

Social workers' experiences of working with parents with learning disabilities

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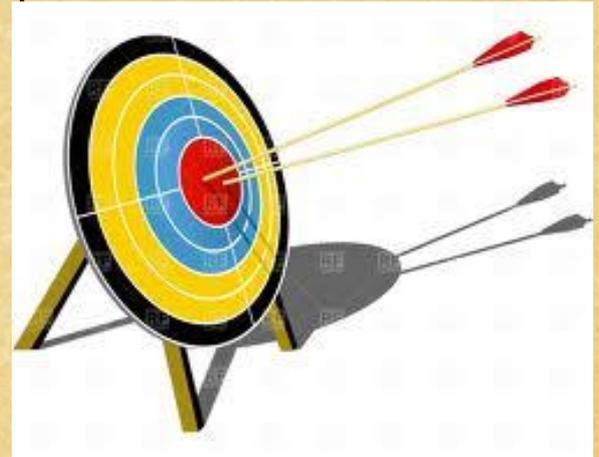
Rationale



- ♦ Child and Family social workers are involved in making decisions about how to support families in need and research suggests that these decisions are impacted upon by individuals' subjective reflections (O'Connor and Leonard, 2013)
- ♦ Previous research suggests that professionals with no LD training hold more negative attitudes and feel less confident with people with LD ((Fitzsimmons & Barr, 1997; Lewis & Stenfert Kroese, 2009; Gill et al)
- ♦ Social Services and child care staff have less of an understanding of the difficulties experienced by parents with LD than health and adult staff (McBrien & Power, 2002)

Aims

- ▶ To investigate how social workers experience the work they carry out with parents with LD
- ▶ To increase our understanding of the increased risk faced by parents with LD of having their children removed
- ▶ To inform practical recommendations around improved experiences for both social workers and parents with LD

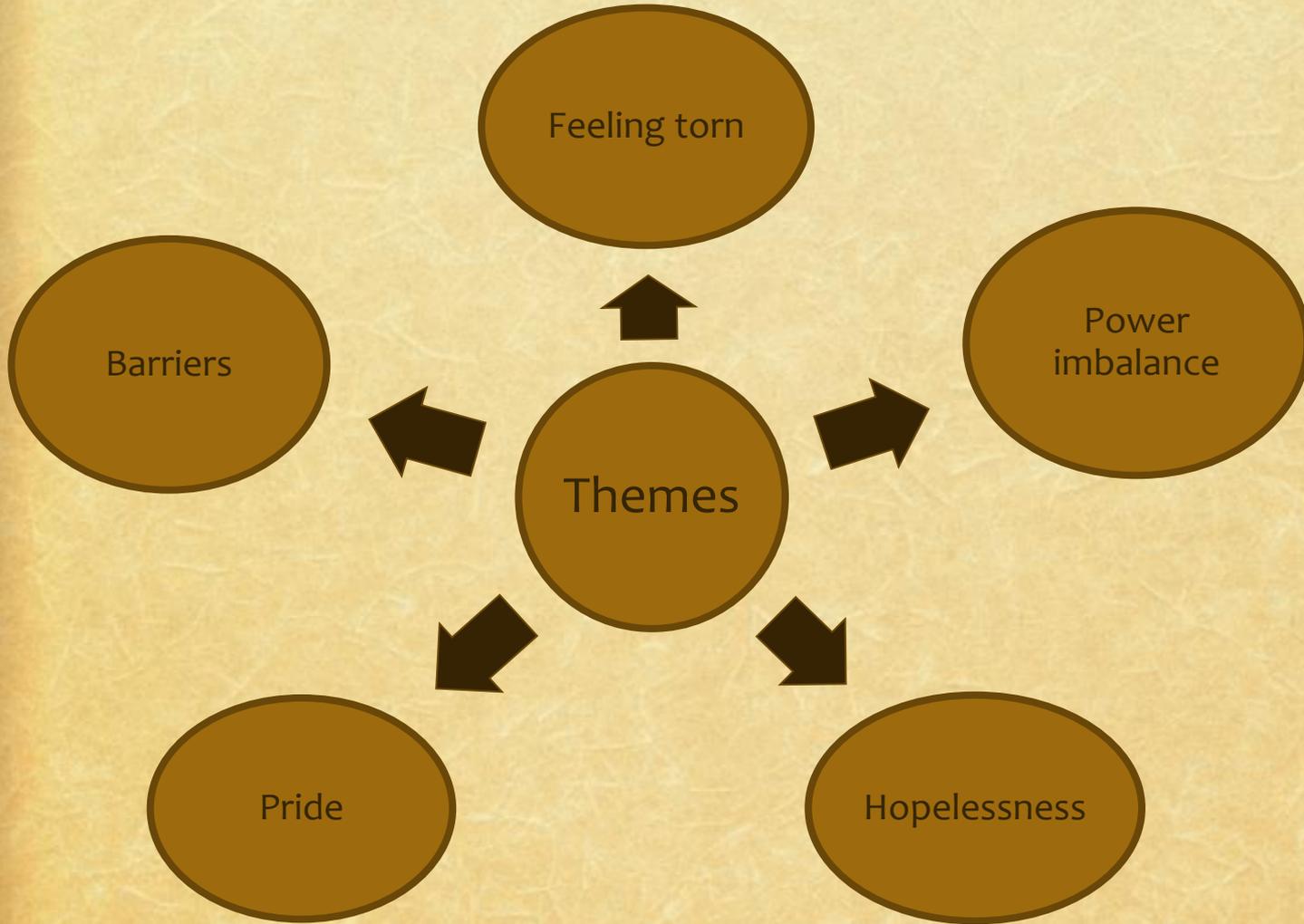


Method

- ▶ Emails cascaded down to social workers via managers. Social workers contacted the researcher to express an interest in participating
- ▶ Seven social workers were recruited
- ▶ Individual semi-structured interviews carried out
- ▶ Semi-structured interview schedule regarding their experience of a particular case
- ▶ Transcribed data were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)



Results



What this adds to our understanding

- ◆ Parents with LD may be less able to stand up for their rights
- ◆ Social workers' ability to advocate for parents may be hindered
- ◆ Social workers' limited confidence and knowledge may hinder their ability to support parents with LD
- ◆ Social workers' efforts can be made more difficult by local authority procedures
- ◆ Social workers have difficulty supporting parents with LD due to a lack of available or adequate services

Ways forward

- ◆ Provide training on how to identify and work with parents with LD
- ◆ Provide resources to improve communication
- ◆ Identify a ‘champion’ for parents with LD
- ◆ Provide more resources for independent advocacy
- ◆ Improve access to supervision, CPD and reflective practice

Questions?

Please contact me (b.stenfert-kroese@bham.ac.uk) if you require more information.

THANK YOU!