

A parent's role in supporting an adolescent's reintegration from an alternative provision. Factors impacting parental engagement.

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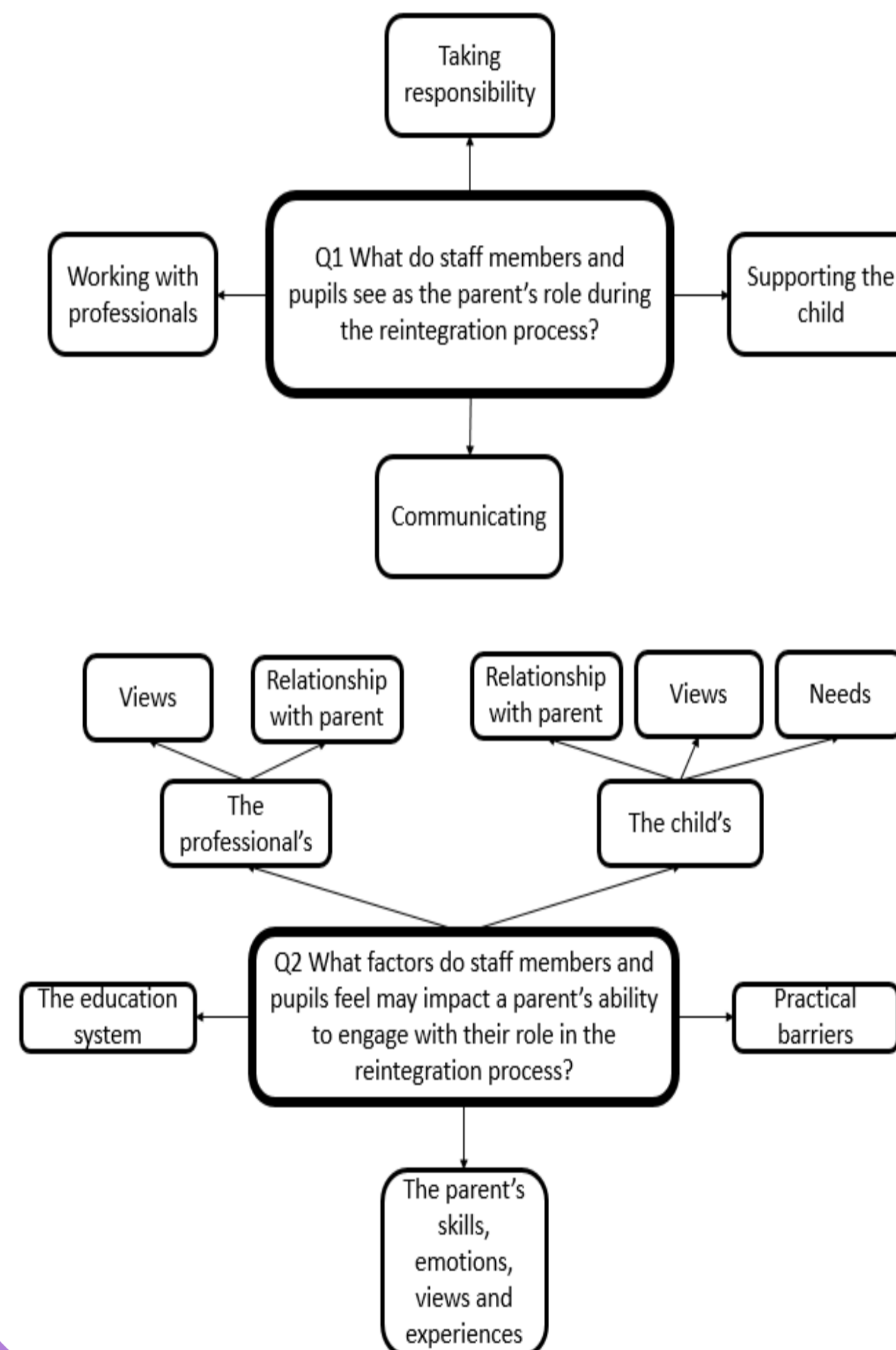
Background

- Within the education system in the United Kingdom there has been an increasing number of children and young people excluded from mainstream education and placed in alternative provisions for the primary need of behavioural problems .
- Alternative provisions are intended as a temporary measure., and many of those that enter these provisions face insurmountable barriers to returning to mainstream education, (Jalali & Morgan, 2017; Lloyd & Padfield, 1996; Pillay, Dunbar-Krige, & Mostert, 2013).
- Parental engagement has been highlighted as a factor impacting on the success of pupil reintegration (Lawrence, 2011) but it is not clear exactly what parental engagement may mean in practical terms within this context..

Method

- Two research questions were investigated: (1) *What do staff members and pupils see as the parent's role during the reintegration process?* and (2) *What factors do staff members and pupils feel may impact on a parent's ability to engage with their role in the reintegration process?*
- All participants came from one of four alternative provisions for SEMH needs. 18 pupils aged 12-15 took part, as well as 10 members of staff.
 - Staff members took part in individual semi-structured interviews with the researcher, and pupils took part in semi-structured interviews in focus groups.
- Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using Thematic Analysis.

Results



Discussion

- Taking responsibility was a theme which emerged from staff but was highly contested by pupils. Parents seen to engage in the process may satisfy staff but be seen as interfering by the child.
- The reluctance of mainstream schools to accept pupils back is a barrier to parents supporting their child through reintegration. Power imbalances in the education system may exacerbate a sense of unfairness and isolation that parent's may be feeling.
- Parents are expected to seek support from staff but often feel judged by professionals, and so may be unlikely to actively do this.
- Staff members views could affect parental engagement. Many expressed that not all pupils should leave alternative provisions and so the goals of the parent and staff member may not be aligned.

Implications for Practice

- The education system and the power imbalances in this prevent effective parental engagement in the reintegration process. Systemic change to practices are necessary to improve the process.
- Educational Psychologists are well placed in supporting alternative provisions to evaluate their practice against the results of this study in order to identify areas for improvement.

References: Jalali, R., & Morgan, G. (2017). 'They won't let me back.' Comparing student perceptions across primary and secondary Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 23(1), 1–14.

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Pillay, J., Dunbar-Krige, H., & Mostert, J. (2013). Learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties' experiences of reintegration into mainstream education. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 18(3), 310–326.