in which researchers describe and present the data. Qualitative reports often use playful, metaphorical, and insightful language to paint thick descriptions of a person's experience that evoke emotionality and significance. Research approaches under the qualitative umbrella focus on participant perspectives, which supports the researcher's assumption that one's reality is subjectively defined through social contexts and interpersonal relationships (McMillan & Wergin, 2002). Rather than propose generalization from

the study sample to the larger population, this study's aim was to bring the reader as close to the experience of another as possible. This journey became an experience in itself, opening a deeper and more personal understanding to the dimensions within human phenomena. This philosophical premise represents common characteristics across qualitative methodology: a search for deeper meaning, socially constructed and perpetually evolving realities, an understanding of behaviour in natural settings, and the use of rich narrative descriptions (McMillan & Wergin, 2002).

Research Design

Case study methodology best captures the dynamics and context under study. This research design allowed for an in-depth, field based, and holistic description of the particularity and complexity of at-risk male adolescents' school experiences (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005; Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995, 2000). The study of adolescent perceptions occurred within a bounded system where the educational context could not be clearly separated from the youth's experience as a designated behaviour student (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 1994). A multiple interpretive case study approach opened an opportunity to look for patterns, either causal or relational, which appeared both within a particular case, and across multiple cases (Gall et al., 2005; Merriam, 2001). This information conceptualized the rich emic perspective of students and professionals, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the nature of these participants' realities. Through encouraging readers to reflect on their own practice and beliefs, particularly in terms of supporting adolescent males with behavioural needs, case study research may be another experience that shapes reader's professional presence and personal compassion.

Researcher Assumptions

The researcher played an integral role in the research process; the dynamics of her direct involvement in data collection and analysis demanding active reflexivity throughout the inquiry (Gall et al., 2005). At each stage of the study, the researcher consciously separated her potentially competing roles as a counsellor, a colleague, and a researcher. As a counsellor, the researcher was present and empathetic to the students' stories. The researcher did not engage in a counselling relationship, but ensured that a counsellor the students knew and trusted was on site during the interview sessions. With these structures in place, the researcher was able to acknowledge the students' potential struggles while maintaining an emphasis on the data's integrity. The researcher also addressed her collegial role with the professionals that participated in her study. In order to distance potential bias and preconceived opinions, the adults involved with this study did not directly work with the researcher, or hold a position that was considered a power-over dynamic. Maintaining respect for the opportunity to speak with colleagues and share in their experiences enabled the researcher to approach each interview with an open eagerness to learn. Consciously noting differences in experiences, and acknowledging the individuality of each person allowed for data collection with minimal bias.

The role of the researcher was of primary importance during this case study. To address this caveat, the researcher documented and self-reflected on personal experiences and reactions in the field, explicitly noting any probable influence or bias towards personal observations and professional judgments (Gall et al., 2005; Gillham, 2000). Making the role of the researcher transparent began with acknowledging the underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions that were relevant to the proposed study. The following premises grounded this research inquiry:

1. Presenting behaviours, thoughts, and feelings are reflective of the socio-cultural and developmental contexts within which they were constructed.
2. A holistic exploration of people's behaviour, thoughts, and feelings illuminates a rich understanding of their experiences.
3. Reality is socially constructed and subjectively perceived according to individual experiences, developmental levels, and environmental contexts.
4. Participants are experts of their own reality.
5. Adolescents are capable of self-determination, and benefit from being included in their case management decisions.
6. Male adolescents designated with behavioural needs demonstrate externalized behaviours that often represent complex and internalized social-emotional struggles.
7. Male students, in comparison to females, demonstrate a greater amount and intensity of externalized behaviours that school professionals perceive as dysfunctional.
8. British Columbia's public education system is grounded in the philosophy and principles of diversity. Acute needs, changing populations, and diminishing resources challenge the integrity of these foundational values.
9. Counselling relationships have the potential to effectively support and advocate for at-risk students as they struggle with experiences at school, home, and in the community.
10. Conducting this study empowers participants and gives a voice to their unique and complex experiences.

Process of Inquiry

The process of inquiry outlines procedures for the case study's methodology and implementation. The initial stages document the development of case identification and

participant selection. After establishing the participant process, the inquiry section describes the case study's data collection methods, and addresses the use of multiple data sources. The researcher presents a subsequent framework for data analysis, and closes the process of inquiry with assurances for the study's rigor and trustworthiness.

Participant Selection

Participants selected for this multiple case study were chosen through the use of purposive, criterion-based sampling. Basic criteria ensured that participants fit the needs of this study and, in addition, were able to offer rich descriptions and personal perspectives. The units of analysis, each individual, were studied independently and then in comparison to other selected cases. Adolescent participants were male, between the ages of 11 and 14, attended the Alternate Learning Program (ALP) in the Saanich district, and were currently designated as needing moderate or intense behavioural interventions. Early adolescence marks a time when youths developed their sense of self as an individual. Selecting participants from the ages of 11 to 14 allowed the researcher to better understand the dynamics at play during this critical time. Within the Saanich district, the middle school population best reflected this participant pool.

Accessing the Alternate Learning Program as a research site respected the diversity found within adolescent males' backgrounds, yet provided for a commonality of experience: the transition from their home school to a specialized alternate setting. The three middle schools in the Saanich district access this program for the small population of students that needed more intensive levels of support than are available within the regular setting. Students typically attend the program for a minimum of three months or longer, before being integrated back into their home school. Adolescents, and their families, attend an intake meeting where the team identified specific learning and social-emotional goals. The aim of ALP was to address these goals with

students, and have the youths return to their home school with effective support and strategies for success. Students within this middle-school program typically represent the more extreme behaviour designations, with circumstances in their traditional school settings unable to meet the youths' academic or social-emotional needs.

Professionals approached for participation in this study worked as counsellors, Behaviour Support teachers, Alternate Learning Program teachers, Integration Support Teachers, or Youth and Family Counsellors within the middle school populations. The Saanich School District held regular meetings for the student services support teachers and counsellors. This forum presented an opportunity to address colleagues and ask their consideration for involvement in the study. In order to best conduct independent and cross-case analysis, the professionals ultimately selected for this study were those that supported youth who were also involved in the research. These case managers included a Behaviour Support Teacher, Integration Support Teacher, and an Alternate Learning Program Teacher. Ethical issues that may have arisen through interviewing student and professional dyads were addressed through a detailed informed consent process with both the student and professional participants.

Following Yin's (1994) suggested guidelines, sampling continued through selecting a minimum of three students and three professionals in order to have adequate redundancy of the study. ALP's population pool was limited as the program allowed for a maximum attendance of six-eight adolescents. Within these numbers, students that attended the researcher's home school were automatically discounted, leaving only three students as possible participants. Professional participants were paired to the identified students, resulting in a total of three case study participants from two different selection pools. Gatekeepers for the research site were sought

through connecting to supportive professionals at ALP. This provision respected the research site, minimized the perception of a power-over relationship, and encouraged easier access.

Data Collection

Types

In order to establish significance and credibility in this study, multiple sources of data was collected through participant observations, interviews, and case file analysis (Gall et al., 2005; McMillan & Wergin, 2002; Ritchie, 2001). The case study's divergent database allowed the researcher to be reasonably comfortable that what participants said, what behaviours people demonstrated, and what documents indicated, together offered a thorough representation of the phenomenon being explored (Gillham, 2000).

Participant observations presented the researcher with opportunities to interact personally in the field, while remaining highly cognizant of significant and observable behaviours. Overheard comments, nonverbal communication, and overt actions created a rich understanding for the context of the case, and a point of reference for perspectives brought forward during in-depth interviews. General observations noted the verbal and nonverbal interactions between students, and between students and adults. Rather than targeting specific observable behaviours, the researcher looked for antecedents and consequences of emerging behaviour patterns. These reflections gave depth and detail to the descriptions of students' motivating factors and school experiences. The researcher recorded observation notes during each session in a logbook, taking care to distinguish between objective observations and subjective meanings or interpretations (see Appendix A). This reflective journaling was drawn into the analysis as an additional source of description and insights, adding more substance to the cases' narrative description. Participant observation also worked to build empathy and trust

between the participants and the researcher (Gall et al., 2005). Strengthening this relationship eased discomfort in future interviews. Students responded familiarly and positively to the researcher, commenting on previous activities and situations where the researcher was present. This connection aided in eliciting participants' thorough descriptions, and better enabled the researcher to view phenomena through the participants' emic perspective.

Focused interviews addressed questions that were based in the case study's protocol, and designed to illuminate each participant's subjective experience (see Appendix B). Student interview questions reflected on how youths experienced social interactions, and how they expressed social and behavioural self-concepts. Questions accessed adolescents' perceptions of thoughts and feelings, descriptions of motivating factors for behaviour, and understandings for the role of supporting professionals. Interviews with school professionals mirrored the student focus and drew attention to the commonalities and differences between the two perspectives.

Unlike a quantitative design, case study research demands a flexibility and responsiveness to the process of data collection. As Yin (2003) suggested, the researcher remained open to questions that arose during interviews, using the initial question framework as a guide to direct conversations across multiple cases in a similar and cohesive manner. Although the interviews remained open-ended and conversational, having a focused and semi-structured framework respected the adolescents' social-emotional and cognitive abilities, and allowed for the expression of differing perspectives on similar topics. Additional interview prompts such as "Tell me more about that" were used as needed, much like in a helping relationship, to encourage participants to deepen or expand on descriptions of their experiences. In order to ensure the possibility for future reference and accountability, note taking and audio recording documented

the full interviews. Reproducing verbatim transcriptions provided an opportunity to hear participants' voices throughout the data analysis and interpretation.

The final source, *case file reviews*, considered the relevant reports and documentation in each student participant's district file. In the Saanich School District, designated students have a separate file that contains information specific to their interventions and supports. With informed consent, the researcher reviewed the student's IEP, psychologist reports, diagnostic assessments, and district documents that were contained in these files. The case file reviews occurred after all research observations and interviews were complete, preventing possible bias or preconceived thoughts from slanting the interpretation of collected data. The researcher maintained a focus on the study's research questions as she reviewed the student case files. Reported information on students' social interactions and behavioural needs provided a more thorough understanding for the student participants' diagnosis, current interventions, and typical behaviour patterns. Files for designated students became a window into the professionals' perspectives, indicating their interpretation and description of student behaviour, and outlining their proactive and reactive interventions. These perspectives were not accessible through other data sources such as student observations or dyad interviews. Triangulating the data with this source showed the level to which participants' points of view were considered within district decisions, and gave a background to the professionals' perspectives.

Procedure

The initial phase of data collection originated with the selection of participants. After receiving approval from the University of Victoria and the Saanich School District, the researcher prepared an overview of her research outlining the purpose of the study, participant criterion, level of participant involvement, and timeframe information (see Appendix C).

Through the gatekeepers at the research site, participants were purposively identified and selected. Students gave their own consent, and retained that of their parents or guardians. Informed consent was thoroughly reviewed with all parties, procedures were explained, and participants were offered lunch in appreciation for their time (see Appendix D).

Collecting data began with observing the youths' verbal and nonverbal interactions between students, and between students and adults, during structured and unstructured activities. The observation periods were over two sessions in order to account for temporal and situational dynamics. Individual interview times of approximately 45 minutes were scheduled after these observations were complete. Interviews were conducted at the Alternate Learning Program, or at a place that was comfortable for both the participant and the researcher. Document analysis occurred once consent to share information was received from parents and guardians, and observations and interviews were complete. Information in the files that related to student behaviour and professional interventions were perused with the intent to add depth and meaning to the descriptions of the individual cases. Data collection continued until the stories echoed a complete picture of reality as experienced by the participants (see Table 2).

Table 2

Description of Sources for Data Collection

Participant	Observation	Open-ended interview	Document
Students	<p>Occurred at the Alternate Learning Program site.</p> <p>Two sessions included individual and structured work sessions, as well as less structured group activities.</p> <p>Notes reflected verbal and nonverbal interactions.</p>	<p>Semi-structured format, approximately 45 minutes in length.</p> <p>Occurred at the Alternate Learning Program site or an agreed upon setting.</p>	<p>Documentation in student confidential file.</p> <p>Individual Education Plans.</p> <p>Report cards.</p> <p>Psych-ed testing.</p>
Professionals	No observations	<p>Semi-structured format, approximately 45 minutes in length.</p> <p>Occurred at the Professional's home school or an agreed upon setting.</p>	<p>Documentation in student confidential file.</p> <p>Individual Education Plans.</p>

Data Analysis

The qualitative paradigm for this research analysis was an interpretive methodology. Interpretive approaches address the understanding of human experiences from diverse perspectives, exploring how study participants ascribed and valued social meanings (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson, 2002). A systematic set of procedures was used to code and classify the data to uncover and explore emergent themes and patterns (Gall et al., 2005). In keeping with the Gall et al., the following steps summarized this study's data analysis:

1. Prepared a database that contained all data collected during the case study.
2. Divided the text into meaningful segments for further analysis.
3. Through reading the text, developed meaningful categories to code the data.
4. Coded each segment with appropriate categories.
5. Cumulated all clusters that fit in a given category.
6. Generated themes that emerged from the categories and described the experience being investigated.

Data analysis was an on-going process throughout the study. Each step required the researcher to assess and reflect upon emergent themes or constructs. Interpretive case studies utilize these rich descriptions to develop the conceptual categories that represent reality as experienced by study participants. In keeping with its descriptive and heuristic nature, case study analysis follows an inductive approach, seeking to understand the data after it was gathered rather than beginning the process with predetermined hypotheses or theoretical notions (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 2001). After examining the data from individual cases, a cross-case analysis sought to recognize and describe the commonalities and differences across the experiences of students and professionals (see Figure 1).

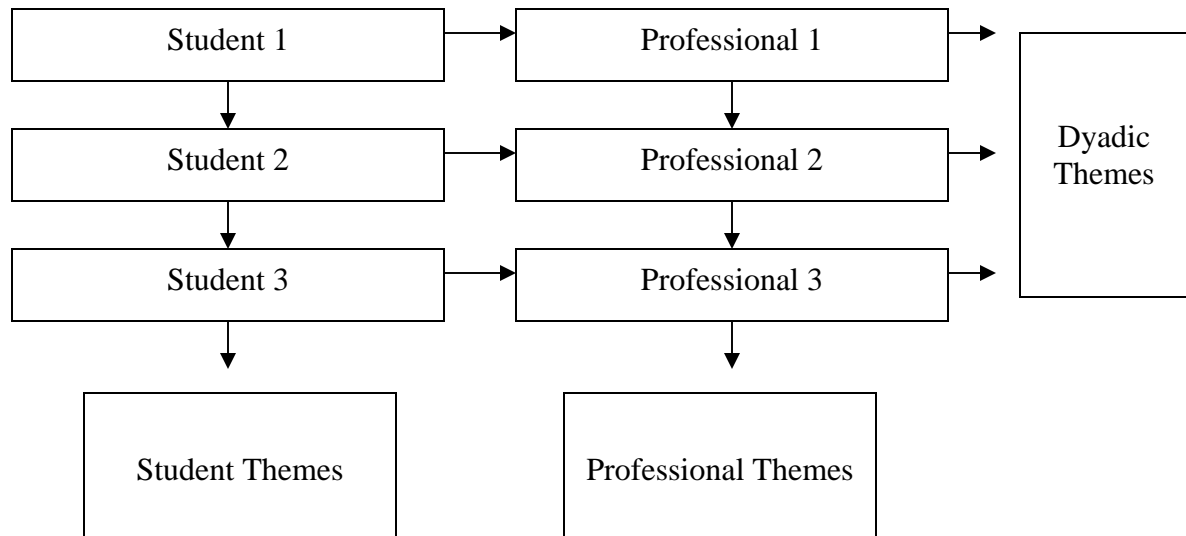


Figure 1. Data analysis model: Individual and cross-case analysis leading to student, professional, and dyadic themes.

Quality Assurances

Case study methodology guided the researcher's actions and framed the exploration of this study's trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of researcher interpretations refers to the authenticity, coherence, and permeability of data findings and analysis (Fossey et al., 2002). Authenticity ensures that there is adequate and reliable representation of participants' views, while coherence and permeability address the presentation of findings and their relation to other theories, populations, or groups (Fossey et al.). Morrow (2005) connects the notion of a study's trustworthiness to its credibility and transferability. Morrow espouses that credibility and transferability parallel the quantitative constructs of internal and external validity: the degree of internal consistency within a study, and the extent to which a reader is able to generalize data findings.

Trustworthiness, or credibility and transferability, are addressed within this research design. Threats of researcher bias and instrumentation held possible influence over the

differentiation between what was recorded and what actually happened. These concerns were countered through interview recording (audio), field note documentation, and researcher reflexivity. Data analysis and interpretations included thick descriptions of participants' experiences. The researcher embedded direct quotations within her interpretations, opening an avenue for readers to assess the findings' trustworthiness. Participants reviewed results and were given an opportunity to comment on the researcher's interpretations. Member checks and triangulation through multiple data sources addressed the data's credibility and worked towards minimizing the influence of the researcher's etic perspective (McMillan & Wergin, 2002; Sharts-Hopko, 2002). The reader is able to reflect upon sufficient descriptions of the research context, processes, and research-participant relationships. With this background, they are able to come to their own conclusions of how the data findings may prove transferable to their own context.

Sound qualitative research also exemplifies methodological rigor in its approach to design, process of inquiry, and interpretation of findings. Methodological rigor refers to good practice in the conduct of the research (Fossey et al, 2002). Issues of congruence, appropriateness, and adequacy must be alleviated through a detailed description of the study's processes, and meaningful insight into the researcher's reasoning (Fossey et al.). Transparent research methodology enables readers to discern for themselves the researcher's process for data collection and analysis. Methodological rigor reflects notions of dependability and confirmability (Morrow, 2005). Morrow links the constructs of dependability and confirmability to the quantitative checks of reliability and objectivity. To increase dependability, the study needs to be conducted in a manner that remains consistent and repeatable across time, researchers, and analysis techniques. Confirmability is established through the readers' ability to assess the integrity of a study's findings within its data, research process, and interpretations.

This study sufficiently addressed concerns regarding methodological rigor. The intent of this research fit well with what was actually studied. Participants were selected purposively, matching their characteristics to the needs of this research. The researcher's extended length of time with the participants (i.e. two observations and one in-depth interview) and familiarity with the subject area established rapport and empathy for the participants, while improving the likelihood that data was not reflecting situational or temporal trends. Cross-case analysis enhanced dependability as it provided opportunities to recognize repeated patterns and illustrate data in sufficient detail and depth. Adequacy of data was evidenced through the use of triangulation, differing participant perspectives, and sufficient data gathering. Thorough research notes, thick descriptions of participants' experiences, and an inclusion of direct quotations within data findings, represent this study's adequacy of interpretation. Following Gall et al.'s (2005) suggestions, this case study process included an audit trail that tracked sources, recording methods, process notes, data analysis steps, and products from a synthesis of information.

The aim of this qualitative study was not to produce generalizations across adolescent populations. Instead, descriptions drew out subjective meanings and contexts that work to surround the reader with the participants' realities. This experience offered readers sufficient detail to consider the applicability of these research findings to their own setting. Readers may examine the transferability of generalizations to a deeper theoretical understanding of adolescent males with behavioural challenges. A strong chain of evidence, from the original research question through to the final concluding thought, allowed readers to make their own assessments and interpretations (Gall et al., 2005; Gillham, 2000; Sharts-Hopko, 2002; Yin, 1994). It became the "responsibility of the readers, not the researchers, to determine the similarity of the cases that were studied to the situation of interest to them" (Gall et al., 2005, p. 324).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was sought through the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee and, upon this consent, the Saanich School District (see Appendix E). Informed consent was used with all participants and parents or guardians. The nature of this research presented some risks to the participants' social position, emotional well-being, and intellectual development. The interviews and observations focused on areas of social and emotional development that counsellors typically address at ALP, however, it was possible that the conversations triggered some emotional or social discomfort. To account for this, counsellors working out of ALP were available during and after scheduled interviews. The researcher monitored participants, reminded them of their right to withdraw consent, and, when necessary, ensured that they were connected to their supports at the Alternate Program. The nature and design of this study presented some limitations to student confidentiality. There are a reduced number of students that attend ALP, presenting a reasonable risk that people reading the report may deduce the identity of a student. In addition, this research paired students and professionals in dyads representing student-counsellor relationships. While a rich source of insights, this situation may automatically limit the degree of confidentiality experienced by students.

As a current employee of the Saanich District, particular considerations were given not only to upholding the integrity of this position and the respect of colleagues, but also to addressing concerns around dual role and power-over relationships. Exploring research directly relevant to the researcher's position as a Behaviour Support Teacher was pertinent to supporting her on-going professional development and practice. Assurances were taken, however, in order to minimize any potential conflicts. Selected participants did not attend the researcher's home school and were not in any way perceived as having a previous working relationship. Reported

data did not contain participants' personal information that, once known, may have identified the person within the district or bring them harm. Participants were clear upon the separation of perceived dual roles and informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without incurring penalty or negative consequences. According to the nature of qualitative studies, ethical considerations remained as an on-going touchstone throughout this process of inquiry.

Summary

Qualitative research premises grounded the methodology of this proposed study. Using purposive, criterion-based sampling, a multiple interpretive case study approach created the research framework, allowing rich descriptions based on both individual and cross-case analysis. Case study methodology supported and reflected the study's intent and the researcher's entering assumptions, important considerations to explore before beginning the data collection process. The process of inquiry included addressing issues of sampling, data collection, data analysis, quality assurances, and ethical considerations. This case study research adeptly answered the need for in-depth explorations of a contemporary phenomenon within a contextual environment.

CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

Data collection for this research study proceeded over the course of 1.5 months at the end of the 2006/2007 school year. The process involved two observation periods, one focused participant interview, and a review of student files. The observation periods noted general observations of student behaviour across two different settings: inside the classroom during a structured academic activity, and outside of the classroom during lunchtime social interactions. The researcher used this information, once summarized and categorized, to supplement her understanding of the students' school experiences, and to provide a background for dialogue during individual interviews. Interviews addressed the research participants' thoughts and feelings, school experiences, and professional roles. The researcher transcribed the participant interviews in their entirety. She then meticulously reviewed these transcripts through the lens of the research questions, and organized information according to these categories. The final source for data collection was the students' confidential files. These were reviewed after observations and interviews were completed in order to minimize any bias or preconceived notions from previous assessments and diagnoses. The case files provided a snapshot of professional assessments, diagnoses, and interventions that created a larger picture of the student's reality, and opened a window into the professional's role. Together, the three data sources created an evidentiary database from which to extrapolate a rich description of each case study.

The researcher viewed the observations, interviews, and case files through a qualitative lens, and triangulated the three data sources on the same set of research questions and protocol. The primary research questions that framed this study's data collection were: (1) How do adolescent males designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs experience their social

interactions at school and express their social and behavioural self-concept?, and (2) How do professionals supporting these students understand social interactions and perceive their social and behavioural self-concept? In chapter 4, the researcher reflected on these research focal points, studied her case study notes and documents, and objectively summarized her findings (see Appendix F). Participants were given a pseudonym in order to protect their confidentiality and provide a name for ease of reporting. Within each detailed case study, the researcher reported data collected during student observations, student and professional dyad interviews, and student case file reviews (see Table 3). The chapter concludes with an executive summary of the most salient information gathered during the data collection.

Case Study – “Jason”

Observations

“Jason” was present for the first ALP observation period, and absent for the second. This first session took place within the classroom, during an academic focused lesson (see Appendix G). The session was on Wednesday, June 20, 2007 between 9:00 and 10:00 am.

Session One

General appearance. Jason was an average sized Grade 7 male of Mexican decent. His appearance was clean and well groomed, presenting as an adolescent boy who took care in how he looked. When first observing Jason, he was staring at the newspaper and rubbing his eyes. While others were engaged in the lesson, he continued to stare ahead, occasionally glancing down to look at his article. Despite adult interventions and redirections, the researcher observed Jason staring ahead on at least two more instances. He would occasionally glance over to look at what another student was doing, shake his head slightly, and then look back at his own paper; however, he would only focus back to his assigned work when he had the individualized support

from his teacher and educational assistants (EA). In addition to rubbing his eyes and staring ahead, Jason also yawned near the end of the observation period, approximately 10 minutes before having a break and a recess snack.

Classroom behaviour. While at his desk and working independently, Jason had his hands inside the desk opening, appearing to fiddle with something. At one point, the teacher asked for the class' attention at the board. Jason looked up, but his hands remained inside his desk. When he was instructed to return to his current events article, Jason stared ahead and did not make a transition back to the assignment. Shortly after, an EA went to his desk and quietly said something to him. Although he initially appeared unresponsive, when the EA spoke a second time, Jason stood up and walked away. Based on the EA's reaction, Jason's response was favourable. Near the end of the observation period, Jason was again asked to work independently at his desk. During this time, he bounced in his chair and looked to the side of his desk. When his teacher walked past and initiated a discussion about the summer journal topics, he answered her questions and willingly engaged in a conversation.

After completing the current events article, an EA reminded Jason that, before recess, he needed to complete the math "Big 5" and write in his journal. His immediate verbal response was, "I don't have the math," then he looked inside his desk and stated, "Oh, never mind." When working on math at his desk, Jason looked at the page and appeared to be working on the task. Near the end of the observation period, the teacher came to his desk and looked at his work. She corrected the answers, talked to Jason, and then walked away towards another student. As she walked away, Jason said, "Thanks, Ms. P." Five minutes later, at 10:00 am, he was told by an EA that it was time to take a break. His response was, "Can I just finish this last question?"

Social interactions. The observation activity was a structured work period with little peer interactions. Jason was brought into one conversation when a second student began asking him about plans for after school. The other student initiated the conversation by asking, “Do you want to go cliff jumping?” Jason responded with simply saying, “OK.” The peer asked Jason three other questions to which Jason continued giving a one or two word answer. An EA then redirected the boys to their work.

Professional interactions. Adult support was frequent throughout the observation period. Five minutes after beginning his independent assignment, Jason declared, “I’m done.” An EA responded to his statement, and Jason appeared to willingly follow directions as the EA told him the next step. At several times throughout the observation, Jason responded positively to the close proximity and intervention of an EA or teacher. Mid-way through the observation period, for example, Jason was walking around the classroom looking and asking for a pencil. Borrowing one from a classmate, he sat at his desk drumming with the pencil until an EA came over and spoke directly to him. With this support, he was able to begin his assignment. Similarly, Jason also responded positively to EA redirection when he was asked to reorganize his binder before heading out for recess.

Jason related positively to the classroom teacher during this observation period. At one point during the hour, the classroom phone rang and interrupted the working environment. The teacher answered the phone as “cottage,” to which Jason laughed and asked, “Why did you say cottage?” The teacher answered his question; he laughed again and, smiling, went back to his work. Fifteen minutes before the class stopped for a break, the teacher asked Jason what was in his lunch that day. He asked why the teacher wanted to know, but agreed with her suggestion

that he needed an additional bagel at lunchtime. His teacher asked him to remind her at lunch, and he agreed without hesitation or concern.

Student Interview

Thoughts and Feelings

Perceived thoughts. Jason described himself as a person who liked working with students who had special needs. He believed he was someone that teachers relied on to stay with the students if they left the room. His self-description of being empathic, caring, and thoughtful led to a perception of himself as trustworthy. “I like to think of that as quite a bit of trust with the teachers.” Jason believed that teachers thought he was smart and hyper. He commented that he did not share this perception. “Teachers say I’m smart. I don’t think I’m smart though.” Jason reflected that adults often asked if he was depressed because “they know what’s been going on”. He differentiated his mother’s perception from that of the adults at school. “My mom says I’m a good kid. She says I’m talented at a lot of things.” Jason hesitated when asked how his peers would describe him. He surmised that they would view him as a skateboarder and a “butthead” because he got into trouble.

Jason stated that he was happiest at school when there were pizza days or special events. He also remarked that he was happy when he did well in math, or other subjects, and met expectations. “It might sound nerdy, but I have fun doing math once I get into it.” When Jason referred to being stressed at school, he spoke of the change between attending his home school and coming to ALP. “Like when I came here, I knew I was coming, but uh, I got really frustrated on my way out. I was like, I don’t really want to change...to here and stuff was just really weird.” He continued to reflect on the transition when asked about the first thoughts that came to mind about his home school. Jason stated that he thought of the school principal “and the

meeting we're having for me to go back....we're having it next year." He continued to describe his perception of the transition process and what staff had told him. "You've had your time at ALP, we should have a meeting to see if you can stay here longer or go to [home school]...and all the principal does is just sit and listen." When asked his thoughts about ALP, Jason responded by saying, "I'm already used to it. I like going to it. The teachers here are nice."

Jason described in detail the kind of qualities he valued in teachers. "Teachers who listen, and they pay attention, and they take you out on field trips, and they know what they're talking about. Like the teachers that'll make sure they know what they're talking about. That's what every kid likes in some teachers," Jason added, "and they're not really strict and they don't yell. They just, even if someone is pushing their buttons, they'd be like, you need to stop now, it's not funny anymore." If Jason could change one thing about school, he expressed that it would be a desire to have no school at all, but to still learn. He likened it to a game of soccer, where at the beginning you did not understand math, and by the end, you do. "No one teaches you anything, you just learn."

Frequent or intense feelings. At his home school, Jason most often recalled feeling frightened, surprised, ecstatic, guilty, mischievous, and bored. He described feeling frightened because he was often in trouble, and surprised because of the level of its serious consequence. He felt ecstatic when he was with good friends, yet guilty about some of his choices and behaviours. Jason claimed that he felt mischievous every day, and remembered how he would think, "OK, what should I do?" He surmised that the only reason he got into problem situations was because of the suspense and the adrenaline rush. His final, and least intense of the feelings, was that of boredom. Jason stated that he was often bored when working on his school assignments.

At ALP, Jason often felt hopeful and confident, shocked and surprised, smug, angry, ashamed, and exhausted. He was hopeful and confident that he would go back to his home school and continue to do his best, and shocked and surprised at how easy he found the work. He described himself as feeling smug when he got himself out of trouble. "I feel smug sometimes because if I get in trouble I'll be like, 'I didn't know, I didn't know', and they'll be like, 'Okay, well next time, think about it' and I'll be like, 'Humph.'" Jason stated that he felt angry when he was frustrated with the teachers at ALP, and ashamed at his needing to be there. "It's just that I had to come here and I had to get in trouble. It's just shameful." Finally, Jason remarked on how exhausted he felt after school everyday when he was attending ALP.

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. In Jason's perception, the behaviour difficulties he had at his home school typically involved fist fights with peers. He described one fight as an example of a time when he was in trouble. The student he fought with was a friend. Jason claimed that he threw the first punch only after his friend pushed his chest. He recalled that many students watched and encouraged the fight, saying things like, "Hit him in the face." According to Jason, "There was like half of the school, and everyone was cheering me on." When asked if people were saying anything to the other student, Jason hesitated and stated, "He's just kind of mean, no one likes him. He's kind of a bully." Jason remembered feeling a rush during the fight. He acknowledged being angry, but focused more on the notion of retaliation. As he spoke, Jason's eyes were wide and his speech was quick. He stopped and said, "It's kind of embarrassing to talk about. I fought lots. It's just something I don't feel good about."

According to Jason, he did not tend to fight at ALP. He struggled to clearly define why his behaviour was different at ALP, stating, "I don't know, you just get more trouble and I just

want to go back to [home school] so bad.” Jason acknowledged that he had fought at ALP, but stated that he had only done so approximately two times, whereas he was fighting about three times a week at his home school. He noted that the staff at ALP prevented him from fighting, and he was unsure that the difference was a result of him stopping himself.

Antecedents and consequences. The altercation that Jason described began during a large pinecone war amongst several students. While he acknowledged that throwing pinecones was not permitted, Jason described this particular game as one that teachers probably could not stop. Students had developed their own set of rules and code of behaviour; the student involved in the fight with Jason had broken this understanding. He had “pegged” Jason in the face from a close range and caused him to fall. This angered Jason who felt the throw was unfair, mean, and not part of the rules. According to Jason, the student audience contributed to his escalating behaviour through encouraging him to fight.

Jason described this physical altercation as an example of something that often happened at his home school. When asked what happened as a consequence to the fight, Jason stated that he did not get into trouble. “I didn’t get suspended for that though. No teachers got me in trouble for that. They didn’t even tell my mom. I only had to talk to the “Duty”.” Jason explained that, at his home school, students often joined together to avoid consequences. Students pretended they were play fighting so that they would not be suspended, then they finished the fight after school.

Professionals’ Roles and Actions

Professionals’ roles. Jason identified his school counsellor and vice principal as supportive adults within his home school. He also included friends as people that helped him and supported him throughout his day. When asked if there were any teachers that supported him, Jason responded that his homeroom teacher was closer to him than the other teachers. He had a

difficult time explaining her role, or how she supported him, saying that she was just his homeroom teacher. The people further from Jason and, in his perception, less supportive, included the school principal and peer groups like “jocks”. Referring to his principal, Jason called him a “butthead” and stated, “I don’t know, he doesn’t really help. He just says, OK, this is your consequence and this is what happened and you’re in trouble for it.”

When the focus of the interview shifted to ALP, Jason identified everyone as being supportive and helpful. He claimed, “I have no negative. I have no negative influences here.” When describing how the adults were supportive, he explained that they were all cool, but again had difficulty stating the specific actions that were helpful to him.

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. Jason struggled to identify characteristics that encouraged him to accept support from adults. At his home school, he stated that he would go to his school counsellor or vice principal, people who he felt would support him and liked him. At ALP, Jason felt comfortable going to any staff for support. He believed that he would seek whoever was nearest to him at the time, stating, “Yup, they’re all cool.”

Professional Interview

“Meg” was the classroom teacher at the Alternate Learning Program. She knew the students upon their intake to ALP, and through her role, maintained contact with their home school. Her background expertise was as an Integration Support Teacher, specializing with at-risk students who struggled in their learning. Meg had worked at ALP for 2 years, and was familiar with the students, their families, and their case histories. During this interview, Meg focused her reflections on Jason.

Perception of Thoughts and Feelings

Perceived thoughts. When asked to reflect on Jason's self-perception, Meg recognized him as a "happy, easy going kid socially, but really frustrated in the classroom and misunderstood." She perceived Jason as believing that his peers saw him as cool, friendly, and "the protector." Through her interactions with Jason, Meg stated that he did not believe that adults liked him. He would likely see a reflection of himself in their eyes as a troublemaker, someone who got into things that he shouldn't, and someone who caused trouble and got blamed for it. Jason's happiest time at school was thought to be when he was drawing or "hanging out" on the playground with his friends. In contrast, Meg perceived that his most stressful time at school was during math and other academic classes "when they talk too fast and he's not given time to process." When asked about Jason's initial thoughts of his home school, Meg believed he would think of his friends and "hanging out" with them. In terms of valued teacher qualities, Meg anticipated that he connected with teachers who did not interrupt him when he was trying to think. She elaborated that he needed teachers who "give him chances...and give him breaks throughout the day...and who talk to him." If Jason were able to change one thing about his school experiences, Meg suggested that it would be to not get so angry.

Frequent or intense feelings. Meg was able to readily identify frequent or intense feelings in Jason. She noted that he was often exhausted, frustrated, anxious, and angry. His exhaustion was likely exacerbated by inconsistency with his medication, lack of sleep, and poor nutrition. These factors, combined with the effort that it took for him to focus in class, resulted in Jason shutting down when he worked over a sustained period of time. He became frustrated because he wanted success, and was not finding this within the regular classroom. He appeared anxious because "he's worried that anything that happens he'll get blamed for, and that he's unable to

control his actions.” As Jason’s exhaustion, frustration, and anxiety heightened, Meg perceived him as becoming increasingly angry. In addition to the cycle of academic frustrations, Meg noted that Jason was often angered by peer interactions. He expressed that “kids are very racist and that he’s had a lot of racial slurs gone his way.”

Meg believed that Jason was starting to feel more secure. In respect to his struggles, Meg noted, “When he has that safety net below him he knows that he can deal with these. If he has someone talk him through those, then he’s happy. And when he’s been there a few days, then you start to see a real different kid.” Meg hoped that an upcoming review of his medication and a psychological assessment would help to reduce his exhaustion and frustration, key triggers to his cycle of anxiety and anger. When reflecting on the difference in Jason’s behaviour at ALP in comparison to his home school, Meg explained that in her observations, Jason was not much different. “I think he’s been fortunate, he’s had some teachers who have worked hard to make it successful for him, and that he trusts, that he can go to, and I think that makes a big difference. He’s a nice kid. He’ll get angry, but he won’t get mean to you.”

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. According to Meg, many students designated with behaviour challenges want support and attempt to ask for help, yet are not effectively able to self-advocate. She recognized a cycle of behaviour problems often grounded in learning struggles and escalating frustrations. Meg stated that students designated with behaviour were typically unable to cope with their level of frustration and anger. Acknowledging the complexity in these students’ lives, Meg reflected, “You don’t know what it is with them, so I think when you deal with the kids, you have to look at their point of view more often, like, not just think of them as the average child...they are dealing with so many different issues.”

In respect to Jason in particular, Meg described him as having an incredibly short fuse. Difficult situations for him were typically explosive and lasted for a short duration of time. The episodes were fast and intense, and involved inappropriate language, banging walls, kicking, and other physical outbursts. Meg shared her observation of Jason as an adolescent who could be sitting calmly and talking to you in one moment, and angrily throwing a chair in the next.

Frequent antecedents and consequences. Although Jason's behaviour pattern at his home school and at ALP may have been similar, Meg discerned differences in the antecedents and consequences of his behaviours. When attending his home school, Jason struggled with inappropriate behaviour before and after school. He was a leader with his peers and initiated the group's mischievous actions. Meg perceived Jason's choices at his home school as a means of compensating for the challenges he faced throughout the school day. Conversely, Meg saw Jason's behaviour struggles at ALP as a result of his exhaustion, and his inability to cope with frustration or anger. His triggers were unpredictable, and possibly as a result of events that occurred several days previously, a delayed reaction that likely stemmed from his slow processing speed and his subsequent need for additional time and support.

According to Meg, consequences at ALP typically promoted and modeled effective problem solving skills. When Jason became angry, he usually "blows up, yells, goes to the back room, or does a lap around the school, [he] comes back calm and remorseful." In these instances, Jason was invited back to the group when he was ready to rejoin them. If his behaviour involved being aggressive towards a peer or an adult, he was removed from the class until its next natural break. For example, if he had an altercation before lunch, he would be removed from the group until after the lunch break.

Underlying needs and motivating factors. Meg's interpretation of Jason's underlying needs referred to his "involuntary action or survival". She did not perceive him as necessarily seeking something out, or trying to use the behaviour in a manipulative fashion. Rather, Meg reflected on the physical drives in his body as being out of control. He self-monitored his medication schedule and nutritional intake, a combination that was often harmful. Jason also appeared to have an attachment difficulty, a pattern Meg interpreted as a need for security. Jason's parents grew up in care, both with abuse in their histories. Meg recognized that Jason was also in a cycle of abuse, expressing that "he doesn't want to be that person, but he doesn't know how not to be."

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Description of role. At ALP, Jason had the support of the classroom teacher, two educational assistants, the district psychologist, and a counsellor who focused on group counselling. Meg described her role at ALP as the classroom teacher and, as such, the key person to teach strategies for functioning in the classroom that were acceptable at Jason's home school. These strategies needed to support him in a way that did not cause Jason to feel isolated or different from his peers.

Successful interventions and strategies. When asked to describe successful interventions and strategies, Meg spoke first about learning strategies, and then about proactive interventions. She described ways to support his reading comprehension when struggling with passages that may be challenging for his reading level. Meg also identified the importance of meeting Jason's physical needs. Approximately every hour, the staff at ALP offered Jason a snack, ensuring that his nutritional needs were met throughout the day. In the afternoon, when his energy and focus were strained, Jason would often be sent outside to shoot a certain amount of baskets, eat a

granola bar, and return back to class. The staff would monitor Jason's physical appearance, particularly when he arrived in the mornings, and if he seemed to have what was described as a glossy look on his face, he would lie down for a short time. With these preventative measures, Meg described Jason as being "able to centre himself."

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. In order for Jason to accept support, Meg believed he must be offered a safe and secure environment where he feels personally accepted. Jason values helping people, and believes that he needs to be giving something back, not simply taking from others. In Meg's experience, acknowledging this perspective and allowing him opportunities to help, encourage his receptiveness to accept support. A safe, relationship-based environment lessened his feelings of being blamed and judged. Meg stressed the need for students like Jason to know that the professionals who supported them would do so consistently, regardless of the students' behavioural choices. "If he doesn't feel that he can make a mistake and move on, and that he'll always be five steps behind because he made the mistake, then he's going to shut down."

File Synopsis

Jason is a male, 13-year old Grade 7 student who attended the Alternate Learning Program for 3 months. He had an official diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). For reasons not reported, Jason had discontinued Ritalin medication, and took Seroquel four times a day as an anti-psychotic for behavioural control and impulsivity. According to file documents, Jason refused to wear glasses despite his vision needs and a doctor's recommendation. Jason had district designations for intense behaviour and a learning disability. His Grade 6 year was with the Victoria School District where he was registered in a behavioural intervention class. Upon entering Grade 7 in

the Saanich District, Jason received community support from his psychiatrist, psychologist, Beacon Community Services, and Saanich Mental Health. School reports stated that Jason's father was in and out of prison, that there was intense conflict with his older sibling, and that there were signs of difficulty in the community including stealing and physical aggression.

Behaviour Descriptors

In his district file, Jason was described as an adolescent with extreme anger issues who could be verbally abusive and intimidating. The district tracking form, which evaluated designation criteria, listed the main concerns for Jason as being physical and verbal aggression, lack of understanding for the cause and effect of his actions, emotional tantrums, impulsive behaviour, and OCD complications. In his file, teachers typically portrayed Jason as very resistant and argumentative. Reports showed he was easily distracted and needed frequent redirection. These struggles were similarly expressed in the district review report, a behavioral summary of concerns presented by the student's home school to a district panel. The district review noted that Jason continued to be physically aggressive with peers despite his apparent recognition of it as an inappropriate behaviour. This report acknowledged that Jason's processing skills were weak, and connected his distractibility or disinterest in the academic curriculum with his demonstration of inappropriate behaviour and defiance. Both the designation tracking form and the student review report recognized Jason's strengths as his outgoing personality, compassion for students with visible special needs, demonstration of remorse, and ability to follow through with school work when he had the necessary support and direct teaching.

Professional Reports and Interventions

Jason's file contained a Psychoeducational Assessment report completed at age 11, during his Grade 6 year. The referral for this assessment came after an initial analysis of a Child

Behaviour Checklist in which Jason's profile appeared consistent to that of extremely aggressive and delinquent behaviour. All clinical scales on the assessment, with the exception of "Withdrawn", were found to be clinically significant. The Psychoeducational Assessment report identified Jason's extremely low processing speed, weak math fluency, and poor working memory. This document identified Jason as a student with a learning disability designation, and noted that Jason was "at-risk for serious and persistent conflicts with the home and community, academic failure and precipitous departure."

Jason's Individual Education Plan (IEP) documented behavioural concerns similar to those identified in the district tracking form and the student review report. In addition, it noted that Jason often had unexcused absences, produced inconsistent work, and avoided attending class. Behaviour difficulties occurred daily and across all settings, from the more structured class environments to the less structured social situations. Jason was on an individualized academic program, finding some limited success on a partial day schedule. His IEP goals were to increase his ability to deal with frustrations; avoid emotional, verbal and physical outbursts; become better at listening to instructions and following directions; and deter from being argumentative and resistant to reasonable adult requests.

Current Profile

Existing supports at school included the behaviour support teacher, integration support teacher, school counsellor, and educational assistants. Jason had multiple in and out of school suspensions during the 2006/2007 school year for incidents ranging from stealing and carrying a weapon, to verbal aggression towards staff, and physical altercations with peers. After what documents described as an excessively aggressive peer interaction, Jason's home school brought his profile to a district student review. This panel submitted a recommendation that Jason have

his educational program delivered through the Alternate Learning Program. His social responsibility goals at intake were to learn to make good choices when frustrated and to recognize positive self actions; his behaviour goal was to learn to self-regulate his emotions; and his academic goal was to self-advocate for additional processing time and support.

Case Study –“Kyle”

Observations

“Kyle” was absent for the researcher’s first ALP observation period; however, he was in attendance for the second. This second session took place on June 21, 2007 between 12:15 and 1:00 pm, during the outside lunchtime activity. Kyle was involved in a basketball game with a classmate and two educational assistants (see Appendix H).

Session Two

General appearance. Kyle was a Grade 7 male of small stature and Caucasian decent. His appearance was clean and typical for that of a male adolescent. During this observation period, Kyle was outside playing basketball with the others. He was actively involved with the game, physically running around the court and making comments about different plays. He smiled, sang, and clapped his hands throughout the game, demonstrating his level of excitement.

Lunchtime behaviour. Kyle was highly engaged and demonstrative throughout the observation period. The researcher observed him as he ran, bounced the ball, and shot for a basket. Kyle went to extreme measures to catch the ball; he fell and dove onto the pavement two times in an attempt to retrieve the basketball from another player. For the full half hour of the game, he smiled, laughed, and interacted with the other student and the adults. He was often quite physical in his play as he pushed a student to check him and grabbed at an educational assistant (EA) to get the ball. When a student grabbed him, he smiled, put his hand on the

shoulder of this much larger student, and pushed him forward. At one point Kyle tried for the ball, rolled onto the ground, and then leapt up onto another student's shoulder exclaiming, "What was that?" His language tended to be equally impulsive and rough. He swore in response to his own actions, not seemingly out of anger or frustration, but surprise. After 10 minutes of play, Kyle ran towards the hoop, shot wildly, and fell back. He ran after the EA that had the basketball, grabbing at him, and again fell to the ground laughing and swearing.

Social interactions. Kyle's direct interactions with the other student were limited, despite the fact that they were playing a game of basketball together. The EAs had determined the teams, and so in this situation, the two students were on opposite sides. Kyle's level of intensity and physical play appeared to dominate the peer dynamics. Although he called for the ball to be passed, he did not pass it to his teammate. His actions seemed to shift from running, dribbling the ball, and singing at the beginning of the game, to rolling on the ground, knocking the ball out of an EA's hand, and chasing a student onto the field at the end of the game. Each peer interaction involved pushing, grabbing, or chasing, and in each situation, Kyle laughed and smiled.

Professional interactions. Kyle willingly partnered with staff during the basketball game. He interacted in a familiar manner, similar to how he was with his peers. Early in the game, Kyle tried for a basket and missed the shot. His partner then missed the rebound, to which Kyle exclaimed, "What was that? Mr. M. you should have been there!" As he did with his peers, Kyle grabbed at the staff, trying to get the basketball from their hands. Near the end of the observation period, he knocked the ball out of an adult's hands and chased a student onto the field. The two supervising adults looked at one another, and then one of them called the students in to line up for the washroom, ending the game when it began to lose Kyle's interest. Kyle responded well to this redirection, moving to where he was asked to be, and quietly waiting for his turn.

*Student Interview**Thoughts and Feelings*

Perceived thoughts. Kyle perceived his peers as believing him to be interesting and different. He smiled while speaking, and stated that this was a good description. Kyle believed that teachers saw him as “a prick.” When expanding on this statement, he claimed that they believed this “because they all hate me”. He acknowledged that he was “mean to them” and that he swore at them “just because he wants to” or because “they piss me off.” Moving away from the perception of others, Kyle described himself as a kind person, explaining that he would share lunch with others if they needed it.

Kyle claimed he was happiest at school when he was having fun and doing an activity of his choice, often a physical sport or game. He was most stressed at school when he needed to do homework. Kyle stated that the classroom work at his home school was hard, whereas the work at ALP was easy. Kyle identified a personal connection to his home school, stating that his first thought of the school was, “That’s my school.” He spoke informatively about the new school building, knowing many details about its construction and timelines for its completion.

When describing teacher qualities that worked best for him, Kyle stated, “They do hands on activities, building stuff, and creating stuff.” Kyle acknowledged that he learned best through doing activities, and struggled with written expression. His wish for ALP was that the teachers and staff would not follow him. At his home school, Kyle wished that lunchtime would return to its previous year’s organization. The current system had students eating at separate times according to their homeroom class. This, in Kyle’s perception, meant that he was unable to eat lunch with his friends.

Frequent or intense feelings. Kyle reported that, at his home school, he most frequently recalled feeling happy, hopeful, confident, overwhelmed, and confused. He was happy when he was having fun, hopeful that he was getting a good grade, and confident in his ability to do well. Kyle reflected on being overwhelmed by the size of his home school, and confused with remembering where everything was after attending ALP. He described teachers at his home school as having a “conniption fit,” and expressed his confusion as to why they were reacting to his behaviour and what he was doing wrong.

At the ALP, Kyle described feeling happy, hopeful, confident, bored, and exhausted. As at his home school, Kyle felt happy because he had fun at school. He was hopeful that he would be returning to his home school, and confident that he was doing well. He was sometimes bored with the school work, particularly when it involved reading. Finally, when attending ALP, Kyle reported feeling exhausted from the heat in the classroom.

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. Kyle expressed that the behaviour difficulties he most often had at his home school were, in his perception, small and inconsequential. He believed the staff overreacted to situations. “It’s just that all my teachers are out to get me. They all hate me.” When asked if he felt angry or frustrated when this occurred, Kyle responded, “No, not really. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. Depends what mood I’m in.” One specific altercation that Kyle chose to describe was a fight that resulted in him returning to ALP. It began when he was in the lunch eating area and a student spat chocolate milk on his shirt. Kyle stated that he turned around and punched that student in the face, not because he was angry, but because “it was just a nice shirt. I wouldn’t give a crap if it wasn’t a nice shirt.” Kyle claimed that the other student was somebody that he hung out with, though not somebody that he referred to as a friend. When

asked what other students were doing at the time of the fight, Kyle recalled them just watching, but not doing anything to encourage or to stop the fight.

Kyle described his experiences at ALP as different from those at his home school. He perceived the structure and high staff ratio at ALP as preventing many situations that may otherwise occur. "Here you can't do that, you just don't punch somebody in the face....you can't exactly spray chocolate milk on anybody either because the teachers are two feet away from you." Kyle expressed a desire to be able to do those types of things; he wanted to fool around with friends and get away with the behaviours he used to do at his home school. According to Kyle's perception, problems were not necessarily solved differently at ALP, but the situations were such that opportunities for creating conflict were minimized.

Antecedents and consequences. Kyle believed that problems usually happened outside of the classroom, often in the hallways or outside on the grounds. He did not recall anything specific happening right before he got into trouble, commenting that "it's just random facts...not even worth getting in trouble for...they have a conniption fit." Kyle perceived that his behaviour difficulties were small, and that "no big things really happen" because "they can never really catch me." He stated firmly that he chose the actions because he wanted to have fun.

According to Kyle, teachers typically "have a conniption fit on me and send me to the principal's office." He stated that he often then made up an excuse for his behaviour and was sent back to class by the principal. "You just agree with what he says. I've learned that. I agree with them." After this initial response, Kyle smiled and said, "Or I just get into a bigger argument, find a bunch of technicalities and screw them over." He laughed and explained that his decision to either argue or agree with staff rested with whether or not he had somewhere he wanted to be or something he wanted to do.

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Professionals' roles. Kyle identified two teachers and one friend as being supportive of him at his home school. One teacher was his Grade 6 teacher, and the other was a "lunchtime" teacher. When referring to the lunchtime teacher, Kyle explained why he perceived him as supportive. "He's just not bad. He doesn't give a shit. All the other 'Duties' have like connoption fits when it snows and we have snowball fights, he like encourages us to have snowball fights. He's awesome." After being prompted to qualify the type of support he received from other staff, Kyle identified his vice principal, principal, and behaviour support teacher as being somewhat supportive, though not as close as his original three people. When asked what it was that the vice principal did to support him, Kyle said, "He gives me jube-jubes everyday." According to Kyle, there were only three teachers in his home school that he liked. He described how they were supportive by stating, "They are just nice to me and they don't give a shit about anything...they don't send me to the office for the stupidest things, they don't give a shit about anything." Kyle determined that several teachers were unsupportive, and he listed their names while saying to himself, "Who else do I hate?" In terms of professional support at ALP, Kyle stated that he liked everyone. "They're pretty okay, they're pretty good." When asked how their support differed from that at his home school, he simply said, "They're nice."

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. Kyle initially identified a fellow student as the person he turned to for support at ALP. He acknowledged that he also sought help from the class' male educational assistant. His reasons for going to that adult were, "because I like him, he's nice." Kyle continued to explain that he would not hesitate to tell somebody his thoughts. "People have problems speaking their mind, I don't see why they have problems speaking their mind, I really don't give a shit. If somebody pisses me off, I'll tell them, they're

“pissing me off.” Kyle acknowledged that he would probably not be nice to them again after a conflict. When speaking about people who supported and helped him, Kyle talked about his perception of respect. Kyle believed that waiting for one person to show respect was difficult, and in his experience, often did not happen. He stated that it was much easier for him to follow another person’s lead than to be the first person to show respect within a relationship. “People always say that if you show people respect, they’ll show you respect. Well, uh, ya. It actually works the other way too. If they show me respect, I’ll show them respect. So really it’s all screwed up. Really. If you look at it that way, everybody’s fucked, there’s no respect.”

Professional Interview

“Dave” was the behaviour support teacher at a middle school in the Saanich School District, one of the home schools for ALP students. He worked in this capacity for several years, and was well familiar with the school and its larger community. Within his position as a behaviour support teacher, Dave interacted with students in a counselling role, supporting the social-emotional and academic needs of those students with either moderate or intense behaviour designations. During the past 2 years, he supported Kyle as his case manager and primary support person. Dave’s interview therefore focused on his professional understanding and perception of Kyle’s self-concept and behavioural needs.

Thoughts and Feelings

Perceived thoughts. When asked to reflect on how Kyle viewed the impression he made amongst his peers, Dave believed that it would be as a “bad kid”. Similarly, he also believed that Kyle perceived adults as thinking he was a “bad kid, someone who gets into trouble a lot”. These thoughts mirrored Dave’s analysis of Kyle’s self perception, that of someone who frequently got into trouble, was often misunderstood, and was always being sent to the office.

The interpretation of Kyle's thoughts regarding school described an adolescent that was happiest when doing subjects and activities that he wanted to do. Dave saw Kyle as most stressed when teachers asked him to do something that he did not want to do at that specific time. Dave perceived that Kyle's first reaction when thinking of his home school would be, "[home school] is...is school. And I hate school". His view on teacher qualities ran along this same vein, with Kyle perceived as liking teachers who could be fair, and teachers who let him do what he wanted to, without saying no. When asked what Kyle would likely want to change about school, Dave answered easily with, "My teacher."

Frequent or intense feelings. Through his daily observations, Dave recognized Kyle's most frequent or intense feelings as being frustrated, angry, enraged, lonely, and sad. Dave believed Kyle's frustration came from being asked to do work that he was either incapable of completing, or perceived himself as incapable of completing. The anger escalated from this frustration level, and quickly turned to rage when a teacher enforced work expectations. At this point, "it blows up and the language starts, then the office is involved and away we go." Moving away from the cycle of anger and frustration, Dave reflected on the sense of loneliness that he perceived in Kyle. He commented that Kyle gave the impression of having many friends and connections, but that these relationships seemed fragile and insecure. Although Kyle presented a desire to be like his peers, he struggled with many challenges. Dave recognized sadness within Kyle, and generalized this observation to other students designated with behaviour. "I've seen it in quiet moments, infrequently, but the tears are there, and they're just really down. It's true emotion that they keep well hidden a lot of the time, but I think they are sad."

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. In Dave's experience, students designated with behaviour typically struggled with changing their mind-set and shifting out of a familiar, though often dysfunctional, pattern. Whereas the majority of students, once removed from an audience, were able to process and debrief situations, Dave believed that students with behaviour designations were "so wrapped up into the emotion of the intensity of the moment, and basically their mind won't shift...so they keep making their situation worse." Behaviours become engrained into patterns, and escalate in intensity.

When he reflected specifically on Kyle, Dave noted that Kyle had difficulties across settings, getting into trouble in the classroom and out on the yard. He perceived that the most common behaviour pattern was speaking inappropriately with adults. These difficult situations escalated when Kyle dug himself in and struggled to change his mind-set. His inappropriate language and extreme reactions reflected an inability to manage his own behaviour and, in particular, his rage.

Frequent antecedents and consequences. According to Dave, there were several antecedents for Kyle's behaviour. The most significant trigger was the involvement of home with difficulties at school. When told home was going to be called, Kyle had extreme and explosive reactions, ones that often presented as aggression towards staff and administration. When Kyle's behaviour was not manageable at the school level, his father was called and he was sent home; sometimes as a suspension, and sometimes as a shortened day. Staff were cognizant of the reaction this caused in Kyle, and tried other strategies to reduce its intensity. Before his intake to ALP, for example, Kyle attended his home school on a reduced day with the intention of alleviating stress and encouraging success at school.

Underlying needs and motivating factors. Dave understood Kyle's behaviour as a reaction to the intensity and frustration of the moment. He did not see that Kyle's actions met a specific need; rather, Dave believed that Kyle's behaviours were impulsive and beyond his control. He noted that Kyle consistently presented an aggressive and violent front, regardless of whether he was alone or in a group. He surmised, therefore, that the behaviour was not a means of seeking attention, control, power, or fun.

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Description of role. In connection with the school counsellor, Dave supported Kyle at his home school. Dave checked in with him on a daily basis, consciously trying to make those times as unobtrusive as possible. He described his role as being that of an advocate and a sounding board. In his conversations with students, he typically looked for opportunities to offer the teacher's perspective. He stated, "I hear the story and do what I can to try and give the alternate point of view, but at least to listen." Dave distinguished between his role as a teacher and his role as behaviour support. He felt fortunate that he was able to, with the one-on-one environment, make allowances for some behaviours, listen to the students' story, and demonstrate acceptance.

Successful interventions and strategies. Dave used his behaviour support role as a sounding board for Kyle. This intervention supported Kyle to be appropriate in the classroom and work through a positive problem solving process. Dave consciously avoided being the person to delve out discipline to students. He found that this allowed him to "play the good cop quite a bit more frequently. On the other hand, they know that I have a line, and it moves around maybe a little bit that line, but they can cross over it." Through modeling understanding and acceptance, Dave worked towards teaching Kyle the value of tolerance and diversity.

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. The most pivotal characteristic for encouraging the acceptance of support was, in Dave's experience, a willingness to listen to the student's story. Those student conversations were without judgment of the experience, or the manner in which it was expressed. Conversely, Dave believed students felt less supported when they arrived at his room and were held to the expectations of their teachers. Their frustration grew as they were "looking for an out and they don't get it. They do get it a lot of the time; they don't get it all of the time."

File Synopsis

Kyle was a male, 12-year old Grade 7 student who attended the Alternate Learning Program for 5 months. He had an official diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and took Concerta, a medication for ADHD, on a daily basis. Kyle had an original district designation of Moderate Behaviour in December 2000. Escalating concerns and community involvement brought forward an Intense Behaviour designation in November 2003. In addition to a behaviour designation, academic testing in May 2004 also identified a learning disability in reading and writing.

The District Student Review report portrayed Kyle's parents as being supportive and caring. Kyle and his family received support from the Ministry of Children and Family, Saanich Police, Queen Alexander Center, and Ledger House. The Saanich School District offered further community support through its district social worker. The social worker's role was to ensure referrals for Outreach with Saanich Mental Health, admission to the Ledger residential program, and assessment by the Complex Developmental Behaviour Conditions team at the Queen Alexander Centre remained active.

Behaviour Descriptors

District reports from the student review and designation tracking processes described a noncompliant, rude, disrespectful, and aggressive adolescent male. Regardless of adult proximity, inappropriate behaviour quickly escalated and Kyle's actions became aggressive, defiant, and unpredictable. The district review stated that, when angry, Kyle demonstrated an authoritarian and demanding stance. During these outbursts, Kyle was often physically aggressive and violent. The review reported one incident when Kyle was verbally aggressive towards a teacher, calling her a "stupid bitch" and telling her to "shut your face". The school perceived Kyle as focusing on meeting his desires through a demanding and egocentric means, with limited understanding and respect for the perspective of others. Kyle was described as having difficulty in following adult directions and in cooperating with his peers. Reports expressed a concern for Kyle's low level of self-esteem, and a suggestion that, through setting goals and finding success, he may begin to build a stronger sense of self. The review noted that when Kyle was not angry, he demonstrated kindness, articulated his thoughts, and valued relationships. The overwhelming conclusion, however, was that despite exhaustive support, the "issues are beyond the school's ability to bring positive change".

The behavioural struggles that faced Kyle were documented throughout his school history. His Kindergarten report noted "displays of oppositional defiant behaviour, unpredictable outbursts, and uncontrolled anger." He attended the Children's Development Centre, an alternative program for elementary children within the Saanich District, in May 2001, and again in November 2003. During his Grade 5 year, he was removed from his home school and placed at another school for partial days only. Teachers reported that a "great deal of time, attention, and expertise were required to prevent him from resorting to inappropriate language and behaviour."

Professional Reports and Interventions

Kyle's file contained a Psychoeducational Assessment report conducted in January 2002. This assessment looked at how Kyle learned, and identified a significant disability in reading and writing. Kyle presented with a high-average verbal IQ, and a low-average performance IQ. His Grade 6 report card showed some academic success with a B average in most subjects. He received an A in Tech Ed, the teacher comment stated that Kyle was "conscientious and does excellent work." Grade 7 reporting showed a dramatic decrease in academic achievement with an average of C/C- across all subject areas.

Kyle's IEP noted his relative strength in math, his engagement with hands-on learning, and his ability to use verbal skills to engage others. Academic concerns centered on weak decoding skills, limited written output, and low-average performance ability. A further academic concern was Kyle's lack of understanding of his struggles. Socially, the IEP reported peer difficulties. Social situations needed to be explained to Kyle, an indication of his difficulty in understanding social cues and nuances. Behaviour concerns reflected Kyle's tendency to be noncompliant, disrespectful, physically aggressive, and verbally inappropriate. The IEP described Kyle's struggle to manage his emotions appropriately and the resultant tantrums and behaviours that often caused other students to feel threatened. IEP goals were for Kyle to effectively manage and display his emotions, cooperate with the requests of adults, understand that actions have social consequences, and recognize when he is "losing control."

Current Profile

District support services included counselling with the district psychologist, school behaviour support teacher, and school counsellor. There were ten behaviour incidents documented in Kyle's file for the 2006/2007 school year. The most extreme event described

Kyle's behaviour as escalating from defiance and swearing to physical aggression towards school property, administration, and teaching staff. The school staff was forced to initiate police involvement, and Kyle received a greater than five day suspension. A suspension of this magnitude included a formalized student district review process. Due to this final report, the district panel recommended that Kyle's educational program be delivered through ALP as of February 2007. At the beginning of June 2007, Kyle was reintegrated back into his home school from the Alternate Learning Program. Within two weeks, Kyle instigated a physical altercation with another student, and school administration initiated Kyle's return back to ALP.

Case Study –“Thomas”

Observations

“Thomas” was present for both ALP observation periods. The first was in class during an academic subject time, and the second was during a lunch activity period (see Appendix G and H). For Thomas, this particular lunch activity period was spent away from the group, completing work in the classroom as a consequence for inappropriate behaviour the previous day.

Session One

General appearance. Thomas was an average sized Grade 8 male of Caucasian decent. His appearance was clean and typical for that of a middle school adolescent boy. Throughout this observation period, Thomas was relatively engaged in the lesson. Although there were times when he was distracted and needed redirection, he was able, with adult support, to re-engage and maintain his focus over an extended period of time. He advocated for himself when he asked if he could use the computer program, Kurzweil, for his typing. However, when the teacher directed the class to shift activities, Thomas responded with some difficulty. During three different transitions, the researcher observed Thomas stretching, moving around the room, and

yawning. Approximately half way through the work period, he looked at his binder and loudly expressed, “Wow, we have a lot of work!”

Classroom behaviour. During the independent work period, Thomas blurted out his thoughts, needed frequent adult support, and became easily distracted and confused. When first observing Thomas, he was flipping through the newspaper looking for a current events article. After a 5 minute period, he put up his hand and loudly declared, “I read my article.” The teacher responded by moving to his desk and reviewing the assignment. Ten minutes later, the teacher asked for the class’ attention at the board and Thomas again responded with a verbal comment. Throughout the observation period he impulsively offered his thoughts about the workload, asked clarifying questions, and expressed his difficulties. Each time, an adult responded to him positively, answering questions and offering support.

There were a few times during the observation period in which Thomas appeared disorganized and confused. Before he began his written current events assignment, he wandered around the room looking for missing supplies. Later in the observation period, Thomas moved his chair to a computer in order to type his journal entry. He had the computer headphones on when an EA reminded him to use the rough draft that they had just finished. His response was, “But I have to think of what to write.” The educational assistant (EA) then re-explained the purpose of producing a rough outline, and Thomas retrieved the paper.

Social interactions. This observation session was in a structured classroom environment with little opportunity for peer interactions. At one point, Thomas responded to a conversation between two students with, “Ya, J,” and defended his beliefs about appropriate drunk driving consequences when challenged by a student’s laughter. In a second interaction, Thomas had completed his journal entry and called out, “I’ve spell checked!” A student responded by telling

him what he should be doing next. Thomas quickly stepped into an argument with this student, exchanging two verbal responses before the teacher intervened and stopped the conversation.

Professional interactions. Thomas received a great amount of adult support throughout the observation period, particularly when the assignment involved reading or writing. For example, his teacher reviewed the newspaper article with Thomas by explaining how to read newspaper columns in their correct order. Thomas accepted this redirection and reread the article on his own. During the next section of the assignment, Thomas again had adult support. He worked with his teacher to orally answer her questions about the article and discuss his own beliefs. After they finished their discussion, Thomas independently put his answers into written form. When working on his journal entry, an EA scribed a draft outline for Thomas before he independently completed his final copy on the computer.

Thomas related positively to the classroom teacher and the EAs during this observation period. He accepted their redirection and willingly worked one-on-one with all the adults. During the observation time, he left the main classroom area to review his personal goals with an EA. He appeared to do this willingly and eagerly, and showed some comfort in being asked to reflect on his feelings and behaviours with the ALP staff. He often smiled during his interactions with the adults in the room, and waited for their support before moving forward with an assignment. His adult interactions were quite familiar in nature, asking questions without putting up his hand, and laughing at certain responses.

Session Two

General appearance. With an EA to support and supervise him, Thomas completed work inside the ALP portable during the lunch period. His classroom teacher reported that the day

before, Thomas became extremely angry, flipped the table he was working at, and threw items around the room. Consequently, he was removed from the following day's recess and lunch.

Lunchtime behaviour. Thomas worked quietly throughout the observation time. He focused on his work, and did not seem distracted by the other students playing outside. He sat at his desk for half an hour, appearing to be working through the math problems. Early in the observation time, he said, "OK, Ms. R, can I get some help, I really want to get this done." He accepted the EA's support, and demonstrated the use of different problem solving strategies such as using his fingers to add or subtract.

Social interactions. There were no opportunities for socialization during this observation period, as all the other students were playing outside the classroom portable. The EA was in the room solely to help Thomas with his work, and did not engage him in conversation. Missing this social time did not seem to have an adverse effect on Thomas; he did not comment on what the others were doing, or look towards the open window. He did, however, recognize when it was time to leave the room and join the other students who were lined up to use the washroom at the end of the lunch break.

Professional interactions. Thomas worked very quietly and comfortably with the EA that supported him during the lunch period. He occasionally asked for help, and remained positive in his interactions. Other than seeking and receiving academic support, Thomas did not interact with the EA. In fact, for the majority of the time, he worked independently. When asked, "Are you getting close?" near the end of the observation period, he responded by saying, "Yup, I have to use the washroom." He then walked out of the portable and joined his peers in the line-up.

*Student Interview**Thoughts and Feelings*

Perceived thoughts. Thomas perceived himself to be a leader, somebody that tried new activities and looked forward to events. He described himself as an encourager, a good athlete, and a sportsman. Thomas stated that he did not “judge a book by its cover.” Adults, in Thomas’ perception, saw him as a “funny kid,” a good person with a few rough edges who “could do very well if they put their mind to it.” He believed that adults saw him as somebody who could share and, at times, be nice to others. Thomas believed his peers viewed him as a big brother, somebody they would like to have as a friend. He perceived that his peers liked his personality, thought he was good at sports, and saw him as a leader. When asked how he was a leader, Thomas responded with, “Entertainment...I do some stupid stuff. But, just to make them laugh, I’ll do it because I like doing that stuff.” Thomas continued his explanation, using an example of mimicking another student in order to make his friends laugh.

Thomas stated that he was happiest at school when he understood the work, and even enjoyed it. He recognized that he was having a good day when he worked through his assignments and got along with his peers. Thomas described this as “just rolling along.” He linked his work completion to his frame of mind at school. “If I get my homework done, I’m good. I go to school with an open mind to learn more and still work harder.” Thomas was most stressed at school when he perceived his peers as not playing fair, or purposefully being “out to get you.” His first thought about his home school was the look on his friends’ faces. When thinking of ALP, Thomas spoke of remembering, “Just another day. Gonna get the work done. Get to go home, go to football, talk to your parents, and ya, it’s fun.”

Thomas expressed a desire to have teachers that have expectations, but were not very strict. He gave an example of two people talking during class. In his opinion, the teacher should ask them to talk quieter or get their work done, rather than immediately separate them and send one to work elsewhere. If Thomas changed one thing at ALP, it would be to have more opportunities for physical education. He took a long pause before answering what he would change at his home school. “Getting blamed for something you didn’t do...and positivity [sic] with some of the kids.”

Frequent or intense feelings. At his home school, Thomas frequently felt confused, angry, bored, confident, and lovestruck. He expressed feeling confused when someone told him what to do, he did it, and in the end it was the wrong decision. When asked if that experience was with school or with friends, he responded, “With everything practically.” These confusing situations led him to feel frustrated and angry. When he struggled with his schoolwork, he felt bored and would often just draw. Thomas was confident in being a leader, positive in his friendships, and lovestruck over a girlfriend.

At ALP, Thomas reported mainly feeling bored and frustrated during the day. When expanding on his feelings of boredom, Thomas made the comment that ALP was “like Kindergarten” and “babyish”. He acknowledged that he needed the support and extra help, but he also expressed a strong need to have independence and to be treated maturely. Thomas compared it to being at the resource room in his home school; he did not want to be there, but he found the work extremely difficult in the regular classes, and did not want to be there either. Thomas continued to express frustration with his school work at ALP. “In this school, my frustration is the work because, to be honest, if someone didn’t sit there and thoroughly sit there with me and do a few, I’m not going to get it.”

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. When speaking about difficulties that Thomas had at his home school, he differentiated between times that were frustrating, and times that he had gotten into trouble. After he clarified boundaries around the language he could use, Thomas retold his story. The altercation that Thomas chose as a typical example of a problem was a situation that happened approximately 4 weeks before attending ALP. Thomas was with a group of friends playing football and was told by a staff member to move the game to a different area of the playing field. According to Thomas, the problem happened when another student, a cousin who sounded a lot like him, swore at the “Duty” teacher. The vice principal and the “Duty” teacher assumed the person swearing was Thomas, and in his recollection, proceeded to threaten him with being suspended and calling his mother. Thomas reported that his response was to swear at the vice principal. He felt angry, pissed off, frustrated, and annoyed. Thomas recalled other students defending him and saying that the teachers’ reactions were not fair. He felt good when his friends stood up for him, recalling how they defended him and looked up to him.

Thomas stated that he reacted differently to struggles at ALP. Rather than swearing or escalating the situation, he believed he would now ask why he was being blamed. Thomas gave a recent example of a situation at ALP, and referred to using different strategies such as leaving the area, ignoring other students, and taking deep breaths. Thomas claimed that despite using these strategies, he still became angry and negatively affected throughout that day. In Thomas’ perception, he was making different choices in his reactions because he did not want to get into any trouble at ALP.

Antecedents and consequences. In the described incident, Thomas was frustrated when asked to move to an area of the field that he perceived to be wet and messy. His frustration

quickly escalated when he felt that he was being unfairly blamed for another person's actions. "For me it's called Anger Mountain. It goes like this. Up my mountain, and you're going to be swinging down, you know what I mean?" Thomas perceived his typical consequence as being brought to the principal's office. Sometimes he would be "free" and not in trouble, and at other times he was taken away from school.

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Professionals' roles. Thomas recognized two resource room teachers and several friends as the main supports at his home school. One resource room teacher stood out as particularly supportive of Thomas. He explained that this adult helped him when he was in trouble with the law by standing beside him, going to the courthouse, and preparing him for what was going to happen. Thomas found his classroom teacher to be less supportive, recalling a situation where he felt unfairly treated. He perceived this teacher to be "stuck up" and "not a nice guy". When prompted to consider other staff such as the school vice principal and principal, he decided that the principal's letter of recommendation for him to register in a football program showed a substantial level of support.

When he reflected on supports at ALP, Thomas identified his friends first, considering them to be close, though not as close as those at his home school. Thomas was quite insistent that the staff at ALP be told that they were helping him. He described the teacher and the educational assistant as being supportive, and noted that the EA "really likes to play games and stuff." The only person Thomas identified as being less supportive at ALP was the district psychologist. At a recent meeting, the psychologist had, in Thomas' perception, made a recommendation that he did not like. "It pissed me off, that I take pills. I don't even have ADHD or anything...I don't want to see him again."

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. Thomas identified the resource room teacher at his home school as somebody that he would go to for help. When asked what qualities made her easier to turn to, he responded with, “She cares.” At ALP, he would talk to either of the educational assistants, or the classroom teacher. He was comfortable with seeking their support because he believed that they cared and that they would talk to him. “They help you, they want to help you, they’re not there for the money...they want you to learn, want you to do good, want you to have a job, they care.”

Professional Interview

“Kelly” was an Integration Support Teacher at one of the home schools for students attending ALP in the Saanich School District. She worked with students in a resource room environment, instructing a small group in language arts and math, and ensuring that learning adaptations were in place for the students’ remaining subject areas. She worked in this capacity for several years, and was well familiar with the school and its larger community. During her interview, Kelly reflected on Thomas, a student research participant that she supported over the last 3 years. She worked as his case manager and primary support person, consulting with the behaviour support teacher when necessary.

Thoughts and Feelings

Perceived thoughts. Kelly perceived Thomas as a student who described himself as hyper, and vacillated between believing himself to be doing well, and recognizing that he had struggles. When asked to reflect on how Thomas would see himself in his peers’ eyes, Kelly saw his perception as being contextualized; on some days he may believe peers thought of him as a “bad kid”, and on other days, as “funny, humorous, and fun to be around.” After some thought, she added that Thomas may believe his classmates would describe him as dumb. In terms of how

adults perceived Thomas, Kelly speculated that he would believe some staff saw him “as a real pain,” and that most teachers did not like him. Kelly was careful to add her own perception of Thomas as a “very needy boy who wanted to do well, who tried hard to do well, and who had a terrible time doing well.”

Thomas’ happiest time at school was thought to be when he was outside, playing sports, and participating in an activity that was of his own choice. Kelly reflected on Thomas’ tendency to want to do well, and his pride and happiness when he succeeded at an assignment. His most challenging times came when he was having difficulty in his academic subjects, particularly in math and language arts. When he thought of his home school, Kelly was unsure of how he would respond. He attended ALP at the end of his eighth grade year, the final year of middle school. Kelly wondered if this affected his perception of the school, contemplating how he may now see his time at his home school as a failure. If he were able to alter one thing about school, Kelly believed it would be to do better. In order to do this, he would want teachers that liked him, cared about him, and helped him to work.

Frequent or intense feelings. Kelly perceived Thomas as an adolescent who was often anxious, frustrated, and angry. To a somewhat lesser degree, she also recognized him as feeling confused, bored, and exhausted. She described Thomas’ anxious behaviours as being different from what she may have typically observed in other students. Rather than recognizing worrying type behaviours, Kelly perceived that Thomas was in a “hyper...almost an agitated state”. She believed Thomas often arrived at school anxious about something that had happened either at home or in the community. He persevered on the situation until a supportive adult intervened and helped him to problem solve. Thomas’ cycle of frustration and anger often began with his attempts to successfully complete his academic work. When he began to struggle, he directed

blame onto others, and then anger onto himself. Thomas often presented himself as being confused, bored, and exhausted by the level of energy that he needed in order to accomplish the academic expectations. The stress embedded within these academic and social-emotional challenges became realized as the staff at Thomas' home school noted "that he was in constant fight or flight mode" and "battling these demons all the time."

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Behaviour descriptors. Kelly struggled to define a typical behaviour pattern for Thomas; she noted that although his behaviour difficulties were constant, the situations and intensity behind those patterns were not. When staff anticipated that Thomas might negatively react to an event, he would often remain calm and content. On the other hand, Thomas responded strongly and escalated in many situations that staff had believed were non-problematic. The common thread throughout his differing reactions appeared to be Thomas' tendency to become stuck in a cycle of anger. Kelly noted that "when he's in the middle of a blow up, he doesn't back down."

Frequent antecedents and consequences. Kelly perceived that the most frequent antecedent for Thomas' behaviour was the context of his environment and his state of mind. Thomas functioned more successfully in the small, supportive resource room than in the larger classroom or outside school grounds. If he was agitated upon his arrival at school, he often remained anxious throughout the day. Each difficulty that he faced compounded the ones before it. Kelly surmised that Thomas may have reacted strongly to a small event, but in actuality, the stress of the day had been accumulating with each negative interaction. Kelly also witnessed other students serving as an easy trigger for Thomas. Rude comments and name-calling were quickly met with escalated behaviours and peer conflict.

According to Kelly, the consequences for Thomas' behaviour in the smaller class differed from what would likely happen in the regular classroom. Within the structure of the resource room, Thomas was removed from the group in stages. Initially he would be sent outside to the hallway, then to the back room, and finally, to the office. Verbal reminders and redirections such as, "Thomas, you need to calm down" were successful for lower level interventions. Kelly recognized that consequences given by the administration were not as graduated or individualized. "Administration didn't have the same kind of patience with his behaviour because they sort of saw it in your face, because he does, he blew up." At this point, Thomas was typically given a formalized suspension.

Underlying needs and motivating factors. Kelly spoke of Thomas' behaviours as meeting a need for love and survival. She reflected on his home life, and noted his mother and father's strained ability to consistently and actively parent. Kelly believed that he carried messages from his family of being terrible, useless, and no good. She perceived that his school behaviours reflected his need to belong and his struggle to trust love. The temper tantrums that Thomas' family reported appeared to Kelly as a vehicle for securing power and control over his life.

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Description of role. The primary home school supports for Thomas were his case manager, Kelly, and a resource room EA. According to Kelly, the two adults worked as a team, supporting Thomas' academic challenges and behavioural difficulties. Kelly consulted with the Behaviour Support Teacher when needed, but a counsellor was not actively involved. Although Kelly's expertise was as an Integration Support Teacher, she described her role with Thomas from a more holistic perspective. "I would say, in actuality, I was mother, counsellor, police officer—typical parent!"

Successful interventions and strategies. In Kelly's perspective, students designated with behaviour need to have predictable and consistent expectations. She approached situations conscious of the need to be both strong and calm, mirroring the behaviours that she encouraged with her students. Using humour, maintaining home contact, and finding a hook to engage the students were further strategies that supported Kelly in her work with at-risk students.

Characteristics that encourage acceptance of support. In her experience, Kelly believed that demonstrating honesty, acceptance, and respect with the students were key factors to encouraging a supportive working relationship. In order to model respect and normalize the need for support, Kelly was transparent in her own goals and struggles, affirming with students that there was nothing wrong with them because they had difficulties. According to Kelly, the social stigma of needing help was the largest barrier to accepting it. "There are kids who are so painfully worried about what others think, especially their peers, that they will do anything to prevent that support."

File Synopsis

Thomas is a male, 14-year old Grade 8 student who attended the Alternate Learning Program for 3 months. He had official diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and borderline general intellectual ability. He did not receive medication at the time of the research. Thomas had district designations for moderate behaviour and learning disabilities. Although Thomas had previous community counselling for anger management, his recent supports were those offered through the school system. These supports included his case manager, resource room teachers, and educational assistants. Thomas worked in a resource room for Language Arts and Math, and received EA support for Social Studies and Science. In his June 2007 Occupational Therapist (OT) report, Thomas' parents described him as a youth who showed

“poor frustration tolerance, displays excessive emotional outbursts ...expresses feeling like a failure, seems to have difficulty liking himself, has definite fears and nightmares, and seems anxious.” His district tracking form supported these descriptors, noting Thomas’ difficulty with sleeping at night and his tendency to be demanding and inflexible with his family.

Behaviour Descriptors

Thomas’ district file described him as being “explosive,” “defiant,” and “aggressive.” The district tracking form documented the teacher’s concerns for Thomas’ focus in class; his quick escalation to frustration and aggression; a lack of emotional control; and significant difficulty in all academic areas, particularly reading and math. The district review report mirrored these struggles. This document acknowledged Thomas’ difficulty with anger and frustration, his disregard for adult redirection, and his tendency to be “very explosive and dangerous to anyone that was around him.” Similarly, there was documentation from a school based team meeting held when Thomas was in grade one that also spoke to his impulsive, inattentive, and strong-willed nature. This report demonstrated a long standing pattern of behaviour struggles at home and at school. Thomas’ Grade 8 IEP offered some identified strengths to counter these problematic descriptors: being a good athlete; wanting to succeed; trying hard; and his ability, when calm, to talk about problems and find strategies.

Professional Reports and Interventions

Thomas’ file contained a Psychoeducational Assessment report from May 2003, when Thomas was in Grade 4. This document identified Thomas’ learning disability, and noted “symptoms of hyperactivity, distractibility, and impulsiveness *may* [sic] be related to frustrations around learning, and should be monitored.” His June 2007 OT report recognized his lack of emotional control and difficulty in all subject areas. The Occupational Therapist assessed

Thomas' sensory processing and sensitivity to touch. Although he needed repetition of information and was sensitive to visual input, his emotional responses did not appear to be related to sensory processing.

Current Profile

Thomas' Individual Education Plan focused attention on his academic and social-emotional goals. His main objectives involved strategies that addressed organization, reading, curricular adaptations, and impulse control. After receiving suspensions for escalating defiance and fights at his home school, Thomas had a greater than five day suspension for an explosive episode that involved throwing chairs, swearing at administration, and kicking the school building. This level of suspension called for a district student review. The panel forwarded the recommendation that Thomas' educational program be delivered through ALP, beginning in April 2007. Records from Thomas' intake meeting showed that social responsibility goals were to learn to interact and problem solve in positive and peaceful ways. His behaviour goals were to understand his own emotions and control his anger.

Summary

A summary of this study's key findings provides an opportunity to examine the research data within and across student cases according to the main data sources: observations, interviews, and documents (see table 3 and 4). In addition to a summarized overview of the data, the researcher drew chapter 4 to a close with an outlined review of each individual case.

Table 3

Student Data: Key Findings for Each Case According to Main Data Sources

	Student: Jason	Student: Kyle	Student: Thomas
Observations	Tired, not focussed Needed individualized instructions and teaching Accepted adult support	Engaged in play at lunch Physical interactions and swearing during play Accepted adult support	Argumentative and defensive with peers Blurted out, not focussed Accepted adult support
Interviews	Described positive personal attributes Happy when meeting academic expectations Negatively related to being in trouble at home school Physical fights common Minimized consequences Struggled to define support Recognized relationships	Described self as kind Stressed with homework Negative feelings about teacher expectations and consequences Physical fights common Random antecedents Recognized relationships as supportive	Described self as a leader and encourager Positive when meeting academic expectations Reacted to injustice Needed yet resisted support for his learning Key factor for support was that the adult cared
Documentation	Diagnoses: ADHD; learning disability, weak processing skills	Diagnoses: ADHD; learning disability, low performance IQ-high verbal IQ	Diagnoses: ADHD; learning disability, borderline general intellectual ability

Table 4

Professional Data: Key Findings for Each Case According to Main Data Sources

	Professional: Meg (Perspective of Jason)	Professional: Dave (Perspective of Kyle)	Professional: Kelly (Perspective of Thomas)
Observations	No observations	No observations	No observations
Interviews	Negative perception of adult image Academic stress Intense and frequent negative feelings Unable to manage anger Driven by survival need Needed learning strategies and safe environment	Identified with being “bad” Academic stress Intense and frequent negative feelings Engrained in negative behaviour pattern Several random triggers Involuntary reactions Needed to be heard and given patience	Negative perception of adult and peer image Academic stress Intense and frequent negative feelings Unpredictable triggers Did not shift mindset Driven by need for survival Needed acceptance and consistent expectations
Documentation	Extreme anger, verbally abusive, physically aggressive, impulsive Intimidates peers Empathy for special needs students Partial day program	Uncontrolled verbal and physical outbursts Poor emotional regulation Limited capacity for the perspective of others Beyond school’s ability to manage	Explosive and dangerous to others, escalates quickly Poor emotional regulation Impulsive, noncompliant Wants to succeed Resource room program for language arts, math

Jason

Jason had diagnoses of ADHD and a learning disability. He described his personal attributes as positive qualities, and believed that his teachers held a similar view. Meg, Jason's ALP teacher, predicted that he felt a positive self-image when amongst his peers. Jason, however, perceived a negative reflection from other students. Rather than describing himself as happiest when with his friends, Jason stated that he was happiest when he successfully met expectations. Jason did not adjust easily to transitions, and preferred teachers who listened, went on field trips, and were not strict. Meg also perceived Jason as needing teachers who gave him chances and time. When attending his home school, Jason negatively related to being in trouble and receiving consequences. His feelings of anger at ALP were largely a result of academic frustrations, a cycle recognized by the staff. Jason described a physical fight at his home school as an example of a typical problem. Meg believed that these situations stemmed from his survival need, though Jason spoke more of fairness and justice. Jason minimized the extent to which he found himself in trouble. When speaking of how people were supportive, he struggled to explain their qualities, describing a personal relationship rather than specific interventions.

Kyle

Kyle was diagnosed with ADHD and a learning disability. Dave, a behaviour support teacher, believed that Kyle identified himself as "bad" in his own self-perception, and in that of adults and peers. In actuality, Kyle described himself as a kind person, giving an example of his willingness to share lunch with somebody. He stated that he was happiest when he was having fun, and most stressed when facing homework. Dave perceived that Kyle was stressed when teachers expected him to work and he chose to not comply. The negative feelings that Kyle expressed in relation to his home school were linked to teachers' expectations and consequences.

Dave described Kyle's typical behaviour struggle as his tendency to not shift his mindset and to speak inappropriately with adults. During his interview, Kyle shared his reflections on a physical altercation that he believed represented a typical behaviour pattern. He described antecedents for physical fights at his home school as random events, small things that did not matter. Kyle stated that at ALP, there were fewer opportunities for these student conflicts because of the high adult to student ratio. When considering what qualities he found supportive in adults, Kyle identified people that were nice to him, showed him respect, and were lenient in their expectations.

Thomas

Thomas had diagnoses of ADHD and borderline general intellectual ability. He readily described himself as a leader, encourager, and an open individual, believing that others held similar views. Kelly, Thomas' case manager, perceived differently, thinking he believed that staff and students looked upon him negatively. Thomas described himself as being happy when he understood his work. The staff that supported him had predicted that it would have been when he did an activity of his choice. Thomas was most stressed when he perceived that his peers were unfair or "out to get him". At his home school, he felt negative about meeting his academic expectations and interacting with some peers. At ALP, he reacted adversely to his learning situation, simultaneously knowing and resisting his need for adult support. Thomas described a typical problem situation that was instigated by his strong sense of justice and fairness. Although Thomas spoke of using new strategies to cope with these situations, his case manager believed that Thomas was driven by a need for survival. Thomas expressed a desire to have teachers who were not strict, yet had boundaries. When he reflected on characteristics that encouraged his acceptance of support, Thomas identified the key factor as having an adult that cared.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 reported data collected through student observations, student and professional dyad interviews, and student case files. The researcher looked at the three data sources individually and objectively summarized the findings according to each case study. The observations, interviews, and student files each gave a different lens through which to illustrate the students' experiences. The resulting chain of evidence linked the study's protocol and research questions to the data sources, and allowed for rich case study descriptions. A detailed understanding for the salient information in each case profile allowed the researcher to establish a platform from which to conduct a thorough data analysis. Individually, these case studies depicted an overview of how some male students designated with behaviour problems encountered their school experiences. Data analysis in chapter 5 further deconstructed the single case, and completed an analysis across multiple studies.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Data analysis synthesized the information gathered by observations, interviews and case files into emergent themes that evolved across student participants, professional participants, and dyad comparisons. The researcher guided her exploration of the data through the framework given by the research's purpose. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore areas of commonality and difference between student and professional perceptions regarding the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural needs in the Saanich School District. To that end, the researcher compared the database collection according to student, professional, and cross-case responses (see Appendix I, J, and K). Through a comprehensive reading of these individual and cross-case databases, the researcher developed meaningful categories with which to code the data. Each segment was appropriately coded, and common categories were clustered together. The researcher followed an inductive and interpretive approach, generating themes that richly represented the participants' experience of their reality, and explored cross-case patterns of commonality and difference.

In chapter 5 the researcher explores student, professional, and dyad themes through the categories of thoughts and feelings, school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour, and professionals' roles and actions (see Table 5). Student and professional themes gave insight into common aspects within these participant perspectives. Dyad themes uncovered areas of commonality and difference across the two understandings. Through exploring the experience of male youths designated with behaviour, and the perceptions of the professionals supporting them, chapter 5 richly described the case studies, and created an avenue from which to discuss the similarities and inconsistencies between student and professional perspectives.

Table 5

Summary of Student, Professional, and Dyadic Themes

Student	Professional	Dyad: Commonalities	Dyad: Differences
The troublemaker vs. the kindhearted ^A	The troublemaker ^A	Explosive anger ^B	Positive qualities vs. negative qualities ^A
Academic stress ^A	Academic stress ^A	Physical altercations ^B	Concrete vs. abstract thoughts and feelings ^A
Injustice ^B	Intense emotional patterns ^B	Environmental factors ^B	Minor infraction vs. multiple suspension ^C
Lack of self-determination ^B	Survival ^B	Random triggers ^B	Relationship based vs. intervention based support ^C
Relationship based support ^C	Multi-faceted support ^C	Survival ^B	
Peer influenced support ^C	Professional virtues ^C		

Note. Themes are organized according to category. A = thoughts and feelings; B = school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour; C = professionals' roles and actions.

Student Themes

Thoughts and Feelings

The Troublemaker Versus the Kindhearted

Student participants identified their more troublesome attributes when asked to consider their personal qualities as reflected by others. They used descriptors such as “hyper,” “depressed,” and “rough edges” to explain how teachers described their personality. Kyle anticipated that adults thought he was “a prick” because “they all hate me...I’m mean to them...I swear at them...just because I want to.” Although students focused on negative adult perceptions, some youth also believed adults recognized another side to their personality, that of an adolescent who was “smart,” “funny,” and “nice to others.” Their harshest self-descriptions were reserved for the presumed vision of their peers. Through their eyes, these research participants saw themselves as a “butthead,” someone who was “different,” and a person known to do “some stupid stuff.”

These views were consistent with information contained in their student files. Participants’ IEPs reported behaviours that were explosive and dangerous to others, often resulting in peers feeling threatened and intimidated. During ALP observations, the researcher noted minimal peer interactions. There was one brief conversation between two students regarding the possibility of cliff jumping after school, and one argument between two students that quickly escalated until an adult intervened. Although limited examples, these research observations represented peer relationships that appeared to be orientated around high-risk activities and steeped in a somewhat volatile nature.

The students’ behavioural and social self-concepts were negative when framed by the perspective of others, yet their personal self-descriptions painted a picture of adolescents that

were kind, caring, encouraging, and leaders amongst their peers. Student participants presented the researcher with only positive personal qualities, defining characteristics that focused on externalized and helpful behaviours. Jason described himself through sharing an activity that he believed highlighted his strengths. “I like working with special needs. People thank me, I don’t like to make fun of them.” When he reflected further on his time with the special needs students, he commented, “So I like to think of it as quite a bit of trust with the teachers.” In their IEPs, case managers recognized the youth’s desire to demonstrate compassion and value relationships. These documented strengths supported the student participants’ self-view as kindhearted.

At their home school, students tended to focus on feelings connected to being in trouble or receiving consequences. They unanimously reported feeling frightened, overwhelmed, and angry, demonstrating their identification with the troublemaker persona that others held for them. Jason explained that he was “frightened because I always got in trouble [and] surprised because I always got in big trouble.” At ALP, students were more commonly frustrated or exhausted by their academic workload, not by the circumstances surrounding their behavioural difficulties. Thomas expressed, “In this school, my frustration is the work because to be honest, if someone didn’t sit there, and thoroughly sit there with me and do a few, I’m not going to get it.” Students more commonly experienced positive feelings of confidence, hope, and happiness. With this shift in dynamics, students at ALP appeared to identify more with their kindhearted persona than the troublemaker identity that evidently dominated their home school experiences.

Academic Stress

The students in this research study had diagnoses of ADHD and learning disabilities. This was not part of the criteria for participation in the case study, but a commonality discovered when reviewing their case files. Academic expectations strongly influenced the students’

prevalent thoughts and feelings. Students were asked to describe moments at school, either their home school or ALP, when they were happiest and when they were most stressed. Responses focused on academic expectations; two out of three students felt happiest when they understood their work, and the third student felt most stressed when he needed to complete homework. At their home school, frequent feelings of boredom and confusion stemmed from the students' ongoing struggle to understand academic work. Thomas spoke frankly about his experiences in the Resource Room at his home school, his pull out environment for Language Arts and Math. "I hate it. But when I go back to my normal classes, it's like, 'Oh God, this is hard. I don't want to be here' ...it was just ridiculous, they give you stickers for your work...it's stupid...I got a crap load of stickers, but..."

Frustration with their studies shifted somewhat when students attended ALP. Students reported feeling hopeful and surprised at the ease in which they were able to successfully complete work. Some moments of frustration remained, but it was no longer as prominent of a feeling. Students described working best when their teachers did not yell, were not overly strict, and taught using active, hands-on lessons. Despite their academic struggles, adolescent participants identified with the role of being a student. They voiced statements that showed a connection to their home school, and a desire to succeed. When Kyle shared his first thoughts regarding his home school, he stated, "My home school. That's my school." During research observations, Thomas asked for help and presented himself as though he were keen and positive about his learning. In the same session, the researcher also noted Jason's struggle to not be distracted by peers and to complete his work in a timely fashion.

Student files reported the participants' struggles across all academic areas, documenting how these students might have greater difficulty than most in understanding and retaining

information. Although specific to each youth, learning disabilities generally affected this group's capacity to process information and communicate adeptly through written or oral language. A shared diagnosis of ADHD may have been a precipitating factor in their heightened academic stress. Thomas' Psychoeducational Assessment report stated that ADHD symptoms of hyperactivity, distractibility, and impulsiveness might be related to continued frustration with his learning, and should be monitored. Academic stress wove itself throughout the students' stories, impacting significantly on the thoughts and feelings of youth designated with behavioural needs.

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Injustice

Shared student experiences were stories of aggression, anger, and frustration. Difficult situations generally happened at lunchtime, when students were with friends, in front of an active audience, and away from the structure and guidance of a supervised classroom. The students' friends were typically involved, either as encouragers or instigators, and the resulting disagreement usually ended in a physical or verbal altercation. In each account, students spoke of the injustice of their situation. Either another student broke an unwritten code, teachers made wrongful accusations, or favourite belongings were ruined. In each situation, the students insisted that they reacted to something unfair, and sought retribution for another's actions. Student participants reported that the other person involved always "did it first." Feelings of anger and frustration were beyond their control, an automatic response to the injustice that ruined their fun. Thomas likened his rising emotions to "Anger Mountain", a metaphor used to describe his quick escalation to rage. Jason also tried to explain how it felt when he was fighting, stating, "I don't know, it's a rush. I was like, OK, I've got to get him back."

Lack of Self-Determination

Student participants externalized their behaviour's locus of control. In their perception, peers forced them to react with aggression, and adults stopped them from escalating behaviours. Students believed that at their home school, their behaviour was not as bad as the teachers seemed to report. They commented on the majority of teachers simply not liking them and being out to get them. The students reiterated that the times of trouble were not their fault, and that the subsequent consequences were unfairly put upon them. All students professed a difference in their behaviour since attending ALP. They reported that they "can not," "will not," and "do not" engage in physical fights at ALP. Only one student reflected on trying new strategies to self-manage his anger and frustration. All three participants spoke of how fighting just did not happen within this environment. In their perspective, the high staff to student ratio prevented situations from even occurring in the first place. "Here you can't do that, you just don't punch somebody in the face," Kyle mused. "Oh, you can't exactly spray chocolate milk on anybody either because the teachers are two feet away from you." The researcher noted the probable accuracy of this statement during her observation periods. In one situation, an adult quickly shut down an escalating student argument through her immediate intervention.

Students were cognizant of the increased level of negative consequences that a difficulty at ALP had over a similar situation at their home school. Interestingly, students admitted a desire to still do the inappropriate behaviours, even if they got in trouble. Throughout their interviews, students commented on liking the staff at ALP, having fun during the day, and feeling successful in their work. However, when the conversation was about the staff's perceived control over behaviour, the students voiced that it was boring to not fool around, that they wanted to be at their home school, and that they were looking forward to the school year ending.

*Professionals' Roles and Actions**Relationship Based Support*

Students identified supportive adults at their home school and at ALP. When thinking of their home school, participants spoke of at least one classroom teacher and one support teacher or counsellor that they believed helped them on a regular basis. When prompted to consider other caring adults in their schools, the students also included their Vice Principal. Although students could identify adults that they found supportive, they struggled to verbalize the role that these people played in their school lives. Rather than identify specific interventions or actions, the students spoke of the relationship that they had with the adults. They noted the importance of consistency and loyalty from the staff that supported them. Above all else, students voiced their primary need to have someone that genuinely cared, and showed respect. Kyle commented, “People always say that if you show people respect, they’ll show you respect. Well, uh, ya. It actually works the other way too.”

When they reflected on the staff at ALP, students unanimously said that they would go to anyone for help because they were all “cool” and nice. In this setting, students identified the adult within the closest vicinity as the person they would seek for support. If this relationship was tarnished, as Kyle explained, it was difficult to repair personal connections. Classroom observations noted supportive dynamics between the staff and students at ALP. The researcher observed Thomas asking for help, interacting positively with the teacher, and easily accepting adult support for his learning. The students also presented as being engaged in goal setting and personal reflections with the educational assistants (EA), indicating the foundation of a safe and respectful relationship.

Student files officially listed more professionals working in a supportive capacity than were acknowledged by students during their research interviews. When students recognized an undesirable personal quality in an adult, they tended to dismiss that person's possible support. Jason perceived that his school principal simply gave consequences and did not endeavor to connect with him. Thomas was upset by the District Psychologist's suggestion of medication, and firmly stated that he never wanted to see him again. Kyle, currently in Grade 7, identified his Grade 6 teacher as being someone he would go to for support. His file reflected this relationship as his Grade 6 report card showed all B's, and his Grade 7 marks reflected a dramatic drop to C/C-. The student participants did not include any of the various community supports as people who helped them on a regular basis. Although professional reports spoke to the importance of these outside interventions, their supportive role was not on the forefront of the students' minds.

Peer Influenced Support

When student participants were asked whom they would seek for support, all of the youth identified their peers as being amongst the top two or three people that they would trust. These peers held at least as significant a place in the students' lives as their case managers and other professionals whose role it was to support them. This was especially true when students reflected on relationships at their home schools. Students may have generally understood the supportive role of professionals, however their immediate response to seeking support was to turn to their peer group. Friends formed a support network that ran parallel to that offered by the adults. In the students' perception, peer support went hand in hand with adult support, influencing the effectiveness of adult interventions and relationships.

Professional Themes

*Thoughts and Feelings**The Troublemaker*

Professionals who worked in supportive roles with the students consistently painted a picture of adolescents with negative behavioural and social self-concepts. When considering how these students viewed adult perceptions, the professionals stated that student participants would see themselves as a “bad kid”; somebody that frequently got into trouble, had many needs, and was not well liked. Meg described Jason’s perception as, “I don’t think he thinks the adults like him very much. They see him as a troublemaker and getting into stuff he shouldn’t get into. Always being the one to cause trouble and getting blamed for it.” In terms of how these students perceived their reflection in their peer’s eyes, the professionals commonly described images of being a “bad kid,” “dumb,” and “the protector.” Two of the adults interviewed surmised that student participants might have believed other adolescents also saw them as “cool,” “humourous,” and “friendly.”

Interviewed professionals recognized a multi-layered image in the students’ self-perceptions. They noted students believed that, at times, they could try hard and be easy going in social situations. Consistently, however, the adults described youth that deeply identified with being frustrated, misunderstood, and in trouble. Their most frequent or intense feelings were thought to be anger, frustration, anxiety, and exhaustion. Kelly reflected on Thomas’ self-perception, “He was completely focused and absorbed in, almost obsessively, on ‘I’m going to get in trouble’, or ‘They’re mad at me’...these feelings were because he had done something that he needed to fix one way or another.” Looking through the vision of others and self, the professionals clearly perceived student participants as encapsulating a troublemaker persona.

Academic Stress

The professionals strongly linked academic stress to the intense emotions displayed by student participants. They saw the students' frustration as being driven by teachers' unrealistic expectations. Students were asked to do what they could not, inevitably causing them to fail while their peers succeeded. This cycle of failure and success led to increased anxiety and anger. Dave commented that Kyle's anger escalated when his teacher enforced work expectations, "Then the rage comes out and it blows up, and the language starts. Then the office is involved, and away we go." Other feelings such as being bored, confused, and exhausted were also linked to academic work. Professionals saw students disconnect when they became overwhelmed by academic expectations. Work blocks extended over lengthy periods of time tended to shut down students and increase their frustration. Students presented as being bored, not intellectually perhaps, but because they did not want to attempt what was expected. The professionals perceived a desire by youth to achieve success at the same level as their peers, and recognized the stress caused by challenges that made this reality difficult.

All the professionals believed that student participants were happiest when engaged in activities of their choice, either in subjects such as Physical Education, or with their peers during the lunch break. Conversely, they saw stress at school as centered around classroom related experiences. Dave talked of Kyle's extreme reaction when asked to do something in the classroom that he did not want to do; Kelly recognized Thomas' significant struggles with reading and math; and Meg reflected on Jason's heightened stress when he was not given adequate processing time. The professionals saw these students as wanting teachers who were fair, gave chances and breaks, and cared about their success. When contemplating the initial thoughts student participants held for their home school, professionals responded with notions of

hating school, feeling like a failure, and only wanting to hang out with friends. In the perception of these professionals, happiness was strongly linked to a sense of freedom from school, and stress was specifically connected to students' challenges in meeting academic expectations.

Student files frequently noted the impact of academic stress on the students' emotional well-being. Descriptors of academic testing results and suggested strategies were identified within documents such as Psychoeducational Assessment reports and student IEPs. At his home school, Thomas was pulled out of his homeroom class for more intensive support in Language Arts and Math. His file reported difficulty across all subject areas and noted that his frustration with learning may be related to his behaviour difficulties. The researcher observed Thomas as he struggled with some of the concepts introduced to him; he counted on his fingers, misread a newspaper article, and needed a computer program to assist him with written output. During this time, he blurted out thoughts, stated his difficulties to the teacher, and expressed his surprise at the workload. Kyle's file similarly identified his academic needs. Kyle had a reading and writing disability that severely impacted his academic output. Although his performance was at a low level, he had a high average verbal IQ. This discrepancy, according to his Psychoeducational Assessment report, was recognized as adding to his level of frustration with learning. Jason's file indicated that his learning disability involved a weak processing speed that fell within the 1st percentile, only 1 out of every 100 children would fit into this category. Meg noted the impact of this stress on his behaviour, recognizing his frustration and inability to focus for an extended period of time. During her observations at ALP, the researcher recorded behaviours similar to Meg's descriptions. Observation notes indicated that Jason often disengaged from the lesson and stared ahead; unresponsive to adult requests and not focussed on his work. Professional

assessments, observations, and interventions consistently pointed to a direct connection between student learning disabilities and escalating behavioural concerns.

School Experiences and Motivating Factors for Behaviour

Intense Emotional Patterns

When describing students' typical behaviour struggles, professionals unanimously spoke of the deeply engrained emotional patterns that occurred across settings and over time. Dave described Kyle's extreme difficulty in shifting his mind set; Kelly noted that Thomas did not back down once a situation escalated; and Meg reflected on Jason's sudden and intense altercations. Dave perceived these students as "wrapped up into the emotion of the intensity of the moment and basically their mind won't shift." Circumstances and triggers differed for each student, but across the cases, professionals conveyed stories of adolescents that could not manage their rage and became so stuck in their emotional reactions that situations escalated without warning or a sense of control. Kyle's student file contained a report documenting a situation that escalated to the point of police involvement as he displayed physical violence towards the school's administration and staff. These students' impulsive nature sparked a cycle of frustration and anger that blocked them from hearing the messages and interventions of adults, even those with whom they had a working relationship. Often these outbursts led to verbal and physical altercations that resulted in short periods of isolation from the group, or formalized suspension from school. These disciplinary actions were recorded in the student participants' records, documenting the impact of their intense emotional reactions.

Survival

Professionals interviewed for this study perceived the student participants' intense emotional patterns as stemming from their basic need for survival. Adults believed that the

adolescents' actions were not willful or designed to achieve a need for love, belonging, power, or fun. Rather, they saw it as an involuntary reaction to the emotions of the moment. The context of a student's day and his state of mind could be enough of an antecedent to trigger an intense emotional cycle. Social status, academic challenges, and issues at home intertwined as students struggled to manage throughout the school day. The complications of their various challenges were seen as compounding the adolescents' need for security and survival. Meg surmised, "You don't know what it is with them, so I think when you deal with the kids, you have to look at their point of view more often, like, not just think of them as the average child...they are dealing with so many different issues." Professionals reflected on the familial cycles of abuse, and the internalized messages of neglect and shame in which the students found themselves submersed. The adolescents had strong reactions whenever family was brought into a school situation. Behaviours escalated, with what was described in Thomas' file as explosive anger, when students were told that administration called their family. Professionals perceived that students wanted to step outside of their family's dysfunction, but did not know any other way to survive. Kelly's thought that "love and survival are so intertwined" was reflected in the perception of the other professional participants. Meg believed Jason's behaviour was an "involuntary action or survival", and Dave proposed that, "I don't know that they're meeting needs...I think it's just a reaction to the moment, to the heat of the event. They can't help it."

Professionals' Roles and Actions

Multi-Faceted Support

Each adult clearly defined their professional role when supporting students with behaviour designations. Their visions were unique and reflected the position that they held within the school. Dave, a Behaviour Support Teacher, described himself as an advocate and a

sounding board for the student's voice. Kelly, an Integration Support Teacher, saw herself as encompassing many dynamics from teaching to nurturing her students. Meg, the Alternate Learning Program teacher, believed her role was to support students in discovering strategies that allowed them to successfully function within their home school. Despite a slightly different twist to each person's role, the professionals all acknowledged themselves as the case manager and main support person for their students. They spoke of working with these youth in ways that were not possible within the structure of the regular classroom. The support teachers believed in a common vision, to share an understanding of the students' reality and create an opportunity for students to connect with an adult perspective. Dave described this role as, "I hear their story and do what I can to try and give the alternate point of view, but at least to listen."

Daily support and contact with students was often performed in an unobtrusive and natural manner. Dave spoke of finding secondary reasons to be in the classroom in order to minimize the student's sense of being different. When situations arose, the case manager was there, as Kelly explained, to be "the mother, counsellor, police officer—typical parent". Successful interventions were different for each professional, yet all strategies were mitigated on creating an understanding for tolerance and an opportunity for students to become calm and centered. Meg focused her strategies on addressing Jason's learning needs, and monitoring his physical health. She maintained that when he was fed and well rested, he was better able to centre himself and be successful in his day. Kelly worked towards presenting predictable and consistent expectations, and mirroring a calm and engaging attitude towards learning. Dave concentrated his interventions on being a person students could use as a sounding board and a listener. He worked to maintain a relationship with the students, while still demonstrating boundaries and expectations. The need to appropriately self-regulate emotions was indicated in

all of the students' ALP intake goals. When students were calm, they were able to produce work, engage in problem solving, and build positive connections within their school community.

Professional Virtues

When considering characteristics that encouraged students to accept support, the adults spoke of honesty, acceptance, patience, loyalty, and respect; virtues that guided their professional practice. Dave defined a willingness to listen patiently to the student's story and the need to openly engage them in conversations. Kelly added to this understanding through her belief in being open and honest with students. She normalized the process of goal setting as much as possible, often being transparent in her own areas of struggle. Meg noted the importance of providing a safe and secure environment in which students were able to explore their needs. Allowing students to make mistakes and grow from experiences offered a dynamic that encouraged acceptance of support. Within all of these descriptions, threaded a common understanding of values and professional virtues. When students believed in the adults supporting them, and felt their unconditional presence, they were more likely to accept support.

Student-Professional Dyad Themes

Areas of Commonality

Description of School Experiences

Explosive anger. Students and professionals spoke of the explosive anger that coloured many of the students' school experiences. Each student recanted a situation in which they were in trouble, a time laden with anger. The students described the instant rage that they felt when, in their perception, an injustice had been done to them. Jason described the feeling as an adrenaline rush, similar to that which he felt when skateboarding. He spoke of the excitement of others cheering, the anger of being wronged, and the embarrassment of fighting. Kyle felt justified in

his anger because the other student had ruined his shirt. He was matter-of-fact in his description of the altercation, stating that he was instantly angry, not specifically because of the other student's actions, but because they resulted in his shirt becoming stained. Thomas described his emotions using the metaphor of "Anger Mountain". He explained that as soon as he is frustrated and annoyed, he reaches the top of the mountain. "It goes like this. Up my mountain? You're going to be swinging down, you know what I mean?" An explosive and powerful outburst of anger surfaced as a common theme expressed by all student participants, an emotion that characterized their experiences and shaped their self-perceptions.

Similarly, the professionals also perceived the notion of explosive anger as a common aspect to the students' school experiences. A cycle of frustration and impulsivity was thought to have instigated their anger and sparked an engrained pattern of behaviour that quickly engulfed the student. The professionals recognized the rage as intense and unpredictable. Dave stated, "He just gets beyond anger, he just gets very enraged." Students reacted with this intense anger across different settings and time, becoming easily stuck in a negative pattern and unable to shift their mind-set to a new way of coping. "He doesn't back down," Kelly commented. "When he's in the middle of a blow up, he doesn't back down." Professionals recognized that these students, more so than the general middle school population, felt anger at such an intense and all encompassing level that its experience became part of what defined their self-concepts.

Physical altercations. The explosive anger experienced by students in this research study inevitably led to physical aggression. Students shared times when they were in a physical fight, and reported that they often fought at their home school. They spoke both of individual altercations when they felt another student initiated a problem, and of group dynamics when one peer group sought out another. One of the students, Jason, told of how groups of students would

meet outside of school hours, and off the property, to continue fights that were interrupted at school. In his perception, and those of the other student participants, physical altercations were commonplace. Kyle explained why, to his understanding, he was at ALP for a second time. “I’m back here because I popped a kid in the face.” When they described being involved in a physical fight, the students’ voices were animated, and their speech quickened. They presented themselves as being excited to share their story. At one point, Jason stopped suddenly and stated, “It’s kind of embarrassing to talk about. I fought lots, it’s just something I don’t feel good about.” The students, like Jason, showed mixed emotions when they talked about fighting. They recognized it as a behaviour that held strong consequences, yet seemed to identify with it as a significant part of their peer culture.

Professionals also noted the student participants’ frequent involvement in physical fights. Their intense emotional outbursts quickly escalated into verbal and physical aggression. Meg described the unpredictability of Jason’s anger. “He’s got the shortest fuse I’ve ever seen. He could be sitting there chatting with you and all of a sudden, he could throw a chair.” His sharp reaction was a typical example of how professionals perceived these students when they were unable to cope with their daily frustrations and challenges. The students did not step back from a situation; rather they dug themselves into a pattern of defiance and aggression that quickly moved out of their control. Both the students and the professionals supporting them similarly understood the student participants’ school experiences. Externalized behaviours of explosive anger and physical altercations were tangible patterns that typified the students’ struggles.

Perception of Antecedents

Environmental factors. Students and professionals described environmental factors as being significant antecedents for the students’ inappropriate behaviour. Through sharing their

school experiences, student participants spoke to the environmental factors that shaped their behavioural difficulties. The students' stories similarly described struggles as happening at lunch, an extended period of unstructured time when they were freely interacting with peers. The students reported feeling happy and having fun playing shortly before the situation escalated into anger and aggression, their emotions sharpened and their adrenaline increased. In addition, each story contained an audience factor. Students spoke of hearing the encouragement and cheering of friends when they were fighting, and of feeling proud when their peers stood up for them.

Students reported that their school experiences were different at ALP. They described an environment that controlled their behaviour and emotional reactions in a way that could not happen at their home school. Kyle stated, "Here you can't do that, you just don't punch somebody in the face...you can't exactly spray chocolate milk on anybody either because the teachers are two feet away from you." According to these students, there were not the same opportunities to have negative situations arise, and there was more staff ready to intervene when necessary. The students looked to their environment for structures to frame their behaviour. They did not internalize choices or growth, but deferred self-determination to externalized circumstances. At their home school, the environment allowed for freedom and with that, the challenges of regulating their emotions appropriately. At ALP, the environment was more controlled, with boundaries and structures in place to guide positive student behaviour.

Professionals identified the context of the students' day, and their state of mind, as major environmental antecedents for their behavioural difficulties. Kelly spoke specifically about struggles at home impacting Thomas before he even arrived at school. When his mornings began in this fashion, Thomas continued to be agitated and anxious throughout the day. Situations that he may have persevered through on one day became triggers for his frustration and anger the

next. Professionals also noted how the time, or length, of a school day could be an environmental trigger for some students. Kyle, for example, was attending his home school on a partial day schedule in order to find some success in an environment where he otherwise struggled. The adults spoke of differences in student behaviour dependent upon their teachers, the class, and even the time of year. These environmental antecedents significantly influenced the student participants' behaviour while attending their home school.

As students transitioned to ALP, the environmental antecedents naturally shifted. The physical structure of the ALP building, and the organization of the educational program, was dramatically changed from the students' home school. This change set a different stage for the students' behaviour. Meg was able to reflect on Jason's triggers both at his home school and at ALP. In her estimation, Jason's behaviour at his home school was partially a compensation for his academic challenges, whereas his behaviour at ALP was more of a reflection on his exhaustion and inability to cope with anger. Meg noted the impact she believed that environmental factors had on many of the students that she supported. "The different environment affects him so incredibly much...he has to be a different person and he can't cope."

Random triggers. Students described antecedents to their behaviour as following a somewhat random nature. Jason described the adrenaline rush that took over his reactions, yet was puzzled as to why this occurred and why he fought so much at his home school. Thomas spoke of being arbitrarily blamed for things all the time, whether in the classroom or on the yard. He stated that he was often confused with why something happened, describing himself as randomly in trouble and falsely accused. Kyle described getting into trouble at different times and places, feeling that teachers were simply out to get him for small things. When asked what was happening right before he got into trouble, Kyle shrugged and said, "Nothing...it's just

random facts. It's not even worth getting into trouble for. Banging on a locker and I get into trouble for that. They have a conniption fit." In the boys' perception, the triggers for their behaviour were mysterious, random, and usually somebody else's responsibility.

When asked what common antecedents precipitated the students' behaviour, the professionals had difficulty in finding a definitive answer. They struggled to anticipate when the student could persevere, and when he would react. Kelly shared how there were times she felt sure that Thomas would display some difficulties, and yet he remained calm and engaged. At other times, he would react quickly and without warning. The impact the context of his day had on his behaviour made it difficult for Kelly to read Thomas' reactions. "He might have calmed down from something else and that will just get him back up again." Meg spoke of how the antecedent for Jason's behaviour could sometimes be a reminder of an event from a long time ago. This memory could somehow be triggered throughout the day, unwittingly sparking a cycle of anger and aggression. Dave explained that Kyle could get into trouble anywhere, and with many intangible triggers. Outside of environmental antecedents, professionals perceived student participants as reacting to unknown triggers, in essence, to any event that brought forward frustration and ignited the students' intense emotional patterns. Across all case studies, student and professional participants described the theme of students reacting to random unknown triggers, a struggle compounded by the balancing of various environmental antecedents.

Understanding of Motivating Factors

Survival. Students, and the professionals who supported them, understood the central need for survival as the motivating factor for their aggressive behaviour. Adolescents described reactions to an altercation as instinctive responses to feeling anger and injustice. Thomas described his heightened emotions and compared their escalation to "Anger Mountain"; Kyle

recounted incidents when he acted on what he believed he had to do; and Jason referred to the overpowering effects of an adrenaline rush. The students' acknowledged lack of control and immediate primal reactions spoke to their underlying motivation of survival.

Throughout the professionals' interviews, the theme of survival continued to come across as a strong motivating factor for student behaviour. The adults reflected on the chaos that surrounded the students' home lives, and considered the spontaneous nature of the students' anger and rage. Kelly explained, "We used to say that he was in constant fight or flight mode." The youth's reactions seemed to be involuntary, and beyond their immediate control. Having faced the challenges of their life experiences, these students' reactions were wired to be self-protective as they aggressively sought what they needed to survive. Students perceived their behaviour as a reaction to something that had happened to them, not as choice they consciously made. The adults agreed, perceiving students' behaviour as a response to the intensity of their emotions, an action deeply embedded within the intense emotional pattern of survival.

Areas of Difference

Description of Thoughts and Feelings

Positive qualities versus negative qualities. The students' perspective of their own thoughts and feelings reflected more positive qualities than the need based descriptions given by professionals. Students connected some at-risk behaviours with a negative outward reflection, largely identifying with the troublemaker image. Despite this recognition of negative qualities, most students noted positive self-attributes that they believed adults understood. Jason perceived that school staff would describe him as smart, and Thomas saw them as appreciating his humour and kindness. Thomas described this perception of him as "a good kid that just has a little rough edges." In terms of self-perceptions, all students conveyed only their most positive qualities.

Jason described situations when he was empathic and trustworthy; Kyle stated that he was kind because he shared his lunch with others; and Thomas proudly described himself as a leader and an open-minded individual, “I see myself as a leader, more or less someone that will try, and if I don’t like it, I don’t like it, but at least I’ll give it a shot.” The troublemaker identity that they knew so well when it came to the perspective of others, did not represent how the students felt on a personal level. Despite experiencing consequences and receiving negative feedback, the students believed themselves to be kind, positive, and giving.

This differed from the professionals’ perception, which held a more negative slant. Professionals believed that students singularly saw themselves in other’s eyes as a troublemaker. They conveyed their understanding that students would perceive adults as not liking them, as someone known to frequently get into trouble. The professionals believed that this negative perception carried over into the manner in which the students saw themselves in their peer’s eyes. Dave understood Kyle’s perception to be that students saw him as a bad kid. Similarly, Kelly also described Thomas as perceiving that others thought he was a bad kid, and would possibly even describe him as dumb. The largest difference between the student and the professional understandings is their description of the students’ self-perceptions. Whereas students perceived only positive attributes within their personal self-concept, the professionals believed that they most strongly identified with being in trouble, misunderstood, hyper, and frustrated. Despite recognizing these qualities as part of the reflection others had, students separated themselves from the influence of this vision, and did not associate negative characteristics with their personal self-concept. Instead, they told stories that exemplified what they saw as their positive impact on others.

In comparing the most intense or frequent feelings experienced by student participants, the students once again included positive emotions, and the professionals spoke only of troubling ones. Students exemplified themselves using such descriptors such as feeling ecstatic with their friends, happy when having fun, hopeful that they were doing well, and confident in their leadership abilities. Although students did identify negative self-attributes, the focus on positive qualities represented prominent feelings in the students' minds that were left unrecognized by the professionals. Adults supporting these students used descriptors that unilaterally focused on being enraged, frustrated, mischievous, anxious, and exhausted. The professionals linked many of these emotions to the students' challenges with learning and their ensuing cycle of frustration. A concentrated focus on learning and behavioural needs excluded the relative strengths experienced by the students, and defined a clear distinction between the two perspectives.

Concrete and externalized thoughts and feelings versus abstract and internalized thoughts and feelings. Student participants were concrete and externalized in the description of their thoughts and feelings, whereas professionals maintained an abstract and internalized focus. Students associated their most intense feelings with tangible experiences rather than abstract reflections of their internalized self-concept. They spoke of feeling happy with friends, bored when reading, and exhausted from the classroom heat. Similarly, students also externalized their behaviour's motivating factors and consequences. The adolescents did not accept ownership for conflicts with other youths and adults, even partially, but gave responsibility to another person's initiation. "It was not my fault" became a common theme expressed by students as they recalled their behavioural difficulties. Although they worked towards learning new coping strategies at ALP, student participants continued to recognize the staff as responsible for mediating conflicts. The students did not internalize growth or recognize their own power within these situations.

Professionals, however, connected their perception of the students' feelings to abstract and internalized notions. They tended to look at the students' experiences as reflecting a deeper and more complex layer than the students uncovered. Professionals described youths who felt lonely within fragile friendships, became anxious from being unable to control their actions, and experienced sadness as a hidden emotion. The professionals described the students' school experiences in a similar fashion. They spoke to the abstract emotional patterns and internalized responses that characterized these students' challenges. Their understanding of the students' stories moved beyond a concrete explanation to discover a more internal connection.

Perception of Consequences

Minor infractions versus multiple suspensions. Students told stories of not being in trouble, and of escaping a difficult situation with little, if any, consequences. They each described how they manipulated the situation's dynamics in their favour. Once caught, Jason reported that students often pretended to have been play fighting in order for the physical altercation to appear as only a minor infraction. The actual fight then continued after school hours, and off the grounds, the students successfully avoiding consequences. Kyle confidently stated that he discovered the best thing to do was to either make up an excuse and agree with the principal, or, if he did not have anywhere else to be, dig into an argument and try to out-talk the principal. Kyle laughed as he commented that he often liked to "find a bunch of technicalities and screw them over." Thomas was proud that he had friends who helped defend him and get him out of trouble. According to Thomas, friends would take the blame for one another and counter a teacher's perception. Although student participants referred to being sent to the office, they did not describe themselves as being in serious trouble. After sharing his story, Jason clarified his consequences. "Didn't get suspended for that though. No teachers got me in trouble

for that. They didn't even tell my mom. I only had to talk to the "Duty"." Kyle even claimed that he only got caught for little things, and believed that he always got away with the big things.

The professionals, on the other hand, spoke of the seriousness of the students' actions. They affirmed the reports in the student files that documented several suspensions and office referrals. Each professional described working within a system of graduated consequences that most often involved some students' removal from their peer group for an extended period of time. At his home school, for example, Kyle was on a shortened day as a result of his extreme behaviour difficulties. These types of formalized consequences eventually resulted in the district student reviews that recommended the student participants attend ALP. Although the students obviously experienced the suspensions and were a part of the district review meetings, these were not the times that they chose to share during the research interview. Students presented themselves as though they identified with the experience separately from any consequences that may have occurred. The level of seriousness did not appear to have the same connection with the student participants as it did for the professionals.

Understanding of Professional Roles

Relationship based versus intervention based. Students identified supportive adults within their home school and at ALP, yet had a difficult time verbalizing the characteristics that defined these people's roles. Students did not recognize specific professional interventions or strategies, but based their perception of people as supportive on whether they liked the person, were shown respect, and believed that they cared. Jason explained that while attending ALP, he turned to whomever was closest, the proximity of that person and their previously established relationship were the two pivotal factors. Thomas' description of the staff at ALP completes the

picture of what characteristics encouraged him to accept support. He stated that the staff “wanted to help you, they were not there for the money...they care, and they talk to you.”

Professionals recognized virtues such as honesty, respect, and patience as critical values that encouraged students to accept support. When they defined their role with the students, the professionals were more prescriptive, giving details about specific learning or behavioural strategies. They did not focus on the working relationship as an intervention in and of itself. In most instances, students were unclear as to what an adult’s actual role was within their school experiences. Their greater concern, however, was whether or not there was some faction of a personal relationship between them. Although professionals spoke of a willingness to listen, and striving to be an advocate for the students, they did not succinctly frame their role within the terms of a positive relationship. Unlike the students, professionals did not identify a genuine liking and caring for the student as the crux to a successful relationship, the foundation upon which other strategies rested.

Summary

Student Themes

Students identified their behavioural and social self-concept according to the perception of those around them. They vacillated between associating with the persona of a troublemaker, as seen by others, or with the character of someone kindhearted, as defined by themselves. Academic stress was commonly attributed to feelings of frustration, boredom, and confusion. Student participants presented a desire to be successful with their studies, yet struggled to meet the academic expectations. Cycles of frustration and anger surfaced when the adolescents believed that another person’s actions, a peer or an adult, had been unjust. Their acute sensitivity to fairness was exacerbated by the students’ lack of self-determination. In the youths’ perception,

other people strongly controlled their actions and decisions. Peers instigated altercations that escalated beyond their control, and adults made decisions that determined their behavioural choices. The students voiced their value of relationship as the crux to accepting support from professionals. Rather than look to the interventions or strategies that an adult employed, the students determined a supportive professional on the basis of the quality of their relationship. Of equal importance to the students was the influence of peers on their support network. Students identified other adolescents as amongst the most significant people that they would seek for support, demonstrating the importance of their peer culture on the effectiveness of the professional interventions and relationships.

Professional Themes

Professionals unilaterally perceived the student participants as identifying with the image of a troublemaker. Adults stated that these students believed themselves to be a “bad kid” in the reflection cast by others, and, in their own perception, an adolescent who was frustrated, misunderstood, and into trouble. More so than the students, professionals definitively connected the student participants’ heightened academic stress to their intense emotional reactions. The adults described students as being in a cycle of failure that led to increased anxiety and frustration with learning. This pattern of behaviour escalated as students struggled to shift their mind-set. Professionals believed that the adolescents’ engrained patterns were grounded in their basic need for survival. Students, in the adults’ perception, had involuntary reactions to the emotion of the moment. Their challenges compounded and created a complex path for the students to navigate. Professionals perceived their support of these students as being a multi-faceted approach. Each adult defined their role according to their specific position within the school, yet shared a common goal to understand the students’ reality, and share an adult’s

perspective. Professionals described specific interventions that they believed met this mandate, strategies ranging from meeting physical needs to adapting learning opportunities. Throughout the professionals' practice ran a common appreciation for the professional virtues of honesty, acceptance, patience, loyalty, and respect. The adults believed that these values guided their practice, and encouraged students to accept their support.

Student-Professional Dyad Themes

Students and professionals alike described the student participants' school experiences as being characterized by explosive anger and physical altercations. Students described the instant anger that they experienced when they felt that an injustice had been done to them. The professionals perceived a cycle of frustration and impulsivity that triggered an intense emotional reaction, one that often resulted in physical altercations. Students spoke to the frequency of fighting at their home schools, describing situations where physical altercations were commonplace. Students and professionals appeared to have common perceptions of the antecedents for the students' behaviour. Environmental factors such as the presence of an audience, the context of a students' day, and the structure of the school itself seemed to significantly alter the students' behaviour. Outside of these influences, the triggers for these students appeared to both the professionals and the students themselves as having a random nature. Students were often confused as to why something had happened; they described getting into trouble at random times, and for unknown reasons. Professionals also struggled to conceptualize the specific antecedents for the student participants' behaviour. They surmised that any event that served to heighten the students' anxiety and frustration would act as a trigger for their intense emotional patterns; behaviours that spoke to the students' overwhelming need for survival. Students recognized their lack of internalized control, and their engrained reactions

when feeling anger or injustice. They perceived their behaviour to be a result of somebody else's actions, an unconsciously made decision. Professionals supported this belief, acknowledging the intensity of the students' emotions, and their seemingly constant 'flight or fight' mode.

There were also areas of differences between the perceptions of the students and the professionals. Professionals tended to focus on the needs of the students, whereas the students tended to recognize their strengths. Student self-perceptions described positive attributes such as being trustworthy, empathic, hopeful, and kind. Professionals held a more negative image. They perceived that students described themselves as troubled, misunderstood, anxious, and frustrated. The professionals viewed the students' thoughts and feelings through an abstract and internalized perspective. They associated the youths' feelings to the intangible aspects of their self-concepts. The students, on the other hand, based their self-descriptions on concrete experiences, and attributed their feelings and reactions to external sources of influence. The thoughts and feelings that built the stage for student behaviour were a source of difference between students and professionals, so too were the perceptions of the behaviour's consequences. Students consistently downplayed the severity of their actions. They spoke of getting away with doing things, not being suspended, and avoiding consequences. Professionals, on the other hand, recognized the seriousness of the student behaviours. They spoke to the several suspensions and office referrals that the youths had been given that school year. The students perceived staff as being supportive throughout their difficulties if they had a solid relationship with that person. Professionals similarly acknowledged the importance of professional virtues, yet they ultimately defined their role through specific actions and strategies, not through a strong interpersonal relationship.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 considered the study's database on several levels. Participant responses were studied in terms of student participants, professional participants, and dyad comparisons. From an analysis of these relationships emerged themes that richly described the participants' reality as experienced through their perspective. Commonalities were discovered across student and professional participants, giving insight into the perspectives of these two groups. The student-professional dyad themes furthered this understanding through exploring similarities and differences across the case studies. The findings supported the research study's purpose, and became the impetus for a discussion on how best to support the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural needs in the Saanich School District.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study kept, as its aim, a drive to understand the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent male participants designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs. Through personal interviews, observations, and case file reviews, the research findings completed a picture of the boys' perceptions of their thoughts and feelings, school experiences, and understanding of professional roles. These rich descriptions were framed within the context of the professionals' perceptions of these same factors, creating a basis for cross-case comparison and analysis. In order to fully appreciate the relevance of these research findings, this chapter returns to the research questions and connects its results to current literature. The researcher concluded her study through identifying its strengths and limitations; reflecting on ethical propositions; exploring implications for counselling, policy, and research; and suggesting possible directions for future research.

Research Findings

The central research questions for this study were: (1) How did adolescent males designated with moderate and intense behavioural needs experience their social interactions at school and express their social and behavioural self-concept?, and (2) How did professionals supporting these students understand social interactions and perceive their social and behavioural self-concept? The student and professional themes that emerged from the data shed light onto these principle questions. Student participants' self-representations reflected compartmentalized and multiple selves, significant academic challenges, and negative perceptions of others' views. Their social interactions were coloured by anger, frustration, and an acute sense of justice; behaviours that appeared deeply rooted in an intrinsic need for survival. Successful professional

interventions seemed dependent upon the strength of the dyad's therapeutic relationship, and upon the demonstration of professional virtues. Through these emergent themes, this study carried forward a critical appreciation for student participants' thoughts and feelings, social interactions at school, and understanding of professional roles.

Thoughts and Feelings

The research findings show student participants' thoughts and feelings as being represented by compartmentalized and multiple selves, impacted by other's consistently negative perceptions, and entwined with significant academic challenges and disabilities. Although professionals consistently held a negative view of how students would express their social and behavioural self-concept, students voiced a more dichotomized self-perception. While recognizing themselves as a troublemaker in other's eyes, students concurrently endorsed self-descriptions of traits such as kindness and trustworthiness. Their most frequent emotions represented polarities of feeling frightened and ecstatic, happy and overwhelmed, or confused and confident. The existence of these opposites supports Harter (1999) and Byrne and Shavelson's (1996) notion of an adolescent's compartmentalized self-concept. As Harter hypothesized, the students in this study demonstrated their incongruent generalizations of self-attributes across different contexts and experiences. Cognitive development during early adolescence allows for increased differentiation of self-attributes. Without a coherent organization, however, these self-representations become extremely unrealistic and bound to a particular social context.

Literature on the socialization of adolescent self-concepts speaks to the formation of youths' private and public selves through an active and relational socialization process (Chu, 2004; Fine, 2004; Harter 1999; Newman et al., 2007). Findings from this research similarly

described a discrepancy between how others saw the youth, and how they saw themselves. Through socialization, male adolescents in this study experienced the negative opinions that they, and their supporting professionals, perceived others held towards them. These negative reflections became the social mirror in which students began to define themselves. Harter (1999) notes the impact that perceived negative self-evaluations have on adolescents' developing self-concepts. Faulty self-images become internalized and ultimately define youths' sense of self as unworthy and incompetent.

Despite these negative reflections, students in this study expressed a connection to their home school and identification with the role of a student. Although adults believed that youth would respond negatively to school-based questions, the student participants actually voiced a desire to be back at their home school and associated this wish with feelings of fun and happiness. Research identifies this type of school engagement as being strongly and negatively correlated to lower health compromising behaviours (Carter et al., 2007) and mental health symptoms (Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006). Maximizing the extent to which students feel accepted, valued, respected, and included is vital in mitigating behavioural concerns. Shochet et al. found that the level of school connectedness not only indicated current struggles with depression, anxiety, and general functioning, but with males it also predicted future concerns with depressive symptoms and general functioning.

Academic ability holds a similar predictive value. Students in this research study had concurrent designations of behaviour needs and learning disabilities. Thoughts and feelings concerning academic challenges prevailed throughout student and professional interviews. Adults in particular strongly linked academic struggles to the cycles of frustration and anger that they witnessed in student participants. These findings supported research claiming a connection

between adolescents' perception of academic abilities and anti-social behaviours (Pisecco, Wristers, Swank, Silva, & Baker, 2001). Pisecco et al.'s longitudinal study followed a cohort of children from birth through to early adulthood. Assessments every three years found that a low self-perception of academic ability at 9 and 11 years strongly predicted disruptive behaviour at 13 years. An early presence of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), combined with a low academic ability, significantly predicted the manifestation of later anti-social behaviour during early adolescence.

Learning disability research seems to particularly point to language difficulties as a predictor of behaviour problems (O'Brien, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Shelley-Tremblay, 2007; Willinger et al., 2003). In an assessment of 101 adolescent males in an alternate sentencing residential program, O'Brien et al. found that 34% of sentenced youth had reading problems, and an additional 10% had reading and attention problems. Adolescents that fell within the reading and attention difficulties groups demonstrated significantly more symptoms of depression and less positive self-representations than youth without learning difficulties. Willinger et al. compared concerning behaviour problems for 94 children with and without language developmental difficulties. They found that 34% of children with language difficulties portrayed clinical behaviour problems, in comparison to 6% of the control group. Willinger et al. link their finding to a neurodevelopmental immaturity that impairs expressive or receptive language development and challenges children's ability to express themselves and comprehend language-based interactions. This study's adolescent participants, a student sampling from the Alternate Learning Program in the Saanich School District, had designations for behaviour and learning needs; in addition, they each had a diagnosis of ADHD. The significance of issues surrounding student participants' thoughts and feelings are strongly anchored in current literature.

School Experiences

The student and professional participants depicted male adolescents' school experiences as social interactions that were aggressively driven through anger, frustration, and retaliation towards an end that seemed controlled only by participants' innate sense of survival. Students and professionals described intense verbal and physical altercations that quickly escalated beyond the participants' control. Professionals saw these patterns as deeply engrained emotional responses whereas participants believed the behaviours were a result of somebody else's actions. The aggression described by these research participants supports findings from recent literature on adolescent aggression. Research shows boys' aggressive behaviour as influenced by individual traits and dyadic experiences (Hubbard, Dodge, Cillessen, Coie, & Schwartz, 2001). Hubbard et al. videotaped small groups of boys during unstructured free play, in each group one pairing of boys was known to display aggressive behaviour. Through these observations, researchers surmised that preexisting tendencies towards aggressive acts was significantly influenced by the nature of dyadic relationships. Research findings showed that this reactive aggression seemed triggered by person-specific interpretations of behavior (e.g. one child interprets a peer's behaviour as hostile) that were either slowly built through repeated encounters, or quickly established during critical episodes.

Empirical literature identifies aggression's two underlying dimensions: reactive aggression and instrumental (sometimes called proactive) aggression (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2001; Little, Jones, Henrich, & Hawley, 2003; Vitaro, Brendgen, & Tremblay, 2002). Little et al. define reactive aggression as an angry response to provocation or frustration, and instrumental aggression as deliberate and self-serving acts. In their study on social information processing during early adolescence, Crick and Dodge (1996) described reactive-

aggressive youth as attributing hostile intent to their peers' actions. Their perception, whether accurate or not, was predictive of retaliatory aggressive responses and future aggressive behaviour. Biased social-information processing became a cyclical pattern and a self-fulfilling prophecy. Little et al. extended this research to examine aggression's typology and measurement through studying self-reports given by 1723 adolescents in Berlin, Germany. Their results built on the notion of reactive and instrumental aggression, directing attention towards two additional descriptors: overt and relational aggression. Overt aggression is direct verbal and physical behaviours that have intent to do harm. Relational aggression, on the other hand, is behaviour designed to damage friendships or cause exclusion. Little et al. found that overt and relational aggressions were markedly different patterns of relating, yet the two dimensions overlapped. Instrumental and reactive aggression, however, remained distinct and separate subtypes.

Student participants at the Alternate Learning Program fit into Little et al. (2003) and Crick and Dodge's (1996) description of reactive aggression, typically displaying their anger in an overt fashion; direct, observable, and physical. Student and professional participants described the youths' aggression as accompanied by extreme anger; that is, the boys blindly struck out without any consideration for their action's consequences. Overt and reactively aggressive youth, such as those in this study, are shown in the literature to have a low threshold for reacting to disturbing and distracting stimuli. These students are more likely to have a history of abuse from parents and peers, and tend to frequently demonstrate significant emotional regulation problems (Vitaro et al., 2002). Contrary to this study's connection between reactive aggression and delinquent behaviour, Vitaro et al. found that proactive aggression was a stronger predictor of overt adolescent delinquency. They surmised that proactive youth tended to have friends in a similar peer group, and that it was through group behaviour that greater delinquency occurred.

Although proactive aggression was a stronger predictor of delinquent behaviour, Vitaro et al. (2002) found that youth demonstrating reactive aggression tended to display greater problems with emotional regulation. Silk, Steinberg, & Morris (2003) define emotional regulation as the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions. They explored the connection between depressive symptoms and problem behaviour with the intensity and unpredictability of emotions. Through an experience sampling method, Silk et al. monitored the emotional regulation of 152 adolescents. Their results indicated that a greater intensity of anger and sadness related to more significant depressive symptoms and problem behaviours. High levels of sadness and anger were maintained through counter-effective strategies such as escape, avoidance, and denial. Youths who struggled with emotional regulation were found to be more vulnerable to internalized and externalized behaviour difficulties.

Professional Roles

Critical to the understanding of students' experiences at school, particularly those designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs, was an exploration of the professionals' roles. This study's findings directed attention towards the primary strength of relationship-based interventions, and the guiding practice of professional virtues. Students were able to identify at least one adult in their home school that was supportive, yet they had difficulty articulating the reasoning behind their choice. For these three student participants, the answer was simple: they liked them. Through this affirmation, students supported a focus on professional virtues; a reflection on "Who shall I be?" guiding the principle ethics of "What shall I do?" (Jordan & Meara, 1990). The strength of these dyad relationships was key to the students' acceptance of help, and their willingness to engage in counselling or learning interventions. This research finding supports various studies that speak to the power of the therapeutic relationship (Baker,

Grant, & Murlock, 2008; Hanna, Hanna, & Keys, 1999; Martin, Romas, Medford, Leffert, & Hatcher, 2006; Rubenstein, 1996; Shirk & Karver, 2003).

Adolescence is a time when youth are searching for increased autonomy from adults; they are beginning to define themselves as separate and unique individuals. Cognitively, adolescents have compartmentalized thinking and tend to not recognize incongruence in their behaviour. These developmental attributes can challenge the formation of an alliance with a counselling professional (Shirk & Karver, 2003). In their review of studies examining an association between therapeutic relationships and treatment outcomes, Shirk and Karver concluded that a relationship was modestly associated with outcome on a consistent basis across types of treatment and levels of development. In their estimation, formation of a relationship with children displaying externalized behaviours was challenging to maintain as students struggled against authority. Baker et al. (2008) examined the degree of closeness and conflict in relationships between teachers and students with externalized or internalized behaviours. Their results similarly supported the notion that the quality of the teacher-student relationship predicted successful school adjustment. Students demonstrating externalized behaviours were negatively associated with school adaptations; the only moderating effects were closeness with teachers and significantly better reading scores. The interpersonal context of a relationship supported the youths' academic achievement and emotional security. Through strong therapeutic relationships, professionals are able to influence change across diverse contexts and interventions.

Professionals in this study recognized the student participants at ALP as needing specific interventions delivered in a manner that demonstrated respect and value. Martin et al. (2006) asked a non-clinical sample of adolescents to rank the most important traits that foster alliance between a student and an adult. Their investigation concluded that the three most important

qualities were respect, time shared, and openness. Rather than perceiving what may be important to a client, Martin et al. espouse that counsellors must hear the adolescents' voices, and respect what is important to them when they are seeking help. Reaching, accepting, and relating with these at-risk youth become pivotal points that determine successful counselling relationships (Rubenstein, 1996). Professionals need to view adolescence as a unique culture and move beyond the boundaries constructed by students' egocentric thinking. They should accept youth unconditionally, and understand their developmental need for freedom and autonomy. As Hanna et al. (1999) articulated, without relationship, adolescents view counselling techniques as a "threat to their integrity, and just another covert or overt adult attempt at manipulation" (p. 396).

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

This study offers important contributions to the understanding of student and professional perceptions regarding the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural needs. This case study gave voice to an at-risk population that is often devalued in our school systems. Previous research critically unpacks adolescents' social and behavioural self-concepts, yet it does so from the standpoint of the general youth population, not those challenged by moderate or intense behavioural needs. This study respectfully represented the experiences and self-perceptions of these students within their school culture. In addition to presenting the student perspective, this study included the alternate perspective of professionals. Areas of commonality and difference between student and professional dyads point to new insights on adolescents' thoughts and feelings, school social interactions, and understanding for the professional's role. For counsellors working within the school system, implications gleaned from this data form a thoughtful basis for continued professional awareness. Through these

meaningful contemplations, professionals may enrich their counselling practice, and work towards opening their perceptions to include those of their most vulnerable clients.

In addition to its significance within current literature and research, this study followed sound methodological procedures. The chain of evidence and case study database demonstrate its completeness. Critical pieces of the research were fully considered, and relevant evidence was presented for readers to evaluate and form conclusions. A new school year meant that it was not possible, nor ethical, to revisit data with student participants. Professionals, however, were given an opportunity to reflect on the data and address possible bias in the researcher's interpretations. The researcher disseminated information through personal feedback at professional meetings, and through providing each adult participant with a summary of the data's findings. These methods communicated information in a way that was useful and responsive to their needs.

Professional participants related to the study's findings and confirmed their value for the power of the therapeutic relationship. They expressed surprise at the adolescents' focus on personal strengths, and the professionals' focus on needs. Meg pondered:

What a terrible thing if we only see their needs and not their strengths! What can we do to change our thinking and practice so we are working from a platform of their strengths? Or is it that we don't talk about their strengths as much because we need to develop their weaknesses in order for them to move forward?

Questions such as these marks the strength of this research as professionals reflect on their personal practice, draw their own conclusions, and become active in their search to better support students designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs.

Limitations

A few limitations of the present study need to be considered when reviewing its findings and implications. First, results from participant interviews and observations may have been impacted by the time of year that the data was collected. These sessions occurred at the end of June; the weather was warm, transition to high school and end of the year activities was well underway, and the staff was completing final reporting period evaluations. Stress, excitement, and exhaustion may have influenced dynamics and altered perceptions of both the students and the professionals. ALP's demographics at the time of the research limited the possible participant pool to three students. Although these cases gave sufficient data to elicit themes and draw conclusions, additional participants would have added further detail and depth to the findings. The time of year and the structure of ALP as a short-term program also meant that it was not possible to revisit students for member checking. Students had transitioned to their home school, high school, and in one case, to a homebound program.

Second, the data from this study needs to be considered through a contextual and developmental lens. Mitigating influences from factors such as family dynamics, prescribed medication, physical well-being, and community issues significantly impact student behaviour. A student's world extends far beyond the institution of school, each element critical in its impact on another. This researcher acknowledges the role that external forces play in shaping adolescent self-concepts. While maintaining a focus on the school context, students' self-perceptions were accepted as the reality that they experienced on a daily basis, regardless of underlying factors that may determine the nature of these experiences. Of further consideration are the natural boundaries characterized by cognitive development in early adolescence. Youths are just beginning to recognize their traits in abstract terms, and struggle to paint accurate self-portraits.

Students will naturally be more concrete, externalized, and compartmentalized than their adult counterparts. Although not a weakness to the study, people examining this research must do so cognizant of the students' developmental and contextual influences.

The final limitation to this study is inherent within the dynamics of gender relationships; the researcher is female, as were two of the adult participants, and the student participants were male. The implications of working in a female-to-male versus male-to-male therapeutic relationship, and as an extension, a research interview, are touched upon in empirical literature. Esters (2001) surveyed 66 students in a public charter school with a mandate to serve students at-risk for dropping out. When given a choice, most students preferred counsellors with similar backgrounds. They desired professionals that communicated the same attributes and values, maintained a similar background and socio-economic status, and were of the same gender.

From a professional perspective, Okamoto & Chesney-Lind (2000) surveyed 248 practitioners about the frequency of fears in their work. The professionals' scores were correlated to the counsellors' percent of male clients. When working with males, male therapists feared physical harm, and female therapists feared damage to their reputation. Within the middle school setting, cross-gendered counselling relationships are common. Rayle (2005) interviewed 22 practicing middle school counsellors about these interactions. Both female and male counsellors described same-gendered alliances as being less challenging than cross-gendered relationships. Throughout their interviews, practicing counsellors spoke of their cultural awareness and competency in handling the potential differences in which male and female students interact. Their cautions have critical considerations for this current study. In cross-gendered counselling relationships, males were often found to be more reserved and to share less personal thoughts (Rayle, 2005). In order to counter the influence of gender dynamics on this study's results, the

researcher modeled genuine and honest communication, remained cognizant of her personally biased perceptions, and attempted to build rapport outside of the interview setting through connecting with students during shared experiences and participant-observations.

Ethical Reflections

Ethical considerations remained as a touchstone throughout this research study. Student participants were vulnerable youth, and considerable care was taken to ensure their stories were honoured with respect and confidentiality. The adolescents were reminded of their right to withdraw consent, and counsellors were on site at ALP during and after scheduled interviews. Student perspectives were expressed through the use of pseudonyms, and identifying information was excluded from the final research report. Professional participants were paired in dyads with student participants, each professional reflecting on their understanding of that adolescent, a youth with whom they held a professional relationship. This connection was explained to all participants, and although the researcher communicated a thorough understanding of this research structure, the students' appreciation for its possible implications was unknown. To this end, the researcher maintained a conscientious and reflective stance throughout the process of inquiry, minimizing possible risks to participants' social or emotional comfort.

This researcher demonstrated her reflexivity throughout the research process. Journaling and field notes documented her immediate reactions, a practice that highlighted beliefs or thoughts that may ultimately have impacted on the study's conclusions. Data collection was meticulously gathered through an objective lens, recording information directly as it was stated or observed. Subjective notions were also recorded to assist the researcher in her attempts to remain impartial and respectful to the participants' perspectives. Breaks were scheduled between participant interviews in order to allow the researcher time to process information and prepare to

objectively and fully engage with the next individual. Professional interviews occurred after student interviews were complete, encouraging a clear and unbiased capturing of the students' realities. The data analysis process was structured, organized, and transparent. Readers viewed information and drew their own conclusions as to the nature of the researcher's interpretations.

As noted in the discussion on research limitations, the nature of this study did not allow the researcher to revisit students for member checking. A significant amount of time had elapsed between the original data collection and the conclusion of the data reporting. The new school year found students in different places in their lives, both physically and emotionally. It was the researcher's determination that revisiting students at this time presented ethical challenges that offset any gained insight. Professional participants, however, were able to give their feedback regarding the researcher's findings. In order to account for this possible imbalance between students and professionals, the researcher forwarded only summary sections of the data collection and analysis chapters. Through limiting the detail of information shared with professional participants, the researcher attempted to protect the vulnerable youth who were unable to respond to a professional's close examination of their dyad relationship.

Implications for Counselling, Policy, and Research

Case study methodology cautions against generalizing the study's findings from this particular population to other adolescents designated with behaviour needs. Rather, it is hoped that the insights gleaned from this exploration will welcome people into the experience of a particular group of at-risk adolescents, and serve as a foundation from which readers may draw their own conclusions and determine the transferability of this study's findings to their own context. A focus on the areas of commonality and difference found within participant perspectives directs the readers' attention towards three critical implications for counselling,

policy, and research: the comorbidity of anxiety and depression, a focus on strength-based counselling and resilience, and the need to bridge experiences at ALP to those at home schools.

Anxiety and Depression

Throughout this research, a recurrent theme emerged from the data regarding student aggression. Students and professionals alike described the adolescent participants' intense and all-consuming anger that quickly escalated into verbal and physical reactive-aggression. Counsellors working with this at-risk adolescent population must appreciate the relationship between reactive-aggression and comorbid mental health diagnoses. Marsee, Weems, and Taylor (2008) examined the association between aggression and anxiety in youth. Using hierarchical regression analyses of students' self-reported surveys, Marsee et al. found that reactive relational aggression was a significant predictor of anxiety, particularly for males. The same connection was not found for overt reactive aggression. The male adolescents interviewed at ALP tended to describe their school experiences in terms of overt behaviours, however, as Little et al. (2003) noted, overt and relational aggression typology overlap within youths' behaviour. This finding suggests a need for counsellors who support these students to fully consider the youths' behaviours in terms of both overt and relational aggression. Overt and relational behaviours may manifest according to which means of aggression are available and effective in a given situation (Little et al.) Reactively aggressive students at ALP may use relational aggression when they feel victimized, and resort to overt aggression when answering a need for control.

Research literature shows a hierarchical and developmental relationship between disorders associated with behaviour difficulties (Burke, Loeber, Lahey, & Rathouz, 2005). Burke et al. found that ADHD in a sampling of adolescents with disruptive behaviour held a predictive relationship to Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). The negative temperamental symptoms

that define ODD are pivotal to the future development of either anxiety disorders or conduct disorders. Anxiety disorders are clearly linked to future depressive symptoms and conduct disorders to psychosocial impairments, struggles which also precede depression. Each student in the ALP sample population was diagnosed with ADHD, and each student experienced serious behaviour problems. Understanding the developmental transitions between mental health disorders is important for counsellors supporting these youth. Focussing early interventions for symptoms of ODD or conduct disorders must be sensitive to comorbid symptoms of anxiety and depression. The high prevalence of comorbidity between behaviour problems and symptoms of anxiety and depression put these adolescents at a high risk for future mental health concerns, and greater social or familial dysfunction (Greene et al., 2002; Wolff & Ollendick, 2006).

Strength-based Counselling and Resilience

Student participants in this study recognized the negative perceptions that adults and peers held regarding their social-emotional and behavioural self-concept. Students and professionals described peers and adults as believing the youths were troublemakers and “bad.” The adolescents, however, maintained a self-perception that represented their most positive strengths. During their interviews, adolescent participants eagerly recanted examples and stories that affirmed their ability to be trustworthy, empathic, and kind. Their compartmentalized self-representations were not influenced by the negative feedback reflected by peers and teachers. Honouring the students’ perceived strengths shifts the counselling focus from needs-based interventions to strengths-based advocacy. Counsellors are better able to reach students through relating to their perceived self-attributes, and accepting their reality as the starting place for a therapeutic relationship. Youths identified supportive people as adults and peers with whom they

had formed an alliance. A therapeutic relationship that is respectful of the youths' perspective and built on common understandings is the crux for any successful counselling initiative.

Students designated with intense or moderate behaviour needs are constantly facing a barrage of negative reactions from those around them. The implication for counsellors working with this population is to mediate these detrimental encounters through exploring all sides to an experience. Research literature reviews the notion of positive psychology, an approach based on positive emotions, characteristics, and values (Beaver, 2008). Beaver espouses a need for counsellors to emphasize psychological well-being through promoting positive emotion and increased resilience rather than focussing on the absence of symptoms.

Resiliency refers to the capacity of individuals to do well despite their constant exposure to risk and adversity (Gilligan, 2000). Authors promoting resiliency encourage professionals to make a paradigm shift from exploring the complexity of risks that face adolescents, to understanding the nature of protective qualities that shelter some high-risk youth (Dearden, 2004; Gilligan, 2000; Kidd & Davidson, 2007; Morrison, Brown, D'Incau, Larson O'Farrell, & Furlong, 2006). Fostering this resiliency builds the skills, capabilities, and assets needed for youth to cope with challenges outside of their control (i.e. poverty, trauma). Krovetz (1999) presents four key attributes that stand as protective factors for many students: social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of future and purpose. These characteristics frame an understanding of resiliency that considers youths' developmental qualities and respects their interpersonal and contextual experiences.

School experiences have the potential to influence youths' sense of belonging, self-worth, and self-determination. A caring environment, positive expectations, and active engagement become the pillars for building resiliency within the school context. Krovetz (1999) encourages

counsellors to ensure that “each student is known by adults, is supported to achieve at a high level, and is aware that she or he is a valued member of the school community” (p. 123). Healthy relationships and secure attachments give students the psychological and social value that increases achievement and emotional well-being. Positive successes in any endeavor counter the struggles and failures in others. Through engaging with school and being actively involved in their own planning process, students develop coping skills that give them hope for the future and a clear sense of purpose. To meet this end, service delivery needs to be positive, ecological, and proactive in its practice. Domains representative of resiliency attributes need to be included in formalized assessments and reports (Morrison et al., 2006). Assessing risks, and their protective factors, creates a profile that recognizes the youths’ resilience and potential, an understanding that works towards minimizing risks while capitalizing on strengths.

Smith (2006) proposed a strength-based model for counselling at-risk youth. She defines her theoretical perspective as a new paradigm of thinking in counselling psychology. Smith encourages counsellors to develop a new language that incorporates the strengths and positive qualities that often remain unrecognized and unacknowledged. She believes that reframing the youths’ behaviours allows professionals to move from only seeing the risk and issues of an at-risk population to seeing their innate resilience and strength. Smith’s propositions present counsellors with a framework from which to create therapeutic relationships and approach counselling interventions. This current study’s findings suggest that a form of strength-based counselling is both developmentally and contextually appropriate for increasing the resilience of students designated with behavioural needs.

Bridging ALP to Home Schools

Despite feeling a connection to their home school, student participants in this study experienced less verbal or physical altercations, greater academic success, and more positive feelings when they attended ALP. Students attributed this difference to ALP's high ratio of adults to students, and to its unique environmental factors. Students were held to expectations, given opportunities to solve problems, and provided with academic strategies and support. The relationships that they formed with staff were based on feelings of respect and caring, as evidenced by all students claiming they would seek any adult at ALP when in need of support.

In addition to the foundation of strong relationships, environmental structures at ALP set a different stage for experiencing student behaviour. The building itself was a single portable, drastically different than the large and often hectic middle school building. The educational program focused on enhancing the students' well-being, and on individualizing their academic expectations. Whereas lunch breaks at students' home schools most often involved the whole student population in relatively unstructured activities, lunch breaks at ALP were with a small group that was directly supervised by adults who were engaged in the students' activity. These environmental structures guided opportunities for success and limited students' concerning behavioural and emotional reactions.

These considerations did not appear to be in place for students at their home school. In this setting, student participants reflected on being confused as to why they were in trouble, overwhelmed with academic expectations, and frustrated by their frequently intense and negative experiences. The week before this study's student interviews, one of the adolescent participants had reintegrated into his home school. Within that first week, he was in an intense physical altercation that brought him back to ALP. Counsellors and decision makers within the school

system must look carefully at the policy and procedures concerning appropriate bridging of services between ALP and home schools. Adolescents in this study clearly communicated a difference in how they perceived their behavioural and social-emotional self-concepts at ALP, and at their home school. In order for change and growth at ALP to be successfully mirrored at the students' home schools, professionals must reflect on ways in which the school environment impacts on these adolescents' well-being and promotes a positive reintegration experience.

Current research literature offers helping professionals insights into common roadblocks that inhibit the inclusion of students with emotional and behavioural needs within a regular school environment. Studies report obstacles such as teachers' perceived inability to work with this population, students' need for specialized services, and a systemic focus on student needs that diverts attention from institutional change (Heath et al., 2006; Slee, 2001; Swinson, Woof, & Melling, 2003; Thomas & Glenny, 2000). Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip, and Watson (2006) contributed to this discussion through their review of a Scottish qualitative study examining the connection between mental well-being and student behaviour. Spratt et al. suggest that student designations imply that the difficulty and need for change are located within the child, rather than the system. Professionals in Spratt et al.'s study reported feeling tension when balancing an individualized program against the structures and expectations of a typical school. Specialists within the school perceived an agenda from others to "fix" the youth, their expert involvement leaving the classroom teacher feeling that the students' needs were being met elsewhere. To minimize these challenges, Spratt et al. promote an engagement with the proactive approach of ownership by the entirety of the school community. They encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills by interagencies and give an interesting perspective for professionals to consider:

By viewing other professional groups not simply as trouble-shooters, but as a source of advice, consultation, and professional development, schools could learn to take ownership of the mental well-being of the school population, working in partnership with, rather than parallel to other agencies (Spratt et al., 2006, p. 20).

This message holds an implication for schools to consciously embrace the potential wealth of working in partnership with community agencies and educational services such as ALP.

Future Research

Future research should continue to explore a critical understanding of the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural needs. In order to build upon this study's findings, the author would suggest two possible variations to its methodology. First, similar studies could be conducted with non-designated students, creating a platform from which to compare the perceptions of adolescents with and without identified emotional or behavioural needs. This type of exploration would differentiate between qualities and perceptions unique to students with behaviour challenges, and those typified by the majority of adolescents. Second, researchers are encouraged to broaden the study's school focus to incorporate a family perspective. Professional participants made reference to the influence of family dynamics on a student's ability to cope and manage his emotions. Although this study purposefully maintained a focus on school relationships, broadening the research scope to include the impact of family creates a further understanding for the students' experiences.

Findings from this research support the paradigm shift from a predominantly needs-based intervention to a model of strengths-based counselling. Although professionals in this study may have appreciated and recognized student strengths, interviews and official documents carried a critical theme of adolescents' needs and challenges. Smith (2006) offers a theoretical perspective

for strength-based counselling with at-risk youth. This model suggests a connection to positive psychology, prevention research, resiliency literature, and multicultural counselling. Future research would do well to examine Smith's propositions and explore implications of a strength-based approach for counselling youth designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs.

Final Summary

Adolescence is a critical time of discovery and change as youth begin to explore new risks and challenges. Along this path, adolescents experience social interactions and internalize personal messages that serve to shape their self-definition. For male adolescents designated with moderate or intense behavioural needs, the journey is fraught with challenges. This growing population is facing increased risks within our current society. Males are generally more likely to engage in high-risk activities, be involved in verbal or physical altercations, and die from violence, accidents, or suicide, yet they are less likely to seek professional help for personal problems (Powelson, 2004; Watts & Borders, 2005). Within British Columbian schools, 72% of behaviour designations are male students (BC Ministry of Education Analysis and Reporting Group, 2008), a similar rate of 66% characterizes the Saanich School District (H. Burkett, personal communication, April 15, 2008). The self-concept of these youths is repeatedly shown to be a central and mediating variable for future emotional well-being and academic achievement. This study responds to the indicators of crisis and serves as a foundation for furthering professionals' respectful understanding for the experiences of students designated with behavioural needs. A glimpse into their reality becomes a bridge between student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts, a necessary step towards effectively supporting these at-risk students.

This study hoped to foremost honour the voice of a population that was often pushed aside, and through this journey, highlight the significance of respecting and including student perspectives within professional practice. The methodology of a multiple interpretive case study met this goal as it provided a platform for students and professionals to speak to their perceptions and experiences. Student, professional, and dyadic themes emerged from the data, creating a rich and textured description of the reality experienced by these designated students. The adolescents received conflicting messages about how they were perceived; in many contexts they accepted the mask of a troublemaker, yet maintained a personal perspective of being kindhearted and trustworthy. Daily school experiences were taxed by the youths' escalating academic frustrations and challenges with emotional regulation. Social interactions typified reactive-aggression, an anger that was acted out in retaliation for a perceived injustice. Professionals tended to differentiate their support according to job definitions, yet students failed to see these arbitrary titles and differentiated their acceptance of support according to relationships. These findings are key to mediating some of the challenges facing youth designated with behavioural needs.

Professionals' interpretation of behaviour must reflect the perspectives of their adolescent clients. Expert interventions should not be in response to externalized behaviour that has been filtered and labeled solely through an adult's perspective. Student and counsellor perspectives are at times aligned, and at others following parallel paths that do not meet in common purpose or intent. The strength of a trusting relationship when working with at-risk youth indicates the imperative need for students to feel unconditionally respected and heard by supportive adults. Hearing the students' story, celebrating their hidden strengths, and honouring the reality that defines their world brings the therapeutic relationship to a place of common understanding, and sets the stage for future change and growth.

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Appendix A
 Observation Sheet

Observation Site: _____

Observation Date and Time: _____

Students involved in activity: _____

Professionals involved in activity: _____

Activity Description:

Observed Behaviours (extend chart as needed):

Time	Objective Description	Subjective Meaning/Interpretation

Reflections:

Appendix B

Table B1

Semi-Structured Interview Questions: Adolescent version

Interview Questions	Concept Addressed	Possible Prompts
<p>When you think about school, how would you finish these sentence starters? <i>A series of about 6 sentence starters will be presented to elicit thoughts and beliefs.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>At school, kids my age see me as... adults see me as..... I see myself as.....</i> 2. <i>I am happiest at school when...</i> 3. <i>The most stressful time at school is...</i> 4. <i>When I think about _____ school, the first thing that comes to mind is....</i> 5. <i>I like teachers who....</i> 6. <i>If I could change one thing that happens at school, it would be...</i> <p>There are a lot of different feeling pictures here, which are the 5 that you most often remember feeling at your home school? <i>Cartoon faces showing several different emotions will be presented to the youth.</i></p> <p>Put the pictures in order from the strongest or most often to the least. Tell me about when you would feel these emotions. <i>The faces are on individual tiles.</i></p> <p>Are these the same five that you feel at ALP? Rearrange the order if you like and tell me about when you'd feel these emotions.</p>	<p>Thoughts and feelings about school experiences.</p>	<p>Tell me a little more about that...</p> <p>Sounds like...</p> <p>I'm wondering about...</p> <p>Look at these faces, what do you notice? Have you ever felt like this one before? Which one most looks like how you feel right now? When do you remember feeling_____?</p>

Interview Questions (continued)	Concept Addressed	Possible Prompts
I'd like you to imagine that someone is making a movie and you are the star. As part of the movie, they videotape a typical day at school.	Description of school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour.	Tell me a little more about that... Sounds like... I'm wondering about...
If there was a still shot snapped when you were in trouble, what would the picture usually look like? Draw it or describe it with your words.		What would it look like~ what would you be doing?
<i>Blank paper will be provided for drawings, a "Y" chart will be provided for prompting written descriptions(looks like, sounds like, feels like).</i>		What would it sound like~ what might you be thinking? ~ what might you or others be saying?
What would probably have happened right before the photo? What would usually happen next?		What would it feel like~ how might you be feeling in the moment?
What other pictures would we often see?		
Describe for me how the pictures may look different at ALP. Which do you prefer?		
Put your name in the center of this blank page. Choose a colour to represent your home school, and one to represent ALP. Beginning with your home school, think of the people who help you in the school day. Place their names on the page to show how close they are to you; those that are most supportive could be closer, and others could be further away. Now do the same with the ALP colour.	Interpretation of the actions and roles of professionals.	Tell me a little more about that... Sounds like... I'm wondering about...
Tell me about what makes one person on your map closer, and another further away.		Is _____ somebody that spends a lot of time with you?
What does each person do at the school? What do they do to support you in having a good day or solving problems?		Do you enjoy working with this person?
Who do you go to at school if something is not going great with friends or teachers?		
What things make it easier to go to that person? What do they do to help you?		What kinds of things do they do to help?

Table B2

Semi-Structured Interview Questions: Professional version

Interview Questions	Concept Addressed	Possible Prompts
When asked to reflect on their school experiences, how do you perceive male students with behaviour designations would complete these sentence starters? The same series of sentence starters presented to the adolescents will be use here.	Thoughts and feelings about school experiences.	Tell me a little more about that... Sounds like... I'm wondering about...
In your experience and perception, what are the five most frequent or intense feelings that these students present throughout their school day?		Reflect on a particular male student, when was the last time you remember them being _____? What were some of the reasons for this?
Describe the situations that appear to typically bring these emotions forward.		
When reflecting on the students that you support, describe the kinds of struggles that students with behaviour designations have at school.	Description of school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour.	Tell me a little more about that... Sounds like... I'm wondering about...
Reflect on the male student participant that you support; what would a typical difficult situation look like for him?		If you had to group the struggles into categories, what would they be?
What are the frequent antecedents and consequences for this behaviour pattern?		What often seems to be the triggers for this behaviour?
How would you describe their actions and the manner in which they presented their thoughts and feelings?		What usually happens after the behaviour occurs?
What is your interpretation of their underlying needs and the motivating factors for this behaviour's continuation?		In your opinion, what keeps this pattern going?

Interview Questions (continued)	Concept Addressed	Possible Prompts
Who are the people that support these students at your home school?	Interpretation of the actions and roles of professionals.	Tell me a little more about that...
What defines their roles and responsibilities?		Sounds like... I'm wondering about...
How do you understand and describe your supportive role with these students (or this student)?		If somebody asked you to explain your job, how would you answer?
What types of interventions and strategies do you find to be most successful?		
In your experience, what characteristics or dynamics tend to encourage students to seek and/or accept support? Which ones may be roadblocks?		What stops a student from receiving effective support?

Appendix C

Letter of Information and Consent for Student Participants

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your son is invited to participate in a study entitled *Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs: Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts* that is being conducted by Monica Braniff.

I am a graduate student in the department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. You may contact me if you have further questions by email: mbraniff@uvic.ca or phone: 995-0450. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in Counselling. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Blythe Shepard. You may contact my supervisor at 721-7772.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the self-concept of adolescent males designated with behaviour, and through hearing their struggles and their thoughts, offer insight into effective means of support from counsellors and teachers. Through exploring both the students' experience and the perceptions of those professionals who support them, it is hoped that this research will highlight areas between the two that are common or different, and ultimately demonstrate the importance of respecting and including student perspectives within professional decisions and interventions.

Importance of Research

Research of this type is needed because it aims to deepen an understanding for the experience of male adolescents designated with behavioural needs in our local schools. Addressing behaviour only from a professional's viewpoint, without considering the students' beliefs, values, and goals, prevents a critical examination and understanding for why the behaviour is occurring. Until the adolescents' thoughts are heard and valued, professional interventions may be resisted and students may be ineffectively supported.

What is Involved

In the research report, I intend to reflect on student and professional responses and comments that I collect through individual interviews, document reviews, and observations. If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will include two 1 hour group observation periods in the natural school setting (during both structured-formalized classroom teaching-and unstructured-larger group free time-activities). Individual interviews will be scheduled at the Alternate Learning Program site for 45 minutes and audio recorded for analysis purposes. Permission will be sought to gain access to student files in order to review documents that may inform the background behind current interventions and behaviours.

What Data is Collected?

Observations will focus on observable verbal and nonverbal interactions between students, and between students and adults. The interactions will add depth and detail to participant descriptions of school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour.

District Documents such as Individual Education Plans, assessment reports, and school communications will add depth to participant descriptions, identify any areas of diagnosis, and give a window into professional perspectives and interventions.

Interview questions will explore student and professional perspectives on the self-concept of adolescent males designated with behavioural concerns. The data will first be analyzed individually, and then partnered to form a pair between a student and the professional that supports them.

Voluntary Participation

Your permission for your child's participation in the research must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that come from giving or withholding your permission. If permission is withdrawn during the study, no examples or notes regarding your child will be used in the written report. Rather than contacting me, you may contact the study's representative to express any concerns or withdraw your agreement to participate. In addition, at the conclusion of all data gathering, the study's representative will again contact participants to confirm their continued consent for participation. I have informed the principal of ALP, Mrs. Burkett, of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact Mrs. Burkett, my research supervisor Dr. Shepard, or the Office of Research Services at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

My interest in this research area stems from my professional experience as a Behaviour Support Teacher at North Saanich Middle School. As a teacher in the Saanich School District, there may be a perceived power-over relationship between myself and the students at the Alternate Learning Program.

Procedures to Minimize Concerns

It is my intention to minimize any concerns about conflicting roles and prevent this relationship from becoming a source of influence or coercion. In order to achieve this, students that have a teacher or counsellor relationship with the researcher will not be selected. This automatically includes all students from the researcher's home school. Using a third party to facilitate participant selection and monitor

concerns regarding ongoing consent will also separate the teacher-student relationship from decisions about participation and voluntary consent.

Confidentiality

In accordance with the University's standards for ethical research, student identities will be protected. In the research report, any examples of children's responses and comments will be anonymous, and pseudonyms for the children and the schools will be used. All observation notes, document reviews, and interview data will be kept secure in a locked cabinet at my house and destroyed after one year. No one other than me will have access to any information which includes the identity of the child.

Limits to Confidentiality

The nature and design of this study presents limits to student confidentiality. There are a reduced number of students attending the Alternate Program, presenting a reasonable risk that people reading the report may deduce the identity of a student. In addition, this research hopes to pair student and professional data in dyads representing student-counsellor relationships. In ideal situations, the student's own counsellor or support person will be interviewed, a situation that while a rich source of insights, may automatically limit the degree of confidentiality experienced by students.

Risks and Benefits

There are limited risks to your child associated with giving information to be used in my study. The interviews and observations occur during regular schools hours and focus on areas of social and emotional development that counsellors typically address at the Alternate Learning Program. It is possible that the conversations may trigger some emotional or social discomfort. To account for this, counsellors working out of the Alternate Learning Program will be available during and after scheduled interviews. As the researcher, I will carefully monitor participants, remind them of their right to withdraw consent, and, when necessary, ensure they are connected to their supports at the Alternate Program.

A potential benefit for your child is that they may become more aware of their social and behavioural self-concepts, key developmental understandings for increasing self-determination and psychological well-being. In addition, this study may also benefit my professional practice and provide other counsellors and teachers with insights into effectively supporting male youth designated with behaviour.

Compensation

A pizza lunch will be provided to the entire ALP class at the conclusion of this research as a thank you to the participants for sharing their time and their insights. All students, regardless of their participation level, will be invited to join in the lunch.

Sharing Results

A copy of the final written research report will be left at the Children's Development Center and the principal will be informed when it is available to be viewed by interested participants. Results from this study may also be shared with a university thesis committee and at meetings with other counsellors and teachers.

Contacts

I am available at your convenience to answer any questions you may have. I may be reached at North Saanich Middle School (656-1129), at home, (995-0450), or by e-mail mbraniff@uvic.ca. In addition to contacting myself or my supervisor, you may verify the ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns you might have by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria at (250) 472-4545.

Please discuss this letter with your child and determine whether he agrees to give consent. Your signatures below, yours and your child's, indicate that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have questions answered. Please return one copy of the signed consent form in the attached envelope directly to Mrs. Burkett and keep the other for your records. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Monica Braniff
MA Graduate Student
Counselling Psychology, University of Victoria

CONSENT FORM

(PLEASE KEEP ONE COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS AND RETURN ONE SIGNED COPY TO ALP)

This consent form is for participation in the study entitled *Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs: Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts*, conducted by Monica Braniff as a requirement for her Master of Arts degree in Counselling at the University of Victoria.

This form gives consent for the following understandings:

- ◇ The study entails one interview and two observations undertaken at the Alternate Learning Program site between the dates of April 1- June 30 2007.
- ◇ Individual students will not be identified in the reporting of the data, and all results will be made available for participants and parent-guardians to review.
- ◇ Consent may be withdrawn at any time in the research process, without consequence, and any related information will not be used.
- ◇ The results of this investigation are for the purpose of enhancing supports available to students designated with behavioural struggles, not for financial gain or commercial use.
- ◇ Signing this consent form acknowledges information contained in the attached letter which explains in greater detail the study's specifics.

PERMISSION – to be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Alternate Learning Program as soon as possible.

I have read the information letter and give my consent for the research study as described above during the 2006-07 school year.

Name of Student—please print clearly

Date

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent/Guardian

AUTHORIZATION TO SHARE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Student's Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
(Last) (First) (Month/Day/Year)

Before sharing confidential information with persons outside Saanich School District, Student Services requests that you complete the following:

I/We give permission to the following Saanich School District personnel:

- 1) Melanie Postle _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

as necessary, to (PLEASE CHECK)

release records and information about my child to the following individual(s) and/or organization(s), **(please be sure to provide an address to which the records are to be sent)**

and/or

request records and information from the following individual(s) and/or organization(s):

- 1) Monica Braniff _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Sharing of relevant confidential information may be undertaken for the purpose(s) of improving educational programming, helping to provide appropriate school and district-based services, better understanding your child's strengths and needs, coordinating school and community-based planning, and obtaining community-based services for your child.

I understand the reason for and nature of the confidential information to be shared.

Comments (optional):

Parent/Guardian Name(s) (please print **and** sign) * Date (month/day/year):

Witness (please print **and** sign) Date (month/day/year):

* Please note that authorization is valid for one calendar year.
 Please return to: Student Services, School District #63 (Saanich)
 2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2A5

Appendix D
Informed Consent for Professional Participants

[Your department letterhead]

Participant Consent Form

Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs:

Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs: Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts* that is being conducted by Monica Braniff.

Monica Braniff is a graduate student in the department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by email: mbraniff@uvic.ca or phone: 995-0450.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in Counselling. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Blythe Shepard. You may contact my supervisor at 721-7772.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the social and behavioural self-concept of adolescent males designated with behaviour, and through honouring their struggles and their stories, better the capacity for counselling professionals to effectively support these at-risk students. Through exploring the experience of male adolescents designated with behaviour and the perceptions of the professionals supporting them, it is hoped that this research will foremost honour the voice of a population that is often pushed aside in the education realm, and subsequently, through exploring themes of commonality and difference, highlight the importance of understanding and including student perspectives within professional decisions.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it strives to deepen an understanding for the experience of male adolescents designated with behavioural needs in our local schools; a population increasingly at risk in our society. Addressing behaviour solely from a professional's interpretation, and in isolation from youths' beliefs, values, and goals, negates a critical examination and understanding for its motivating purpose. Until the adolescents' voice is heard and wholly valued, professional interventions may meet with fierce resistance and disenchantment.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because as a counsellor, behaviour support teacher, alternate learning program teacher, or youth and family counsellor, you meet the purposive-sampling criteria. Student participants in this study are middle school male adolescents designated with behaviour

needs and attending the Alternate Learning Program in the Saanich School District. As a professional working with this population, your perspective on youth's social and behavioural self-concepts is imperative for demonstrating the commonalities and differences between a student's experience, and a professional's interpretation of that experience.

What is involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include one semi-structured interview of approximately 45 minutes in length. The interview will take place at a chosen site that works for both the researcher and the participant.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you in terms of time spent in interviews with the researcher.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include enhancing your understanding for how to best support at-risk adolescent males, particularly those with behaviour designations. From an institutional level, the Alternate Learning Program will be able to explore social and behavioural self-concepts of students when at their home school, and after interventions from the alternate setting. This information will enhance counselling practices through suggesting the need for planned intervention strategies to include student perspectives.

Compensation

As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be given a small gift certificate towards a local café near your home school. If you agree to participate in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used only if you give permission, otherwise it will not be used in any fashion.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as a colleague/colleague and teacher/student. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken. Students that have a real or perceived teacher or counsellor relationship with the researcher will not be selected. Counselling professionals will be approached, and decisions will rest with each individual without any repercussions for non-participation.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, names will be withheld from the data and results. If a situation arises in which others may ascertain the identity of a participant, consent will be sought before releasing any further data. Limits to anonymity and confidentiality occur if there is imminent reason to believe a child will be harmed, if the student is being abused in some form, and if the researcher is subpoenaed to testify in the court system.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring documents are stored in a locked and secure place.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: directly with participants, through a thesis committee, and as a presentation at a scholarly and/or collegial meetings.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of one year after its completion. Electronic data will be erased, and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher and her supervisor; please refer to the contact information at the beginning of this consent form. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix E

Request for Research: Saanich School District

The following is taken from the *Request for Research* form that the Saanich School District requires as application for a research proposal.

1. Title of research project:

Male Adolescents Designated with Moderate or Intense Behavioural Needs: Student and professional perceptions regarding social and behavioural self-concepts.

2. Brief description of research project:

As a middle school counselling professional, I witness adolescents' exploration and commitment to new directions. Although there are times of struggle, students accept risks and demonstrate resilience as they shape their emerging academic and social self-concepts. In looking more closely at the student population, I understand that this is not a shared experience for all youth. Some stand aside, confined by their struggles with emotional and behavioural difficulties. These students present behaviours in ways that mystify the professionals who support their growth. As a counsellor in the education system, this is the population that draws my attention and curiosity.

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the self-concept of adolescent males designated with behaviour, and through hearing their struggles and their stories, better the capacity for school counselling professionals to effectively support these students. Through exploring the experience of male adolescents designated with behaviour and the perceptions of the professionals supporting them, it is hoped that this research will highlight the importance of respecting and including student perspectives within professional decisions and interventions.

Qualitative case study research best reflects this study's research questions and purpose, satisfying its intent to create rich descriptions of student self-understandings and related professional perceptions. Rather than propose generalization from the study sample to the larger population, this study's aim is to bring the reader as close to the experience of another as possible. Participants selected for this multiple case study will be chosen through the use of purposive, criterion-based sampling.

Adolescent participants will be male, between the ages of 11 and 14, attending the Alternate Learning Program in the Saanich district, and currently designated as needing moderate or intense behavioural interventions. Accessing the Alternate Learning Program as a research site respects the diversity found within adolescent males' backgrounds, yet provides for a commonality of experience: the transition from their home school to a specialized alternate setting. Professionals who are active in this study will be working as counsellors, Behaviour Support teachers, Alternate Learning Program teachers, or Youth and Family Counsellors within the middle school populations. Ideally, professionals interviewed in this study will be supporting youth also involved in this research in order to best conduct independent and cross-case analysis. Sampling will select a minimum of two to three students and a minimum of two to three professionals in order to allow for an adequate replication of the study.

Collecting data will begin with observing the youth in their school environment, both during structured and unstructured activities. The observation periods will be over at least two sessions in order to account for temporal and situational dynamics. Individual interview times of approximately 45 minutes will be scheduled after these observations are complete. Interviews

will be conducted at the Alternate Learning Program, or at a place that is comfortable for both the participant and the researcher. Document analysis will occur once consent to share information has been received from parents and guardians. Information related to student behaviour and professional interventions will be perused with the intent to add depth and meaning to the descriptions of the individual cases. Data collection will continue until the stories are echoing a complete picture of reality as experienced by the participants.

3. Your project involves (check one or more boxes):

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Students – Grade levels 6-8 @ ALP | <input type="checkbox"/> | Principal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trustees |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | School District Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | | |

4. Involvement in your project by School District 63 employees, students and parents is optional:

- Yes No

Please indicate level of involvement required:

In the research report, I intend to reflect on students' responses and comments that I collect through two observations, one 45 minute individual interview, and with permission, school documents. Observation periods will occur in the natural school setting at the Alternate Learning Program during both structured and unstructured activities. Individual interviews will be scheduled for 45 minutes and audio recorded for analysis purposes. Professionals in the study will voluntarily participate in one semi-structured interview of approximately 45 minutes in length. The 45 minute interview will take place at their home school, or a chosen site that works for both the researcher and the participant.

5. The timeline of your actual involvement in our School District:
From April 1 2007 to June 30, 2007

6. Approximate date that SD #63 may look forward to receiving the results of your project:
September 2007

7. *University Human Subjects Approval Form attached:*

Yes No. Expected date of completion: March 2007

8. Please submit a copy of the entire package (including this cover sheet as the first page) to:

Leigh Glancie
District Executive Assistant
Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools
School District 63 (Saanich)
2125 Keating Cross Road

Saanichton, BC V8M 2A5 (phone: 652-7330)

Monica Braniff

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature

17 Newstead Cres. Victoria, BC V9B 6L4
Address including postal code

995-0450
Phone Number

North Saanich Middle School 656-2759
Fax Number

mbraniff@uvic.ca or monica_braniff@sd63.bc.ca
Email address

Appendix F

Observation Notes

June 21; 12:15-1:00 pm

Activity: lunch break, just finished the eating time and are heading to the break activities

Participants: 3 students, 3 educational assistants (EA)—one inside, two outside; Jason is absent

Playing basketball outside, 1 other boy & 2 educational assistants (male)

Kyle

Objective	Subjective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running, bouncing ball, singing (12:20) • Pushing student to check him, shoots & misses, partner missed “What was that Mr.--, you should have been there!” • Smiling, clapping (12:25) • Running, shoots wildly, falls back, running & grabbing at EA to get the ball, falls to ground “Oh, Sh...” ; said while laughing (12:30) • Playing, calling for the ball to be passed (12:35) • A student grabbed him, he responded back by smiling, hand on shoulder of st., pushing him (12:37) • Going for ball, rolling on the ground, leaping up onto another st’s shoulder “What was that?!” (12:40) • EA holding ball, he knocked it out of hand, ran after another st, chasing, laughing (12:45) • Lining up outside with the others for the washroom in the main building (12:50) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy; running, singing, playing • Physical—in checking, smiling, clapping • Interacting with staff while playing • Very engaged • Swearing—naturally—while laughing & playing • Physical—grabbing EA to get ball, falling back, shooting wildly • Engaged, calling for ball • Physical—pushing back & forth with a student, smiling & laughing, enjoys it • Enjoys physical interaction & exertion of energy • Able to stop playing when adults stop & move into the line with the others

Student Interview Summary

Thoughts

	KYLE
Peer perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting, different • Smiles while saying this, thinks it is a good thing
Adult perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A prick” • “...because they all hate me.”, “I’m mean to them.”, “I swear at them.”, “...just because I want to.”, “...probably, I swear at them if they piss me off.”
Self perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Kind.”, “If kids don’t bring lunch then I share my lunch with them.”
Happiest at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m having fun.” • “Playing wall ball.” (his choice, physical activities)
Stressed at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Finds classroom work very easy at ALP, hard at home school
First thoughts re home school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My home school. That’s my school.” • The new school--know many details about the construction of the building and timelines
Teacher qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They do hands-on activities, building stuff and creating stuff.” • <i>Is that how you learn best then?...What’s the worst way?...</i>”Writing.”
Magic wand wish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALP: “Teachers don’t follow you around.” • Home school: “...and at my home school it would be put lunchtime back how it was.” (separated lunch times between east & west wings, doesn’t have lunch with his friends)

Feelings

	KYLE
@ home school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy, hopeful, confident, overwhelmed, confused • Happy—fun; hopeful—“I’m getting a good grade, I’m hopeful that I’ll get a good grade.”; confident—“That I’m doing well.”; overwhelmed—“because it’s big.”; confused—“I was confused because I just went back and it took a long time and I couldn’t sometimes remember where everything was.” • Speaks about teachers having a “conniption fit”, didn’t know why <i>so the confusing is going back to school and not just about where things are but a little bit about what the expectations are?</i> Mmhmm.
@ ALP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy, hopeful, confident, bored, exhausted • Happy: “I have fun.” • “Hopeful because I’m hopeful that I’ll go back to my home school.” • “Confident because I’m confident in doing well.” • “Bored because sometimes it’s boring.”--reading • “And exhausted because it’s so hot in the classroom.”

Description of school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour

	KYLE
Description of home school experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m back here because I popped a kid in the face...they spat chocolate milk on me and sprayed it on me. Ya.”, “And then I turned around, picked me up, and punched him in the face.” <i>Were you really angry when that happened?</i> “No, I was just a nice shirt. I wouldn’t give a crap if it wasn’t a nice shirt, but...” • It was suppose to be a joke, someone he knows & hangs out at times • Other kids were just watching, “nobody does anything at our school” • “It’s just that all my teachers are out to get me. They all hate me.” • “I don’t do anything. It’s stupid, like sometimes I like do something really small, and they have a conniption fit.” <i>Know it isn’t right to do, but doesn’t see it as a “bad” thing</i> • <i>Do you get frustrated when they get mad at you for little things?</i> “mmm...no, not really. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. Depends what mood I’m in.”
Typical antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instantly angry because it was a nice shirt; felt angry, pissed off • At lunch time, in eating area; back at school after attending ALP • <i>what happens before, what’s going on</i> “nothing...it’s just random facts.” • “...it’s not even worth getting into trouble for. Banging on a locker and I get into trouble for that. they have a conniption fit.” • “I’m never in my classroom” it’s usually in the hallways or outside • “no big things really happen.” <i>So your big things usually start with little things do they?</i> “mmhmm. They can never really catch me.” • <i>So it’s not because you’re angry at somebody or trying to get revenge or control or...</i> “no, just having fun.”
Typical consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What happened afterwards?</i> “I got sent home.” <i>Did the teachers step in?</i> “mmhmm.” • <i>Did you get a chance to talk about it or anything?</i> “uhuh” • “They have a conniption fit on me and send me to the principal’s office”; • “...I make up some dumbfounded excuse and I go back to class.” “You just agree with what he says...I’ve learned that. I agree with them.” Even if he doesn’t agree, then usually gets off • “Or I just get into a bigger argument...find a bunch of technicalities and screw them over.” • Laughs “...depends if I want to be somewhere.”, “If I don’t really have anything that I’m not really doing anything for, they, ya, party!” <i>you like arguing with them?</i> “mmhmm.” <i>Likes tripping them up, win arguments</i>
Difference with ALP experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Here you can’t do that, you just don’t punch somebody in the face.” <i>What’s different...</i> “hmm...Oh, you can’t exactly spray chocolate milk on anybody either because the teachers are 2 feet away from you.” • At home school “It’s just that they don’t get into...friends just fooling around, spray chocolate milk on me so...that pissed me off, so...I hit him.” • <i>Which would you rather</i> “No, I hate it here.” <i>You mentioned before it was about friends, is that the main reason why?</i> “mmhmm” • “It’s boring.” <i>So you like being able to do those things?</i> “ya.” <i>But you don’t necessarily like getting caught.</i> “I don’t get caught. That’s the thing.” <i>Well, sometimes you get caught with the little things.</i> “no, I don’t. No...I...well the little things, banging on the locker, stupid things like that, but like little things, like me and my friend dumped salsa all over the bench and they never caught us for that.” • It’s not so much you learn how to solve problems differently, but that they just don’t happen at ALP

Interpretation of the actions and roles of professionals

@ home school	KYLE
<p>More supportive people</p> <p>Why? What is their job? How do they support you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places 2 teachers & a friend close to him Grade 6 teacher & lunchtime teacher “He’s just not bad.”, “He doesn’t give a shit.” “all the other duties have like conniption fits when it snows and we have snowball fights, he like encourages us to have snowball fights.” “he’s awesome.” VP is closer in (more than middle), but not as close as friends <i>What does he do?</i> “He gives me jube-jubes everyday.”; principal is same as VP; asked re behaviour support teacher, “Oh ya, he’s ok, he’s...” “he’s nice, I like him” <i>all of these needed to be prompted</i>
<p>Less supportive people</p> <p>Why? What is their job?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I only like 3 teachers in my school.” “They are just nice to me and they don’t give a shit about anything.” “...they don’t send me to the office for the stupidest things, they don’t give a shit about anything.” Saying things like, “...who else do I hate.” A few teachers he has had.
<p>Who would you go to?</p> <p>What makes it easier to go to that person?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “people always say that if you show people respect, they’ll show you respect. Well, uh, ya. It actually works the other way too. If they show me respect, I’ll show them respect. So really it’s all screwed up. Really. If you look at it that way, everybody’s fucked, there’s no respect.” <i>Unless everybody just does it “ya...” but sometimes when you’re waiting for one person to start, it never starts, huh?</i> “exactly. Exactly, that’s why.” <i>So for you it’s easier to follow if someone else starts it.</i> “much easier for me”

@ ALP	KYLE
<p>More supportive people</p> <p>Why? What is their job? How do they support you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I like everyone here, they’re pretty ok, they’re pretty good.” <i>Everyone? Adults and everything?</i> “ya, I like everybody here.” “everybody is pretty cool.” <i>so what is different about how they call you on rules than at home school</i> “they’re nice”
<p>Less supportive people</p> <p>Why? What is their job?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nobody mentioned
<p>Who would you go to?</p> <p>What makes it easier to go to that person?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked who at ALP he would go to and say I need some help, he answered with a student’s name. When asked about an adult, he answered with the male EA’s name. “cause I like him, he’s nice.” “if I don’t like you, I’ll straight forward tell you that. I don’t have a problem telling people.” “people have problems speaking their mind, I don’t see why they have problems speaking their mind, I really don’t give a shit. If somebody pisses me off, I’ll tell them. They’re pissing me off. <i>Are you ever nice to them again after that?</i> “probably not”

*Professional Interview Summary***Thoughts**

	DAVE—KYLE
Peer perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “as a bad kid”
Adult perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “adults also see me as a bad kid, someone who gets into trouble a lot”
Self perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “someone who gets in trouble a lot and people don’t understand me. I’m always being sent to the office.”
Happiest at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m doing what I want to be doing. So usually it’s in PE, I’m happiest in PE and my fine arts and applied skills classes.”
Stressed at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the most stressful time at school is when the teacher is asking me to do something and I don’t want to do that then.” <i>Example given re transitioning between subjects.</i>
First thoughts re home school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[home school] is...is school. And I hate school.”
Teacher qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I like teachers who can be fair and let me do what I want to.”; “Maybe not total freedom, but if I want to go get a drink of water, or go to the bathroom, teachers will say no to me. But I want to go then.”
Magic wand wish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “my teacher”

Feelings

	DAVE—KYLE
5 most frequent or intense feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger, also “he just gets beyond anger, he just gets very enraged.” • Frustrated; “certainly very frustrated” • “you know, deep down I think there’s a loneliness aspect” • “mischievous, I don’t know, maybe” • “I’m thinking sad, I think there’s that side”
Situations that bring these forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think lonely in one sense...they give the appearance of having a lot of friends and a lot of people but I think those friendships are very fragile.” • Frustration: being asked to do work that they can’t do or feel they can’t do • Anger: brought about by the level of frustration • Rage: when teacher enforces expectation about work “then the rage comes out. And it blows up and the language starts then the office is involved and away we go.” • Sad: “I’ve seen it in quiet moments infrequently but the tears are there and they’re just really down and it’s true emotion that they keep well hidden a lot of the time, but I think they are sad, I think they want to be perceived like they are more like the other kids and they’re not, and I don’t know that they can help that.”

Description of school experiences and motivating factors for behaviour

DAVE—KYLE	
Struggles for behaviour designated students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “they have a great deal of difficulty shifting. So once they’re into that pattern, and ‘no you can’t make me, I’m not going to’ they find it very difficult...” • Whereas other students react, once removed from the audience, could talk and hear the message of “you know eventually you’re going to be up at the office. It’s going to happen, it’s either going to happen today or it’s going to happen tomorrow...” more what you’d expect • “I think the boys we’re talking about here, they cannot do that. they are so wrapped up into the emotion of the intensity of the moment and basically their mind won’t shift.” • “so they keep making their situation worse. Whereas the other boy I was just telling you about, he made the situation better.” • Keep getting engrained in the pattern and escalating it
Typical difficult situation for one student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle can get in trouble anywhere. He can be in trouble in the classroom...out on the yard...” • “I think most frequently what gets Kyle into trouble is probably the way he actually speaks to adults. I think it’s the most typical thing.” • “he digs himself in very quickly and it’s most frequently in conversation with adults. I mean, sometimes with students, he can be physical with students, but it’s with adults” • “one of the most worrisome things about him is that he’s not able to manage his behaviour, the rage.”
Typical antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “there’s lots of different triggers for Kyle.” • “a huge trigger for Kyle in particular is, “well, Kyle, you know what, I’m going to have to call home. And that’s like pushing this big red button and he hits the ceiling and the language comes out and that’s why he came across the desk of 2 VP’s in our school and resulted in ALP this time.” • Was moved in gr 5 to another school because of being physical with an adult
Typical consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad is called, sent home • “sometimes suspensions, sometimes, you know what, call it off, ‘let’s go home’ and get it done the next day. • On a reduced day when he is there, likely to continue into the Fall
Interpretation of their underlying needs and motivating factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s not a willful thing—let’s piss off these teachers off even more. Kids don’t do that, right. They cannot help it I think” • “I don’t know that they’re meeting needs. I think it’s like frustration is coming in and they can’t help it.” , “I think it is just a reaction to the moment, to the heat of the event. They can’t help it.” • “Kyle will be quite aggressive and very violent in his presentation even if it’s solely 1:1” others don’t

Interpretation of the actions and roles of professionals

	DAVE—KYLE
School support roles & responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor is very involved, no learning assistance support
Description of personal role with student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with him daily, “sometimes he doesn’t know that I’m checking in, I prefer that. I may come into the classroom and have a talk with the teacher, pass the teacher a piece of paper, or something that may or may not be important at that point in time, but I’m checking to see what’s happening with Kyle, same thing in the gym or recess time.” • “my role, I think anyway, is when they come to me, I’m a sounding board as well as an advocate for them. So I learn all sorts of interesting things about what they think about teachers, how mean and horrible teachers are, particularly to them.” • May offer teacher’s perspective, this isn’t as successful with Kyle • “I hear the story and do what I can to try and give the alternate point of view, but at least to listen.” “See me as a go-to person” • “they have a hard time understanding, if I were your teacher, you’d hate me too. The reason is because I would have different expectations, I would expect you to be polite to me all of the time because we’re in public, I’d expect you to do work, and all of those things that your teachers expect of you, I would be expecting of you. But fortunately we’re in a different role and we get to listen to the story and be separate.” • “also, I get to be more accepting because it is 1:1”
Types of successful interventions & strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being that sounding board, that listening person • Avoiding discipline; “you get to play the good cop quite a bit more frequently, but on the other hand, they know that I have a line, and it moves around maybe a little bit that line, but they can cross over it.” • Teaching them an understanding of diversity & tolerance—the bottom line moving around differently for some students, they recognize it & at first question it, but then begin to understand
Characteristics that encourage students to accept support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “willingness to listen to the story”, patience, “I’ll listen to them”, the ability to have conversations with them & deal with language etc., differently • Don’t feel as supported when they arrive at his room but still have to do work. They want to come to his room & not do anything, when they have to (or stay in over recess) they get frustrated • “looking for an out and they don’t get it. They do get it a lot of the time, they don’t get it all of the time.”

*Case File Summary***Kyle:****Birth date:** October 15 1994**Grade:** 7**Diagnosis:** ADHD**Medication:** Concerta**Designation:** Dec 7/00---R (moderate behaviour); Sept 22/06---H (intense behaviour)

- new achievement testing done @ CDC in 03
- reading & writing disability---May 04---Severe Learning Disability (SLD)
- 03/11/13 Intense Behaviour Intervention (IBI)---04/05/13---SLD

Schools attended:

May 1/01---CDC; spring of gr.1

Oct 22/01---partial integration from CDC to P--- [school 1]

Nov/03---re-referred to CDC

Feb 14/05---not to return to B—[school 2], moved to B—[school 3]

Intake Date: January 30---greater than 5 day for physical violence towards admin; previous 2 day in school suspension—“very defiant, disrespectful & verbally aggressive towards teacher”

- Currently seeing Tier III, behaviour support, counsellor
- Dave is case manager
- 10 incidents; final one---escalation with defiance & swearing; at office, sees counsellor, escalates swearing @ him, advised parents would be contacted---escalated---
- Kicking walls, boxes, chairs, flipped table, pushed down teacher, police called & escorted him out

Family Background:

- District review states supportive & caring parents

Community Supports: student review recommendations:

- District SW, to keep referrals active for Outreach with Saanich Mental Health, request for Ledger residential program, and involvement in Complex Developmental Behavioural Conditions Team @ QA; co-ordinate/facilitate community support through inter-agency meeting
- Parents to follow up with Saanich Police
- Seeing district psychologist
- YFC from QA
- Ledger: counsellors & psychiatrist
- Ministry of Child and Family involved through police after school incident

Descriptors:

- Tracking form
 - Works well with routine
 - Concerns re self-esteem, non-compliant
 - Noncompliant, rude, disrespectful, swears, can be aggressive; occurs in & out of class, at any time, regardless of adult presence
 - Escalates into inappropriate behaviour very quickly, aggressive to peers, defiant & unpredictable, not always able to learn in class (needs alternate setting)
 - Uncontrolled outbursts of anger

- IEP
 - Strengths: high average verbal IQ; math is a relative strength, loves to draw, enjoys hands-on; “uses verbal skills to try and engage others”
 - Concerns: decoding, writing, needs to develop a clearer understanding of areas of difficulty, to set goals, and build self-esteem by meeting his goals
 - Concerns: performance IQ low average, some difficulty with social interaction with peers, behaviour: noncompliance (defiant), disrespectful, managing emotions appropriately, tantrums
 - Concerns: can be physically aggressive, swears, social situation must be explained to him
 - Gr. 1: School Based Team “immature 6 year old”, some characteristics of ADHD, IBI designation, oppositional/disrespectful behaviour, unpredictable outbursts, can be unsafe, uncontrolled anger, difficulty in a group

- District Review
 - Unpredictable when in an angry state, doesn’t know boundaries
 - When angry demonstrates authoritarian & demanding stance
 - Physically aggressive & violent when angry

Academic level:

- Gr. 7---report card: C/C- across board; CAPP “A focus for the future is to make an effort to be more aware of exhibiting behaviour that reflects mutual respect to others”
- Gr. 6 report card: LA, Ma, Sc, PE, Home Ec---all B; CAPP—C; Performing Arts---C; Art---C+; Tech Ed---A “J is conscientious and does excellent work”
- Gr. 5
 - “For the most part, Kyle has been able to manage his behaviour appropriately. He is in a very controlled environment where the staff use strategies to enable Kyle to make appropriate choices.”
 - Mornings only at B-(2nd school); “due to major focus on behaviour challenges, learning needs adapted through a specialized program, visual & tactile learner”
 - “great deal of time, attention and expertise were required to prevent him from resorting to inappropriate language and behaviour”
 - IEP: behaviour concerns noted in Kyle; “displays of oppositional, defiant behaviour, unpredictable outbursts, and uncontrolled anger”
- Tracking form: high/average verbal IQ; low/average performance IQ

Reports:

- Psych-ed Jan 24/02
- ALP Intake
 - Social responsibility goal: to comply to requests in a positive manner
 - Behaviour goal: to communicate in a respectful, cooperative way
- IEP
 - Partial days, family counselling
 - “slower than peers to pick up on appropriate social nuances”
 - Transitions difficult
 - Other students may feel threatened by his acts
 - Removal to alternate setting helpful & required
 - Goals: manage & display emotions appropriately; work at being more cooperative more often, cooperate with requests from adults, recognize that actions have social consequences, recognize when he is “losing control”
- District Review
 - When not angry, and things are going his way, he demonstrates kindness, articulate thoughts, values relationships
 - Enjoys service type activities
 - Limited understanding & respect for the perspective of others
 - Focused on meeting his desires through a demanding, egocentric means
 - Difficulty following adult directions, cooperating with peers
 - Learning challenges with reading & writing output
 - “issues are beyond school’s ability to bring positive change”
 - With exhaustive support, no improvement in ability to manage anger, be cooperative, & demonstrate mutual respect
 - Verbally aggressive to teachers—“stupid bitch,” “shut your face”

Appendix G

Participant-Observations: Session One

Formal observations were conducted at the Alternate Learning Program on two separate occasions. The first session was on Wednesday, June 20, 2007 between 9:00 and 10:00 am, observing interactions in the classroom during a semi-structured activity and familiar routine. The Alternate Learning Program was housed in a classroom portable at the site of the Children's Development Center. The classroom environment was warm and inviting, with student work and posters decorating the walls. Individual desks framed the outskirts of the room, and there was a central round table in the middle. Off to one side there was a reading nook with a couch, rug, and bookshelf. The teacher's desk was at the back of the class along with filing cabinets, extra student supplies and boxes. At the time of the observation, there were three students, one teacher, and two educational assistants in the room. Students sat together at the round table, individually reading sections of the local Times Colonist newspaper. Teacher instructions were for students to read an article, summarize the main ideas, and complete a written response. Following this, students were to write a journal entry and complete a daily math review.

During this independent work period, the teacher and one educational assistant (EA) supported the class, while the other EA individually met with students to review their weekly goal. The pair met away from the group for approximately 5 to 10 minutes, after which time the students resumed their current events activity. The EA explained to the researcher that student goals focused on social-emotional and behavioural objectives as identified by the student's team during intake. At the beginning of each week, the student committed to a particular aspect of that overall goal and their progress was reviewed daily. During this first observation period, two adolescent research participants were in attendance: "Jason" and "Thomas."

Appendix H

Participant-Observations: Session Two

The second observation session at the Alternate Learning Program was on June 21, 2007 between 12:15 and 1:00 pm, observing loosely structured student activities during the lunch break period. ALP shared the outside playing fields with younger students at the Children's Development Center, though they occupied the grounds at different times of the day. Near the buildings, there was a small basketball court and adventure playground. These areas could be easily monitored and observed from the ALP portable. The large playing fields extended below this blacktop area and were naturally framed by trees on two sides, and a forested area on the other. The weather on this observation day was pleasant and warm. Students had just finished eating their lunch indoors, and were heading to break activities at the time of this observation.

During the lunch activities, there were three educational assistants (EA) supporting and supervising the students. The classroom teacher was not present as she was inside the Children's Development Center having her lunch break. On this day, one female EA was inside the portable supporting a student who was finishing work, and two male EAs were outside supervising two other students. The four males were involved in a two-on-two basketball game, each pair comprised of one EA and one student. The researcher made observations of both the classroom and the outside basketball court from an advantageous window seat within the ALP portable. Windows were open, which allowed voices from the court to be clearly heard and understood. During this second observation period, two adolescent research participants were in attendance: "Kyle" and "Thomas."

Appendix I

Student Themes

Table II: Thoughts & Feelings

	Student: Jason	Student: Kyle	Student: Thomas
Peer	Skateboarder, butthead	Interesting, different, smiles while speaking	Big brother, leader, friends, entertainer of stupid stuff
Adult	Smart, hyper	Prick, hate me	Funny, rough edge, nice
Self	Empathy, caring, trustworthy	Kind, sharing	Leader, tries, encourager, athletic, open minded
Happy	Special events, doing well in math	Fun, his choice, physical	Understanding work, enjoying it, work done
Stress	Change from schools	Homework	Out to get you, not fair, distracted from work
1 st Thought	Meeting to back to home school, likes ALP, mtg sucks	That's my school, knows about construction of new building	Look on friends' face, not like posers, fun at ALP
Quality	Listen, pay attention, field trips, not really strict, not yelling	Hands on activities, building & creating	Lets you get away, kind of, with stuff
Wish	No school, just learn	ALP=not following you, home school=lunch with friends	ALP= more PE Home school=getting blamed

	Student: Jason	Student: Kyle	Student: Thomas
Home school	Frightened (trouble), surprised (conseq.), ecstatic (friends), guilty, mischievous (suspense), bored (work)	Happy (fun), hopeful (grades), confident (doing well), overwhelmed, confused (big building, expectations)	Confused (doing the wrong thing), angry (from this), bored (not getting work), confident (friends, leader), lovestruck (girlfriend)
ALP	Hopeful/confid. (doing well-go to hs), shocked/surprised (easy work), smug, angry, ashamed (to be there), exhausted (after school)	Happy (fun), hopeful (to go back), confident (doing well), bored (with reading), exhausted (hot in the room)	Bored, frustrated with the work

Table I2: School Experiences

	Student: Jason	Student: Kyle	Student: Thomas
Home School	“other kid did it first” Fist fight after pinecone war, kid broke unwritten rule, others cheering him on, adrenaline rush, angry, embarrassed	“other kid did it first” punched a kid, ruined a nice shirt & reacted teachers out to get him, conniption fit, it wasn’t ok, but not as bad as teachers say, sometimes frustrated	“other kid did it first”, feels falsely blamed for swearing at teacher, did swear at VP, felt angry, frustrated, annoyed, felt good to have friends stand up for him
Antecedents	Rules not followed, at lunchtime, other kids around, encouragement from other kids, angry, other kid did it first	Instant anger, at lunchtime, random times/events, having fun, gets in trouble for small things	Didn’t like what he was told by teacher, felt blamed, Anger Mountain, lunchtime, encouraged by friends
Consequences	Story was one of not being in trouble, no suspension for that, talked to “Duty”, kids teaming up & pretending they aren’t fighting, fight after school	Story was one of not being in trouble, that time was sent home, conniption fit, usually sent to office, make up excuses, either agrees with adults or gets into a bigger argument	Story was one of not being in trouble, brought to office, friends all followed, friends stood up for him, sometimes he would get sent out of school
ALP/ underlying needs	Doesn’t fight anymore, would get in more trouble at ALP, wants to be at home school, staff at ALP stop him from fighting	Can’t do it, can’t have things that trigger you, no fooling around, boring, likes getting away with things, it just doesn’t happen at ALP	Won’t do it now, place to go when frustrated, doesn’t want to get in trouble, can’t wait until the year is over, doesn’t want to be out of his school

Table I3: Professional Roles

	Student: Jason	Student: Kyle	Student: Thomas
School supports	<p>*Counsellor, VP, student, no classroom teachers, maybe homeroom teacher-no reason</p> <p>*Jocks, principal, doesn't help-just gives consequence,</p>	<p>*Grade 6 teacher, lunchtime teacher, a friend, prompted for: VP closer (not as close as friends) principal same, beh teacher same</p> <p>*Only likes 3 teachers at school, rest he hates</p>	<p>*resource room teachers first, then friends, specifically one r. teacher, prompted—VP & principal, middle</p> <p>*classroom teacher, stuck up, doesn't help him,</p>
Interventions	Identifies counsellor & VP as people he's go to-not able to give a reason	Being shown respect first, easier to follow someone else's lead and not have to be the one to start	Would go to resource room teacher—cares, stood beside him when in trouble, prepared him, principal (prompt) - wrote a letter of recommendation for football
ALP/ accepting support	Would go to everyone, no negative influences, would go to whoever is closest, they're all cool	Likes everyone, they are all cool, they are nice, no less supportive people, would still go to a student first, would tell people if he doesn't like them, speaks his mind, if the relationship is tarnished, won't repair it.	<p>Friends first, further than HS, teacher in middle, male EA, likes to play games, want to help you, not there for \$, want you to learn, do good, have a job, they care & they talk to you</p> <p>*Dr. recommended he take pills, didn't like that, doesn't want to see him</p> <p>*was going to place principal away, remembered she did something re football—moved her</p>

Appendix J

Professional Themes

Table J1: Thoughts & Feelings

	Professional: Dave	Professional: Kelly	Professional: Meg
Peer	Bad kid	Depends on day, bad kid or humorous, fun to be around, dumb	Cool, friendly, the protector
Adult	Bad kid, gets into trouble a lot	Depends, real pain or very needy, some as liking him, others as not—most don't	Thinks adults don't like him, troublemaker, gets into stuff he shouldn't, blamed for things
Self	Gets into trouble a lot, people don't understand, always sent to the office	Hyper, trying hard, inflated ego or reflective	Happy, easy going kid socially, really frustrated in classroom & misunderstood
Happy	Doing what he wants, usually PE & Fine Arts and Applied Science	Outside, sports, playing, free; when he did well in school	Drawing, hanging out in the playground
Stress	Teacher asks me to do something & I don't want to	Reading or math, can't remember	Math, when teachers talk too fast, not given time to process
1 st Thought	It's school, hates school	Failure? Made gains? Didn't come back in gr.8	Hanging out with friends
Quality	Who can be fair, let me do what I want, won't say no	Who like & care about him, help him get better, help him work	Don't interrupt when thinking, give chances /breaks, talk to him
Wish	My teacher	Would do better	Wouldn't get so mad

	Professional: Dave	Professional: Kelly	Professional: Meg
Most frequent or intense feelings	Angry, enraged, frustrated, loneliness (deep down), mischievous (maybe), sad	Mischievous (though didn't see it often), most: anxious, frustrated, angry—less: confused, bored, exhausted	Exhausted, frustrated, anxious, angry, starting to feel more secure (with safety net deals with frustration, feels happy)
Situations that bring these forward	Lonely-appearance of friends, are fragile, frustration-asked to do what they can't, anger-level of frustration, rage-force expectation, sad-tears are there, hidden emotion, want to be like others, aren't	Blamed others for frustration, turned it to self, anxious-more hyper, agitated, bored (didn't want to do it), confused with work, exhausted from so much energy into anxiety, flight or fight mode	Exhausted-meds, lack of sleep, nutrition, shuts down if work period is too long; frus-wants to succeed, can't-rubs temple; anxious-worried he'll be blamed, unable to control actions; angry- many challenges, kids (racial slurs)

Table J2: School Experiences

	Professional: Dave	Professional: Kelly	Professional: Meg
Struggles for behaviour designated students; typical difficult situation for one student	Difficulty shifting once in a pattern, can't talk & hear messages from adults like others, wrapped in the emotion & intensity of the moment, mind won't shift, makes situation worse, engrained in pattern & escalates; gets into trouble for speaking to adults, digs himself in quickly, not able to manage his rage	Constant, hard to anticipate triggers, think he'd be upset & wasn't & vice versa; could persevere thru a frustration & other times couldn't; doesn't back down when in a blow up, would go on own to cool down	Try to ask for help, don't know how, get frustrated-are impulsive, do things they shouldn't; challenges with learning, brings out beh, don't know how to deal with frust & anger; short fuse, could be sitting chatting & then throw a chair, processes slowly, fast intense blow ups with verbal & physical, short time
Antecedents	Lots of different triggers, calling home is huge, hits ceiling, lang. Starts, had been physical with adults before, resulting in change of school	Name calling, looking at him, if he started agitated, would stay that way, context of his day, his state of mind, audience adds to it, more difficult out of classroom	Home school: Compensating for challenges at school, being a cool kid, leading the pact; ALP: tired, can't cope with anger, trigger something from a long time ago
Consequences	Dad called, goes home, sometimes suspensions, sometimes a shortened day, scheduled into a shortened day before ALP	Different consequences than in reg. Classroom; calm down strategies: drink, hall, back room, removed from group; vocal redirection, sent to office, admin would suspend more	Blows up, goes to back room or does a lap, comes back calm & remorseful; problem solving, usually invited back, if its aggression towards a person, out till the next break
Interpretation of underlying needs & motivating factors	Not a willful thing, cannot help it, not trying to meet needs, frustration comes in & they can't help it, reaction to the moment, heat of the event; will be quite aggressive & violent in presentation even I only 1:1, other students don't	Think its for love, told he's terrible & useless, still immature & doesn't trust love, inconsistent parenting, love & survival are intertwined, temper tantrums give him power	Don't know what it is, look at point of view, dealing with so many issues; needs security, has attachment difficulty, physical not in control- meds not taken properly, not seeking need, involuntary action /survival, familial cycle of abuse & being in care; doesn't want to be like that, doesn't know how not to be

Table J3: Professional Roles

	Professional: Dave	Professional: Kelly	Professional: Meg
School support roles & personal role with one student	Counsellor involved, no LA, check in daily (unobtrusive) during class, gym or recess time; role is as a sounding board & an advocate, listen re teachers, may offer teacher perspective, go-to person, more accepting b/c of 1:1, different expectations	Resource room EA, teacher, counsellor was involved-didn't feel he was being successful; TJ saw her as a parenting figure, called if he was in trouble on the yard; case manager, IST: ground him, feed him, nurture him, the mother, counsellor, police officer, & parent	@ ALP: 2 EAs, teacher, Dr. Tobin, group counselling; role as teacher is to give ways to function in the class that are acceptable to HS, strategies for learning w/o being different from peers
Successful interventions & strategies	Sounding board, listening person, avoid discipline, play the good cop more but can still cross a line, teach an understanding for diversity & tolerance, different bottom line for different kids	Predictable & consistent, graduated conseq.; being strong in stopping beh, mirroring or matching the calm expectation; contact with home; reward system, changing things up; using dry humour	Learning strategies-reading; feeding him on a regular basis, bottoms out at 2:00; comes in & has a glossy look on his face, ask him to lie down-he can then centre himself
Characteristics that encourage accepting support	Willingness to listen to the story, patience, have conversations & deal with lang, etc differently; don't feel as supported when they arrive to his room & have to work; looking for an out & don't always get it, do a lot of the time, but not always	Honesty is critical; acceptance that he is ok, nothing wrong b/c there's something to work on; respect with students, work on struggle together, transparent on own; they are painfully worried re what others think, esp. peers, they will do anything to prevent that support	Offer secure & safe environment; loves to help, offer way to give back; let him know that if he blows up, you are still there; feeling judged or blamed would stop him; needs to feel that he can make a mistake & move on, if he thinks he'll always be 5 steps behind he'll shut down

Appendix K

Student-Professional Dyad Themes

Table K1: Thoughts & Feelings

	Student: Kyle	Professional: Dave
Peer	Interesting, different, smiles while speaking	Bad kid
Adult	Prick, hate me	Bad kid, gets into trouble a lot
Self	Kind, sharing	Gets into trouble a lot, people don't understand, always sent to the office
Happy	Fun, his choice, physical	Doing what he wants, usually PE & FAAS
Stress	Homework	Teacher asks me to do something & I don't want to at that time
1 st Thought	That's my school, knows about construction of new building	It's school, hates school
Quality	Hands on activities, building & creating	Who can be fair, let me do what I want, won't say no
Wish	ALP=not following you, home school=lunch with friends	My teacher

	Student: Kyle	Professional: Dave
Home school	Happy (fun), hopeful (grades), confident (doing well), overwhelmed, confused (big building, expectations)	Angry, enraged, frustrated, loneliness (deep down), mischievous (maybe), sad
ALP/ Situations that bring this out	Happy (fun), hopeful (to go back), confident (doing well), bored (with reading), exhausted (hot in the room)	Lonely-appearance of friends, these are fragile, frustration-asked to do what they can't, anger-level of frustration, rage-enforces expectations, sad-tears are there, hidden emotion, want to be like others, aren't

Table K2: School Experiences

	Student: Kyle	Professional: Dave
Home	<p>“other kid did it first” punched a kid, ruined a nice shirt & reacted teachers out to get him, connotation fit, it wasn't ok, but not as bad as teachers say, sometimes frustrated</p>	<p>Difficulty shifting once they are in a pattern, can't talk & hear messages given by adults like others can, wrapped into the emotion of the intensity of the moment, mind won't shift, make situation worse, engrained in pattern & escalates it; gets into trouble anywhere, way he speaks to adults, digs himself in quickly, not able to manage his rage</p>
Antecedents	<p>Instant anger, at lunchtime, random times/events, having fun, gets in trouble for small things</p>	<p>Lots of different triggers, calling home is huge, hits ceiling, lang. starts, had been physical with adults before, resulting in change of school</p>
Consequences	<p>Story was one of not being in trouble, that time was sent home, connotation fit, usually sent to office, make up excuses, either agrees with adults or gets into a bigger argument</p>	<p>Dad called, goes home, sometimes suspensions, sometimes a shortened day, scheduled into a shortened day before ALP</p>
ALP/ underlying needs	<p>Can't do it, can't have things that trigger you, no fooling around, boring, likes getting away with things, it just doesn't happen at ALP</p>	<p>Not a willful thing, cannot help it, not trying to meet needs, frustration comes in & they can't help it, reaction to the moment, heat of the event; will be quite aggressive & violent in presentation even I only 1:1, other students don't</p>

Table K3: Professional Roles

	Student: Kyle	Professional: Dave
School supports	<p>*Grade 6 teacher, lunchtime teacher, a friend, prompted for: VP closer (not as close as friends) principal same, beh teacher same</p> <p>*Only likes 3 teachers at school, rest he hates</p>	<p>Counsellor involved, no LA, check in daily (unobtrusive) during class, gym or recess time; role is as a sounding board & an advocate, listen re teachers, may offer teacher perspective, go-to person, more accepting b/c of 1:1, different expectations</p>
Interventions	<p>Being shown respect first, easier to follow someone else's lead and not have to be the one to start</p>	<p>Sounding board, listening person, avoid discipline, play the good cop more but can still cross a line, teach an understanding for diversity & tolerance, different bottom line for different kids</p>
ALP/ accepting support	<p>Likes everyone, they are all cool, they are nice, no less supportive people, would still go to a student first, would tell people if he doesn't like them, speaks his mind, if the relationship is tarnished, won't repair it.</p>	<p>Willingness to listen to the story, patience, have conversations & deal with lang, etc differently; don't feel as supported when they arrive to his room & have to work; looking for an out & don't always get it, do a lot of the time, but not always</p>