THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

BEREAVEMENT EXPERIENCES

OF MALE PRISONERS:

GRIEF, CUMULATIVE LOSS AND

IMPRISONMENT

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Social Policy)

in the University of Hull

by

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January 2019

ABSTRACT

The central aim of this research was to explore and understand the grief experience of male prisoners as it occurs, and the impact of cumulative loss caused by death, prior to custodial sentencing. The responses of other inmates and the ways in which staff facilitated and managed prisoners' grief were also the focus of enquiry.

The research methods used were participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. Twenty-three bereaved prisoners participated. Also involved were 23 members of staff of different occupations and grades, and three volunteers. All participants were residing or working within a male, Category C prison in the north of England.

Findings demonstrated that grief could not easily be confronted and processed as a result of: the many restraints imposed institutionally, the hegemonic culture, lack of trust and high levels of felt frustration due to constricted agency. Avoidant coping strategies were common, alongside an unwillingness to reach out for support. The evidence strongly suggests that prisoners can be at heightened risk of a more complex grief reaction than the normal population.

This study provides a major contribution to both the criminological and thanatological fields. It makes policy and other recommendations, and widens the current international debate by offering a critique of the proposed *Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder* (APA, 2013). The narrative accounts have produced evidence of negative and positive stressors uniquely found within the prison setting, demonstrating in a new way how they can impact upon the grieving process, using Stroebe and Schut's (1999, 2016) Dual Process Model. Recognising excessive grief reactions, a theory is proposed – 'Prisoners' Grief Overload theory.' Finally, a proposition is put forward for future inquiry: a significant bereavement can become a factor in putative desistance from crime if grief stressors are adequately confronted and processed, and a new individualised truth is attained.

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Abbreviations

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork (care plan)
APA	American Psychiatric Association
CG	Complicated grief
CM	Custodial Manager
CofE Chaplain	Church of England Chaplain
DARS	Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service
DPM	Dual Process Model (of coping with bereavement)
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th edition)
FC Chaplain	Free Church Chaplain
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
GDPR (2018)	General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IEP	Incentives and Earned Privileges (scheme)
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRAS	Integrated Research Application System
LO	Loss-Orientation/oriented (stressor)
MDD	Major depressive disorder
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPS	New psychoactive substances
PCBD	Persistent complex bereavement disorder
PGD	Prolonged grief disorder

p-NOMIS	Prison National Offender Management Information System
PO	Prison Officer
PSI	Prison Service Instruction
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RC Chaplain	Roman Catholic Chaplain
RO	Restoration-Orientation/oriented stressor
Seg PO	Segregation Wing Prison Officer
SO	Supervising Officer
VP wing	Vulnerable Prisoners' wing
YOI	Young Offender Institution

INTRODUCTION

Rationale and justification for the study

When people become bereaved, they respond in unique ways on an emotional, psychological and spiritual level (Holloway, 2007). The cultures they are embedded in can create, influence, shape, limit, and define the form their grief takes, sometimes profoundly (Rosenblatt, 2008). Cultural difference may be influenced by a wide range of factors, including social class (Allen, 2007), family systems (Rosenblatt, 2013), religion and secularisation (Walter, 2015), gender (Parkes, 2006), social rituals and structures, cultural systems and policy frameworks (Holloway, 2007). For this reason, the study of grief needs to be approached having due regard to a complex array of cross-cultural characteristics, and recognition that no knowledge about grief is culture free (Rosenblatt, 2008).

As a result of personal loss and the impact of grief within my local community through providing bereavement support, I have become acutely aware of a range of responses which can affect various cultural networks. These may be actioned as a means of self-protection from further distress, or to prevent additional pain occurring for other family members, or to suppress the effects of grief from wider social circles. Examples include a female who 'used' grief as an implicit form of control over others (by inferring, "Don't upset me - I have been bereaved …"). Alternatively, there was a need to over-protect offspring from future anguish following the death of a sibling which was sudden, traumatic, and 'out of time', thereby stifling their own future coping abilities. Another situation was when a retired male 'hid' the extent of his grief from those he knew until the stress of constraining it could no longer be controlled, whereupon it exploded unexpectedly to the detriment of anyone in his path. If such interpersonal situations can be observed in society, what effect would imprisonment have on the way grief is responded to?

The literature has so far failed to uncover in a nuanced way whether coping behaviours would be exaggerated in response to the social, cultural and strutural aspects of prison life. Also, the literature has not examined in detail

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how the process of grief is managed by other inmates and staff. Recognition of individual needs in this atypical setting are essential in order to attain a more comprehensive overview of how society manages grief, regardless of one's social position. Moreover, the ways in which these individuals are variously supported and managed, set against a backdrop of the socio-cultural constraints of imprisonment, are relevant for a fuller appreciation of how government and society expects staff members to respond to prisoners who are grieving.

There is a considerable and well-established body of research and theory on bereavement and grief, although very little has contextualised these phenomena within the adult male, custodial setting. Further, there are deficits in existing knowledge within both the criminological and thanatological disciplines on the effects of excessive grief reactions which can lead to offending behaviour, and the relationship between grief and future engagement in offending.

From a criminological perspective, factors which influence offending behaviour include 'substance misuse problems, pro-criminal attitudes, difficult family backgrounds, … unemployment and financial problems, homelessness and mental health problems' (MoJ, 2014: 4). However, the literature confirms bereavement can also impact on offending behaviour, and is more prevalent for young people entering the justice system (Beyond Youth Custody, 2013; Durcan, 2008; Harris Review, 2015; Inquest, 2015; NACRO, 2003; Rodger, 2004; SECOB, 2013; Vaswani, 2008; Youth Justice Board, 2005). The situation is exacerbated particularly when it is experienced alongside a wide range of other losses (Hammersley and Ayling, 2005; Leach et al, 2008; Vaswani, 2018a).

In order to achieve a better understanding of the nature of grief across the world's cultures it is necessary to explore the various contexts in which it is experienced (Stroebe et al, 2008). Further, Stroebe and Schut (2010) highlight the importance of identifying not just the impact on adjustment of the griever but, crucially, analysis at an interpersonal level. Accordingly, it seemed imperative to provide an opportunity for the voices of 'at risk', stigmatised

individuals, and those working alongside them within the poorly understood location of the prison, to help provide a major contribution to the knowledge gap. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to determine a suitable research methodology which would be efficient in delivering relevant data, having due regard for limited timescales and the most efficacious use of resources.

The central research aim was to explore and understand the grief experience of male prisoners as it occurs, and the impact of cumulative loss caused by death, prior to custodial sentencing. The responses of other inmates and the ways in which staff facilitated and managed prisoners' grief were also the focus of enquiry. This was achieved by undertaking participant observation of naturally-occurring events for a week, followed by in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 23 prisoners. These rich portrayals were supplemented by additional interviews with 23 staff members of different occupations and grades, and three volunteers. I anticipated these professionals, practitioners and volunteers would provide valuable insights from a range of differing perspectives. Qualitative data captures complexity and nuance in ways that quantitative data fails to achieve. Accounts were analysed using an adapted grounded theory approach.

Research questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the research within an adult male, Category C prison, the following research questions needed to be addressed:

- Can unresolved grief/cumulative loss become a significant factor in offending behaviour within the male population?

- What are the most common grief-related stressors experienced?

- What are the most common means of coping with such stressors?

- How does a masculinised culture influence the pattern of grieving?

- How effective are staff members in working with bereavement?

- What are the effects of prisoners' bereavements, and also staff members' own past/more recent bereavements, on staff members?

- What are the possible outcomes for prisoners who actively seek and/or accept support following a significant bereavement?

Anticipated benefits of the study

The findings have implications for criminal justice policy and practice, social policy and mental health. In order to achieve its objectives, the Prison Service is committed to providing a safe and decent delivery environment with the expectation that it provides a supportive and rehabilitative culture (Clinks, 2016). The prison and Young Offender institutions' population for England and Wales as at 17th January 2019 totalled 82,107, comprising 78,345 males and 3,762 females (Howard League, 2019). These data provide stark evidence of the vastly greater ratio of imprisoned males compared to females, and greater understanding is needed as to the reasons behind this. The findings uncover masculinised ways of coping in a macho environment, and may contribute to the evidence base in understanding more about the disproportionate ratio of male: female prisoners.

The MoJ (2018b) reported that in the 12 months to September 2018 there were 83 self-inflicted deaths of males in prison custody, with 74 deaths of males having occurred in the previous year. While many differing national statistics exist, no national records are held detailing significant difficulties they may have experienced with unresolved grief. The cause of some suicides has been the unfortunate consequence of a prisoner having experienced the death of a significant person (Liebling, 1995). However, it is unknown to what extent unresolved grief is a factor for prisoners ending their own lives.

Providing greater awareness of grief stressors unique to prison and the coping strategies adopted, will inform how the regime may be more responsive to individual needs to ensure that support is 'delivered in ways that offenders are most likely to respond to' (NOMS, 2014a: 11). Future custodial regimes that focus on helping to meet the specific needs of young, often volatile male offenders to build resilience against loss, will have the effect of improving efficiency and reducing running costs in the longer-term.

The research examines how prison culture affects the grieving process, and in what ways the culture becomes affected by grief. Understanding this two-way process should better inform the MoJ of underlying problems which need to be addressed. Recommendations based on the findings should feed into future policy decision-making. Areas highlighted include a review of Prison Service Instructions (PSIs), improved individualised assessment, future research into the efficacy of a tiered level of support, and more judicious rehabilitation planning. By offering increased insight into how grieving prisoners can be better supported, security and safety may improve for these men, other inmates and staff. Additionally, learning of the possible impact of unresolved grief on offending and reoffending can serve to improve public protection in the future, thereby creating a safer society.

Analysis of the participants' narrative accounts provides improved understanding in a number of areas in the thanatological field, including: a more finely grained analysis of positive and negative grief stressors (linking to Stroebe and Schut's Dual Process model, 1999, 2016); disenfranchised grief (Doka, 2002); continuing bonds theory (Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996); meaning-making (Neimeyer, 2000a, 2001); attachment and loss theory (Bowlby, 1969), and post-grief growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995, 1996, 2004).

An inability to *trust* was found to be a significant contributory factor in terms of the self-management of grief in prison, with a complementary avoidant coping strategy being commonly used. One of the most profound emotions felt was that of *frustration*, as a result of the authoritarian regime and limited sense of agency. However, the theme of frustration does not feature readily in general grief literature. Additionally, protocol (PSIs, procedures and systems), staffing levels and the hegemonic masculine culture played a huge role in mal/adaptive coping strategies, involvement in internal and external mourning rituals, levels of support, and the level of grief adjustment which could be made.

The criminological field is better informed by this research due to contributions concerning the onset of offending behaviour following *grief overload*, the unique grief-related stressors occurring in prison which have to be negotiated, and the

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possibility that given the right conditions, bereavement may become an event that prompts desistance. The fact that some men *'escaped to prison'* following a bereavement they could not handle in society, or were grateful they were imprisoned upon receipt of bad news of a significant death, to prevent society becoming at risk and to prevent a longer sentence themselves, were two important findings.

In addition to contributing to academic knowledge and the provision of recommendations to the MoJ, the following are considered to be valid contributions:

- A critique, contributing to the international discussion on the proposed criteria put forward for Persistent Complex Grief Disorder (PCGD), found in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) (APA, 2013).
- A brief inventory of positive and negative grief stressors unique to the custodial setting, situated within the Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement (DPM) (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016).
- Contemporary grief theories and theories relating to the onset of crime and desistance from offending behaviour have been examined. As a result, the study has provided an opportunity for new theory generation: *'Prisoners' Grief Overload theory'.*   A proposition is put forward for future inquiry: a significant bereavement can become a factor in putative desistance from crime if grief stressors are adequately confronted and processed, and a new individualised truth is attained.'

Chapter overview

Chapter One begins by examining grief as a socially constructed concept. It proceeds to include evidence of studies most closely associated with this research, highlighting what is already known about the experience of grief in the custodial setting, including Young Offenders and females. Literature on prison culture, the relevance of hegemonic masculinity, and the role of officers and chaplains, is also provided. The most pertinent theories are highlighted,

including a range of grief theories and a model, and theories explaining the reasoning behind offending behaviour and desistance from crime.

Chapter Two outlines the methodology used in the research. There is a heavy emphasis on the ethical considerations necessary when examining such an emotive topic with vulnerable people. Details of how the qualitative study was undertaken, using adapted grounded theory, are also outlined.

The findings chapters explore a range of key themes which have emerged from the empirical data, and these are laid out in the following order.

Chapter Three highlights the relevant protocol which has to be negotiated by staff and bereaved prisoners. It also emphasises positive and negative grief stressors arising. Tempered with this are details concerning involvement of the Chaplaincy team who act as a vital central hub in implementing practical, pastoral and spiritual/religious support.

The findings revealed the concept of trust is integral to successful adjustment within the grieving process. The fourth chapter provides evidence of the outcome on coping capacity when mistrust and distrust become apparent. Chapter Four also provides background detail from both workers and inmates on the impact of staff on the grieving process.

Chapter Five contains evidence of significant bereavements experienced from childhood, through adolescence, pre-prison and during incarceration. Accounts indicate how the inmates managed unresolved loss, often by utilising maladaptive means of coping.

The significance of culture operating at both the meso and micro levels was examined in Chapter Six, demonstrating the intersection between hegemonic masculinity and the display or concealment of emotion.

Chapter Seven draws together continuing bonds theory and meaning-making theory, demonstrating their usefulness in the processing of grief, and how well or otherwise the custodial setting affects their application. Furthermore, having cognisance of the range of bereavements many experienced over their lifecourse – which were often traumatic – and the resultant coping strategies,

the data suggest that as a result of cumulative loss, grief overload tipped the balance for some male citizens, followed by deviant coping strategies and removal from society as a means of punishment. With some men finding refuge and security in prison, and others being notified of a death during incarceration, the culture and environment affected the grieving process in different ways, ie either positively or negatively. Paradoxically, evidence suggested that while grief was a factor in offending behaviour, it could also act as a trigger for a '*changed self*', resulting in possible future desistance from crime.

Chapter Eight provides a synthesis of key theoretical concepts from criminology and thanatology, which have bearing on themes from the participants' narratives. Complicated grief is one of a number of contemporary topics of concern for bereavement researchers and health care professionals who support bereaved people (Stroebe et al, 2013), and this study provides more evidence to support the notion that imprisonment may contribute towards developing complicated grief (Warrilow, 2018). With this in mind, a critique of the criteria outlined to meet the requirements for Persistent Complex Grief Disorder (PCBD) (APA, 2013) evidences those differences occurring in this marginalised population, as distinct from the general population. A commentary and inventory are also included, indicating unique negative and positive grief stressors to be found within the custodial setting, situated within the DPM (Stroebe and Schut, 1999; 2016). A new theory is proposed – 'Prisoners' Grief Overload theory'. Until now little empirical evidence has been available which exemplifies what drives people to commit crime as a result of excessive grief-related stressors and co-occurring cumulative loss. Finally, a proposition has been put forward for future inquiry relating to bereavement triggering putative desistance from crime. Adequately confronting grief stressors may result in identity transition, meaning making and stronger continuing bonds with the deceased. This may have the potential to move individuals towards a pro-social, non-offending future.

The concluding chapter summarises the findings and discussion chapters and provides policy recommendations. The prisoners give recommendations for

future bereaved prisoners on how to manage their own grief. Chapter Nine also indicates limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. It ends by offering a rationale for greater awareness of the impact of unresolved grief upon this group of males, residing on the edge of society – marginalised and misunderstood.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter incorporates literature drawn largely from the criminological and thanatological fields. The key construct – grief – is examined initially in terms of what may be regarded as *'normal'* as distinct from *'complex'* grief, and the bereaved male taking on the temporary identity of *'prisoner'* is subsequently contextualised within the demanding inmate culture of the institution. Hegemonic masculinity in this setting is also explicated. The distinctive tasks the prison officers and chaplains perform in the management of a prisoner's grief are briefly discussed, as well as the roles of spirituality and religion. A range of grief theories will then briefly demonstrate the grieving processes. The review proceeds to examine the reasons for entry into criminal behaviour, which may be linked to bereavement, and concludes with an explanation of the role of grief in desistance and recidivism.

'Grief' as a socially constructed concept

It is important to initially establish definitions of the key terms commonly used when a significant person has died. Stroebe et al (2008: 4-5) use the following three descriptions. '*Bereavement*' denotes the objective situation of losing a significant person to death. '*Mourning*' refers to the social expression of grief, displayed publicly. '*Grief*' is a term applied to a complex range of reactions in respect of a loss caused by death, including emotional, psychological (cognitive, social-behavioural), and physical (physiological-somatic) manifestations. Grief also encompasses a spiritual dimension (Doka and Martin, 2002; Thompson, 2012).

Grief is a socially constructed concept (Rosenblatt, 2008), with bereavement becoming medicalised as a result thereof (Bandini, 2015; Frances, 2010). It is commonly categorised in the West as '*normal*' or '*abnormal*' (Harris, 2016). When it becomes of far greater intensity and duration than would be regarded as '*normal grief*' (Prigerson and Maciejewski, 2005-2006), the term '*complex grief*' will be used within the thesis. Other terms mentioned are as used by academic authors commenting on the subject.

So-called 'normal grief' reactions include feelings, cognitions and behaviours alongside a range of physical sensations (Worden, 2010). If the reaction to bereavement falls within expected norms, given the circumstances and consequences arising following the death, the majority of people *can* cope (Shear et al, 2011a; Stroebe et al, 2008).

It is estimated that 5-11% of people within the normal population, confronted with a natural loss, experience a more complex form of grief, with the remaining 89-95% responding with a normal grief reaction (Lundorff et al, 2017; Nielsen et al, 2017; Prigerson et al, 2009). The rate increases slightly when sudden, unexpected and traumatic loss (Kristensen et al, 2012), losses which are stigmatised such as those which are drug-related (Valentine et al, 2016), and death of a child are accounted for (Lichtenthal et al, 2015; McCarthy et al, 2010). While a heightened risk of psychological and physical health problems have been found following bereavement, paradoxically, the most vulnerable are the least inclined to seek help (Stroebe et al, 2017).

Approximately 72% of men sentenced to immediate custody have two or more mental health disorders (Prison Reform Trust, 2018). Drug and alcohol dependency can form unhealthy coping strategies as a consequence of bereavement (Hamdan et al, 2013; Pilling et al, 2012). Approximately 26% of new arrivals at prisons nationally have substance misuse and 19% have alcohol misuse needs (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2014). A 'shockingly high' number of prisoners acquire a drug habit in prison (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2018), with 44% of Category C prisoners believing it is easy/very easy to get illegal drugs in their prison (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2015). It is acknowledged in the literature that anger is regularly associated with grief (Prigerson et al, 2008), and this was found to be a commonly occurring emotion among a group of bereaved Young Offenders (Finlay and Jones, 2000), often manifesting through self-harm, aggression and withdrawal in the secure setting (National Children's Bureau, 2008). Also, bereaved people are at heightened risk of suicide (Warrilow, 2018).

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2017: 8) described finding 'far too many prisoners suffering from varying degrees of learning disability', with nearly 50%

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having a literacy level at or below what is required for successful employment, and many unable to read at all (Shannon Trust, 2018). Low education compared to high education is associated with an adverse grief trajectory (Nielsen et al, 2018).

Overall, the criminological and grief literature has so far failed to provide adequate awareness-raising concerning grief - one of the potential root causes of drug and alcohol misuse, anger and suicide - among this disadvantaged, marginalised population. Thus, it is important to identify the percentage of prisoners at risk of more complex forms of grief.

The categorisation of a complex grief disorder

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), produced by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013), is a respected publication, alongside the World Health Association's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Both are used as reliable sources to diagnose, and thus label, a range of Mental and Behavioural Disorders (Parkes, 2014).

Prior to the latest edition of the DSM-5 in 2013, Prigerson et al (2009) and Shear et al (2011b) were instrumental in putting forward two separate sets of criteria classified as a psychiatric disorder in the form of '*prolonged grief disorder*' (PGD) and '*complicated grief disorder*' (CG)*,* respectively. However, a decision was made by the APA that insufficient evidence had been put forward and therefore such a disorder did not warrant being recognised as an independent diagnosis. It was proposed instead that a newly termed condition, '*Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder*' (PCBD) should be placed as a '*Condition for Further Study*' (APA, 2013: 789-792).

While bereavement can become prolonged and more intense in nature, triggering a variety of mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder and reactive forms of anxiety and depression (Parkes, 2014), there are dangers in medicalising what is essentially a normal human reaction (Granek, 2016). There is opposition to the suggestion that grief should be classed as a mental illness (Granek, 2010) because of the extreme variability in people's individual

mourning experiences, which are shaped by factors such as 'culture, gender, age, previous loss history, and personal idiosyncrasies' (Granek, 2016: 112). Wakefield (2013) raises serious concerns that unless more stringent diagnostic criteria are agreed, there will be a massive upsurge in false positive diagnoses. Because mental disorders often warrant drugs, the pharmaceutical industry's involvement in the debate implies that disorders are recognised as medical problems which need solving, with millions of people being prescribed antidepressants following a significant bereavement due to conflation of grief and depression – resulting in an overuse of medication to treat grief (Granek, 2016). Thus, clinicians may contextualise a bereaved person's grief experience within the social rules of grief in Western society, which are arguably based on market economics instead of true human experience (Harris, 2016).

An outcome of socially constructed grief is the marginalisation of individuals, some of whom may be labelled with a disorder they do not want by using a pathology-based diagnostic system, or through the suppression of grief in order to conform to social expectations (Harris, 2016). In any event, there is deep disagreement between mental health professionals concerning the consequences of adopting dimensional models for developing diagnostic guidelines, with attention focused on the boundary between what is considered to be normal and abnormal grief (Zachar et al, 2017). Crucially, Parkes (2014) suggests that psychiatric diagnoses should only be provided when the benefits are seen to outweigh the disadvantages to the patient or to protect society at large. As has been evidenced, there are divergent viewpoints on the medicalisation of grief and this thesis intends to inform the current debate.

A review of the grief literature pertaining to prisoners

The existence of empirical literature directly relating to grief in male, Category C prisons in England and Wales, is sparse, and must be supplemented by papers pertaining to other categories of prison, Young Offenders and female prisoners. Vaswani's (2008, 2014, 2015, 2018a) contributions concerning the bereavement experiences and mental health of Scottish Young Offenders in custody are the most expansive among the male population at the younger end of the age scale in the United Kingdom. Along with colleagues (Vaswani et al,

2016), she has built on her earlier work by evaluating trauma, bereavement and loss developments at HMP and YOI Polmont. Vaswani (2014) found that some of the young men directly attributed bereavement as a contributory factor to their arrival in custody. When a bereavement did occur, the realities of prison life interrupted all aspects of the grieving process.

Finlay and Jones (2000) piloted a grief awareness programme with Young Offenders in Wales who were assessed as having complicated grief following the sudden death of a first degree relative – sometimes killed by violent means or a completed suicide. The young men commonly used drugs to cope, experienced suicidal thoughts and reported depression and anxiety. The Harris Review (2015) focused attention on the reasons for self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds. In its submission, the Prison Reform Trust (The Harris Review, 2015: 83) found that children who end their own lives can be impacted by the sudden and unexpected deaths of close relatives.

I undertook a pilot study (Wilson, 2010, 2011), exploring the efficacy of group support for male, bereaved prisoners at a Category C prison in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region. The results from the Hogan Grief Reaction checklist (2001) indicated a statistically significant increase in personal growth and a significant reduction in despair, blame and anger following participation in the group (Wilson, 2011: 12). No significant change was found in feelings of detachment, panic behaviour or disorganisation.

Potter (1999) used examples of prisoners' experiences set against Worden's (1982) Tasks of Grief which the bereaved undertake for successful adjustment, to demonstrate the difficulties of grieving in prison. Although useful, Worden's tasks have been superseded by further models, as outlined later. Masterton (2014), a Bereavement Volunteer for Cruse Scotland who had worked extensively with bereaved male inmates, presented the case study of a 22 year old client, containing a series of harrowing, traumatic events. Jervis (2018) considered the impact of sudden death on prisoners when it occurs within the criminal justice system, arguing that it carries additional complexities, not least because of the risk of disenfranchised grief.

At the far end of the age scale, Maschi et al (2013) investigated the protective role of coping resources in response to trauma, stress, grief, loss and separation in a male, American prison. High levels of adverse life experiences were common among older prisoners, placing them at risk of later-life physical and mental decline. (See also further American papers relating to male prisoners: Olson and McEwen (2004); Schetky (1998); Stevenson and McCutchen (2006)).

Two reviews on male prisoners were undertaken in Australasia. Hendry (2009) (New Zealand) concluded that masculinity and culture have a strong impact on the ability of incarcerated men to resolve grief issues, with such factors contributing to disenfranchised grief. Leach et al (2008) (Australia) found that recidivism is linked to traumatic grief, which, if left untreated, results in a cycle of behaviours such as substance abuse and criminal activity.

Warrilow (2018) highlights the need for equivalence of care, commenting that mental health practitioners located in prisons who attempt to treat symptoms associated with loss and bereavement are often ill-equipped to provide interventions to successfully examine the root cause. Corcoran (2018) recognises the voluntary sector's contribution in providing bereavement support to both those deserving of public support and those perceived by some as arguably not deservedly bereaved. Soulsby (2018: 115), in reflecting on her counselling practice with prisoners, reiterates the importance of external counselling support in what can be an 'otherwise hostile and unsupportive environment'.

Bereaved, incarcerated American women have been found to have similar difficulties to males (Ferszt, 2002; Ferszt et al, 2009; Harner et al, 2011). For example, avoidant strategies were common, despite prisoners never being totally absent from the company of others (Woolfenden, 1997), and the current aging population resulting in long-term inmates dying in prison (Aday and Krabill, 2016).

What is known about the bereaved male prisoner?

Prisoners bereaved prior to imprisonment may also receive news of a death during confinement, the combined effects of which can result in years of unresolved grief (Wilson, 2011). While a loved one's death is one of the most emotionally challenging life events (Lee, 2015), other non-death related losses incurred prior to, and during imprisonment, need to be acknowledged, to recognise the cumulative effect of loss which can be generated over a lifecourse (Vaswani, 2015).

Criminal justice populations have been consistently documented as having to endure a lifetime of loss at a rate greater than the general population (Vaswani, 2015). Low socio-economic status (Friestad, 2010), an absent parent (for example through incarceration), being placed in care, abuse, breakdown of a relationship (Leach et al, 2008; Schetky, 1998; Vaswani, 2015; Wilson, 2010), and unemployment (Olson and McEwen, 2004), are typical examples of non-death related loss to be found in this marginalised group. Immigration, long-term illness (physical and mental health) and disability (Parkes, 2006) can also exacerbate the feeling of loss. Following sentencing, prisoners are subjected to yet more psychosocial loss. Vaswani (2015) has organised psychosocial losses into an overarching typology, comprising: loss of future, loss of relationships, loss of status, and loss of stability.

Sykes' (1958) earlier seminal text – The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison - has been extremely influential in broadening understanding about prison life. Sykes coined the term '*pains of imprisonment'* as a means of describing the range of losses experienced when entering the carceral setting: the loss of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and security. Expanding Vaswani's (2015) concept of 'loss of future', Henley (2018) highlights the *'pains'* of: future unemployment, educational opportunities, accommodation (eg trying to rent a property), financial services (increased insurance charges, difficulties obtaining a mortgage), civic participation, victimisation, and international mobility. Thus, losses need to be viewed holistically according to individualised experiences.

Postmodern ontology is based on the assumption that one's lived experience is individually recognised through a complex array of social worlds, which operate differently and are constantly being created and recreated, collectively (Rogers, 2010). Bereavement and loss, then, are experienced in a social context, shaped by 'social, political, legal, economic, philosophical, religious and cultural imperatives' (Holloway, 2007: 1). Accordingly, particular social contexts – such as the prison – can have a huge impact on how bereavement is experienced, due to the restrictive environment (Read and Santatzoglou, 2018).

As outlined above, the social context of imprisonment needs to be recognised when considering how prisoners cope with loss and grief. Prisons comprise a 'complex social world of values, traditions, rules and rituals', whereupon the prisoner becomes 'observed, controlled, essentially disempowered by the system, and forced into subservience and obedience' (De Viggiani, 2006: 71). Moreover, a process of depersonalisation takes place which can render a prisoner feeling isolated and defensive (Aday and Kraybill, 2016). Thus, the prisoner has to face coping with an accumulation of loss at a time when personal agency is severely diminished.

The relationship to the deceased

Young Offenders have been found to endure multiple and traumatic deaths in greater frequency (Finlay and Jones, 2000), and experience the death of a parent, to levels far in excess of those expected by the general population (Vaswani 2008). In addition to being bereaved of a parent, there is also the distinct possibility of a grandparent dying. Offering an unconditional, loving bond and providing primary or secondary care in the place of a parent, this connection may be different to a parent-child relationship, with the death bringing about a profound effect, especially if it is the first experience of bereavement (Westerink and Stroebe, 2012). The impact of prisoners losing important prisoner friends to death is a topic that has attracted little research. These significant individuals can become assimilated into an inmate's 'prison family'; becoming more valued than family members residing at home (Aday and Krabill, 2011). Thus, it can be particularly difficult when such a friend dies (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Hendry, 2009; Stevenson and McCutchen, 2006).

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The institution, the culture and the prisoner

Prisons are generally viewed as 'low trust' environments (Liebling and Arnold, 2004) where there is a male tendency to 'trust no-one, to keep silent about private pains and vulnerabilities, and then act aggressively to avoid talking about inner turmoil so as not to be seen as a weakling' (Hendry, 2008: 272). Daily existence can involve becoming 'submissive', 'passive' and 'compliant', with prison life becoming a lie - a place in which no-one can be real - and therefore no-one can be trusted (Liebling, 2011: 538).

Prison provides an environment where there is a huge quantity of time to fill, with limited opportunities to fill it with purposeful activities, and all the while the pain of loss can increase in intensity over time (Aday and Krabill, 2016). As a result of this, grief is frequently suspended until reality is realised upon release (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferszt, 2002). The degree to which bereaved prisoners cope following release has yet to be researched.

It is argued that civilised, democratic societies should only use incarceration as a means of last resort (Coyle, 2005), not least because those entering the criminal justice system are often already structurally disadvantaged through poverty, inequality and exclusion (Crighton and Towl, 2008; Yates, 2010). Moreover, the social, psychological, behavioural and emotional effects (Liebling and Maruna, 2005) of this means of punishment can be considerably harmful, not only during detention but also upon release (Irwin and Owen, 2005).

Should an individual be fated to such an outcome, he immediately is given the identity of '*prisoner*'. Upon entry he becomes *'managed'* via operationalisation of the regime and its protocols as a passive respondent rather than an active participant, becoming an '*object*' rather than a '*subject*' at the institutional level (Coyle, 2012). He and his peers are not a homogenous conglomeration of deviants (Coyle, 2012); rather, they comprise a diverse collection of marginalised, vulnerable individuals (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007) who have undergone a range of social losses, and frequently been bereaved (Olson and McEwen, 2004; Vaswani, 2015).

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The inmate culture

The holding together of a mass of individuals in a confined environment for long periods of time inevitably results in a social system: 'a society within a society' (Sykes, 1958: xii). To attain greater understanding of this culture a number of scholars have examined its impact on the people confined there.

Clemmer (1940/1958) investigated pre-prison socialisation, proposing that the inmate culture was imported from society, largely based on gender, social class and educational attainment, with adaptation evolving over time. He defined '*prisonization*' as 'the taking on, in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs and general culture of the penitentiary' (1940/1958: 299).

Sykes (1958), studying the New Jersey State Maximum Security Prison, asserted that all prisons contain a common set of inmate values arising from the conditions therein. He highlighted various situations which may appear as 'attacks on the personality', ie threats to security, self-esteem, and future life goals, with such extremely damaging subversive actions being damaging on a psychological level (1984: 64). Using these psychological difficulties, he identified five pains of imprisonment (mentioned earlier), as playing a dominant role within the prisoner society. Sykes recognised that negotiation was needed for the maintenance of order rather than the absolute enforcement of rules and regulations.

Goffman (1959) was concerned with the structure of social encounters using '*impression management*'. Accordingly, an individual has several selves, and while participating in a role, capacity is needed to refrain from involving himself in other patterns. Tension is expected to be controlled or discharged but if it is not monitored sufficiently it has a tendency to accumulate and explode (Toch, 1977).

Goffman extended Sykes' theory, and the indigenous approach (or deprivation model) was developed (Goffman, 1961; Sykes and Messinger, 1960). The various pains of imprisonment and society's rejection of criminals combined to unify prisoners and create a culture independent of wider society and separate to staff. The administration of power and the prison's organisational goals also

played a part. In a similar vein to Sykes, Goffman (1961) commented that upon entry into an establishment an individual's previous conception of himself is removed, having formerly been made possible by certain stable social arrangements in his home world, and he becomes systematically, and often unintentionally, '*mortified*'.

Further research criticised this model, maintaining that external forces have an integral part to play. The importation approach recognised the status, behaviour patterns, norms and values of a prisoner before imprisonment, and the influence these had on the prisoner subculture (Irwin, 1970; Irwin and Cressey, 1962). Irwin and Cressey reinvestigated the earlier notion that inmates may bring a culture with them into prison (1962). While recognising the deprivation model, they contended that it was overemphasised and believed the effect that external behaviour patterns have on prisoner conduct was overlooked. Referring to Clemmer's work, Mathiesen (1965) argued that the degree of involvement in the inmate culture was dependent on the extent of external contacts, the influence of primary social relations inside, and length of sentence. Both deprivation and importation models are now widely recognised as benefiting from integration to form a more complete picture (Thomas and Peterson, 1977; Zingraff, 1980), with measures of deprivation being considered as more important predictors of the degree of prisonization than are measures of importation (Paterline and Orr, 2016).

Crewe (2009) explored the concept of adaptation, describing how prisoners reflect on their particular circumstances, evaluate the options available and decide how to *'do time'* relative to their pre-prison characteristics. He found structural, institutional and external determinants interrelate, albeit distinctly for each prisoner, thereby resulting in a range of adaptive outcomes. Importantly, Crewe emphasised that some people regard prison as a form of security and safety from the outside world, while for others it signifies hopelessness.

When considering the effects of grief, then, it is necessary to acknowledge how previous loss has been handled - whether that has been via coping strategies that have been imported/adapted, or through the emergence of new means of coping within a male prison.

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Masculinity and culture

Sim has criticised many criminological studies as being research on 'men as prisoners rather than prisoners as men' (1994: 101). Sykes' (1958) reference to the deprivation of heterosexual relations highlighted the absence of femininity within a closed institution, necessitating that prisoners mark their identity through other means. Additionally, by disallowing inmates the conventional marker of masculinity, imprisonment imbues males with exaggerated masculine traits as a means of compensation for such deprivations (Crewe, 2012).

Using Gramsci's (1971) term, '*hegemony*', to develop and describe hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 832) stated it was: '… the currently most honoured way of being a man', requiring 'all other men to position themselves in relation to it' with hegemonic masculinity ideologically legitimating 'the global subordination of women to men'. Thus, hegemony relates to cultural dominance within a society, with particular gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men (Connell, 1995).

Connell changed her views on hegemonic masculinity over time, having previously viewed it as a single pattern of male dominance over women. In critiquing previous research undertaken on hegemonic masculinities, including Connell's work, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) proposed that masculinity is not a fixed construction embedded physically or as part of one's personality trait. Instead, it is a configuration of practice achieved through social action with the ability to alter according to the gender relations relative to a specific social setting (2005: 836). Accordingly, masculinity can be significantly re-shaped through economic and cultural change, with established means of expression being redefined and remoulded to align with a new social, cultural and economic environment (Winlow, 2001).

When focusing on masculinity it is necessary to dichotomise both men's and women's experiences, taking a relational approach to gender in the light of the 'other' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 837). The ratio of female: male prison officers has increased significantly since the time of Sykes' writing. This is also true for positions of governance. The environment has thus become more equal in terms of gender presence (Liebling et al, 2011), however, the fact

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that male prisoners are in a subordinate position to female staff members is nevertheless pertinent.

Gadd and Jefferson (2007) highlight the relevance of psychodynamics, with unresolved anxieties arising from childhood, additional vulnerabilities, and the process of splitting and projection all being factors in how masculinity is displayed. Ricciardelli et al (2015: 491) comment that an empowered masculine presence rather than a submissive presentation is employed by prisoners when they react to uncertainty and perceived risk (2015).

Accordingly, the ways in which more individualised interactions and subsequent support take place will depend on relationship-building between bereaved prisoners and those working alongside them.

Prison officers and the use of power

Prisons are heavily influenced by external effects, including the political context (Paterline and Orr, 2016). Staff power now allows deviant acts to be addressed through sanctions based on self-regulation and self-interest, such as the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme (Crewe, 2009). However, the psychological burden of imprisonment has become more intense, with the dynamics of power shifting quite dramatically and each prisoner being obliged to (or being seen to) engage on a much more personal and responsible level (Crewe, 2009).

Crewe and Liebling (2015) explored the over- and under-use of power in a range of prison settings, and identified different kinds of staff cultures and different modes of authority. Using a 'heavy-light, absent-present' framework, they point to the dangers of 'absence' of staff presence in both public and private sector prisons, identified by a low-cost, low-staff model. When the characteristic 'weight' of public sector imprisonment was combined, this resulted in staff being either standoffish or overbearing, creating a fertile environment for violence. Prisons operating under a 'heavy-absent' framework experienced more violence, and in those employing a 'light, present' touch, power is present, although it is neither intrusive nor oppressive.

In general, regimes are less authoritarian but more bureaucratic, using psychological power which relies on self-governance (Crewe, 2011). Kelly (2013) undertook a study to assess the nature and sources of punitive attitudes among prison staff at a maximum-security prison in Northern Ireland. The most punitive had the least experience and minimal contact with prisoners. Conversely, the least punitive had many years of service, with staff members being directly engaged in prisoner care and rehabilitation work.

Modern penal policy encourages ambiguity and uncertainty. Individuals are often forced to reduce social distance, thereby enabling both officers and prisoners to get their independent needs met (Crewe, 2009, 2011). Officers may capture information on changes in prisoner inter-relations for security purposes, while for prisoners it may relate to early release, privilege decisions and favourable wing reports, respectively (Crewe, 2009, 2011). Crucially, neither party is able to assume that the other is behaving genuinely (Crewe, 2011). Authenticity, thus, becomes problematic.

Emotion management undertaken by Prison Officers

'Emotional labour' is a term used to describe the acceptance by a worker of the '*feeling rules*' of emotion management considered necessary to serve the purpose of an organisation (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional and psychological adjustments are made as men and women begin their training, adapting to life as a prison officer (Crawley, 2011). Generally, these staff members become reluctant to acknowledge that they feel emotions or respond in emotional ways to the people and situations they encounter, with emotions often being denied, minimised, normalised and controlled (Arnold, 2016: 274). Cultural norms and rules direct appropriate emotional expression, defining the strategies they use to manage extreme emotions (Crawley, 2011).

As with many other direct-facing professions, officers need a range of coping mechanisms. Resorting to humour when work involves dealing with dead prisoners can be seen as heartless, as can the defence mechanism of working robotically. However, emotional distancing enables officers to deal with large numbers of prisoners and helps prevent conditioning (Crawley, 2011).

While the authoritarian prison of the past was oppressive but predictable, modern imprisonment is faceless, less restrictive and more difficult to navigate, with erratic and inconsistent boundaries resulting in ontological insecurity and an exacerbation of feelings of powerlessness (Crewe, 2009). Staff body language demonstrates internal thoughts and feelings without the use of language, with prisoners becoming aware of staff discomfort, superiority and aggression (Tait, 2012). Critically, the consistent professional manner in which staff work alongside prisoners and their ability to use first names and nicknames, chat about football or television programmes, become '*social levellers*' and a recognition of prisoners' humanity (2012: 20).

Staff culture shapes an establishment. Staff members bring occupational norms to bear on colleagues, resulting in them behaving in culturally specific ways, for example, through non-disclosure of personal distress (Tew et al, 2015). Occupational cultures in prisons are continually evolving, with their characters becoming dependent upon the type of prison, its history, the ratio between young and old staff, having more or less experience, the type of regime, the staff: prisoner ratio, rate of employee turnover, the prison architecture, and also the political and economic climate (Crawley and Crawley, 2008).

Staff-prisoner relationships are essential in helping provide stability. If these workers display a professionally consistent approach, this can instil prisoners' faith in their congruity and gain a sense of trust, compassion and acceptance (Tait, 2012). However, those with an 'uncaring' attitude who are hostile and inflexible are deemed unable to sense the individual needs and personal circumstances of a prisoner. Tait suggests the former helps alleviate the powerlessness and frustration of prison life, acting as a lever for prisoners to want to co-operate and give something back, whereas the latter intensifies powerlessness, depressive rumination and precipitates violence towards staff.

The role of Chaplaincy and religion within the penal landscape

Chaplains are responsible for providing pastoral and practical support to prisoners. They also help address religious issues. For example, profound loss such as bereavement can provoke a spiritual crisis, resulting in responses

ranging from questioning or rejecting a higher power (Neimeyer and Jordan, 2002) to becoming more religious (Kirkpatrick and Shaver, 1990). Prisoners have been known to turn to religion to 'fill a critical void' when experiencing the isolation of grief (Aday et al, 2014: 248).

The notion of religious adherence is somewhat ambiguous according to data obtained in prison and also in society. According to HM Chief Inspector of Prisons' Annual Report, 2017-18, 70% of males reported having a religion, with faith provision continuing to be a strength in many prisons, served by 'a diverse range of chaplains to meet the faith needs of their population' (2018: 34). In contrast, the British Social Attitudes Survey found that in 2013, 50.6% of people described themselves as adhering to 'no religion' (Woodhead, 2016). Woodhead asserts that this upward trend, commencing at 31.4% in 1983, is set to continue, 'because of the youthful age profile of the '*nones'* (emphasis added): the younger you are the more likely you are to be one', (2016: 247). Hunt and Read (2018) propose that the multi-faith chaplaincy team in its current format alienates atheist and non-faith prisoners, who have an entitlement to support relevant to their individual belief system. They call for the appointment of non-religious pastoral carers to afford the same opportunity to prisoners of no faith.

The Chaplaincy team is expected to play a critical and creative role within the wider prison setting by helping maintain harmony, encourage personal reflection and questioning (Liebling et al, 2011). However, a Chaplain must not visit a prisoner against his/her will nor subject a prisoner to unwanted or unsolicited persuasion to change their religious affiliation (NOMS, 2016: 17). Thus, proselytising - or trying to persuade someone to join a religious group - is forbidden.

In terms of '*risk*', which is a fundamental aspect of prison work (Crawley, 2005), Hicks (2012) maintains that chaplains have to constantly use it as a lens through which to look at and evaluate situations to prevent them from escalating. Further, she suggests that '*institutional props*' such as keys, remote radios and lanyards which distinguish them from inmates and visitors, identify

them as belonging to the community of prison staff and demonstrate symbols of authority.

Todd and Tipton (2011: 33) depict the chaplain as a form of counter-cultural agent within today's prison service – 'employed by, yet in many ways set in opposition to, many of its characteristic discourses'. They explain this frees chaplains from being associated with the pain and loss of liberty of imprisonment, allowing them to maintain a unique, and somewhat distinctive position. Assuming this identity as partly institutional mythology, as civil servants, Todd and Tipton suggest they have a responsibility to maintain security, while also having the powers of more flexible ways of working than other staff members. As such, chaplains maximise this situation in order to provide a stable influence in what is potentially an often unstable environment. This may offer a useful juxtaposition, particularly when chaplains are in four-way contact with grieving prisoners, staff, external organisations and family members.

For chaplains to work effectively with grief-related issues, it is vital they have a good understanding of how grief can impact on individuals, in differing ways. Grief theory can help provide a useful foundation from which to work effectively.

Grief-related theory

Theoretical concepts briefly covered include attachment and loss, the Dual Process Model of coping with grief, continuing bonds, meaning-making and disenfranchised grief.

Attachment and Loss Theory

> … there is a common core to grief that is rooted in the attachments that we make to the people and objects around us. How that grief is expressed … is determined by social and other factors … (Parkes, 2001: 41).

John Bowlby (1982) viewed attachment as a class of social behaviour of equal importance to that of mating behaviour and parental behaviour. Attachment and Loss theory, developed by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), recognises that

patterns of attachment, developed early on between the child and caregiver, are retained and taken forward across the lifecourse. These patterns determine later grieving patterns (Parkes, 2006). Bowlby's theorising was greatly influenced by the work of Mary Ainsworth and others who devised the 'Strange Situation' procedure (Ainsworth et al, 1978). This experiment assessed individual differences in the organisation of attachment behaviour towards the mother in young children aged twelve months. Findings resulted in the identification of three main patterned responses (in the following order):

Pattern B – (secure) feels comfortable when close to others; mutually trusting; able to express distress and also receive support.

Pattern A – (avoidant) has feelings of discomfort when close to others; lacks trust in others, so relies on self-care.

Pattern C – (ambivalent) needs to cling to others, but this can result in others' reluctance to get close, scaring them away; expresses emotion openly; ruminates and becomes preoccupied; lacks trust in self, and sees others in a more positive light.

Mary Main (1991) added a fourth type known as disorganised attachment, accounting for extreme cases in which children have failed to form any kind of attachment relationship.

Pattern A/C, or type D – (disorganised) often trauma has been experienced; elements of both avoidant and ambivalent kinds of attachment behaviour are displayed; cannot recognise their own self-worth, and lack trust towards others; lacking in a defensive strategy to protect against feelings of anxiety; adoption of a *'frozen'* stance during both separation and reunion; inability to display feeling or emotion.

Accordingly, attachment behaviour roughly similar to that displayed by 4 year-olds, generally continues throughout early school years, developing as a dominant strand throughout life (Bowlby, 1982). During adolescence and adulthood some attachment behaviour can be directed towards individuals belonging to groups and institutions other than the family, for example school, college, a work group, or a religious group, acting as a subordinate attachment

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figure (1982: 207). When an attachment bond cannot be directed to a member of the older generation due to old age, it may come instead to be directed towards a younger one, thus emphasising the importance of attachment bonds throughout the life-course (Bowlby, 1982; Cassidy and Shaver, 1999).

Bowlby (1982) proposed that if a primary caregiver satisfies a child's attachment needs, the child feels safe and secure. It forms a secure attachment bond, and when placed in a stressful situation it seeks the attachment figure in order to obtain nurturance and protection. Furthermore, Bowlby asserted that an 'internal working model', based on the history of the child's early attachment relationships, serves as a basis for future relationships. If a less than secure experience occurred for the child in which attachment needs were not met, an insecure model would be used as a template in the future. An image of the self can be recognised as positive, or unworthy (negative), while models of others may be positive (caring and available), or negative (unreliable or rejecting) (Stroebe et al, 2005). As a consequence, it is estimated that approximately 60% of the general population has a secure attachment style, with 40% having one of the three insecure attachment styles (Van IJzendoorn, 1995).

Fonagy (2001) outlines examples of various critiques of attachment theory, particularly in relation to the tenets of the psychoanalytic tradition, including: renouncement of primitive ego drives, complex internalised motivational and conflict-resolving systems; lack of recognition of the wide variety of human emotions; failure to recognise biological vulnerabilities aside from those based on the caregiver's behaviour; and, the developmental state of a child's ego concerning ability to form attachments and respond to loss. However, more recently the two disciplines have recognised mutually common foundations (Fonagy et al, 2018), culminating in a recognition of Mentalising theory, or reflective functioning (a child's capacity to understand interpersonal behaviour in relation to mental states) (Fonagy et al, 2002) and epistemic trust. This allows social learning to take place in an environment which is constantly changing (Fonagy et al, 2015).

As has been described, one's attachment style can influence the nature of grief

following the death of an attachment figure (Stroebe et al, 2005), with the threat of loss creating anxiety, profound pain and sorrow – and in a minority of cases - leading some people to become outraged (Bowlby, 1982; Parkes, 2006). Stroebe et al (2005) propose that ambivalent copers grieve the most intensely, frequently ruminating and speaking of their loss - but not in a constructive manner – which can result in chronic grief. These scholars suggest avoidant copers are less expressive in their grieving and less likely to confront their grief, which can lead to 'absent, delayed or inhibited grief in extreme cases'. Finally, they propose that people with a disorganised attachment style, having often experienced trauma, also become prone to unresolved grief.

Ogilvie et al (2014) undertook a systematic review of the literature through meta-analysis of 2,798 offenders, examining whether an insecure attachment style could be associated with criminality. Associations were indeed found between insecure attachment and both criminality and mental health issues, with mentally disordered offenders being more likely to have an avoidant attachment style. Violent offenders were more insecure in their attachments than non-violent offenders, with violence increasing as felt attachment security decreases. Limitations to this review included an exclusion of studies relating to juvenile and female offenders, and the fact there was little data concerning disorganised attachment in adult, male offenders (Ogilvie et al, 2014).

High anxiety and avoidance – associated with attachment responses – can result in Prolonged Grief Disorder (Bowlby, 1980; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2008). Moreover, individuals who have developed a disorganised attachment pattern during childhood are less well able to cope with traumatic bereavement in adult life than more securely attached people, resulting in high distress levels, and a more complex grief outcome (Parkes, 2006). Individuals with attachment anxiety are more inclined to seek professional support, exaggerating their distress in order to ensure they receive support from others (Vogel and Wei, 2005). Because avoidant individuals are reluctant to acknowledge any distress, which fails to show up on self-report distress measures, they do not perceive the need to seek professional help (2005: 354). Interestingly, Fonargy et al

(1996) found that residential psychiatric patients who benefited most from one-to-one/group therapy were those with an avoidant attachment style.

Despite the pain of grief, people with insecure attachments styles *can* learn to cope with future distress reasonably successfully, following suitable support (Parkes, 2006). Ogilvie et al (2014) recommend attachment perspectives being given more consideration when designing programs for prisoners and that if, as a result of this, secure attachment bonds can be formed, it may serve as a protective factor, particularly against future violent recidivism.

The Dual Process Model of coping with bereavement

Stroebe and Schut (1999) developed the Dual Process Model (DPM) - a framework to demonstrate the various stressors incurred following the death of a loved one - having recognised there were limitations in what is understood in the grief field as the '*Grief Work hypothesis*' (Stroebe, 1992). The Grief Work hypothesis was the most widely accepted theory at the time (Richardson, 2010), being described using models such as Worden's (1982) four tasks of mourning, and Parkes' (1972) and Bowlby's (1980) phase models of grief. These models make the assumption that the bereaved person cognitively confronts the reality of a death, reflects on memories of the deceased and undertakes a process of detachment. The bereaved person is expected to '*pass through*' or actively work towards healthy resolution using the tasks or phases (Worden, 2010: 38). Whilst they were not meant to be addressed in a linear manner, there was an absence of showing *how* grievers navigated them (Stroebe and Schut, 1999).

Stroebe and Schut recognised the importance of better describing both successful and poor adaptation, and incorporating individual differences in the ways people of different cultures and communities adjust following a bereavement. As a result, the DPM became widely established as a useful visual model to help explain grief, having been successfully used across a number of different continents (Stroebe and Schut, 2016). Additional limitations of the grief work hypothesis were put forward by Stroebe and Schut. There was lack of recognition of both confronting and avoiding grief, interpersonal processes, gendered coping, health outcomes, failure to account for dynamic

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processing and a lack of empirical evidence and validation across cultures and historical periods (2016). Moreover, the DPM can demonstrate a variety of coping processes, thereby predicting (non)adaptive outcomes (Stroebe and Schut, 2010).

Three central constructs form the basis of the DPM (loss-oriented coping, restoration-oriented coping and oscillation) and these were developed using concepts from Chronic Stress Theory (Folkman, 2001; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and the Stress Response Syndrome (Horowitz, 1986). Aspects from Lazarus and Folkman's work included: the causes of stress, assessment of the threat, how the threat is dealt with, and the outcome (for example in terms of health outcomes) (Stroebe and Schut, 2010). Horowitz drew attention to the frequency and intensity of what would be regarded as normal manifestations following shocking and traumatic life events, and the relevance of both intrusion (re-experiencing feelings associated with the event) and avoidance (denying intrusive thoughts of the event) (Stroebe and Schut, 2010).

The DPM defines two categories of stressors which a bereaved person needs to actively confront for healthy adaptation: stressors being perceived as concerns, preoccupations or burdens which need confronting and addressing or dealing with in some way (Stroebe and Schut, 2016). '*Loss-orientation*' (LO) refers to appraising and processing the loss, and recognising a changed bond between the bereaved and the deceased person. '*Restoration-orientation*' (RO) refers to the struggle to reorient oneself without the dead person. RO stressors arise purely as an indirect result of the death occurring, with these secondary stressors not manifesting had the individual remained alive. The grieving individual at times confronts and at other times avoids both types of stressor. Stroebe and Schut argue that emotion regulation is necessary. Oscillation is a 'dynamic, regulatory coping process', through confronting and at other times avoiding stressors, and taking time out to engage in activities which are not related to the bereavement, in order to relax and recuperate (2016: 99).

Figure 1 *The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement (Stroebe and Schut, 1999).*

Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement
(Stroebe& Schut, 1999)
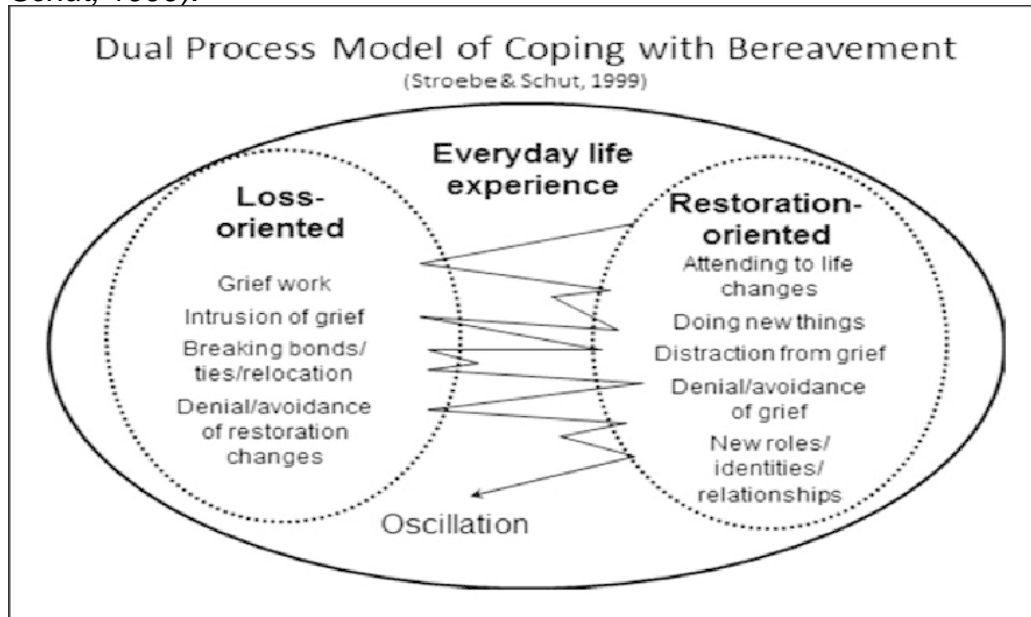
(Permission obtained from M. Stroebe and H. Schut to reproduce this and other figures on pp 33 and 277.)

Stroebe and Schut refined their original model to widen recognition of its applicability, through incorporating grief 'overload' (Stroebe and Schut, 2010; 2015; 2016). This concept had not been the focus of attention in previous grief models which aimed to explain coping (Stroebe and Schut, 2016). Stress overload was identified by Stroebe and Schut (2016: 97) as, 'having more to cope with than one feels one can manage'.

When either LO stressors or RO stressors become an exclusive focus of attention, with avoidance of the other stressor, they can become both psychologically and physiologically exhausting (Stroebe et al, 2005). Stroebe and Schut used the DPM (above) as a framework for understanding how individuals experience chronic grief, absent grief and a traumatic reaction, with the latter being evident, for example following traumatic bereavement. Chronic grief results when too much focus is placed on LO stressors, and absent grief when there is too little focus on LO stressors. Absent grief is restoration-oriented, recognised for continually avoiding confronting the reality of loss, while attempting to evoke a persona of normality. Also, traumatic bereavements result in highly intense and relentless periods of confronting on the one hand,

and failing to confront on the other, leading to an inability to regulate a balanced dosage and erratic oscillation (Stroebe and Schut, 2016).

Suls and Fletcher (1985) found that '*avoidant*' coping strategies are associated with a more positive adaptation in the short-term, with 'attention' strategies being associated with more positive long-term outcomes (ie confronting and attending to the loss). Thus, avoidance can be both adaptive and maladaptive when one is confronted with bereavement (Shear, 2010).

Figure 2 *The Dual Process Model and the effects of multiple stressors, leading to overload (Stroebe and Schut, 2016).*

DPM:
Effects of Multiple Stressors

Everyday Life
Stressors Overload

Loss-
Oriented
Overload

Dual-
Orientation
Overload

Restoration-
Oriented
Overload
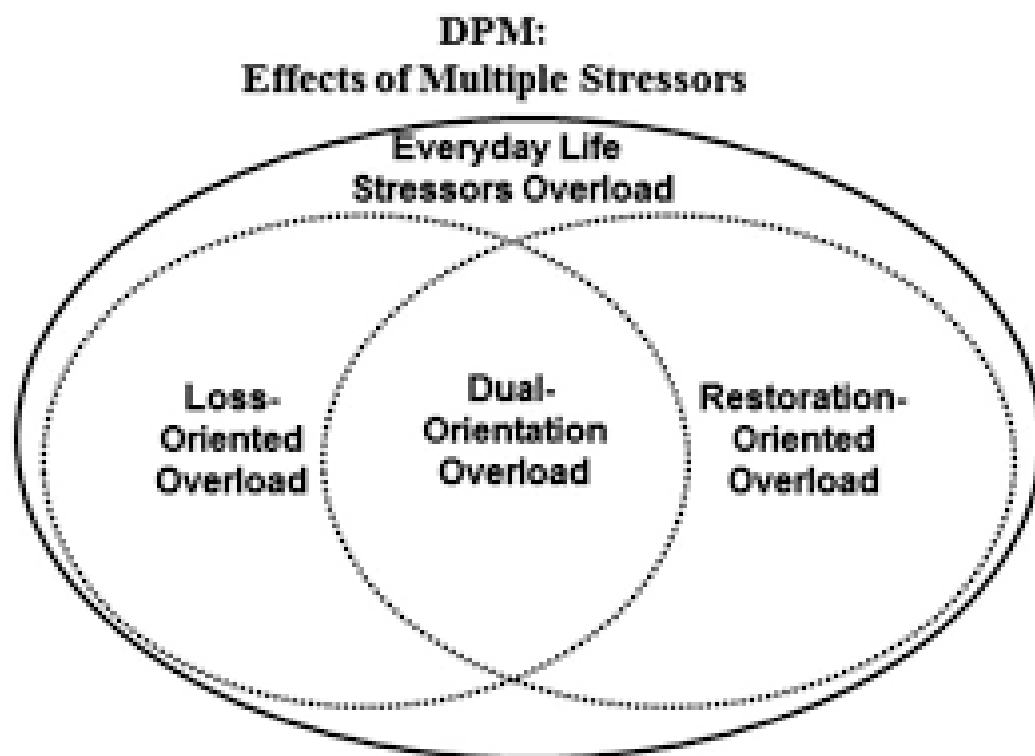
Stroebe and Schut's answer to grief overload draws on the work of Dyregrov and Dyregrov (2008), through 'taking action to gain control over the overload' (2016: 103). Openness and a recognition of personal needs are paramount, alongside both formal and informal support as a means of reducing the feelings of overload. Critically, overload links to 'feelings of disturbed well-being, upset, and anxiety', and is also connected to 'various other mental and physical ailments and disorders' (Stroebe and Schut, 2016: 103).

Continuing bonds

Scholarly views on retaining or relinquishing a continuing bond with the deceased have altered dramatically over the last few decades. A fundamental aspect of earlier grief theories was the notion of detachment with the deceased so that recovery could be achieved (Bowlby, 1980; Freud, 1917/1957; Lindemann, 1944) through emotional withdrawal (Worden, 2010) and the undoing of psychological bonds (Raphael, 1984). In contrast, postmodern thinking proposes that maintaining 'an ongoing inner relationship with the deceased person by the bereaved individual' (Stroebe et al, 2005: 477) is a healthy means of coping, rather than an indicator of pathology (Attig, 2001; Field, 2006; Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996).

Linked to continuing bonds is Parkes' (1988) psychosocial transition framework. The bereaved person readjusts his/her assumptions about the world and life to come to terms with death, in line with the constructivist model of grief, used in meaning-making (Neimeyer et al, 2006), outlined next. Accordingly, researchers have begun exploring how ongoing bonds are socially constructed, resulting in a multi-dimensional approach being created. Valentine explored the nature of continuing bonds and uncovered a range of meanings with varying cultural emphases, including: 'mutuality', 'contact initiated by the deceased person', 'continuity and change', 'rediscovering the deceased person', and 'respecting the deceased person's wishes' (2008: 126). In the light of these meanings, Valentine's research participants were able to convey an intersubjective experience of identity, personhood and agency, which provided mutual support, validation and empowerment (2008: 127).

When successfully internalised, a healthy bond can be maintained with the deceased person that fully recognises the termination of a physical bond (Field, 2008). Positive continuing bonds may involve one's life trajectory being shaped (Currier et al, 2015) through internalising the deceased's values/belief system (Klass, 1993), or using the deceased as a role model (Marwit and Klass, 1996). Furthermore, conversations with the deceased may bring comfort, and guidance with problem solving (Currier et al, 2015). However, when the reality of death fails to be acknowledged through the use of appropriate continuing

bond expressions, this can result in maladaptive coping, often caused by the defensive efforts of the griever to confront the reality of death (Field, 2008).

Despite a number of studies being undertaken, it is suggested that firm conclusions cannot be readily made regarding the adaptive quality of continuing bonds (Root and Exline, 2014; Stroebe et al, 2005; 2012). Accordingly, further suitable research designs are called for which can capture the complexity of the continuing bond and its relation to bereavement-related adaptation (Field, 2008).

Meaning-making

Rooted in constructivism, the meaning-reconstruction model (Neimeyer, 1998) refers to a bereaved person initiating a search for new meaning following a significant death, by constructing a new self-narrative. Meaning-reconstruction recognises both the cultural and social dimensions of grief (Neimeyer et al, 2014), with '*meaning in life*' referring to the extent to which individuals recognise purpose and order in their lives, and the pursuit and achievement of worthwhile goals (Archer, 1999: 146). Assimilation - through understanding the event set against pre-loss assumptions - may take place, or the loss may be accommodated through the re-organisation, expansion or replacement of previously held assumptions, with these earlier assumptions never being held in the same regard again following a traumatic life event (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

'*Meaning-making*', as it is recognised within the grief field, can be closely linked to Viktor Frankl's early work and his assertion that the main motivation to live lies in the will to find meaning in life (1959). Authoring the book, '*Man's Search for Meaning*', and recognising the existential givens of death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness (Yalom, 1980), Frankl, having survived living in a Nazi concentration camp, describes the will to find meaning in the most abhorrent circumstances. Frankl is concerned with phenomenological ontology. In other words, it is man's responsibility to contemplate and take meaning from the very fact of '*being in the world*', and recognise how one's subjective meanings are formulated based on personal experience of life-changing events, often over which one has no control (Frankl, 1959; 1967).

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'*Normal*' and anticipated bereavements may not need a reappraisal of one's self-narrative in the same way that a sudden and traumatic death may trigger a revision of life's meanings (Coleman and Neimeyer, 2010). In the latter case, Neimeyer et al (2009: 10) argue that for a minority of people, grief 'may become nearly a life sentence', whereby a bereavement can seriously challenge the validity of one's core beliefs, destabilising previously-held assumptions concerning one's self-narrative. It is suggested that problematic bereavements, 'may be inhibited by obstacles to making sense of the loss' (Valentine et al, 2016: 295). Examples of these 'special deaths', which are deemed particularly difficult and often involve a high level of psychosocial trauma, include murder, a drugs overdose, death of a child, and a secret relationship (Holloway, 2007: 80). Further, the bereaved individual may benefit from becoming 'an active learner and agent' in his own 'process of change', by finding a 'new framework of '*belief*', in order that he can re-locate his experience (Holloway, 2007: 82). Meaning-making, thus, can help establish 'a thread of consistency and significance in the midst of a turbulent transition' (Neimeyer et al, 2009: 10).

Disenfranchised grief

Doka (1989: 4) describes '*disenfranchised grief*' as being '*grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported*'. Societies which disenfranchise grief can be guided by specific values or principles 'at the expense of an overarching interest in the welfare of all their members', with this being not only hurtful to individual members of society but to society itself (Corr, 1998-99: 5). Thompson (2012) suggests that when an individual becomes unsure whether they should be capable of receiving respect as a legitimate griever, then helplessness and hopelessness can set in. This leads to an uncaring attitude, and destructive behaviour being directed inwardly, or outwardly in the form of reckless behaviour (Thompson, 2012).

When societies incorporate grieving rules that can both define and limit the role of a grieving person (Doka, 2002), grief becomes '*policed*' (Walter, 2000). Particular forms of grief expression may be valid within some cultures, whilst in others they may be disparaged or deemed inappropriate (Doka, 2002).

Prisoners commonly experience disenfranchised grief within the prison culture (Ferszt, 2002; Leach et al, 2008; Masterton, 2014; Olson and McEwen, 2004). Hendry suggests that the obstacles which prevent loss and grief to be adequately dealt with are formidable (2009), with harsh living conditions often resulting in prisoners being resistant to process painful emotions relating to grief and loss (Aday and Krabill, 2016). Prisoners are encouraged not to express sadness (Jervis, 2018). As a result, grief may intensify when others fail to socially acknowledge it, leading to repression and manifestations of both anger and guilt (Attig, 2004; Parkes and Prigerson, 2010).

It is suggested that those entering the criminal justice system are likely to have experienced more multiple, sudden and traumatic deaths than would commonly be found within the general population, including murder and suicide (Vaswani, 2014). Such '*bad deaths*', including substance misuse, can attract condemnation, causing the bereaved person to feel stigmatised and isolated (Valentine et al, 2016). Importantly, Attig (2004: 200-201) draws attention to the empathic, political, and ethical failures which mark the denial of a mourner's '*right to grieve*', asserting that it is 'an ethical failure not to respect the bereaved both in their suffering and in their efforts to overcome it and live meaningfully again in the aftermath of loss'. He also refers to disenfranchised grief as being an abuse of authority 'when others presume to know, but do not actually understand, a mourner's suffering or efforts to overcome it' (2004: 202).

Criminological theory

I consider the most relevant theories linking bereavement to the onset of offending behaviour are Bowlby's Attachment theory (1944; 1969; 1973; 1980), Agnew's Strain theory (1992, 1997, 2001), and his theory of Crime Resistance and Susceptibility (Agnew, 2016), although I argue that none fully capture the essence and power of grief in its relation to offending behaviour from a holistic viewpoint. Holmes and Rahe (1967: 216) devised the Social Readjustment Rating scale, demonstrating the magnitude of events based on life stress, emotional stress and '*object loss*', and subsequent adjustment needed. The first five rankings out of a total of 43 different stressors were found to be: 1 Death of spouse; 2 Divorce; 3 Marital separation; 4 Jail term; 5 Death of a close

family member. The six highest rankings of The Adolescent Life Stress inventory (Yeaworth et al, 1980), comprising 31 items, include: 1 A parent dying; 2 Brother or sister dying; 3 Close friend dying; 4 Parents getting divorced or separated; 5 Failing one or more subjects in school; 6 Being arrested by the police. Accordingly, a significant bereavement, as perceived by both adults and adolescents, is one of the most stressful of life experiences encountered.

It is generally agreed that the proliferation of theories which currently attempt to explain offending behaviour should be viewed as complementing one another; these theories being divided into four groups (Howitt, 2018: 64):

1 societal, or macro-level theories (based upon social structure and the inequalities surrounding this).

2 community, or locality level theories (concerned, for example, with economic deprivation, leading to increased social difficulties, and thus difficulties in discouraging crime).

3 group and socialisation influence theories (such as direct social interaction through family and friends, and whether they directly determine if an individual becomes involved in offending behaviour or not).

4 individual level theories (relating to individual psychological and biological difference, for example, the characteristics of certain groups which make them susceptible to committing crime).

In line with Howitt's assertion above, I also believe a combination of the broad theories delineated can interlink and complement one another when considering the relationship between bereavement and offending behaviour. However, for the purpose of this limited literature review, only the theoretical concepts which seem of most relevance will be briefly addressed. These comprise: Attachment and Loss theory (Bowlby, 1944), General Strain theory (Agnew, 2001), the theory of Crime Resistance and Susceptibility (Agnew, 2016), the theory of Cognitive Transformation (Giordano et al, 2002), Post-traumatic Growth theory (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995), and the phenomenology of desistance (Maruna, 2001).

Bowlby's 44 juvenile thieves

Bowlby's theoretical assumptions concerning attachment and loss (1969; 1973; 1980) are referred to earlier in terms of their contribution towards developing a greater understanding of individual attachment behaviour and subsequent coping styles following loss. In terms of criminological recognition, Bowlby's influential 75-year old study, entitled 'Forty-four juvenile thieves' (1944), identified the common occurrence of maternal separation and subsequent delinquent behaviour. A group of 31 boys and 13 girls had all committed theft, more than half of whom were younger than the age of 11. The youngsters were matched with a control group of children and young people, similarly balanced in intelligence, age and economic status. The notion of prolonged separation from a mother or foster-mother was highlighted by Bowlby as the most significant factor in the young people's biographical life stories, with attention being paid to the resulting psychological and behavioural effects found, including raised levels of depression, over-activity, lack of affection and the presence of schizophrenic symptoms. This paper was pivotal in developing an understanding of what would nowadays be termed '*Reactive Attachment Disorder*' (Follan and Minnis, 2010). The accounts included various biopsychosocial factors, including the children's emotional and social development, the prevalence of trauma, and the impact of socio-economic deprivation.

Crucially, in addition to consideration of the above factors, I would like to draw attention to the rate of deaths incurred. Other significant deaths had been recorded in Bowlby's notes, apart from the nine deceased mothers mentioned. These included: three fathers, five siblings and a great aunt who was one child's main carer while his mother worked. Other key figures had also died, such as an estranged father, plus siblings who had been killed or died by other means before the participants' birth, which may have had an indirect impact on surviving family members at the time. Maternal separation – either temporary or permanent – was given the most prominent attention in comparison to the other deaths Bowlby logged. Interestingly, considering the age group of the

children, there were no recorded deaths of grandparents. Such family members are those most likely to die, due to the natural order of life.

Critiques of Bowlby's study on the 44 juvenile thieves included the assertion that the main factor in the development of difficulties was the result of maltreatment, with several accounts including evidence of abuse, rejection and abandonment (Follan and Minnis, 2010). Further, it has been argued that infants also become closely attached to the father, grandparents, siblings, and others (Rutter, 1972; Schaffer and Emerson, 1964). In the light of Bowlby's study and later critiques, it would seem that a number of factors contributed towards offending behaviour in this group of young people.

In respect of Bowlby's ratio of boys compared to girls, males commit more criminal offences than females, and theorists have sought greater understanding of this fact (Block et al, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1993; Zimmerman and Messner, 2010). Robert Agnew and Lisa Broidy (1997) asserted that males and females experience different strain types, differently, with gender differentiating emotional response to strain, differences in coping, social support, opportunities, social control and the disposition to engage in crime. Agnew further theorised about the effects of strain on individuals who become criminals.

Theories developed by Agnew

As distinct from the sociological Strain theory proposed by Merton (1968) in regard to the attainment of goals, Agnew proposed a General Strain theory of Crime (Agnew, 2001: 319) which recognised some strains as being:

1 Seen as unjust

2 High in magnitude or duration, or being recent

3 Associated with low social control

4 Fundamental in creating some pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping, for example involvement in drugs.

General Strain theory argued that strains can increase the prospect of experiencing negative emotions such as anger and frustration (Agnew, 1992).

It pointed to several new categories of strain, including the loss of positive stimuli, such as, 'death of a friend', in association with 'the presentation of negative stimuli', for example physical assault (Agnew, 2001: 319). Using a different approach to Howitt (2018), earlier, in describing the wide range of theories which help explain the propensity towards crime, Agnew (2016: 201) proposes they can largely be situated under four overarching themes:

1 Strains (pressures for crime)

2 Social learning (attractions to crime)

3 Controls (restraints against crime)

4 Factors affecting resistance and susceptibility.

Agnew's (2016: 200) Theory of Crime Resistance and Susceptibility draws heavily on constructionist perspectives, resilience research, General Strain theory, and several additional bodies of literature lying inside and outside criminology. It has been proposed by Agnew (2016) that individuals high in resistance (either through internal or external controls), experience the same events and conditions that motivate crime in others, but they do not experience them as pressures for or attractions to crime. Conversely, he asserts that when susceptibility is high, some people are at more risk than others to experience events and conditions outlined in strain and social learning theories as pressures for, or attractions to, crime. Agnew further proposes four factors which affect resistance and susceptibility levels towards criminogenic events. These are: negativity in terms of the extent to which individuals view particular events and conditions as bad and unjust; pleasure and sensation seeking; conventional efficacy and perceived legal social support; and general sensitivity to the environment in terms of responsivity to a range of environmental influences (Agnew, 2016: 184). The situation is expected to be made worse when there is a lack of social support and minimal coping skills, often giving rise to unlawful behaviour. Furthermore, only Agnew's (2016: 201) theory focuses on those factors that affect the reaction to strains when taking account of both susceptibility and resistance.

Desistance from crime

Calverley (2013: i) regards desistance from crime, the 'cessation and curtailment of offending behaviour', as a phenomenon that should be regarded as a process rather than an event. Many theories have attempted to explain what causes desistance, but the theoretical assumptions most likely to incorporate bereavement as a factor in influencing desistance from crime are the theory of Cognitive Transformation (Giordano et al, 2002), identity reconstruction using symbolic interactionism and life scripts (Maruna et al, 2004), and the notion of post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995).

Based on the premise that a prisoner is aware of the potential for change and willing to engage in a period of reflection (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Farrall and Bowling, 1999), there needs to be an opportunity or a significant event which can provide a '*hook*', or '*turning point*', to place the individual on a new trajectory, leading to non-offending. '*Turning points*' can be recognised as an 'alteration or deflection in a long-term pathway or trajectory that was initiated at an earlier point in time' (Sampson and Laub, 2005: 16). This process of moving onto a new trajectory was thought to be beneficial to enable the '*knifing off*' of the past in order to invest in new supportive relationships which foster growth, become involved in activities which are more reminiscent of conventional life, and undergo an identity transformation (2005: 16).

Theory of Cognitive Transformation

Giordano et al (2002: 1000-1002) developed the theory of Cognitive Transformation: a four-stage process, involving: a general openness to change; experience of and reaction to 'hooks for change'; the recognition of a respectable 'replacement self'; and, a change of view towards criminal behaviour. Farrall and Bowling (1999) assert that personal agency and social structures should combine in order for the hook or turning point to be efficacious.

Redemption scripts and identity reconstruction

Based on the findings of the Liverpool Desistance Study, Maruna (2001: 8) outlined a '*phenomenology of desistance*', having undertaken interviews with 30

desisters and 20 persistent offenders to identify the psychosocial structures that undergirded their narratives. He found that some men's perspectives referred to a '*condemnation script*' which outlined their fated situation. However, others who could recognise agency within themselves in order to control the future, could find meaning in their lives and were able to desist from crime. Maruna (2001: 7) proposed that rather than '*knifing off*' their past criminal lives, individuals need to '*make sense*' of their experiences through the construction and reconstruction of the self-narrative by integrating 'one's perceived past, present and anticipated future'. In other words, the reformed men were able to use a '*redemption script*' to transform their past difficult lives into an existence which was both useful and optimistic for the future. Thus, it was considered important that new meanings should be created and developed by means of a socially-based understanding of reality (Maruna et al, 2004). A 'pro-social identity' also encouraged some to help others who had been through similar circumstances. Notably, such a profound alteration in personal agency was often accredited to empowerment from an outside source, with people often offering 'strangely trivial' explanations for desisting (Maruna, 2001: 25).

In tandem with Giordano et al's (2002) theory of Cognitive Transformation, Giordano and colleagues (2007) suggest that as a result of a changed identity, the individual's negative emotions which gave rise to crime may diminish, positive emotions which prompted crime may decrease, and the individual may become better able to handle a range of emotions more successfully. Also recognising that emotions and strong feelings can motivate behaviour, Farrall and Calverley (2006) found that the individual becomes much more likely to be trusted by family following a changed identity, and it is these changes in feelings which can reinforce the desire to stay out of trouble, and help connect and reconnect people to wider social groupings.

Post-traumatic growth

Finally, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995, 1996, 2004) developed Post-traumatic Growth theory – the process of personal growth emanating from a traumatic experience. These scholars understood that time itself does not heal, instead it is the experiences and coping mechanisms used to deal with the aftermath of

trauma which are transformative (1995: 27). While lives become forever changed, they become '*deepened*' - which helps individuals relate more easily to others - and recognise their own 'vulnerability, power, and self-reliance' (1995: 39). As a result, taking on new, personally meaningful challenges becomes possible. Using a cognitive framework, and recognising the importance of confronting spiritual issues, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) emphasised the importance of nurturing a new sense of power. They highlighted the relevance of being at peace with oneself and the giving up of: 'old assumptions, hopes; belief systems; and, in particular, notions of invulnerability and personal power, and harsh judgments of self and others' (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995: 137).

Redemption scripts recognise the inherent goodness within the individual, and with the help of an 'outside force' who believes in the individual, the 'narrator is able to accomplish what he or she was 'always meant to do' (Maruna, 2001: 87). Rather than recognising the 'outside force' as a living entity, based on the empirical data collected in the field, this thesis considers the possibility that it is a deceased significant person who can become the '*turning point*', or '*hook for change*', and a factor in the trajectory leading to post-grief growth and putative desistance from criminal activity.

Summary

With the benefit of working at the interface of the thanatological and criminological fields, the two discrete bodies of knowledge were interrogated to synthesise theoretical concepts in order to provide a fresh perspective on serving prisoners and address existing gaps in knowledge. Vaswani's (2008, 2014, 2015, 2018a; Vaswani et al, 2016) body of work relates to the effects of grief and other losses on young people in the criminal justice system, however, their adult male counterparts have not hitherto received the same empirical attention. Much has been written about the experience of grief within a range of cultures globally (see Parkes et al, 2015; Rosenblatt, 2008; Walter, 2015). Yet the interpersonal effects of grief have not been examined between prisoners and those who control and care for them in a constantly evolving, confined

culture, which is influenced by complex social organisation and punishment practices (Liebling, 2014).

While attachment and loss theory linked bereavement to offending behaviour in adolescents 75 years ago (Bowlby, 1944), Bowlby's early work has failed to be developed by later empirical research to gain a greater understanding of attachment, loss and grief across a criminal's offending career trajectory. Significantly, positive and negative grief stressors in prison – and particularly those of an excessive nature – have thus far not been examined in detail to ascertain their resulting effects upon the grieving process. Although it has frequently been alluded to and minimally commented upon, this links to an absence in the criminology literature indicating how excessive grief relates to the onset of offending behaviour. Furthermore, while it is recognised that post-grief growth does occur and can result in resilience against future loss (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995, 1996, 2004) this concept has not been explored within the process of possible future desistance from crime.

It was necessary to devise a methodology which would answer the research questions and help fill knowledge gaps, while being ethically robust and adhering to the demands of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in relation to conducting research in a custodial setting. The following chapter describes how this was undertaken.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains why I wanted to explore the concept of grief in a prison setting. It then proceeds to show how the research developed, and the various considerations made in respect of paradigmatic approaches and the chosen data collection methods. A description is provided of the route taken in order to obtain the necessary ethical approvals, following which an outline is sketched describing how I worked in the field. Details are given as to how I undertook participant observation, alongside semi-structured interviews with 23 bereaved prisoners, 23 members of staff and 3 volunteers: the fieldwork being undertaken between March – August 2017. An explanation has been presented demonstrating how adapted grounded theory was used to inform data collection and analyse the data. Due to the weightiness of the topic being studied, personal health and wellbeing became important personal considerations, and a reflexive account is provided. Finally, pen portraits are provided of the 23 prisoner participants.

Background information and rationale for the research

The pilot study I undertook in 2009 (Wilson, 2010, 2011) as part of an MA in Counselling, exploring the efficacy of a bereavement support group for male, Category C prisoners, used a mixed methods approach. The results suggested that a grief-focused group intervention, when offered alongside one-to-one support, could be useful for some in reducing levels of despair, blame and anger, and in fostering personal growth - at least in the short term - if they were committed to engage with the group process (Wilson, 2011). Key themes emanating from the research included: identity; issues around attachment/security; and lack of autonomy (agency) versus (authoritarian) power. A limitation of the study was the cohort size, with eleven men participating. However, the qualitative data captured gave meanings to the men's experiences, which have relevance beyond the sample.

While recognising that facilitated peer support could be beneficial for some men, I was left wondering how those inmates, who made a conscious decision

to neither engage in formal or informal means of support in prison which would assist with the processing of grief, cope. The impetus for the focus of the most recent research came from not what had been found out from the pilot study, but what had failed to be uncovered.

I provided both one-to-one support and group support where the 2009 pilot study was undertaken on an ongoing basis from 2007–2012, on behalf of Cruse Bereavement Care. At that time the findings indicated that loss had been a continual process of separation and adjustment from birth to incarceration for some inmates, often caused by death and other life events such as parents divorcing, being placed in care, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, etc. Many men had a pronounced tendency to resort to more negative forms of coping and displayed negative behaviour patterns (Wilson, 2010). This seemed to be another important reason to uncover information about inherent stressors and coping mechanisms in prison.

I found one of the participant's comments extremely profound: 'This is not just about death — it's about how we deal with the rest of our lives' (Wilson, 2010: 10). This statement does not simply reflect upon the short- to medium-term consequences of a significant bereavement, but implies some kind of phenomenon linking *'death'* to a future life *'lived'*. Therefore, the effects of being given the opportunity to confront and begin to adjust to grief within the restricted prison environment would be expected to continue upon release and onwards, permeating the future life of the putative *ex-offender*.

Having considered my own limited understanding of the experience of grief in the context of this setting, it seemed relevant to obtain the level of understanding upon which policy makers were making decisions on this marginalised group. While acknowledging the two extremes the judicial system faces - punishment on the one hand and rehabilitation on the other - it seemed logical to obtain a broad perspective of the extent to which the effects of grief may be recognised by protocol as a bereaved individual moves through the system. In light of the above, I wanted to build on the pilot study in order to contribute further to the combined knowledge base of the criminological and

grief disciplines, and I made an application to the University of Hull to study for a PhD.

Development and scope of the current study

I was awarded a three-year scholarship from the University of Hull to undertake a PhD, commencing from autumn, 2014. The primary aim of the research was to explore the grief experience of male prisoners as it occurs, and the impact of cumulative loss caused by death, prior to custodial sentencing. The responses of other inmates and the ways in which staff facilitated and managed prisoners' grief, were also the focus of enquiry.

Paradigmatic approach

Having considered the purpose of the research it was necessary to decide which paradigmatic approach, based on my guiding beliefs, would best *'fit'* with the aim and objectives of the proposed study (Knight, 2002: 1). The philosophy of such an approach comprises various assumptions, the paradigmatic underpinnings of which are explicated in order for the context of the research to be understood, and to interpret the findings (Doucet et al, 2010: 299). Ontology, epistemology and methodology together made up the paradigmatic approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 107).

When considering paradigmatic approaches, the prison environment can be threatening (Piacentini, 2007). Prisons comprise a transient population and the culture created becomes a fluid phenomenon. Accordingly, a distinctive research stance was called for. It was decided that the project would operate most successfully from a constructivist/critical theorist paradigm incorporating qualitative methods (Lincoln et al, 2011). Constructivism recognises that the world people experience arises from multiple, socially constructed realities, with constructions being created through a need to make sense of experience (Gibbs, 2007). Critical theory, a social theory associated with the Frankfurt School (with prominent figures including Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm and Habermas), has its roots in the Marxist tradition, which aims to excavate beneath the surface to provide a deeper understanding of the world as it is experienced, particularly when power imbalances are evident. This approach

demonstrates concern for social inequalities, with work directed towards positive social change (Carspecken, 1996: 3). From a critical theorist perspective, knowledge is transformed over time, with ignorance giving way to new insights (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The following ontological assumptions indicate how I believe *'reality'* is viewed. I also demonstrate my personal understanding of the ways of epistemological *'knowing'*, and how I considered such knowledge would be found based on the methods chosen for the research.

Ontology

When considering the death of a prisoner's family member, the individuals who make up that family can have vastly different experiences of the same death, and therefore will have different versions of *'reality'*. Thus, whilst there is homogeneity (all being affected by the death), there is also heterogeneity in terms of multiple realities. Taking this example one step further, each bereaved prisoner will have a different experience of coping with grief compared to his peers. Hence, multiple, socially-constructed accounts arise from the same prison experience – coping with bereavement in prison.

Ontology relates to what '*exists*' (St. Pierre, 2011: 615), and the representation of *'being'*. The duality of '*Being and Time*' (Heidegger, 1962) are pertinent within the custodial setting, where self-identity becomes temporarily affected (prisoner as opposed to freeman), and the concept of time is measured by what remains on one's sentence.

Epistemology

There are inherent tensions between the epistemological principles of quantitative and qualitative research (Flick, 2014a), and a decision needed to be made based on the rationale for the study. Sartre (1973) posited that the genuine critical dilemmas of life, such as the experience of bereavement, are unable to be solved by intellectual exploration of the facts, with objectified knowledge being always at one or more removes from the truth. I initially considered the use of a survey but this was discounted. Undertaking questionnaires with prisoners can be problematic due to low literacy levels

(Scott, 2015). I did not want to cause further anxiety, bearing in mind the nature of the research topic, and this method did not sit comfortably with my epistemological stance. Moreover, bald prison statistics can serve to 'dazzle', by running the risk of blinding or anaesthetising the reader from the realities beneath, while ethnography can help in understanding 'bureaucratic processes and the visceral effects they have on the flesh-and-blood people serving … sentences' (Jewkes, 2015: x). Therefore, subjective experiences became the knowledge source of the enquiry in order to provide an insight into the effects of protocol on bereaved prisoners.

Reason for choosing the male prison establishment

According to the Prison Service Instruction, PSI 40/2011:6, adult males may be held in one of four security categories (NOMS, 2011b: 6):

Category A Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous …, and for whom the aim must be to make escape impossible.

Category B Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult.

Category C Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but are considered to be unlikely to make a determined escape attempt.

Category D Prisoners who present a low risk … and for whom open conditions are appropriate.

I chose to undertake the fieldwork in a Category C prison. It lies approximately mid-way along the categorisation system, thus affording the greatest value in research terms to other prison settings. Some Category A and B prisoners undergoing lengthy sentences were expected to be coming down through the system following decategorisation, towards this lower security level prison. Additionally, Category C prisons typically accommodate medium-term sentences of between 12 months and four years' duration, thereby attracting longer timescales than some of the shorter sentences found in *'local'* prisons.

Prisoner participants largely originated from the immediate geographical region, providing relatively convenient access home for visiting dying relatives and taking part in funeral rituals, subject to permission being granted.

Gender

Many accounts of male prisons describe the culture as '*macho*' or '*hypermasculine*' (Crewe, 2012; Sim, 1994), and I wanted to explore how stereotypical male traits would affect grief within this setting. Masculinity is socially constructed using 'malleable social perspectives and values and biological status' (Levesque, 2011: 1653), recognised more through physicality in prison (Toch, 1977) than through financial achievement or by profession (Archer and Lloyd, 2002). Moreover, I wanted to examine any discrepancies between the *'ascribed'* identity and the '*experienced'* identity of the prisoner (Jewkes, 2002: 1).

Obtaining ethical approval

Following consideration of my paradigmatic approach, the importance of validity and choice of data collection methods alongside the various practical and ethical considerations, the next step was to obtain approval. An application was submitted to the School of Social Sciences at the University of Hull in December 2015, and sponsorship of the research was approved by the University in January 2016, with ethical approval being granted on 25th May 2016 (in the interim the IRAS (Integrated Research Application System) application was being developed and refined). An approach was made to a prison to gauge interest in the study that month, however, the governing Governor was unable to give backing to the proposal. Another Category C prison was approached (which became the location for the study) but no indication could be given at the time as to whether the Governor would support the proposal. An application (project identification number 189619) was sent electronically to the MoJ via IRAS on 16th July 2016. Having agreed more detailed arrangements, approval was granted on 24th January 2017 by the MoJ (Appendix 1), and final approval was sought from the prison which became the location for the study on 22nd February 2017. The qualitative study was

undertaken at a Category C, male prison in the north of England, referred to in the thesis as *'HMP North of England'*.

Ethical guidelines

It was vital to mitigate the risk of harm (Walliman, 2006) and it was hoped that the interview experience would be advantageous for participants (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). The British Sociological Association's Statement of ethical practice (BSA, 2002) and the British Society of Criminology's Statement of Ethics for researchers in the field of criminology (BSC, 2015) were followed during the research.

Method

The MoJ encourages research which links to its priorities and recognises efficiency savings (NOMS, 2014b), while having to meet stringent research criteria. It was important to consider how this could be optimally achieved as an '*outsider'*. Ethnography can aid the study of society, such as the historical, anthropological – and objective - work undertaken by Malinowski, Mead and Evans-Pritchard, by bringing together different research methods (Flick, 2014b; Ortner, 2006). Ethnography in a postmodern world has 'shifted towards (local) theories and narratives that fit specific, delimited, local, historical situations, and problems' (Flick, 2014a: 8). Drawing on the classic Chicago School, while being adapted for more contemporary use, there is a long-established tradition of ethnography evidenced within prison research (see, for example, Bennett, 2016; Crewe, 2009; Drake, 2012; Goffman, 1959; Jacobs, 1977; Jewkes, 2012a; Liebling, 1999a; Liebling and Arnold 2004; Phillips, 2012; Sykes, 1958; Toch, 1977). Ethnography incorporating interviewing techniques seemed to be a logical choice and was considered by the MoJ as an acceptable means of data collection; notably because both prisoners and prison officers (and other staff members) were being interviewed to balance the research (O'Connor, 1976). A semi-structured interviewing technique was chosen, with neither the ordering of the questions nor their precise wording being particularly prescriptive (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) (See Appendix 4).

Members of staff are integral to maintaining the safety, welfare and security of those people in their care, yet are inclined to be neglected when research is undertaken (Arnold et al, 2007; Crawley, 2004). Using an ethnographic approach can often provide, '… epistemic advantage because it accesses experiences and views that generally go unrepresented in the public sphere, particularly when the people concerned are marginalised' (Hammersley, 2015: 23).

Although doing research as an 'insider' has its benefits (Carr, 2015: 374), such as having existing knowledge of the establishment and procedures and access to keys to move around independently, disadvantages include no-one feeling obligated to accommodate the researcher's needs and the research not being viewed by others as a priority. When undertaking research independently, subsequent to being a staff member, Carr was recognised and viewed humorously as an '*informant*' or '*snitch*', although she maintained her credibility and used this unique position to advantage. Thus, identity can become pivotal for undertaking effective research. Having undertaken the pilot study previously (Wilson, 2010, 2011), I was not '*going in green*' (Sloan and Wright, 2015). Conversely, I needed to deal with any personal pre-conceptions of those living and working in the 'field', in addition to any cultural and environmental prejudices and presumptions I may have held prior to undertaking the doctoral research. To ameliorate this, direct contact with participants – such as the methodology considered - can help researchers overcome preconceptions and prejudices (Hammersley, 2015: 22).

In terms of validity, knowledge captured during the study cannot be replicated. Ethnography is self-consciously historical and comparative, with both data and analysis playing reflexively against the researcher's own understandings (Toren, 1996: 103). Therefore, it was necessary to consider the wider topic of validity in order to ensure any qualitative data obtained would be classed as having sufficient merit.

Qualitative research findings have frequently been compared to a set of personal opinions which are subject to researcher bias (Rolfe, 2006), so it is incumbent on the qualitative researcher to demonstrate that research is valid

and reliable in ways which are relevant to the methodology used.   Koro-Ljungberg (2010: 603) links validity relating to qualitative data with 'authenticity, credibility, confirmability, internal coherence, transferability, reliability and significance'. Trustworthiness, rigor and quality can be used as helpful indicators to replace reliability and validity (Golafshani, 2003: 604). According to Wells (2011), it is the researcher's truthfulness, the significance of the interpretation and the power to promote political change which is of relevance in terms of the strength of the research, but research cannot be value-free (Janesick, 1998: 41). A task of the qualitative researcher involves getting the correct balance between various accounts, while being aware of potential personal bias. In the case of prison research, in Liebling's (2001) experience it *is* possible to find merit in both the offenders' (subordinates') perspective and also the perspective of those who wield power over them (superordinates). She suggests that research is a political act involving 'wielding power, wading in other people's power and perhaps feeling powerless' (2001: 481).

Some critics may regard prison research as having the potential to be unreliable (Curtis, 2010; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). However, when testing the reliability and validity of a life-events calendar method using Ohio prisoners, Sutton et al (2011) found that males who were deemed disreputable by the criminal justice system, typically provided consistent and credible information in their self-reports. From the researcher's perspective, personal, professional, and political loyalties may contaminate the research (Liebling, 2001; Travers, 1997), and so it is necessary for the data to 'speak for itself' (Liebling, 2001: 474). I was more interested in acquiring 'meaning' rather than 'facts', and therefore, how people 'speak their culture'. When various sources conflict I report these fully, thereby informing the reader and leaving them free to form their own judgment (King, 1996). Having carefully considered the best methods suitable to adequately answer the research question it was initially decided that participant observation would take place for a week alongside the Chaplaincy team, followed by 23 semi-structured interviews being conducted with bereaved prisoners, a series of four focus groups with people working in the prison, and one focus group with prisoner 'Listeners'.

Entering the 'field'

It was important to be aware of others' assumptions concerning my own identity when entering the field. A perceived authority may be apparent when undertaking ethnography and acting as an interviewer (Hammersley and Atkinson,1995; Wengraf, 2001). Drake (2012) reminds the researcher of the difficulties in fully appreciating the experiences of a prisoner. I entered the field with a degree of humility, acknowledging to the more knowledgeable, and particularly during the first few weeks, my inferior position (Agar, 1996; Payne and Payne, 2004).

Gatekeeping and negotiating access to participants

The smooth running of the task of data collection was greatly enhanced by the excellent organisational skills and enthusiasm of the gatekeeper for the study – Lydia, the Roman Catholic (RC) Chaplain. This professional 'stranger-handler' (Agar, 1996: 135), widely respected within the prison, was indispensable in being able to confirm the initial appropriateness of potential participants as part of the sampling (Maguire, 2000), whilst having due regard for confidentiality. A detailed timetable was devised in order to cause the least possible disruption to prison life. This was based upon annual staff leave, shutdowns, special functions and events taking place, prisoner release dates, prisoners' exams and visits, etc. King (1996) suggests it should follow that if a researcher becomes recognised as a 'semi-permanent' fixture, people will be more inclined to show an interest in their activities. When accompanying her across the estate, Lydia always made a point of introducing me to those she interacted with, telling them the purpose of my presence, which helped others locate me.

MoJ approval required adherence to manageable demands on staff and resources. Therefore, minimal disruption to ongoing routines was an important factor as part of the logistical aspect of the design. Lydia and her Chaplaincy colleagues regularly discussed working extra hours when a bereavement or other event had taken place. Recognising their capacity to flex their routines, their workload did not need to be more onerous. Mutual respect was evident, with all parties recognising each had work to perform which was important and relevant in its own right.

Regular brief dialogue took place between myself and key personnel, eg the different chaplains, staff working in the gatehouse, and the Chaplaincy Department's line manager. Prisoners were moved to and from interviews according to lined route/movement time, so in the main, one interview was conducted in the morning and another in the afternoon, in tandem with lined route timings. On occasions I was left by myself in a Chaplain's office making notes, but more often than not I was invited to accompany a Chaplain as he/she went onto the wings etc to conduct their daily tasks. When Lydia was on holiday or away (being on a part-time contract), two other chaplains stepped in to act as temporary gatekeepers. Without question, they did their utmost to help me acquire the necessary interviews, while still carrying out their busy roles.

Participant observation

Participant observation can be valuable in learning about the field, its inhabitants, local practices and conventions (Crawley, 2004; Sparks et al 1996). This method helped develop an understanding of the 'everyday, the banal, and the commonplace' (Adams, 2000: 394), along with naturally occurring one-off events which were directly related to bereavement. The job of the qualitative researcher is to unearth hidden realities (Drake, 2012: 12). This task is informed by ethnic, cultural, gender, social and political values (Ponterotto, 2005: 130), history and tradition (Dahlberg et al, 2008), such as can be found within the institutionalised environment of the prison. Ryan and Sim (2007) also raise the important issue of prisons being populated by the economically and politically powerless, and the disproportionately racialised (Ryan and Sim, 2007). While holding all these aspects in mind, it was necessary to get a sense of how they impacted on the prison way of life, and participant observation aided this.

People may be resistant to talking about the research topic due to the stigma involved, or may have seen me as an *'unwanted intruder'* (Ugelvik, 2014).   One Prison Officer displayed unease when the topic was mentioned and two officers made excuses not to get involved. Some prisoners are careful to hide their true emotions from loved ones during visits (Jewkes, 2012b: 48), thereby masking

their authentic self. In this regard, grief may have been too painful for some inmates to discuss with an unknown researcher, resulting in them abstaining from the study. To mitigate this I aimed to forge friendly, professional relations with both staff and prisoners, and displayed an ease at being able to speak on grief-related issues.

Participant observation provided a useful insight into the multifarious tasks undertaken by the chaplains and the wider world of prison life, from an outsider's perspective. Activities observed included: attending a Saturday morning Roman Catholic Mass in the Chapel; sitting in on a drugs awareness session with the prisoners; gaining a brief behind-the-scenes perspective of the running of a wing and the Segregation Unit; eating lunch prepared and served by inmates; sitting in on prisoner ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) reviews; and attending two Governor's morning meetings. Verbal consent for me to observe was always obtained through the intermediary of the gatekeeper to ensure staff, volunteers and prisoners did not object to my presence. In relation to prisoners' bereavements, strict ethical consideration was taken into account concerning how recently a death had taken place and their perceived vulnerability. When a prisoner was distressed, for example in the Segregation Unit, or if he was very recently bereaved and tearful, or staff were involved in disciplining, a respectful distance was afforded to all concerned.

Sampling

A purposive sampling method was needed to obtain suitable interview participants, while making the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). The chosen technique had to accord with the research aim, the restrictive nature of the environment and the fact that prisoner participants had to meet the following criteria:

1 They would have experienced the historic or more recent death of a significant person, earlier than one month previously.

2 They had been residing in the prison for more than a month. This was to allow time to settle into the surroundings.

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3 Their release or transfer date was in not less than one month's time from date of interview (if such information was known at the time of assessment). If anything had arisen as a result of the research it would have been unethical to fail to attend to resulting problems immediately prior to release.

4 To cause the least distress to inmates a prisoner would not be included if a staff check via ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) documents indicated he was currently at risk of self-harm or suicide. The ACCT process is a prisoner-centred, flexible care-planning system aimed to reduce risk to self and others (PSI 64/2011) (NOMS, 2011c).

Recruitment took the form of convenience sampling and, part-way through, snowball sampling. While convenience sampling is used to collect information from participants who are easily accessible to the researcher, although commonly used, it can be viewed as neither purposeful nor strategic (Palinkas et al, 2015). The nature of prison life and limitations on time and resources largely defined the sampling choices, despite their known limitations as a purposive sampling method. Polsky (1969) found that snowball sampling was the most effective technique to use with criminals, who will vouch for the researcher to others. Recruitment involved the RC Chaplain and myself placing a poster on all the wing noticeboards and a letter being circulated via global email to all staff members by the governing Governor's Personal Assistant. During the recruitment process a request was made for everyone to abide by procedures to ensure confidentiality was not breached. Interested parties notified the study's Gatekeeper, Lydia, who ensured they received a copy of the participant information sheet (Appendix 2). Interested prisoners were assessed by myself on the available knowledge provided against the criteria for inclusion, and mutually convenient appointments were subsequently made.

Convenience sampling worked well initially, and as friends and associates discussed the research, snowball sampling emerged. Staff in general were willing to be involved, with several displaying a keenness to take part. To ensure a wide range of perspectives were obtained – particularly from the mental health/psychology/healthcare departments – this involved the

gatekeeper and myself pro-actively promoting the study in person to encourage staff to participate. No incentives or privileges were offered to any participants.

Ethnicity

Details concerning ethnic origin, collected during the most recent prison inspection (HMIP, undated for anonymity), are as follows, with some original percentages combined:

Table 1: *Ethnic origin of prisoners at 'HMP North of England'*

Ethnic origin			
White – British (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish)/Irish/other	72%	Mixed race – white and black	7%
Black or black British – Caribbean/African/other	4%	Caribbean/African/white and Asian	1%
Asian or Asian British – Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	14%	Mixed race – other	1%
		Arab	0%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese/other	0%	Other ethnic group	1%

Nineteen prisoner participants were white British (83%), three were Asian or Asian British–Pakistani (13%), and one was Irish (4%). This cohort, based on ethnicity, was the best match which could be obtained at the time of the fieldwork.

Literacy levels

Due to many prisoners having literacy skills at or below level 1 (CIVITAS, 2010), consent form questions (Appendix 3) were often read out, to reduce potential anxiety. Prior to the one-to-one interviews taking place with the inmates, permission had been sought to discuss the content of the information

sheet, consent form and interview schedule with two prisoners to ensure the wording would be readily understood by the interviewees.

Semi-structured interviews with the prisoners

Following the participant observation my gatekeeper suggested that I should interview the prisoners first as she believed this group would take more organising, followed by the staff focus groups. In the event, she found organising the men logistically easier to become involved in the study. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 23 prisoners who had recent/historic/cumulative/unresolved loss. Interviews on average lasted one hour. Participants were encouraged to expand on the responses they made through exploration of their feelings about such actions within the prevailing culture: culture being an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman, 2012: 35).

Male prisoners can be classed as 'vulnerable'. Inviting them to speak about the emotive topic of grief needed to be handled sensitively and with integrity. I had a constant awareness of preventing harm to all participants. If a participant showed any sign of distress particularly during sensitive interviews, in line with Brookman (2010), the recorder would have been paused. Although some participants did become either tearful or angry, none requested to stop the recording. If they had wanted to withdraw, any information already obtained would have been deleted. Assistance would have been summoned if requested and any concerns would have been reported to a member of staff. If distress began to manifest during participation I worked collaboratively 'in the moment' to minimise any upset, and to ensure the most effective way forward. Work was carried out ethically to ensure the welfare of the participant took precedence over the research project. A number of prisoners became upset, however, these emotions were normalised within the context of the circumstances. Furthermore, such authenticity demonstrated their ease at being able to speak openly and honestly about how they had been affected by grief with an outsider.

A request was made of the Chaplain gatekeeper to indicate on a prisoner's records that he had participated in the research that day. This brief,

computerised note acted as a useful reminder to staff, should he be affected later on as a result of participating. The decision was based on ensuring the continued welfare of participants, in line with Offender Health Research Network (2010) ethical recommendations. My decision to make this request was based on achieving the best balance between prisoner welfare and confidentiality. One long-term inmate, shortly due for recategorisation, displayed a need to self-harm on the wing the week following his interview. His Probation Officer (a later interviewee) had been asked to speak with him about his urges but was unsure whether this was down to the interview or being one stage nearer release, or a combination of the two factors. To my knowledge there were no other negative after-effects as a result of participating.

No personal information needed to be divulged to staff about participants. However, if I had concerns a prisoner may have harmed himself or another person, be involved in a security risk, or talk about a threat of terrorism, such information would have been reported to a Chaplain and the necessary paperwork completed. The power balance/relationship between myself and the prisoners varied throughout the interviews. Due to the particular hegemonic culture present (Lincoln et al, 2011) this had the potential to affect how I was viewed as a female outsider undertaking research in a male prison. Control was inevitably more in my hands: the interviewer maintaining the power of editorship (Letherby, 2000), timing and management within the interview process. However, the dialogue was interviewee-centred. Sensitivity was used in the ways in which the process shaped newly-discovered data (Richards, 2009). I spoke minimally. Silence is beneficial as it provides interviewees with time to make associations and reflect (Kvale, 1996), assisting with exploration of deeper meanings. In retrospect it could be argued that these two opposing positions in effect distributed the power dynamic equitably.

Each prisoner was asked brief, closed questions initially to obtain a minimal amount of personal information (name) and factual information on bereavements experienced (when, how, relationship), accompanied by a gentle introduction to the topic. Further open questions entailed asking about bereavements experienced, how the participant, staff and other inmates had

reacted to his bereavement, and what improvements could be made to help bereaved prisoners (See interview topic guide, Appendix 4).

Interviewing those working in the prison

The original research application had anticipated a series of focus groups being organised. Due to staff workloads, shift patterns, etc, it was logistically impossible to organise these at a set time on a particular day. A focus group was initially set up with three of the chaplains but this was abandoned after ten minutes due to continual distractions. It was also expected that it would be possible to interview a group of Prisoner 'Listeners' who volunteer as part of a listening service on behalf of the Samaritans. However, due to none of the prisoner participants reporting having accessed the scheme for bereavement issues, and as several of the small group of trained Listeners had recently been released, leaving few 'experienced' Listeners, it was decided not to pursue this source of inquiry. However, information on the Listeners' service was obtained through the semi-structured interviews.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were undertaken on an individual basis with: a governor (head of Functioning and Residential), four chaplains, a male and female prison officer (PO) working on the wings, a PO working in the segregation unit, a family liaison officer/supervising officer (FLO/SO), a senior clinician working for the Mental Health team, a nurse, a drugs and alcohol rehabilitation lead (DARS), a lead information technology tutor, and a Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer. Paired interviews took place with two custodial managers (CMs) and two members of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB). Finally, two small focus groups were run, comprising four probation workers and four psychologists (totalling 13 women and 13 male participants).

It can be argued that a group response is more preferable to one-to-one interviews because the participants can react and respond to one another, thereby obtaining a collective view (Tett et al, 2014), with insights less likely to surface during a one-to-one interview (Coolican, 2004). The two small groups and the paired interviews were efficient in terms of time, and acted to provide some quality control within the study by providing checks and balances (Flick, 2014a). However, I gathered a sense of these participants monitoring one

another's comments, with one staff member in each grouping and pairing being implicitly regarded as more authoritative on the topic, and others generally building on their initial comments made. Thus group dynamics played a significant role in the direction of the conversations, dependent upon the implicit hierarchy of the groupings. The 26 participants (23 staff and three volunteers) working on site comprised:

1 *Chaplaincy team* members (Church of England (CofE), Roman Catholic (RC), Muslim and Free Church (FC)), who have both pastoral and spiritual oversight of all working and living in the prison, and have the most direct involvement with bereaved individuals.

2 *Prison Officers,* who are integral to prison life and play a significant role in mediating the pains and harms of imprisonment (Tait, 2012). Mixing with prisoners is 'the bread and butter' of an officer's role (Liebling and Arnold, 2004), which entails keeping inmates secure, assessing prisoners and writing reports, supervising prisoners and maintaining order, supporting vulnerable prisoners, and helping prisoners reflect on their offending behaviour (National Careers Service, 2016). A considerable element of an officer's job role is consumed with involvement in '*domesticity*', as well as controlling violence and emotional outbursts (Crawley, 2004). Other duties include acting as escorts to visit dying relatives and attend funerals.

3 *Managerial grades,* who offered information based on decision-making in managing inmates with grief issues. Most had worked their way up through the ranks having acquiring *'jail craft'*, based on years of experience and fine judgement through working alongside the prisoners (Liebling, 2009).

4 *Other professions* These workers were not POs, so would be viewed by prisoners differently in terms of authority. They included volunteers, and provided a wide range of services which sought to improve the prisoners' quality of life.

Practical issues

Suitability of venue

Choice of locality and level of comfort when interviewing can have an effect on the data (Richards, 2009). When undertaking the pilot study in 2009, inmates' comments intimated that the Chaplaincy department provided a neutral, peaceful setting. Therefore, a request was made, and approved, to use a small room in the Chaplaincy department as a base for the study. Interviews with staff were also conducted in the Segregation Unit, the Chapel, a staff 'mess room', a wing storage area, and various other departmental offices across the estate.

Assessment of risk, and security

The practicalities of undertaking the study were fully discussed with a member of the Security staff and the Chaplaincy line manager, with an in-house risk assessment carried out. I ensured I was in close proximity to the alarm buzzer in the rooms being used, and would have requested immediate assistance by either alerting the Chaplain or pressing the buzzer if a situation was in danger of escalating. Work was undertaken in accordance with the lone researcher risk assessment policy, developed by the University of Hull. This included checking-in via a text message and checking-out when back in the prison car park with a PhD student '*buddy'*.

Security clearance and the carrying of keys

Advanced security clearance to access the site could not be applied for due to the protracted time taken for clearance, so a weekly request for temporary access was made. While drawing keys would have freed me up from having to rely on the gatekeeper to move around easily (Earle, 2014), I would have been identified as someone with sufficient authority to carry keys (Jewkes, 2002). Being escorted did provide restricted movement, as the prisoner experiences it, but having keys would have meant missing out on involvement in many conversations while walking around the site and conversing informally with the various chaplains, volunteers, staff members and prisoners. Moreover, due to the complexities of the regime, the sprawling layout of the site and the

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gatekeeper's willingness to work alongside me, this method of moving around the site proved to be the safest and most cost-effective in terms of staff resourcing. I waited every morning in the gatehouse for the gatekeeper to arrive to work, and left the site at a time when a Chaplaincy worker was leaving, thus minimising time for being escorted.

Displaying neutrality

In terms of undertaking research in prison, it has repeatedly been found that '*breaking in*' socially is much more difficult than '*breaking in*' physically (Jewkes, 2002: 73; Smith and Wincup, 2000: 344). The notion of the us/them dichotomy between staff and prisoners (Sutton, 2011) became evident on some occasions, particularly within the prisoners' accounts. It was important to develop an understanding of power (Sykes, 1958) in terms of domination and control. Crawley (2004) raises the dilemma of some POs being very wary of people on the one hand, yet if too much friendliness and familiarity is displayed this can lead to manipulation by prisoners. Therefore, of fundamental importance was to strive for an appropriate balance, ie to display bias towards neither party. This was achieved by keeping a 'clear distance' (Maguire, 2000) while remaining friendly, thereby allowing a definitive ethical line to be drawn for the benefit of both researcher and those being researched. It also involved being self-aware. All participants were treated with respect, including those who chose not to engage (Morselli and Tremblay, 2010). I showed appreciation by thanking staff and prisoners involved, and valuing their thoughts and feelings on the topic (King, 1996).

Availability of support afterwards

The ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence needed to be kept in mind at all times (Ali and Kelly, 2012) with a responsibility to make sure vulnerable people in particular did not become overly distressed. Details were provided of follow-up support which could be accessed (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) with separate information being provided to staff and prisoner participants about a range of support, if they felt it would be helpful to them. If any participants had become upset, a Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer was available one morning a week to provide temporary support if needed. If a

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prisoner did request further formal bereavement support he was advised to speak to the CofE chaplain who co-ordinated Cruse bereavement support. It is understood several of the men requested to be put on the list for Cruse support following their interviews as they were previously unaware of this service.

Participant interest in, and withdrawal from the study

At the end of the data collection period prisoners were still coming forward, wanting to get involved in the study, however, the cut-off point had been reached. Prisoner participants had clearly talked about the research with their peers. This indicates that the research topic was deemed to be important and implies that despite the culture of not generally speaking at depth about grief issues, some participants benefited from the experience. Inmates were thanked for their interest, and information was provided on support available, if it was needed.

Participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time up until data collection finished. If anyone had declined involvement they would have been provided with brief written confirmation that all information about them would be deleted. No-one wished to decline.

Adapted grounded theory

An adapted grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), was adopted to analyse the contrasting experiences of those living and working in the custodial setting, juxtaposed within the socio-cultural processes. The pioneers of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967), never intended that it should be used dogmatically, with its aim being suited to generate and develop theory rather than test it (Rennie, 1998), using a process of induction. Steps taken were in line with Henwood and Pidgeon's suggested approach (2006):

1 Open coding helped capture the detail, variety and divergence of the initial material. *NVivo 11* computer software helped to organise the data, which was then transferred to 49 *Word* files, for each participant. Separate interviews were read through numerous times to identify main topics of interest. Each topic was coded. There were 26 main codes, and these were further sub-divided using 112 separate nodes. Pertinent sections were edited to improve

the flow by removing extraneous dialogue. Early 'mapping' of ideas contained within the data was undertaken, and Excel software was also used to collate information.

2 I was able to begin comparing data to pinpoint difference and similarity, which acted to drive the data collection. Data had to undergo a process of analysis in order to decide what data to collect next (Glaser, 1978), and identify sampling issues. The following are examples of where the data guided the sampling. All of the prisoner interviewees at one point were white, British, and I had few participants who happened to be younger people working in prison. Pointing this out to the gatekeeper, she operationalised selective invitations to participate, which enabled differing perspectives to be obtained in terms of religion, culture and ethnicity, age and level of experience.

3 As new data and cases were introduced, the analysis progressed to checking out emerging ideas, and relating the data to existing theory and potentially new theory building. Examples of significant importance included the data which emerged on coping, the display of emotion in the context of hegemonic masculinity, and data relating to meaning-making.

4 Analysis moved the groupings beyond the descriptive to a more abstract level.   Notes and diagrams were used to help understand patterns and emerging concepts.

5 Data became synthesised, with themes and ideas emerging to aid theory construction.

6 The new data were finally placed alongside existing theories to see how they compared and contrasted, so a commentary could be produced linking established theory with emerging findings.

Drafts were presented to the two Supervisors during the analysis stage for further exploration of the material. There has been an expectation that a researcher enters the field with 'as few predetermined ideas as possible,' to remain sensitive to the data 'without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases' (Glaser, 1978: 2). Bryant (2017) argues against this, suggesting that researchers do not enter the field

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as a *'tabula rasa'*, but instead utilise their distinctive roles and forms of participation, engagement, and positionality. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest it is necessary to read the literature prior to undertaking the research. I examined the literature to prepare for the study and have experienced personal bereavements and losses which have impacted on my own lifecourse. Having sat alongside hundreds of bereaved people, including many prisoners, it is difficult to claim I have no preconceptions. Furthermore, I regard each person's bereavement as a unique entity. However, I would argue that precisely because of life and work experiences I was well placed to undertake research which integrates the thanatological and criminological fields. In this respect it was considered that an adapted grounded theoretical approach was suitable for meeting the research objectives.

Data handling

All participants have been anonymised through the use of pseudonyms, and confidentiality has been maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act (Gov.UK, 1998) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018) (Gov.UK, 2018).

Only data gathered of relevance to the study was used. Should a prisoner have begun speaking about any past offences an initial request was made that he kept any comments to a minimum or generalised the information, relevant to the study.

Data collection

Permission was granted to use a digital recorder to record the semi-structured interviews. Maguire (2000: 133) never used recording equipment in prison interviews as he believed it could damage the trust he had to build up with the interviewees. It may also serve as a reminder of the recording of police interviews (Sloan and Wright, 2015). Whilst I can write shorthand, I would argue that concentrating on note taking and not having some means of recording an interview verbatim does a disservice to the participant through failure to capture the richness of the dialogue and the nuances which can be

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picked up audibly and visually, 'in the moment'. Notably, no participants commented negatively about being recorded.

Reflexivity and positionality

The following section highlights how 'authorised' outsiders such as myself manage data collection in prison. Reflexive comments are included, demonstrating how undertaking the research affected me.

During the fieldwork

> Expressing, absorbing, and responding adequately to the expression of emotion in others, and handling it in oneself, can be among the most pressing challenges of prisons research (Liebling, 2014: 481).

This perspective is endorsed by Vaswani, who highlights specific challenges to conducting ethically sensitive, qualitative research of value, when exploring bereavement with a vulnerable cohort (Vaswani, 2018b) such as in the prison setting. One challenge is that of status. Liebling (2014) suggests that for the researcher to both claim and respect status in this environment, relationship-building needs to be underpinned by soliciting authenticity, knowing the culture, and building trust. Trust, which arguably has to be earned (Ugelvik, 2014), can be acquired through utilisation of the 'empathic listener' role, although this position can, at times, cause significant emotional pressure (Drake and Harvey, 2014: 496). Moreover, lone researchers can act as a 'sponge', absorbing frustrations, harrowing stories and divergent opinions (Drake and Harvey, 2014).

Inmates can behave differently in the company of staff, and vice versa (Drake and Harvey, 2014). The symbolic demarcation line which separates prisoners from officers, structures everything that goes on in a prison, and by alienating either party in favour of the other during research can close doors and create problems within the research (Ugelvik, 2014). To overcome this, Drake and Harvey (2014) found that utilising impression management (Goffman, 1959) became a useful tool. Despite this, they frequently experienced a 'sense of meaningless' and a weakened sense of their own 'real' identities (Drake and Harvey, 2014: 496). The scholars highlight the difficulty of continually

conveying recognition of the informant's standpoint, whichever 'side' they are on. Thereafter, Drake and Harvey wrote of having had little opportunity to process their emotions as lone researchers. In this regard, and based on my own experience, beginner researchers, particularly, need to be acutely aware of their own wellbeing. Also, re-appraisal of the methodology concerning extended exposure during ethnographic data collection, as in the above example, may be necessary.

From my own perspective, I had previously undertaken counselling and counselling supervision qualifications. Knowledge, skills and awareness helped build emotional robustness in the support of others over the years, and reinforced the value of understanding 'process'. How I manage others' and my own emotions in both a counselling and data collection situation are similar. On a conscious level I separated myself from becoming 'enmeshed' in the daily dilemmas of the participants. Writing a weekly log helped unpack the field experiences. Data collection was the most enjoyable part of the research as I had an opportunity to interact with others in a meaningful way. Having previously supported bereaved prisoners, I understood broadly how prisons are run. Fortunately, no major issues occurred as the gatekeeper was extremely well organised, and I flexed with the needs of the establishment.

This said, my time in the field was not without difficulties, but these were managed. I constantly monitored my own energy levels and emotional state of mind. Vicarious trauma can affect researchers. This is the emotional residue of exposure that people have from working with participants who have experienced trauma themselves (Coles et al, 2014). One interview rendered me tearful for a couple of days. A prisoner participant's traumatic recollection from childhood tapped into a less traumatic experience I had at a similar age. This was emotionally demanding (Liebling, 1999a), and tapped into my own vulnerability (Richardson, 1996). I talked through own my re-experiencing with a trusted counsellor-friend. During the data collection and analysis a family bereavement occurred, and I had to have my elderly dog euthanised. Following communications with my supervisors, these last two experiences caused me to

have a few days' break from the work, and provided salutary reminders of the inevitability – and normalcy - of death.

The relationship dynamics occurring between an 'outsider' prison researcher and its inhabitants and workers can be likened to the dynamics occurring between those working on behalf of the voluntary sector, and prisoners and workers. Exploring the role of prisoner relationships with voluntary sector practitioners, Tomczak and Albertson (2016) found that these representatives could separate the punitive and coercive aspects of criminal justice work, provide space and time, and build rapport, with no 'hidden agenda'. This stance enabled them to gain additional information as they were not part of the 'system'. Adopting a non-judgemental, person-centred approach (Rogers, 1951) aligned with strengths-based interactions, and helped individuals express their self-worth alongside new ways of being due to liberation from the stigma of their conviction (Maruna and LeBel, 2003). Notwithstanding these beneficial effects, as with 'outsider' researchers, third sector workers would undoubtedly also be required to report any health, safety or security concerns. Accordingly, neither could be entirely impartial to what was divulged by participants.

It is argued that internal researchers such as practitioners may be trusted more by participants due to them being familiar to the informant (Vaswani, 2018b). However, prisoners can feel unrecognized by those who imprison and risk-assess them (Liebling, 2014). Additionally, the role duality of internal researchers may result in potential participants becoming unsure about possible repercussions if they choose to withhold consent for involvement, due to the inherent power imbalance (Vaswani, 2018b).

Using a further example of role duality, a lack of critical distance and objectivity can arise, in that a blurring of the therapeutic and research boundaries can provide a therapeutic experience, but may also cause a power imbalance and generate problems if the participant becomes unclear about the purpose of the work (Vaswani, 2018b). Although I had undertaken University modules in qualitative research methods, I had not previously been involved in actual in-depth interviewing before, so had to be mindful of not stepping into a counsellor role. As the fieldwork progressed I could feel the pull of wishing to 'counsel',

lessen. On reflection, my position as an outsider had several advantages and privileges. For example, inmates, staff members and volunteers who came forward for involvement in the research regularly indicated they welcomed the opportunity to speak openly about this emotive topic. As an authorised 'outsider', the experience acted as a useful valve, allowing safe exploration of often highly personal information. Some participants may have viewed the role I occupied as one in which a 'confessional' response could be safely adopted without judgement. Was I being 'used' to disclose and share feelings and emotions that would otherwise be hidden? Had I provided a 'safe space' to talk about the emotions that would otherwise remain silenced?' I was a complete stranger who could provide no tangible grounds for trustworthiness prior to meeting each participant in person, other than my status as a doctoral researcher. Meaningful disclosure could only have occurred if I was viewed as a trustworthy individual. Additionally, in terms of relating to those participants working within the establishment whose positions attracted differing levels of responsibility within the organisational structure of the establishment, I could claim no internal authoritative position within this hierarchy. Due to demands on their time and possible disinterest in the topic it would have been easy for staff members to provide an excuse not to become engaged. What actually happened was that when I met participants face-to-face, they mainly came across as wanting to be involved (despite their busy workloads). My counselling background and general sense of trustworthiness in others reminded me to behave authentically and to meet each individual on their level to the best of my ability. When sitting with those who spoke of their own bereavements, I could empathically connect, due to my background. This position left me at liberty to gently probe, while simultaneously demonstrating compassionate appreciation of what each individual felt able to disclose. In contrast to the demanding nature of the ethnography undertaken by Drake and Harvey (2014), going into prison for only one day a week did not feel onerous. Moreover, had I been an 'insider', any internal politics, inexperience or self-unconscious signs of impending burnout (as a more mature researcher) may have precluded some disclosure, thereby failing to yield the depth of data, as an 'outsider', I was able to obtain.

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It must be emphasised that there are clear distinctions between the roles of qualitative researchers and counsellors. The purpose of research is to advance knowledge, while ensuring that 'potential physical, psychological discomfort or stress to individuals participating is minimised' (BSC, 2015: 5). The latter role serves the needs of the client, maintains ethical practice and safeguards the client from harm (BACP, 2019). Counselling aids coping, by helping the client understand themselves better and make positive changes to their life, for example following a bereavement (BACP, 2019). Given that a pre-requisite of the counselling profession is that regular supervision will be used to explore issues arising within the counsellor-client relationship, this acts as a 'safety net' for safely exploring the process as well as the content of sessions.

After the fieldwork

A problem arose each night for months on end, in the form of broken sleep, during the analysis stage. I would be consistently awoken by thoughts of death. This was undoubtedly tied in with unconsciously trying to process the research material. Such thoughts needed to be shaken off in order to gain a beneficial night's sleep, and so distractions such as watching mindless television, doing a crossword or listening to music were employed.

I enjoyed the task of typing up the transcripts at my kitchen table. However, listening to the voices – sometimes faltering and tearful, sometimes angry and frustrated - and 'translating' their audible words into textualised format onto the screen in front of me through my fingertips, often resulted in copious tears falling (my own historical default coping mechanism being to shed tears in private, which I have regarded as a relatively healthy outlet). A couple of telephone calls to my PhD research buddy confirmed she was experiencing a similar reaction in response to her own emotive research topic. This brought reassurance for us both. Living as a single person and having to be self-sufficient, I also recognised the importance of balancing the often solitary research experience with spending quality time amongst valued others, and engaging in an (inexpensive) social life which included lively bursts of positivity and enjoyment, for my own self-care.

At the close of the research

Although it is possible to experience to some extent the emotions conveyed by informants while undertaking qualitative research, it never fully grasps the deeply felt experiences of its participants (Drake and Harvey, 2014). In hindsight, my poor sleep pattern and need to shed tears in isolation, for example, helped inform how bereaved prisoners, too, would struggle through the night with both conscious and unconscious forbidding thoughts.

Reflecting back, the 'content' of the work was explored much more fully than the 'process' during supervision at the University. This may have been due to me developing increased stamina through listening to numerous distressing stories around loss. Being a qualified counselling supervisor for a number of years, I had learned how to 'self-supervise' my feelings and emotions. Perhaps I had an unconscious desire to maintain my integrity as a beginner researcher, or not want to over-burden my University supervisors. My own coping style, which lies somewhere between 'definitely secure' and 'slightly avoidant', may have played a part. Alternatively, an 'avoidant' response to my own needs may have been transferred across from the inmates, thereby 'negating' the need to discuss how the research was affecting me. With hindsight, I believe all the above factors played some part in how I handled the research 'process'.

Drake and Harvey (2014: 499) explain that, 'Disentangling the underlying causes of the emotional strains of in-depth fieldwork in extreme settings is an exceptionally complex task.' However, affective reactions can offer notable insights to methodological, conceptual and empirical understandings and, notably, how prisoners' emotions are managed in the longer-term. My own experience aligns with this. At the close of the last supervision session at University, prior to handing the thesis in, I could not restrain myself from shedding a few tears. I felt empathically 'held' by both supervisors. This meeting acted as a temporal marker. I didn't feel guilty or embarrassed about openly demonstrating the affective impact of the whole process. My research study had figured in the lives of both my supervisors for the previous few years too – although to a lesser extent. The meaning I give to those few short moments is that the deceased and the bereaved, and those supporting and

managing them, were honoured through simple ritual, in silence. Rather than uncovering the 'process', as a counsellor would do in supervision, my own take on being a researcher (rightly or wrongly) was to recognise that it was my responsibility to metaphorically continue to 'hold' the research participants until the thesis was complete. I merely acted as a vessel, as accurately as possible portraying through the written word the participants' own processes of coping with grief. Upon completion of the thesis my responsibility to hold them had come to an end. Thereafter, they would be left to their own devices to make an impression upon the reader, within the pages of the thesis.

Prisoner participants' personal profiles

Brief background information is provided about each prisoner participant. Details of the prisoners' age, the most significant deaths occurring, year of death and significant causes of death are bracketed.

Sam (24) was separated from his mother for the first year of his life. He was brought up around alcohol, drugs and fighting in the family home. Sam was in a coma for two weeks following a fatal road traffic accident (2011). Three friends (2015-2017) (hanging/overdose); brother (heart attack following overdose, in a prison) and mother (2015); grandfather (2012); friend (2011); father (2010); best friend (2010).

Gavin (45) and his sister found the mutilated body of a female, teenage murder victim, aged five. He found his father hanging less than a week following Gavin's release from a sentence, aged 17. His father's death sent Gavin 'off the rails' - robbery, in possession of firearms, and attempted murder. Mother (2016).

Fred (62) acted as his 94-year old mother's carer until imprisonment. Through the help of Chaplaincy, Fred helped organise his mother's funeral (2017). Father (1980) (suicide).

Les (44), was the youngest of several siblings. Mother's first husband died and she developed depression when Les was young. His mother was unable to look after Les properly, and he was his siblings' 'torture toy'. Les's mother's second husband drank heavily and physically abused Les. He learnt to read,

aged 23. Mother (2016), plus an additional 22 people while in prison (16 years), including good friends made in prison.

Mitch (23), mother had twins, with one dying (cot death), affecting mother badly. Mother drank, and younger brother was taken into care. Mitch was largely brought up by father and grandmother. Brother (alcohol), best friend (hanging), cousin (hanging), sister (alcohol) (2016); pedestrian (2015) (accidental death caused by Mitch); father (2011); grandmother (2005).

Barry (32). His parents were addicted to heroin for 13 years, both regularly committing theft. Barry was excluded from school so he could look after his siblings. His grandmother was also involved as a carer in the background. Barry began taking drugs, aged 18, following his father's death. Grandmother (2016); brother (2015) (hanging); girlfriend (?); father (2003).

Dale (39), following his mother's death, began taking heroin to cope. His best friend's mother was killed when he was 10, sister died when aged 14 and friend's father died when he was 20. Dale felt closer to this friend than his own siblings, and acted as his support mechanism until his own death. Mother (2015), best friend (2006) (hanging).

Howard (40), never knew his own mother. His father is currently imprisoned for murder. Howard was assaulted with a hammer as a young adult, causing brain injury and mental health problems. Howard's partner became a mother aged 14 and had four children (Howard was not the father). The ex-husband had their children put up for adoption. Partner (2014) (suicide); mother (?) (alcohol).

Wayne (38), had not seen family members since his brother's funeral (2016). He was fearful of becoming upset in front of his family. Wayne's mother had cancer at the time of the interview. Father (1995).

Woody (31), described himself as having had a 'happy' childhood. He was diagnosed with cancer, aged 15. His biological father never wanted to build a relationship with him. Woody helped care for his terminally ill mother. Developed bad epileptic seizures. His mother's death (2005) and epilepsy caused him to turn to drugs to cope. He caused a fire in his home and was in a coma for two months and not expected to survive. Step-father (2016).

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Yameen (46), went to Pakistan aged 5, and his mother died there. His father had four children and worked seven nights a week. Yameen's father quickly remarried. He had a poor relationship with his step-mother and all but one sibling. Yameen saw himself as a 'lost sheep'. When his father died (2015), Yameen was made to leave the family home.

Lewis (35), chose to be brought up largely by his grandparents – who he loved but found to be overly strict. He mixed with other children down the street and got involved with drugs. Lewis made both his grandmother and mother buy him drugs in the past. He has been diagnosed with severe ADHD. Has DVT and part of a needle lodged in a vein. Grandfather (2017); father (?) (murdered); friend (recently) (blood clot, as a result of drug addiction).

Pete (54) was brought up by his mother, and both lived with his grandfather. An only child, Pete never knew his father. Pete's grandfather would physically beat him and his mother. Pete found his grandfather dead on Boxing Day, aged 6. Mother (2003); twin children (?) (abortion); grandfather (1969).

Ronnie (24), father was an alcoholic, who tried to murder Ronnie's brother when Ronnie was 6 (brother survived and father sent to prison). Ronnie tried to 'rescue' his brother but always blamed himself for the incident. He began smoking cannabis aged 9. At 11, he was taking ecstasy tablets. Ronnie had been diagnosed with PTSD. He developed mental health problems. He fathered three children by the age of 15. Father (2017); brother-in-law (2016) (hanging).

Shadan (28) was sentenced alongside his father, Haseeb. He hadn't seen his mother for 2 ½ years as they both become too emotional, although they spoke regularly on the telephone. Grandmother (2017); cousin (2017).

Haseeb (64), first wife died (although Shadan provided this information). Mother-in-law (2017); nephew (2017).

Fergus (30). His parents divorced when Fergus was younger. Fergus has literacy problems. He was present during a traumatic, fatal industrial accident and was actively involved in caring for his dying work colleague (2015).

Kieran (25), was diagnosed with PTSD following a fatal car accident in which his mother, brother and sister were killed when he was five. His father remarried. Kieran refused to speak about his loss until he was 18, then 'went off the rails', buying drugs and stealing. Stepmother (2016); grandmother (2016); grandfather (2015).

Lenny (30), parents divorced when Lenny was a baby. He doesn't speak to his biological father. Brother (2017) (hanging); daughter (2012) (stillbirth); cousin (2011); uncle (2010) (hanging); friend (2010) (hanging).

Mark (23), parents divorced 'years ago'. Has a speech problem. Describes himself as the only one in the family to go down the 'wrong path'. Father (2017).

Mathew (49), came from a close-knit family and was very close to his grandmother. Has had personality disorder issues. Tried taking his own life, aged 19. Mother (1999); an associate (1999) (murdered by Mathew); father (1998); grandmother (1979). Not being allowed to either grandmother's or father's funerals had a major impact on Mathew.

Danny (34), described himself as having a 'rough upbringing', with his father being physically violent. Parents divorced when Danny was a teenager. Began working aged 15. His mother wanted to remarry but Danny couldn't accept the new partner, so left home. Saw himself as the 'black sheep' of the family. Mother (2016); uncle (2014).

Jason (36), found his dead baby sister when he was five. Expelled from school, raped, and lived in secure units where he was often abused, battered and beaten. His four brothers have all been in prison. From the age of 15 – 36 Jason has been locked up 20 of the last 21 years. Ex-girlfriend (2017); half-sister (2017); best friend (2015) (drug related); grandmother (2009); father (2002).

CHAPTER THREE

PRISON PROTOCOL AND THE ROLE OF CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy Department is responsible for activating various procedures upon receipt of information concerning dying and deceased family members. Chaplains effectively become the formal link between the institution, the prisoner and his family. Lydia (RC Chaplain) informed me that between 1st January and 16th August 2017 the deaths of 43 family members and loved ones had been formally reported to the Chaplaincy. However, this is a notional figure as other deaths were often relayed directly through family, friends and prisoners' acquaintances, without chaplaincy involvement.

In order to manage reported bereavements a set of PSIs have been provided through HMPS, covering England and Wales, giving guidance on the various tasks which should be accomplished to adequately support a prisoner. The PSIs rely on a range of staff members working collaboratively, in addition to the chaplains, to achieve the aims and objectives outlined. Chaplains are responsible for providing the majority of the practical, emotional and spiritual support needed when a prisoner's relative is notified as dying, or has died. This chapter begins by looking at how prison protocol, associated procedures and localised systems, directly shape a prisoner's grieving process. Findings illustrate for the first time how protocol-related stressors may be either positive or negative in nature, with these additional stressors being absent when people grieve in society.

The first half of the chapter explores the extent to which more complex forms of grief could be present in a custodial setting as a direct result of the regime. The remainder of the chapter directs its focus on the work of the chaplains. In particular, it highlights how simple, internal mourning rituals are organised as a secondary means of honouring the deceased in the (often, extremely limited) presence of an other, when a public funeral is not attended. Individualised belief systems are explored, and the impact of formalised religious observance and teachings demonstrate whether or not prisoners can benefit from involvement in them. The chapter concludes with attention being paid to the

length and breadth of bereavement support available in the medium- to longer-term.

Prison protocol directly affecting the grieving prisoner

Procedures laid out in PSIs outline how the Prison Service has a duty of care to put arrangements in place to support prisoners affected by a relative's serious illness or death (PSI 05/2016 - Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners: Section 17 (NOMS, 2016); PSI 13/2015 - Release on Temporary Licence: Section 4 (NOMS, 2015a); PSI 33/2015 - Funeral Escorts/Visits to Dying Relatives: Section 7 (NOMS, 2015b)). Chaplains, in collaboration with other departments, manage these procedures, which refer specifically to:

- receiving notification of a dying or deceased relative

- verification of the information

- breaking the news

- offering support following receipt of the news

- applying for clearance to visit a dying relative/attend a funeral if the relevant criteria are met

- having received approval, making any practical arrangements

- the prisoner being granted temporary release

- providing follow-up support.

Protection of the public is of paramount concern when a decision is taken to allow temporary release (PSI 13/2015) (NOMS, 2015a: 1). A prisoner is not asked to make a choice between visiting a terminally ill relation and attending their funeral, but it cannot automatically be assumed he will be granted release on both occasions. Furthermore, the wake cannot be attended following the funeral. Critically, a terminally ill relative, if able to express a view, must want the prisoner to visit.

The PSI 13/2015 definition of a *close* relative is:

> 4.54 Spouse …, parent, child, brother, sister (including half or step-brothers and sisters), fiancé or fiancée, … or a person who has been in loco parentis to a prisoner, or to whom the prisoner has been in loco parentis. Applications should be assessed on an individual case basis, taking care to balance security considerations with those of decency, and should only be refused on security grounds, which need to be clearly evidenced in the risk assessment (NOMS, 2015a: 24).

Governors are expected to take account of other close, caring relationships that may exist in extended families, for example grandparents. However, documentary evidence to confirm loco parentis must be provided to secure temporary release.

Analysis of the data comprised identifying key protocol-related stressors which can affect the grieving process within the restricted regime, where there is *extremely* limited opportunity for personal agency. When agency was driven by a positive emotional reaction this benefitted the grieving process *and* relationship with the regime, but when agency was driven by negative emotions such as isolation, anger, frustration, anguish and remorse, it served to compound the grief and *frustrate* regime compliance. The following findings are separated to highlight positive and negative grief stressors, and the resultant coping behaviours. Coping behaviours influence the course of grief and a prisoner's ability to conform to the regime.

Positive stressors – "I was showing me true, who I am."

Under normal circumstances, healthy grief work requires individuals to confront various painful stressors in order to accept the reality of the death (Worden, 1982). While stressors are difficult to endure, they are nevertheless an essential aspect of grief adjustment. Friends and family can struggle to connect with the dying as their condition deteriorates (Lillie, 2018). Although challenging, visiting a dying relative can be a positive life event, for example, finding hope as a result of healing relationships, having special times with family members to achieve '*completion*', and finding spiritual meaning in the anticipated death (Clayton et al, 2005; Steinhauser et al, 2000).

When a prisoner responds authentically upon visiting a dying relative, and embraces the situation, Colin (PO) commented, "… they say their last farewells and it becomes like a ceremony." Similarly, Don (CofE Chaplain) stated it can create, "… a lasting memory, particularly if the dying person can speak."

Jason visited his hospitalised grandmother who had helped raise him. "She died within an hour" of his visit. Jason stated he wrote a letter of thanks to his escorts, conveying his appreciation.

Lewis visited his dying grandfather:

> They were very supportive. … I think they understood … I was double handcuffed. … I couldn't cuddle me grandad properly. … I broke me heart in front of 'em [escorts and grandfather]. I wasn't bothered. … I was showing me true, who I am. I was just holding his hand and I was stroking his head and kissing him and that, and just saying …, 'I love you.' (becomes tearful) It's upsetting.

Possessing agency within the severest of restricted circumstances and demonstrating *in the moment authenticity*, may contribute towards both anticipatory grieving (see Rando, 1986) and partially buffer the post-death grieving experience (particularly if the experience can be processed later on). McAdam et al (2008: 1099) researched the unrecognised contributions of families in two intensive care units when a loved one was at high risk of dying, and found benefits of their presence included: the provision of emotional support; comfort and assurance; intimacy between patient and family member, for example through touch; family members feeling more of a sense of control in an environment that often seemed out of control; and providing memories of helping the loved one, especially when they do not survive.

Delivering bad news – "I needed to be there to support them."

Delivering bad news is regarded as an emotionally charged encounter (Rosenbaum et al, 2004), so breaking bad news *well* to a prisoner requires considerable discernment. Don (CofE Chaplain) stated that he always strove to provide a "reasonable memory" through careful choice of words and the manner in which his message was delivered. Undoubtedly, *how* it is relayed

will influence the connected, abiding memory. The combined narratives of the staff members confirmed that the majority of men notified became tearful and upset: tears signalling distress, eliciting sympathy (Zeifman and Brown, 2011), bonding, relieving stress, and being associated with healing in the grieving process (Griffith et al, 2011). Fred, a 62 year-old prisoner, pre-empted the RC Chaplain when she notified him of his mother's death:

> 'I know what you're here for'. ... they say big men don't cry. Er, yes I did a bit. I'm welling up now, I'll be honest.

Referring to the wider societal expectation of masculine control of soft emotion, Fred nevertheless was within the limits of immediate macho cultural expectations, with the expression of soft emotion being acceptable due to recency of the death. As Fred was his mother's next of kin, very unusually, he stated he arranged the funeral from prison, assisted by the Chaplaincy. Fred stated there was a communication issue and serious internal communication and logistical problems:

> The funeral director … [hadn't] put the right amount of stamps on … he sent a second letter, … which came to the prison … on a Saturday, but … as there's no prison post on a Saturday I didn't get it until Monday. … The funeral was at 1.40 in (city) and I was still in this prison at five to one. Er, so there was panic stations [resulting in Fred arriving after the hearse].

Notwithstanding Fred's problems on the day of the funeral, having prior knowledge of his mother's impending death allowed a process of anticipatory grieving to begin. Organising the funeral rituals and delivering the eulogy may be classed as positive stressors, having accorded with the beneficial male *'instrumental'* manner of coping (ie physically, cognitively or behaviourally) (Martin and Doka, 1999).

Mitch was able to confront his sister's death with sadness, during his imprisonment. Recognising softer emotion, as a *masculine* griever, his thoughts also considered the feelings of other family members:

> I started crying. … I was just more hurt that I couldn't be there for them. … I'd have been egging my sister on to help her, …, being the, sort of,

man of the family. I felt like I needed to be there to support them. … I wasn't thinking about myself so much. And my mother, the first thing that shot through my mind was my mum. How she must be feeling.

Mitch was asked to prepare three separate eulogies.   He had felt closer to his best friend than his brother or sister when all three were alive. For him the death of his friend (hanging) was more painful than the deaths of his siblings (both alcohol-related), but he accepted he would not be allowed to attend his friend's funeral. In the weeks following the deaths the distraction of writing the eulogies focused his mind, providing a useful contribution to the external mourning rituals, and inducing him to think in a detailed way about his deceased loved ones:

I started focussing on writing a speech for the funeral. I put a lot of my thoughts into that.

If a prisoner does not, or cannot, visit a dying relative or attend a funeral, Charlie (FC Chaplain) commented, thoughtfully:

… we'll have a time with them at the graveside the day after. So that's another way of helping them to deal with their grief.

These examples provide evidence of intuitive grieving (the experiencing and expression of grief) and some instrumental grieving (Martin and Doka, 1999). Building on their work in relation to gendered stereotypes and the grieving process, Doka and Martin (2010) assert there are benefits in expressing affect and help-seeking, with corresponding strengths in demonstrating stoicism following loss and proactively working to lessen the pain using cognitive and active approaches. This supposition broadly aligns with Stroebe and Schut's DPM (1999).

Immediate negative stressors – "I come back to me cell and I smashed it up."

While it is recognised that breaking bad news can be an uncomfortable experience for both giver and recipient (Aein and Delaram, 2014), the distinctiveness of prison culture and its environment may also influence how

bad news is received, in addition to the extent to which the griever feels able to express his reaction to the news. Due to estrangement or family rifts, bad news can be delivered late, especially if the whereabouts of the prisoner is unknown:

> DANNY: I'd been off the radar for a little bit and ended up coming to jail again. … she [sister] told me that me Mum had passed away, and two days before, they'd had the service and that [Danny later had a failed attempt at taking his own life].

Prisoners often responded to bad news, poorly, resulting in:

> MICHAEL (Governor grade): Verbal aggression, err times where prisoners will damage furniture. They'll probably hurt themselves as well, … It's important that yes, we manage the crisis there and then, but it's also about the days after and the weeks after, when we have to still consider that they might be in crisis as well.

PSI 05/2016 (Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners: Section 17) (NOMS, 2016: 21) states:

> 17.7   The Chaplain should offer care and support to the prisoner following news of serious illness or the death of a family member.

It should be noted that this instruction fails to recognise protracted and intense grief, and the fact that it could be regarded as a *crisis. Furthermore,* there is no clarity on the provision of longer term support, which arguably is often needed.

Heightened emotions were common. Barry stated he had smashed his cell, and when Woody received a visit from his partner:

> … She went, 'Your dad's died.' … she couldn't tell me why. … I got really, really angry. I come back to me cell and I smashed it up. I don't know why I did it.

When Ronnie was told of his father's death he stated he used avoidance to cope. This detachment from reality allowed him to gain a modicum of temporary control. Under normal circumstances, denial is a common reaction following receipt of news of a death (Schuchter and Zisook, 1993; Worden, 2010). The reality of the death hit Ronnie a week later, when he felt he was

"going wild". He remained in his cell with no television to distract him, due to already being on the *basic* level of the IEP scheme. Only Ronnie's sister attended his father's funeral, with remaining family members staying away due to a soured paternal relationship. Although assessments are undertaken prior to release on temporary licence, things can go awry. Charlie (FC Chaplain) recounted the previous day's events:

> … the inmate had turned to an escort and said, pardon my language, 'I need a piss.' And it was … just before the actual coffin's going to go through the curtains. So the officers tried to calm him down: 'Look, it's your dad's funeral ....' Then he became very, very irate and had to be took out. … the family were there taking photographs of him kicking off, which just doesn't help anything.

When accompanying Lydia (RC Chaplain) on a visit to the Segregation Unit as part of participant observation, an officer confirmed to her that upon his return the same prisoner had assaulted two officers, was restrained and placed in the Segregation Unit. Charlie continued:

> I think it was probably remorse that he'd had nothing to do with his dad, as such, and all of a sudden now there's a coffin with his dad in it. Any issues … he can no longer put 'em right.

Kieran's step-mother died. He had previously caused extreme problems within the family due to his delinquent behaviour, arising as a result of the traumatic deaths of his mother and two young siblings. He was asked whether attending her funeral had brought him any form of comfort:

> No. … Because I can't prove nowt', can I?
>
> MARION: … what would have made that situation better?
>
> KIERAN: Pphhoohh, I don't know. To get out of jail and just prove to her [that he was trying to change his ways and was receiving help] (very long pause).

While it is considered important to express negative emotions such as anger directly at the deceased, it is argued that avoiding or minimising the expression

of negative, grief-related emotions should predict a more intense and protracted bereavement outcome (Bonanno, 2001: 496). What the literature generally does not take into account is a punitive environment such as the prison setting, where extreme deprivation is common (such as only being able to visit a dying person once, when they are hours or at most, a couple of days away from death), and how this can negatively impact on the griever in relation to his sentence. In other words, a prisoner's extreme response may be considered by some as a normal reaction to an abnormal event under abnormal circumstances (Frankl, 1959).

Common features of men's prisons include the celebration of violence and toughness (Crewe, 2007: 139). Jewkes (2002) proposes that inmates construct two separate identities as a means of coping with imprisonment: a private sense of self which is completely separate from the socially sanctioned prisoner identity, and a public identity which permits them to receive social recognition within the prison environment. The above examples illustrate the limited agency and control the culture and environment affords.

Salmon (2005) contends that prison visits have declined, in spite of a growing prison population. Regular visiting and family contact has been found to improve prisoners' mental well-being, improve resettlement back into the community and reduce the likelihood of re-offending for some men (Dixey and Woodall, 2012; HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2016). However, not all family contact results in a positive experience for the prisoner, with visits often being emotionally painful for both parties (Dixey and Woodall, 2012). Moreover, building familial ties may not be appropriate where a family member is deemed at risk, thereby placing them in danger (McCarthy and Brunton-Smith, 2017). Other families are able to maintain tenuous, or stronger, links. Families have to endure *ambiguous loss* (Boss, 1999) when a member of that unit becomes imprisoned. The prisoner may be physically absent (with imprisonment preventing contributions to the family finances, loss of immediate family role as a father/son/brother), yet psychologically present through telephone calls and letters. During visiting he may be physically present yet psychologically absent (ie temporarily becoming a *different* person due to adherence to the masculine

culture through preventing himself getting in touch with his emotions).
Moreover, ambiguous loss can cause problems within the family because of
outside constraints and situations beyond the family's control (Boss, 1999: 9).
Arditti (2003) comments that the way family members were regarded by the
regime at a local jail in Virginia, USA, during visiting, left them feeling frustrated.
The following accounts suggest that ambiguous loss leaves some family
members feeling powerless and, at times, frustrated. However, the views of
family members (and especially the needs of dying relatives) *are* considered by
the regime at times of dying and death, and this ability to regain some control in
decision-making overrides the needs of the prisoner in favour of a family's
expectations.

Ian (CM) stated he escorted an inmate to visit a dying relative. The terminally ill
relative became angry with the inmate because of his chosen lifestyle, and the
visit ended promptly. This account served to further distress the dying relative
and prevent some form of relational *closure* for the prisoner. When grappling
with partial accounts surrounding dying and death, Kirsty (FLO/SO) explained
that prisoners,

> ... want things to happen (punches closed fist into her hand) there and
> then. And it's quite hard, … they're in this prison bubble, so their families
> do things …, they might not tell them anything about the bereavement.
> And then they hear it.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) took a call from an inmate's parents, insisting they told
their son about a death themselves. Having to comply with their wishes, while
she escorted him to a phone he, "lost it completely," unable to cope with the,
"not knowing". Often, family rifts occurred. Yameen had spent a lot of time in
prison, with several family members dying in the interim. As a result of threats
within the family he did not always receive news straightaway. His sister had
said:

> 'Right, fucking leave him in jail, leave him. Don't visit him or owt'. ... Just
> leave him to rot. It's his problem.'

Occasionally Chaplains may be instructed by family to only divulge certain details as a means of *protecting* the prisoner, inevitably resulting in the *whole truth* coming out later. This often caused betrayal, anger and frustration towards certain family members. A veiling of the *truth* resulted in Kieran and his father having to deal with further relationship difficulties. Kieran referred to a visit to his dying step-mother:

> I was angry with me dad not telling me, …, 'cos he was saying, 'Yeh, she'll be all right until you get out.' ... The day I went to see her was pphh, she was just a cripple. ... He tried blocking that out from me as well.

The narratives explain succinctly how additional stressors are created which directly relate to the power dynamics between family, prison and prisoner. Negative stressors include delays in communicating bad news via the prison, an absence of visits and communication leading to isolation, and the receipt of only partial information. In some situations, therefore, the institution and the prisoner submit to external demands by rendering control to family members.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) reported that delays were common, particularly when notifying a prisoner of bad news following a sudden or traumatic death, when a post mortem/inquest was necessary. I observed her in a telephone conversation with the representative of an external organisation (which would normally be a hospital, hospice, nursing home, the Police, undertakers, mortuary etc), who was reluctant to provide information. When a loved one was dying, the medical profession and hospices could not be accurate about timing. Clearly, anticipating the day and time of someone's death is not a precise science. Notwithstanding this, protocol requires that to grant temporary release, the relative is expected to die within hours or at most a few days following being seen by the prisoner. This raises important ethical issues concerning the quality of the interaction and the level of distress it may cause for *both* parties during the visit. Problems commonly occurred when the external communicator believed there was a danger of contravening the Data Protection Act (Gov.UK, 1998) (in force at time of data collection), thus placing additional negative stress on the prisoner. Since the time of writing the GDPR

(2018) (Gov.UK, 2018) has been introduced, which arguably could make matters worse.

Sometimes fictitious information is received, so verification is necessary. The chaplains were observed working tenaciously to authenticate notifications at the earliest opportunity, although there could be delays, depending when and to whom the message was relayed. Lydia (RC Chaplain) described herself as being like, "a dog with a bone." Recalling a typical request, she continued:

> 'We just need to know because the lad's not going to see his father before he dies if you don't give the go-ahead. If you tell me he's going to get well again, I'll take your word for that. That's absolutely fine, but I do really need to know.'

Charlie (FC Chaplain) narrated a current situation regarding a prisoner's brother. The inmate was due for release in four days' time. Charlie, working late the previous night, contacted a hospice and was informed the brother's death wasn't imminent. The following morning the hospice rang to say he had died, and Charlie broke the news:

> At that point he went absolutely ballistic. … 'Get out of my f-ing space. You didn't let me go and see my brother, etc, etc.' Well, to be fair he would never have gone to see his brother overnight. If I'd have known how poorly he was last night we'd have got him out possibly within 24 hours, but that's all down to getting staffing levels up, to take a prisoner out.

Auschra (2018) warns that confidentiality issues based on legal requirements can impede inter-organisational collaboration, through delayed information exchange. Moreover, Auschra suggests such barriers can either be actively raised by individual employees, or emerge more passively due to structural and institutional arrangements.

Examples of staff competence, leading to positive stressors

All staff members who discussed permission being granted for temporary release stated that Michael (Governor grade) and his colleagues always endeavour to achieve this. Charlie (FC Chaplain) stated:

> … at least 80% will go out. It's only the very, very extreme cases where the behaviour in the prison's been appalling.

Chaplaincy will notify staff prior to giving news to a prisoner, with details being recorded on the p-NOMIS (Prison National Offender Management Information System), in the Wing Observation Book and the Chaplaincy Team Journal. Experienced staff were reported by prisoners as making the event more meaningful by displaying empathy. Decision-making was based on compassion and morality, recognising priorities and making practical arrangements, promptly. In an attempt to conceal the PO's and his own status when visiting his dying mother in hospital, Fred (wearing denim jeans, a striped shirt and prison-issue anorak), recalled his escort suggested they should both pull their sleeves down:

> She said, 'That's so they don't see your 'cuffs.' … then when we got up onto the ward, she [Fred's mother] was in a side room. She looked round. 'Oh, there's no high risk here, 'cuffs off.' At the beginning, one of the officers sat beside the door. … But in time the other officer moved round to the window, so the door was 'there' (demonstrates). But I wasn't going to do it [escape].

The way bad news is relayed cleanly yet respectfully, helps provide a clear understanding of protocol. Luke (CM) would speak to the prisoner along the lines of:

> You need to appreciate at this minute, I know you don't want to hear it, but the chances are you will not be going to this funeral.

He continued:

> I always prepare now [points to a toilet roll on the desk, when bad news has been received]. That would be one of the first things I put in the office before they even get there. I'd have some tissues. I would ask, 'Do you

need anything?' Because if a grown man's crying in front of you it's difficult for them.

Colin (PO) stated he would verbally explain the procedure for an escorted visit so the prisoner would be aware of the event unfolding, adding:

> Most of t' lads, when you come back, are quite chatty. And they seem more relaxed. … It's like you can approach each other more relaxed because you've done something together that's not one of the nicest things.

In describing 'traditional staff culture', Crewe et al (2011: 112) offer two definitions: 'traditional-resistant', comprising cynicism, pettiness, disrespect and preoccupation with control; and 'traditional-professional', in which staff display confidence, clear boundaries, and knowledge. The examples provided fall within the latter category.

Staff involvement with funeral rituals

Religious affiliation and prison duties may suddenly combine for some staff as part of ritual, resulting in their relationship with a prisoner being imbued with spiritual meaning. Muslim practice requires that the deceased are buried within 24 hours. According to Adrian (Seg PO), staff will come in on rest days if it means an inmate can attend a Muslim or other funeral. Luke (CM) explained that two staff members volunteered one night in the previous week, escorting a prisoner within an hour of him being notified of the death. Ian (CM) continued:

> … a mate of ours, he's a Muslim lad and he ended up being there, washing the body with the prisoner [with handcuffs removed].

By initially establishing positive relationships with prisoners, POs were found to successfully manage and control a situation by applying discretion through the 'trained application of reason' (Liebling et al, 2011: 147). A key quality of a good officer – and arguably other staff members working in an oppressive environment – is the ability to select the right skill or 'tool' for the particular person or situation, possessing empathy for a prisoner's particular situation and

demonstrating a recognition of human behaviour, motivations and individual needs (Arnold, 2016: 273).

Staff difficulties, leading to negative stressors

The lengths a prisoner will go to, to submit to the demands of a regime, depend partly on '*how* their imprisonment is delivered, and whether it conforms to broad principles of justice' (Crewe, 2016: 94). The following scenarios report situational difficulties which give rise to individual stressors, and the individual reactions based upon assessment of *fairness.* Luke (CM) commented on the dissemination of bereavement-related information:

> It will go on the MM [Governor's Morning Meeting bulletin, and emailed in bulletin format] … And it will be in the observation books. … Staff will be a bit more, you know, 'kid gloves' type.

However, various accounts revealed serious problems with poor internal communication and record keeping. Authenticating loco parentis or other family details were often problematic for Chaplaincy and other staff, resulting in a prisoner not being allowed temporary release for someone who featured strongly in childhood/adolescence, such as a grandparent. For example, while Probation staff did keep their own records, Theresa (Probation) explained:

> Probation were quite nosey and would ask all these questions about your parents and your brothers and sisters, and we'd have a record of it. Now they've kind of gone away from that. … we can't actually help out because we've no record of that.

There can be a hiatus when bad news is waiting to be delivered. For Gavin, this resulted in an unexpected and enforced swapping of familial roles between imprisoned father and teenage daughter. Gavin's mother died on a Friday. His older sister had left a message with the prison but the paperwork was lying on someone's desk and no-one had actioned it. He rang his daughter on the Sunday, explaining she should visit her grandmother because she was, "ready to pass". However, his daughter had to be the bearer of the news:

It killed me that it had to be me daughter that told me. ... Me youngest daughter's 16 years old. For her to have to tell her Dad that his Mam's died, it's a bit wrong. ... I would have carried on with one of t' screws, …. For leaving it two, fucking, three days before I had to find out from me daughter. When they all knew what was going on. Obviously, it wasn't Mr ...'s fault, you know. ... If I'd have snapped, fucking 'ell, I'd have just got meself more jail.

Barry's grandmother had died a month earlier. An aunt had spoken to one of the imams, but the message was mislaid. Barry rang his grandfather:

He says, 'How are you?' 'All right, …, I'm doing good.' ... I said, 'How's me Nanan doing?' He said, 'Are you taking t' fucking piss?' I says, 'What are you on about?' 'She's fucking dead, she died fucking so-and-so.' ... I said, 'Nobody's told me.' He said, 'Nah, somebody's got to have told you. Our ... 'phoned a number of times, talking to people. I said, 'Do you think I'm sick or something?' He knows what me Nanan meant to me an' all. ... When I found out, it didn't really sink in and it still hasn't.

Gavin, Fred and Mitch all described very stressful experiences on the morning of the respective funerals as wing staff had failed to realise in time that arrangements needed to be made to get them out of the prison. Mitch stated:

I started like, getting irate and stressed out … they knew about the circumstances. They hadn't bothered. Oh, it was a bit of a nightmare really. I was just fretting all the way there …, ten minutes late … to the funeral. Everyone was already waiting.

Fred commented:

I had to keep calm. (Sharp intake of breath, then exhalation of breath. Slight pause.) … if I'd been awkward … I would have been dragged off … banged up for 24 hours, television taken off me. No, you've just got to keep some thoughts to yourself.

The current penological climate, represented by a high population, budget cuts and low staffing levels, can produce a tension for staff between what is practical

and what is possible (Arnold, 2016: 280). This inevitably has serious repercussions on the prisoners, and may be particularly impactful at a time of already heightened stress - when a relative is dying, or has died. Moreover, it can serve to aggravate the stressors incurred directly as a result of imprisonment.

No personal agency – "I'd not seen her 4½ years before she passed."

There are few other environments like the prison in which the relationship between constraint and agency is so vividly manifested (Crewe, 2016: 77). The unintended consequences of order and control in decision-making in relation to a prisoner's dying and deceased family member are arrived at by social structure and the absence of agency. The following example refers to promises not being fulfilled by representatives of the institution, producing intense and prolonged suffering, and feelings of helplessness.

Having spent many years in prison, Les never received permission earlier in his sentence to see his mother who had enduring health problems before she died in another part of the UK, despite being granted verbal permission by a Judge he respected. Probation staff later put forward evidence to prevent any visits. This affected him detrimentally over the years and clearly had been a source of ongoing bitterness towards "the system":

> I'd not seen her 4 ½ years before she passed. I was promised on two occasions that I'd definitely see her because she was too ill to travel.

Not only is a prisoner affected when permission is not granted for temporary release, but due consideration should be afforded to the dying relative concerning associated stress, anxiety or other health implications.

A prisoner's brother had recently died and the cause may have been one of several factors, including suicide, but his family would not divulge anything. Kirsty (FLO/SO) recalled:

> He was going crackers. … it took me two days to find that out, … It's about me having the time to do it, which I would find time to do it, … [and] not breaching his confidentiality.

Regarding obtaining temporary release, Michael (Governor grade) had to be aware of potentially "erratic behaviour":

> … in terms of security it doesn't always necessarily mean they will be allowed to go to the funeral … we've also got the other issue about keeping the public safe and it's striking that balance.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) was careful not to raise hopes. She would never say,

> 'You'll be going out,' but rather, 'well, you most probably will be going. Everything will be put in place. Unless it's something I don't know about: maybe a security issue, or for any other reason that you wouldn't be allowed to go, but there is a very good possibility that you will be going.'

She emphasised the need to raise the element of doubt, to protect both the inmate and the decision-making process. Building on this, she commented on *felt pain* being recently discharged as a result of a refusal:

> One lad asked me on the wing last week and I never would have told him like that. But … I couldn't lie to him when I knew that he'd been turned down. I explained, 'I'm really sorry.' … He was just glaring. He went back into his cell, shut the door and let out this loud scream. It was like an animal in pain. It was like the pain coming out. … He was given a phone-call and he was heart-broken. … I think it's harder to deal with, you know, when you see them and it just doesn't touch the surface, really.

Several examples were reported, whereby management disallowed involvement in funeral rituals. Mitch's mother had become upset because he was not allowed to help carry his sister's coffin:

> It was embarrassing. You know, obviously everyone's looking at you. … I felt like I was letting … down that I couldn't … carry her to her final resting place.

Prior to release on temporary licence a risk assessment is undertaken to determine the appropriate strength for the escort (the minimum strength being two officers) and the application of restraints (Section 7 of PSI 33/2015) (NOMS, 2015b: 23). Interviews confirmed that usual practice was to be single

handcuffed (occasionally double handcuffed, and one interviewee being allowed to wear a chain) when visiting a dying relative or attending a funeral.

While the prisoner has 'foregone his claim to the status of a full-fledged, trusted member of society' (Sykes, 1958: 66), the study nevertheless highlighted the fact that wearing handcuffs could discourage prisoners from attending the funeral of a significant relative due to perceived humiliation and incorrect assumptions made by attendees. Haseeb, aged 64 and a low-risk prisoner, stated:

> When you see somebody handcuffed with a big chain and two officers, they automatically assume you've committed a heinous crime. … a lot of boys here, because of this handcuffing they don't even bother going to any funeral. You know, something *has* to change within all the prisons to reflect the attitude of the prisoners.

Haseeb stated he had witnessed these men becoming distraught in their cells, the situation bubbling up, leading to anger and a need to "kick off". Gavin described his feelings when visiting his dying mother and subsequently attending her funeral:

> ... I'm in for fighting me pal. Even t' judge said it was stupid. … I've only got a few month left. It's me mam, for God's sake! … they still sent me cuffed up. … I *was* there, but I *wasn't* there [at the funeral]. … I was embarrassed as well about being the only one cuffed up.

Mitch went forward to read a eulogy:

> Again that was quite awkward … I was 'cuffed … on my left wrist but … I needed to be on the opposite side of the officer so I was, like, leaning across, … trying to read my speech …. It was all a bit of a palaver … it would have been a lot better if I was allowed to be on a chain at least.

Regarding prisoner attendance at a funeral, the use of handcuffs and safety of the wider population, Kirsty (FLO/SO) stated:

Some families are very disruptive that they've come in 'cuffs, and they want us to take their 'cuffs off them. … They can be quite threatening and abusive to us.

Accounts are consistent with Vaswani (2014), who found that the Young Offenders she interviewed believed the requirement to wear handcuffs was deeply embarrassing, agreeing it conveyed a lack of respect to the deceased. The issue of handcuffing could benefit from being reviewed to ascertain whether a less dehumanising means of restraint can be utilised.

The potential for complex grief reactions

Bearing in mind the cumulative negative stressors highlighted thus far in the chapter, Theresa (Probation) stated her department had received internal notification that no-one could be referred for Cruse Bereavement Care support unless the death had taken place more than 12 months earlier. She commented:

> That's the [local] rules in here. Up until that stage all they say is, '… what they're going through is, *normal grief*. And it doesn't make sense to me because if they had that rule in the community then I'd think, 'Okay, that's the rule.' But why are prisons different? ... it is very difficult to talk to someone who's put their heart on the table about how they're struggling with it, to say, 'Give it another four months and I'll refer you'.

A conversation was initiated with Heidi (Mental Health) regarding the recognition of more complex grief in prison:

> HEIDI: It's not part of our remit [to listen to a prisoner's bereavement issues] unless it's part of a larger scale condition or problem. You're allowed to have schizophrenia *and* be bereaved … I see bereavement as *normal*. … if we sort of get involved with a normal bereavement then it 'labels' prisoners, … labelling them with a mental health issue is not fair. … if they're coping badly they will end up on an ACCT document. ... And then we'll say, 'Yes, it's bereavement. If you want to talk to us, that's fine. But the most appropriate thing is for you to talk to your family, talk to

chaplaincy, talk to officers on the wing'. ... And then we'll go through the appropriate coping mechanisms.

MARION: Do they have to meet any criteria?

HEIDI: No, we don't have any criteria. ... as far as I'm concerned if I thought it was bereavement I would hand it over to Safer Custody staff or chaplaincy, and they would assess whether they thought it, you know, if there were any criteria. I don't know if there are any criteria. There'll be criteria, like lack of sleep, lack of appetite, poor concentration. …

MARION: Do you give a period of time before they can be seen?

HEIDI: We do for anybody. … Unless they're … kicking off and behaving very, very extremely, then we wouldn't get involved in the first place. …. Obviously, if they were self-harming, behaving wholly inappropriately, we would go as part of an ACCT review, but that would be a multi-disciplinary including the prisoner. … Chaplaincy, the Prison Service, Safer Custody would be there. ... It's assessing it at that point if they behave inappropriately. But if it's feasibly inappropriate within the realms of prison, because prison behaviour is different from outside. People behave differently in prison. I've got people and they go, 'I never self-harm outside, Miss, ever.' They never do it. They only do it in jail. So they *can* cope, but *they just can't cope in jail.* I'm not sure that I could cope being locked up a long time.

The manifestation of complex grief does not seem to be recognised as a *stand-alone* issue in some of the prison's departments. Moreover, usual informal family support mechanisms are all but absent in prison. The Cruse Bereavement Volunteer would see a prisoner following an application being forwarded by him via the Chaplaincy, whereupon any practical arrangements were made by one of the chaplains. Importantly, the Cruse Bereavement Care Standard for Access, Referral, Assessment and Allocation (2014) does not include any restriction on length of time which must elapse before support can be offered.

Complicated mourning has been described as lasting too long (prolonged or

chronic) or not long enough (abbreviated); and expressed too demonstrably (exaggerated, distorted, conflicted) or not demonstrably enough (absent, inhibited, delayed) (Foote and Frank, 1999: 164). The accounts provided strongly indicate the tremendous bearing the regime has on evoking additional negative, and some positive, grief-related stressors, which must affect the grieving process. In the second half of the chapter, narratives provide further evidence of grief stressors, and how, as part of their work role, the chaplains helped the men to deal with them.

Grieving prisoners' involvement with Chaplaincy

Differentiating the particular duties of prison officers and chaplains, Todd and Tipton (2011: 26) describe an image of both working together to ensure the smooth running of the prison system:

> one to administer and manage the machinery of the regime; the other to pour oil onto and lubricate the hot spots, tensions and cracks that appear within the penal mechanism.

Although they may not be viewed in the same manner as the stereotypical white-shirted Prison Officer, chaplains nevertheless have to abide by the regime regarding security and confidentiality, and carry keys. It should be noted that there is drastically reduced opportunity to be in so much relatively close contact with leaders and representatives of differing faith traditions within society, compared to a custodial setting. I observed reception visits on the wings with three of the chaplains at separate times during the fieldwork. The chaplains were viewed by all with respect, and by some with *polite caution* - particularly by those who had just arrived at the prison and were learning to orientate themselves to the regime. These introductions are part of the prison *acclimatisation* package. Coping with *entry shock* at this time, prisoners have multiple psychological assaults to confront during the initial phase of confinement (Jewkes, 2012b: 46). On many occasions the chaplains were observed interacting through the use of humour, yet with sensitivity.

As part of undertaking a wide variety of duties, chaplains are tasked with providing practical, pastoral and spiritual support to the bereaved (PSI 05/2016

– 'Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners') (NOMS, 2016). The findings of this section relate to internal mourning rituals, the relevance of individualised belief systems, the impact of formalised religious observance and religious teachings in relation to grief, and ongoing support provided through Chaplaincy.

The Chaplaincy Team

When considering death in a multicultural environment, a plurality of religions and social backgrounds must be considered and responded to accordingly (Draper and Hancock, 2011). The prison was expected to make provision for men of differing religions and none.

Some chaplains and *'sessional'* chaplains were employed and others were non-remunerated: (CofE – 1 x full time; RC – 1 x 30 hours, 1 x Saturday mornings; Muslim – 1 x 20 hours; 1 x 14 hours; 1 x Fridays, (with the last having no comment made on status); FC – 1 x two days; Sikh – 1 x Saturday mornings, Pagan – 1 x one morning, sessional; Buddhist – 1 x 2 hours, sessional (Chaplaincy Headquarters, 2017). Other chaplains available on request represented Judaic, Jehovah's Witness, Quaker, Mormon and Rastafarian traditions (the last three awaiting appointment). The CofE Chaplain, RC Lay Chaplain, FC Chaplain and a Muslim Chaplain participated in the study. A limitation of the research is non-involvement of chaplains of minority faiths. However, they had considerably reduced physical presence and minimal involvement with bereaved prisoners and the wider prison, compared to the chaplains interviewed.

The ratio of prisoners interviewed according to faith was largely determined by level of interest in the study and willingness to engage, and the opportunity never presenting itself to be able to speak to men who ascribed to minority faiths. Three participants described themselves as Muslim, with the remaining 20 variously using the identity of Christian (including one Mormon and two Roman Catholics), or recognising no particular religion. There was no representation from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh or other faiths.

Table 2: *Prison population at 'HMP North of England', according to Religion (Chaplaincy Headquarters, 2017).*

Religion	%
Atheist	0.2%
Buddhist	0.7%
Christian	4.3%
Church of England	17.3%
Church of Scotland	0.2%
Mormon	1.2%
Muslim	17.5%
No religion	37.3%
Pagan	0.1%
Rastafarian	0.1%
Roman Catholic	19.2%
Russian Orthodox	0.1%
Sikh	0.5%
Unknown	1.1%
Total	100%

Internal mourning rituals – "They do come back feeling better, you know."

Many cultures have particular mourning practices which determine, 'when, how, and how long people grieve' (Rosenblatt, 2008: 215). The prison setting is no exception. Death rituals can serve to *define* death, with people participating in the construction process while witnessing the participation of others in it (Rosenblatt, 2001: 294). Thus, the process of mourning develops a socially constructed meaning, assisting with how grief is shaped; the phenomenon of *constructionism* signifying that there is no one true or valid interpretation (Crotty, 1998). Some prisoners isolated from family, have scant – if any - opportunity to actively participate in communal mourning, thereby causing a breach within the normal grieving process.

Importance is attached to the expression of grief during culturally recognised mourning rituals. These highly social activities allow lamentation of the dead and celebration of their lives. *Significantly*, they may serve to make the death more *real.* When a prisoner refuses to, or is not granted permission to, attend the funeral of a close family member as part of the mourning ritual, Kirsty (FLO/SO) referred to the work undertaken by the chaplains:

> … they're brilliant [the chaplains] in offering them another alternative. … Some lads will go through the prison and they'll deal with bereavement as they see fit … And some lads …, we'll put 'em in Chaplaincy's direction because they're the *experts* on bereavement. Unfortunately, for prison staff we don't have the resources. Our resource *is* Chaplaincy.

At the time of the study, *unofficial* mourning attendance on the day of the funeral for those not attending the formal funeral usually comprised a chaplain and the bereaved prisoner [assuming this could be logistically arranged] being involved in a simple ritual in the Chapel. Thus, the broader notion of *mourning* as it is culturally recognised in society, was not taking place. Despite this, Don (CofE Chaplain) was asked whether ritual aids the grieving process:

> … doing *something* is something that they can do when they can't do *anything else*, possibly.

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The three Christian chaplains described very similar strategies for involving a bereaved prisoner, regardless of his belief system. Charlie (FC Chaplain) explained:

> … I try to make it as much like a funeral as I can. … '… tell me about your Mum/your Dad when you come down to light the candle.' … And just a normal eulogy, just to try and get them talking about the person who's died and the memories. Because memories cannot be lost. But it also helps them to deal with their grief and get things out of their system.

Assisting with positive memory making was deemed an important aspect of the Chaplains' role. The Christian chaplains provided those who *wanted* to engage, with *some* agency and physical involvement in symbolic ritual. Woody was asked whether he was involved in an alternative funeral ritual for his step-father following his refusal to go, as he wanted to save his family from humiliation:

> (decisive tone) Yes. I came down to the Chapel here with Father (CofE Chaplain), erm read out the eulogy, even though me sister were doing it on t' outside as well. … We just lit some candles and then he did a prayer for me. …. And then I remember he left me for a couple of minutes after, just to sit and have a bit of time to meself.

Woody recalled the Chaplain having to finish reading the eulogy as he was so overcome. If the strength of the relationship to the deceased is only recognised by a Chaplain during private mourning rituals and not by other prisoners or staff, there remains an absence of public recognition of the relationship to the deceased, resulting in the grief being *disenfranchised* (Doka, 1989) within the prison community, and in this case by society due to non-attendance at the public funeral.

Ritualistic involvement such as lighting a candle on anniversaries also took place. Colin (PO) stated:

> … 'We've got you fifteen minutes in t' Chapel.' … They do come back feeling better, you know.

While formalised, *social* mourning was absent on the above occasions, active participation focusing solely on the bereaved against the backdrop of simple ceremony and liturgy as a second-best, was beneficial.

To ameliorate the effects of non-involvement in social ritual with family and friends, chaplains aspired to be *prisoner-centred* in decision-making regarding how a prisoner might want to mark the death of a family member or loved one. However, structure (regime, staff availability, availability of the chapel, administrative and security arrangements etc) pared the level of agency down to a minimum.

Prisoners' individualised belief systems

The fact that some 37% of prisoners identified as possessing no religion, according to the Chaplaincy HQ Assurance and Compliance Inspection (Chaplaincy Headquarters, 2017), is an issue of considerable relevance, given that chaplaincy comprises religious leaders and lay people attached to a faith community. Hunt and Read (2018: 195) argue that multi-faith chaplaincies are 'alienating to atheist and non-faith offenders, who are entitled to support that is relevant to their beliefs'. Lydia (RC Chaplain) stated:

> … Sometimes lads with no faith require that help. They find that there *is* something there at the end of the day. … it's like (laughs gently) that film, isn't it, er, Nanny McFee: 'When you need me, you won't want me. When you want me, you won't need me.' … I always say when they come in for induction, '… Chaplaincy is for everybody. For a person of faith or no faith. … If you want the *God* bit put in, we can put that in,' you know. Predominantly that's what we're employed to do, to give the guidance and the teaching within your own faith, but generically, to be there as a support.

During participant observation Lydia (RC Chaplain) was engaged in conversation with lots of men, some of whom openly stated they did not engage in religious practice. She was observed having discussions and said several times that it was inconsequential to her what their beliefs were: they would be well supported, regardless.

Darim (Muslim Chaplain) agreed:

> … it is a holistic approach and we are part of that process. … Often it happens where we have to deal with people that are not from our faith background necessarily, but that doesn't make a difference.

The prisoners' accounts confirmed that many men actively sought out the chaplains, while some staff commented that others dealt with loss in their own way. The chaplains often acted as an intermediary in negotiating dying, death and loss within and without prison. Indeed, some prisoners' interviews implied that having become bereaved, especially when there were family relationship complications, one or two members of the Chaplaincy team became *proxy* family members, due to the breadth of support offered and the time they were able to devote on a one-to-one basis in comparison to other staff.

Todd and Tipton (2011: 28) assert that it is problematic to quantify the *value* of chaplaincy, for example in the case of measuring key performance targets against the number of suicides, self-harms or acts of violence a chaplain has prevented, because of the unquantifiable nature of this essentially qualitative role. In contrast, Garland (1990: 204) minimises the role somewhat, commenting that chaplains play a 'small part' in prisoners' lives, with their spiritual and pastoral mission being limited in influence and often indistinguishable from the social worker role.

Deuchar et al (2016) undertook qualitative research on Scottish and Danish young male offenders' experiences of incarceration, chaplaincy, religion and spirituality. Findings suggested that both countries were becoming increasingly secular. Further, several participants described a need for some kind of spiritual support, even for the young men who did not have a religious belief. This *need* was usually as a result of bereavement, loneliness, or other crisis or traumatic experience. Juxtaposed with this, Potter (1999), and Hunt and Read (2018) assert that the experience of prison counsellors and healthcare professionals in England and Wales is that many bereaved inmates feel uncomfortable accessing the services provided by chaplaincy because of identifying as 'non-religious', and having differing beliefs and value systems; resulting in them not receiving the help they need. It should be noted that no

prisoner interviewed complained of this problem, and some men without a clearly-recognised faith were interviewed. Luke (CM), commented:

> A lot of lads, quite a lot of lads don't want anything to do with Chaplaincy though.
>
> IAN (CM): No.
>
> LUKE (CM): That's not disrespectful, it's just that they don't.

While it is the governing Governor's responsibility to ensure faith provision is available to all prisoners (NOMS, 2016) this is not always a straightforward task to accomplish, with structural constraints such as equality of provision and non-availability of some denominations for recruitment as chaplains (Beckford and Gilliat, 1998). The MoJ recognised in 2014 that humanists in prison have the legal right to see a humanist pastoral support visitor, with humanists offering advice and reassurance on an existential level (Humanists UK, 2018). There was no provision within the Chaplaincy incorporating a chaplain representing this tradition, although HMP Cardiff had employed a Humanist celebrant to cater to the needs of those ascribing to this belief system (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2017). Availability of humanists also depends upon numbers of people going forward for training and accreditation. For a prisoner who has had little, or no, direct former contact with religious and spiritual leaders, their reactions, outlined above, perhaps are not surprising. During spiritual crises, the issue of having a suitable person to turn to, then becomes all the more important.

Theistic belief and divinity *were* considered by some participants, and beliefs fell into three broad points of view. Religion/spirituality was recognised as important or very important for some interviewees. Several had a vague sense of a spiritual belief yet afforded it little time and relevance. Others were sceptical or had not formulated any personal belief system. Thus, it was difficult to determine their precise belief system:

Kieran's position was:

I don't believe in owt' like that. … Well there's no God is there? He wouldn't do things like this, would he? [allow the deaths of multiple family members including small children] … that's the reason I don't.

MARION: Have you talked to anybody about it?

KIERAN: (sounded annoyed) I haven't talked to no-one about nothing.

MARION: (gently) No. Sorry. (pause) You said your way of coping has been to not talk about it.

Lenny was asked about having a faith or some kind of spiritual outlook:

LENNY: (pause) I don't know. … it's like summat' in me own head tells me I do, but I don't know! I've never been to church. I don't know.

MARION: When your baby daughter died, how did that affect your outlook on life?

LENNY: I thought, 'How could there be a God,' or whatever, if he can do summat' like that. She never did nowt' wrong, you know. It's like, why take someone's life before they're even born?

MARION: And what answer did you get?

LENNY: I didn't. I still don't know.

Dale spoke of his mother's Catholic faith and his regular attendance at Mass in the Chapel:

MARION: Do you feel any kind of a connection [spiritual connection with your deceased mother]?

DALE: No. Like I say, I don't *think* …. Obviously, probably one of the best places to have a connection with her would be in Chapel but I don't think of her then, you know. … So I don't have to go through them emotions and things like that. … I *do* think she's dead *sometimes*, you know.

Kuhn (2002) comments that when a loss is unusual, or if a bereaved person has been excluded from the normal activities of a family or group due to some

kind of difference which sets them apart, grievers often feel awkward about expressing their feelings due to a fear that others will not understand. It could be argued that religion and spirituality, and existential matters, would fall in this category from these accounts.

The above narratives infer that by using an avoidant technique as a way of coping in prison may also preclude the potential for processing grief in the light of personal belief systems – whatever they may be. Critically, for some prisoners, working through such difficult questions may be too emotionally painful to deal with. A significantly greater proportion of the prison population have poorer literacy skills than the general population (Creese, 2016), and 37% of the average monthly prison population report having mental health or wellbeing issues at any one time (National Audit Office, 2017: 4). Combined with the immediate stressors which present themselves on a daily basis, ie the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958) *and* bereavement, the act of metacognition, or higher order thinking skills, may be too difficult for some to contemplate.

Balk and Corr (2001) contend that it *is* possible to be spiritual without being religious. Woody stated his deceased mother and step-father had held no particular religious affiliation. He continued:

> I never believed in all that before I come to prison. And then Father (CofE Chaplain), the way he tret [treated] me after me [step-] dad died, it, just, everything, and (RC Chaplain), she took me in t' Chapel, sit me down when it were me [deceased] mum's birthday. … I'm not 100% religious now. I just believe somebody's up there.

Fred spoke about his views on the afterlife:

> I'm thinking, well okay, some people say there's life after death. You know, your spirit goes on. I don't know about that. … The life after my death is in my son, my daughter.

The above participants had contemplated the bigger question of the meaning of life and death, and by rationalising others' beliefs against their own experiences, had reached conclusions which sat comfortably with their self-

concept. Having considered their *own* position, while this may not have affected the pain of grief, it could have been beneficial in the longer-term processing of, and adjustment to, the death. The accounts given by Kieran, Lenny and Dale provide evidence of potentially another gap in a prisoner's ability to process grief.

Some prisoners reached out towards Chaplaincy. When exploring the relationship between early caregiver experiences and attachment to God, McDonald et al (2005), found a correspondence between working models of parents and God. Those respondents who originated from homes that were emotionally cold or unspiritual exhibited higher levels of avoidance of intimacy in their relationship to God, a trend consistent with a dismissing [avoidant] attachment style. In contrast, McDonald et al (2005: 21) found overprotective, rigid, or authoritarian homes were associated with higher levels of both avoidance of intimacy and anxiety over lovability in relationship to God, a trend characterised by the fearful attachment style. Thus, for an improved connection, both Chaplaincy and bereaved prisoners need to find a way of connecting more easily.

Barry stated he lit a candle, weekly, at the Church of England Sunday service. When asked whether or not attendance helped, he responded:

> (voice became more tranquil) It does, yeh, I've found peace, yeh. … I do believe there's summat. … It's me that's not taking notice of it.

Lewis was brought up in the Mormon tradition:

> I'm trying to even send a message to him [grandfather] and that, through prayer. Trying to see if he can say anything back through his spirit. … I'm a really spiritual person … I believe in God, … Now I think - you know - inside me - you know - I could have been - *I am* a special person.

During the fieldwork Ronnie was regularly to be seen in the Chaplaincy attending various religious groups. Following a quite recent bereavement he stated:

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I'm a big follower of Christ, so I've been reading my bible and stuff ... I've been praying to get me through it all. ... Don't get me wrong, it has helped me. But I am still grieving.

Prisoners are inevitably on a continuum, as the differing accounts verify, and involvement in organised religion or private study, meditation and prayer, may partially mediate the pains of grief. Some prisoners believe their faith is enhanced as a result of the adverse circumstances of prison life (Hunt, 2011). Haseeb, more devoted to Islam since having time to study in prison, stated:

… death does not become a grievance for me now.

Danny had a positive experience of the chaplains and their religious conviction:

(RC chaplain), *she* was brilliant. Fr (CofE Chaplain)'s been *awesome*. He come and sees me when I moved over to … wing and er, he prayed with me. … a couple of the lads saw it. And after he'd gone, they were like, (voice takes on the tone of his peer) 'What was going on there?' I was like, 'You don't have to worry, lads, it's not a demonic takeover, (we both laugh) the man was praying with me!' 'Why?' (energised voice) … I don't push a faith or anything on anybody. … I tell 'em about my faith and my experiences, and they go away a bit happier. If I've helped them to understand what was going on there, then the next time they see it, it might actually stop someone feeling targeted or victimised by having a faith. You know, it might make somebody feel more comfortable as they're opening up about their faith. … I've just had enough of all t' bollocks that's going off! (both laugh) Sorry, but I have!

This account shines a light on how religion may be viewed within the prison culture, and how personal beliefs may have to be played down for those who don't have the strength to self-identify with their belief system. Les's faith had become significantly stronger following the death of his mother. Participant observation demonstrated his behaviour and manner were recognised by staff and inmates as having changed too:

I'm a Christian. It's like *knowing*. The meaning of life is like *knowing why*, and *knowing*.

Balk and Corr (2001: 208) assert that all who grieve are engaged in a spiritual task – a profound quest for meaning. Following a study exploring spirituality in contemporary funerals in society, Holloway et al (2010) found that the death of a loved one acted as a catalyst in requiring the bereaved to conceptualise death and confirm or formulate religious or spiritual beliefs. Thus, the task of the chaplain becomes something of a personalised ethical challenge, resulting in leading by example and trust in a higher power. For those prisoners who recognised it, the chaplains *lived out their faith* in serving the needs of the prisoners as part of their job role. This *template* as a way of *being* came to be recognised as being influential for some men. It is important to recognise that grief did not diminish as a result of religion and spirituality, but the ability to cope became enhanced, potentially leading to a less prolonged period of grieving, of less intensity. Usó-Doménech and Nescolarde-Selva (2016: 147) explain how this process may come about:

> Reason cannot prove the beliefs it is based upon. Beliefs arise through experience. … Beliefs, reason and experience, are based upon each other.

Haseeb, Danny and Les provided narratives demonstrating the effects of assimilation, context, and dynamism. A significant bereavement can invoke feelings of real abandonment. Thus, for the *abandoned* prisoner, recognition of some other means of connection to a concept bigger than himself whilst in prison can prove beneficial. It may be that having a relationship with God, 'provides those who have little reason to trust themselves or others[,] with a parent-figure whom they can trust' (Parkes, 2006: 185).

Having confronted their own belief system in relation to personal bereavements, with some influence directly attributable to Chaplaincy and religion/spirituality - death had taken on a different meaning for some men. This perceptive change also served to affect the men's identity in relation to the regime and inmate culture, increased their locus of control, and brought about a new-found sense of security in their relationship with a higher being. Those particular accounts indicating a move towards self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961) accord with Calverley's (2013) notion of the spiritual life assisting with the reordering of

personal goals: not specifically through living family members but as a result of the chaplains, the deceased and a higher being. It also transformed the meaning of courage, as will be explored later in Chapter Seven.

Religious observance and teaching – "… we pray for the dead … on the wing .…"

Across the prisoners' accounts there was evidence of Christian chaplains supporting Muslim inmates, with fewer accounts of the imams supporting either Muslim or non-Muslim prisoners, and no evidence of minority faith chaplains' involvement at all. It is unknown whether this was due to cultural/religious/other reasons. However, this study found that Muslim imams made facilitating special release to visit a dying Muslim relative or attending a funeral a priority. The imams had strong links in the community where many of the Muslim prisoners resided, and this was beneficial in negotiating prison protocol for special temporary release.

When participant observation took place during the fieldwork, one of the imams was leading a session instructing the Muslim prisoners on the rituals associated with washing and preparation of the body prior to burial. Significantly, from the data obtained, adherence to Muslim death practices and reading religious literature may be seen as more widely relevant than dealing with the effects of prisoner grief, as recognised by Westernised thinking.

Haseeb was asked what the imams' involvement would be if a Muslim prisoner was unable to attend a funeral:

> You can do prayers anywhere, whether you're in prison or wherever. … We all get together – not all - maybe a dozen of us, and we pray for the dead … on the wing … But specifically the imam does not come into your room, which I would have thought would have been better because he can approach it from a, it's like a vicar. …
>
> MARION: So you don't think it happens so much?
>
> HASEEB: Not as often from the imams' point of view.

In contrast to the *individualist* Christian-based mourning ritual described earlier, located in the chapel with one Christian chaplain, Muslim practice was much more *communal* and often located on the wing.

Christians remembered the deceased during a short period of prayer in formal weekly services in the Chapel. Islam also recognised the importance of praying for the deceased, either in a formal or informal setting, such as on the wing. Reading religious literature was a way of *aiding* the deceased Muslim recipient in the afterlife. It would also benefit the giver upon their own death in terms of forgiveness. Thus the intersection of loss through death, religion and personal spiritual contemplation was a positive act which a Muslim prisoner could get involved in, not just in relation to his own loss but other inmates' losses. It was powerfully symbolic, providing mutual support and care in a culturally different way, which also recognised the act as a means of reward in the hereafter.

There was a subtle difference in the weighting of the religious/spiritual roles of the chaplains of different belief systems. Because they were imprisoned and away from the trappings of material need and social responsibilities, some men stated they placed a stronger focus on religion and spirituality, were able to share their faith formally and informally, and could attribute meaning to the rituals they engaged in. Yameen was asked whether religion in prison had helped him in any way, following his father's death in 2015:

> (long pause) Oooh. Yeh. Er (pause). … (pause) It did in the first two weeks when I came back on remand in 2015, to be brutally honest with you. I haven't told that to nobody. I absolutely and utterly bawled my eyes out on the prayer mat. … I was reading summat' and I just felt really, really overwhelmed with emotion. … *I could not stop crying.* … I'm trying to mute myself from crying so that other people couldn't hear it. 'Cos I've been in and out that much I've got a reputation. … I thought, wwooaahh. Okay, I must have needed that.

Yameen was then asked whether he had been involved in Friday prayers, led by the imams, in the Chapel (when Christian artefacts are draped with cloths or hidden from sight).

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YAMEEN: … (speaks resolutely) *I need it.* … I definitely *need* it. … I keep thinking about it every other day, thinking, 'What are you doing? You need to start doing your prayers and stuff again.' 'Cos I think it were the only time when I was proper pphh chilled out, relaxed, not stressed, not anxious.

Howard was asked about any involvement he may have had in religion:

(pause) I don't like religion, to be truthful. I like little aspects of certain religions. … I like little bits. ….

Danny spoke of church attendance:

… I started going to Church a bit more in jail and that. Just because I felt a bit closer to me Mum and that. ….

Jason's views were:

I've been to church for years. Then I've watched a few babies die. … me pals' kids and stuff, it's just like, there ain't no God, mate. If God can let that happen to that baby, what's done nothing wrong. It's not that I don't believe in God. I just don't believe in exactly how he's portrayed. … There's summat' else goes on, yeh. I'm not 100% sure what it is.

Some prisoners may attend religious services for years at a time and yet fail to explore the deeper meaning of religion and spirituality. Todd and Tipton (2011) found that many prisoners who register a 'Nil' response during reception into prison can still be found in the chapel. Determining religiosity and sincerity in prison can be fraught with problems. Attending religious events may be a way of reducing boredom, engaging in the illicit sub-rosa economy, meeting men from other wings for a short social time afterwards, meeting volunteers and others who are not prison staff, or involving themselves in social connectedness eg singing, etc. In this respect, organised religion may have the effect of encouraging the questioning of one's moral standpoint and belief system, and observing different ways of *being* a member of society, rather than prisoners becoming pro-actively *changed* by it.

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Various descriptions of the benefits of faith-based activities organised by chaplaincy, include: opportunities for self-development, providing space for deep reflection, and reinforcing the possibility of a transformed identity as a result of redemption (Clinks, 2016). Prisoners receive help with adjustment to prison, a possibility of a change in behaviour and outlook, an opportunity to create one's own regime within the prison regime, a sense of protection and group belonging, and an escape and a time for reflection (Todd and Tipton, 2011). There is an opportunity to share values and norms (Beckford, 2013); a feeling of safety, a chance for prisoners who display leadership skills to put them to use, contact with others (including the opposite sex), a sense of solidarity, and a higher purpose (Thomas and Zaitzow, 2006). Religion or faith can, for many people, be the most important aspect of their identity, and way in which they are most clearly identified by others (Cherry, 2010: 150). A prisoner's representation of self in this regard (whether it be connected to an established faith or none), can, therefore, become a useful identifying marker as a means of both individualised self-expression and adherence to a recognised grouping. However, it may induce bullying and cynicism. Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) found faith-based activities were particularly useful for former gang members who were beginning to reject the notion of its associated mentality, and appreciated being attached to an organised (institutional) group. These scholars found that participating in activities of a religious and spiritual nature could result in both a lessening of poor behaviour and adherence to negative values associated with the norms of the inmate culture.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) and Darim (Muslim Chaplain) gave nearly identical replies when asked about prisoners' means of coping with bereavement in terms of their strength of faith, or not having a faith. Darim answered:

> People with a faith generally tend to cope better. For the men that don't have any faith it is hard. But the way I tend to deal with them is, I don't mention the faith aspect. … They'll say, 'You know what, I don't have any beliefs but I really appreciate you're here today.' … And more often than not they'll say, 'I don't believe in God. I don't believe in anything like that, but I know there's someone up there.'

Duration of bereavement support

Some faiths have established mourning periods, for example, the Islamic faith recognises a six week mourning period, and Jews have a prolonged period of mourning [lasting the first year, in varying stages] (MoJ, accessed online on 25 January 2018). Commenting on prescribed periods of mourning and the need to hide one's grief as a 'social duty', Charles-Edwards (2005: 10) comments:

> In England, for many, there is an unwritten convention that it lasts from the death to the funeral, after which the bereaved are expected to become more self-sufficient again and 'back to normal', as if they have used up their quota of sympathy.

From the accounts provided in Chapter Six, there is an implicit expectation that outward expression of grief should be short-lived. Due to the transitory nature of prison and the passage of time being recognised somewhat differently during incarceration it is not always easy for chaplains, prison staff and other prisoners to keep track of who has been bereaved, and when. Don (CofE Chaplain) was asked what sort of pastoral support he would provide after the funeral:

> … life goes on and there's others out there [who become bereaved and have other issues]. … You do what you need to do and then you move on, as it were.

Charlie (FC Chaplain) commented on his level of involvement:

> … it's … up to the funeral, even after the funeral, that we as chaplains come into our own. … 'I've come to see if you're all right.' And it's just general chit-chat. … Yeh, and I'll be honest, there's not many macho men when death comes into it. They might be macho to start with, for the first 10 or 15 minutes, but when they get back behind them doors, that's when they *really break*. And that's when we've got to be there for 'em. I'll leave 'em for a couple of hours and then go back and say, 'How are you doing? Have a cup of tea with us.' … Working away so you keep talking to them and helping them through as much as I possibly can. Me personally, I never stop that. … And it's surprising what it does when they get out.

Darim (Muslim Chaplain) illustrated the Muslim message following death concerning strength, presumably in contrast to perceived '*vulnerability*':

> … me being from an Islamic point of view – you know, it's a balance between definitely grieving, but only saying such things which will make you *strong*er and help you get through it.

Thus, time and adherence to a *strong*, masculine identity may also determine the allotted time a prisoner can '*officially*' mourn. For those men whose bereavement was not so recent and who were not always afforded what may be regarded by some as *quality* time and attention by all the chaplains, this could often be due to: cultural or religious difference; prisoners' indifference, avoidance strategy, or conduct and behaviour in Chaplaincy; chaplains' personal working practice preferences; chaplains' competing priorities for *time* ie others' more recent bereavements and other issues; and, the natural inclination for chaplains to *forget.*

None of the chaplains interviewed indicated they had undertaken bereavement counselling training. When Chaplaincy recognised their limits in providing bereavement support, comments made during conversations with two of the chaplains confirmed that they would refer on to Anne, the Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer. However, Anne stated she was limited in the number of men she could see (each for an hour, in one morning), and had a waiting list of men to be seen: several of whom she knew she would not have the time to support before their release.

Prisoners are able to display self-determination in considering how far they are prepared to be socialised within the prisoner community (Jewkes, 2012b). In theory, this has important implications in terms of the processing of grief in prison. Using Wheeler's (1961) inverted 'U-shaped curve' of prison adjustment, the more prisonized inmates become, the less conventionally socialised they will be, until just before release, when they 'revert to an outsider's view' (Jewkes, 2012b: 52). Clemmer (1940/1958) suggests that short-term prisoners become less assimilated into the subculture than those with medium or longer sentences. Therefore, it may be that prisoners engage more with bereavement support and activities organised by Chaplaincy according to length of their

sentence and the degree to which they become enmeshed within the prisoner culture.

Conclusion

While the needs of bereaved inmates were met as equitably as possible, the accounts have provided strong evidence of prison protocol being operationalised to the detriment of the grieving process, with some limited benefits. Such protocol is open to interpretation by the management and the governing Governor of each prison, thereby potentially affording bereaved prisoners located across different sites varying levels of recognition and support. This may be dependent upon local availability of resources and the balance weighted according to acceptable levels of security versus compassion. At times, external factors, negative prisoner behaviour, involvement of family in (often, poor) decision making, staffing and timing issues, etc, all contributed to causing additional negative stressors over and above those to be expected when coping with a bereavement in society.

Positive, albeit still painful, stressors, could be confronted to aid the grieving process, for example, visiting a dying relative immediately prior to death, openly expressing *soft* emotion in a suitable environment at the right time, having *partial* involvement when attending a public funeral, receiving good support from members of staff, writing/delivering a eulogy, being involved in a simple internal ritual, etc. In terms of chaplains' involvement in organising mourning rituals in place of attending the public funeral, it was recognised that steps taken were beneficial. However, there was an absence of data indicating whether any support was considered missing from prisoners who termed themselves as atheists or agnostics and did not participate in any form of mourning.

Possessing a personalised belief system, whether this was based on a particular faith, or more on secular beliefs, seemed to help during grieving, particularly if the death could be processed contextually within the belief system. In terms of religious involvement, there were distinct cultural differences between how Muslim and Christian prisoners practised mourning rituals: the former being communal and taking place on the wing, the latter

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being more individualised, and performed in the Chapel. Moreover, the social aspect of religion provided an informal support mechanism (Giordano et al, 2002) which assisted in enriching and structuring some prisoners' time (Calverley, 2013).

Receiving news badly, often led to aggression, abuse and violence (towards material objects). Furthermore, this poor behaviour could result in the removal of earned privileges if the prevailing circumstances were not recognised. Heightened emotion due to the stress of attending a funeral could also result in inappropriate behaviour. Staff failings contributed to stress levels, as did higher level regime control, which led to vastly reduced, or no, personal agency, for example the wearing of restraints in public and the refusal of attendance, or involvement in, public mourning rituals.

Longer term support was provided by some chaplains and through Cruse Bereavement Care, subject to the length of the waiting list at the time. However, clarity was needed across the site on how soon a bereaved inmate could receive formal, dedicated, bereavement support, eg through Cruse, and the degree to which more complex grief could be recognised through accurate assessment.

There was an accumulation of additional stressors to contend with during imprisonment. Important findings concerning coping strategies used as a result of these are addressed in detail in Chapter Five. Defining the stressors as either positive or negative has important implications when they become situated within the Dual Process Model (Stroebe and Schut, 1999; 2010; 2016) - the effects of which are presented in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER FOUR

[MIS]TRUST AND ITS IMPACT ON STAFF SUPPORT

It is suggested that the dominant ideological foundations of imprisonment fundamentally orient the purposes of the prison more heavily towards punishment than social welfare (Drake, 2012: 15). Thus, within the prison walls an underlying tension pervades, between imposing power through loss of liberty and control, while to a lesser extent attempting to successfully achieve a humane level of management and support of its occupants. These tasks are undertaken simultaneously, largely by the same group of workers, and central to balancing these two somewhat contradictory mechanisms lies the concept of trust.

This chapter attempts to take an overview of the broader significance of trust, or lack thereof, and how it influences the management of grief in prison. At times, recognising an absence of trust in oneself, the accounts also point to the differing ways in which the men can feel let down through lack of trust in staff, peers, the MoJ, family and loved ones, and the wider society. The second section of the chapter goes on to explore in detail how effectively, or otherwise, staff members actively support and manage bereaved prisoners. Factors are highlighted which act as additional barriers in preventing staff members' compassion and empathy. These directly relate to depiction of a staff member as being untrustworthy. Alternatively, some accounts indicate how personal experience of bereavement and the possession of *jail craft* enabled some staff members to work particularly well with prisoners, thereby substantially increasing levels of trust. Jail craft is defined by Peacock et al (2017: 3):

> Jail craft is a multi-layered narrative or discourse, and a set of tacit practices which allow officers to maintain order and have functioning working relationships with prisoners, where authority and respect are maintained and where the self is protected, in part, from the vagaries of prison life.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the narratives highlight the relevance of the need to recognise trust in self and others before progressing with the processing of grief in prison.

[Mis]trust

Trust is a 'two way street' (Cook, 2006: 175). Arguably, trust in prison is often a three way affair, comprising the institution, staff members and prisoners. Basic, reciprocal trust provides the bedrock to a prisoner's successful engagement with the prison regime and conducive interpersonal relationships. It is also closely related to safety and security of the individual, and confidentiality of personal information. However, during imprisonment inmates can find it difficult to place trust in others, in such an 'unpredictable and volatile' environment (Jewkes, 2012b: 49). Nadia's (Psychologist) account reinforces this view:

> We work with a lot of people who have got anti-social attitudes – they can't trust anybody.

Trust is a 'multi-dimensional construct', based not only on perceptions and on perceived motives and intentions of others, but also a manifestation of behaviour 'towards these others' (Costa, 2003: 608). *Distrust* relates to a level of trust based on individual experience or reliable information, being, 'the feeling that someone or something cannot be relied upon', and *mistrust* conveys 'a suspicion of, or having no confidence in' [someone or something] (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). These terms are useful descriptors in identifying the wider concept of trust if lack of it becomes an obstruction within the custodial setting.

The statement of purpose of HM Prison Service (2018) is to 'keep those sentenced in custody, helping them lead law-abiding and useful lives, both while they are in prison and after they are released.' *Institutional thoughtlessness* (Crawley, 2005; Crawley and Sparks, 2005), by acts of omission, occur in relation to bereaved prisoners, as highlighted in the following accounts. Furthermore, the impact of 'hidden injuries' generated by the regime and environment (Crawley and Sparks, 2005), seem to contribute to lack of trust in the institution.

When a prisoner has, "proper bad trust issues."

Contextualising the position on prisoners' levels of trust, it is necessary to revert back to earlier childhood and adolescent experiences in which inadequate levels of support by many participants' early authority figures would have resulted in distrust and insecurity (Butler, 2008). Sam stated his mother nearly died in childbirth. Separated from her for the first year of his life, and having begun misbehaving at the age of 11, CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) diagnosed Sam with Reactive Attachment Disorder. This condition is characterised in the DSM-5 (APA, 2013: 266) by 'markedly disturbed and developmentally inappropriate attachment behaviours', with disturbance being 'evident before age 5 years.' The disorder can result in developmental delays, difficulties connecting with others and difficulty managing emotions. Later in his interview, Sam provided one example of inconsistent parenting by his now deceased father:

> Me dad was a bit of a shit, a crap drunk … I was around 14 and I lived with him for a bit. We'd get back from t' pub at 11.00 at night …. We'd go to bed without any food. … whilst he was asleep in the morning, hung over, I'd go downstairs and I'd make meself a big meal, 'cos I knew I wouldn't be eating for the rest of t' day. … I've got proper bad trust issues. … It's just down to people shitting on me, not physically.

Thus, the need for *self-sufficiency* and a *self-imposed* refusal to seek support (as it was envisaged it would not be forthcoming) may result in entrenched mindsets and behaviours to guard against being further let down by current and future authority figures.

Having been imprisoned prior to his current sentence, Sam, aged 24, had to endure the deaths of his mother and brother during that stretch of time (coping with six significant deaths and the deaths of three friends in total, in six years). His former partner had gone back on her word to continue supporting him and allowing access to his child, thus he had to manage the additional loss of social support (the reasons for the break-up were not disclosed, although among other reasons for relationship breakdowns, prisoners receive 'Dear John' letters (Liebling, 1999b)). While struggling to cope with the two deaths, he was

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released on licence and living in a hostel, having been banned from his familiar locality as a condition of his licence, (stating he had previously used threatening behaviour towards his deceased brother's girlfriend). He recalled:

> I had nothing, I had no-one. … in a town I'd never been to in me life. … I wasn't allowed in [town] where I was brought up. … where I could have got support. … And it felt like I was getting suffocated, and *I couldn't wait* to get back to prison. … they wouldn't let me go see ma family, … I've just fucked off from t' hostel, … to see ma family in (town) for two weeks, … knowing that I were coming back to prison. But I only thought I were coming back to prison for 28 days and I didn't commit no other offence *and* I handed myself in *and* kept in contact with Probation. They added *15 days* onto my sentence for being unlawfully at large, and they made me serve a full *18 month* just for doing that. … Ma behaviour hasn't really been bad since I've been in prison. ... They have *not took into consideration ma losses* at all. … when I told 'em they said they can't imagine how I'm feeling, but I've got to abide by the law. The system doesn't have no compassion at all. (firm in his tone) That's what I know, I know that 100%.

This extract implies the law took little account of Sam's recent losses upon release, and how departure from imprisonment into a community away from extended family and friends (ie his recognised social support system) would affect the grieving process. Despite being returned to society, Sam was *invisibly* imprisoned by the numerous restrictions placed upon him, a consequence of which was an inability to access recognised means of social support, and punishment for contravening his limited agency to try and cope. This example sits alongside Drake's (2012) proposal mentioned at the head of the chapter, with the criminal justice system placing far more emphasis on punishment than social welfare. In order to protect himself from overdosing (more detail discussed in Chapter Five), Sam verbalised feelings of "needing" a structure such as the prison to better manage his grief, as he did not trust himself. This frightening scenario raises important questions in terms of how

the situation could be improved, in a manner which is sensitive to the circumstances, yet provides a feeling of safety and containment.

Sam's narrative serves as a timely reminder of the ethics surrounding deterrence and punishment, and how imprisonment affects people differently. On the one hand the deprivation of liberty (Sykes, 1958) and separation from family members can be awful, while on the other custody may become, 'a haven, a place of safety from the pressures and severity of external life' (Coyle, 2005: 14). For the ex-offender to contemplate such a future, making the choice between freedom and imprisonment infers that being outside the prison walls is the least appealing. This state of affairs suggests that for the bereaved prisoner, society and the criminal justice system is letting him down badly.

Sam went on to state:

> All my plans when I was in prison revolved around me brother an' me mum. But I got out and they were gone.

One positive coping strategy *inside* prison may be to fantasise or muse over an improved future life *outside* prison, as Sam had. However, following a significant bereavement such reveries may shatter, with other inmates' accounts indicating feelings of *retrospective* distrust in (and anger towards) the bereaved person for abandoning the individual, together with an existential mistrust and fear for the future.

Sam, speaking of his surviving brother, placed emphasis on diminishing trust in the establishment as a recognised place of protection:

> … I try to help 'im but it just goes in one ear and out of t' other. Prison used to be safe for him but then he comes to prison now and he smokes that spice and he nearly dies in prison … it's only a matter of time before I've lost him as well.

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2017: 26) reported that New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) remained a significant issue in most adult male prisons, and were often linked to violence, debt, organised crime and medical emergencies. His Annual Report further stated that prison was becoming more unsafe, and

the proportion of new prisoners with a drug and/or alcohol problem remained very high, being most noticeable among those reporting a mental health problem. Accordingly, prison is failing to represent the safe space it once provided.

Early, traumatic experiences have been linked to a general lack of mistrust in adults (Welfare and Hollin, 2012). In addition to childhood trauma occurring (mentioned in Chapter One, Literature Review), Gavin, aged 45, recollected how he felt at 17, having little sense of security residing in society immediately following his release from incarceration and finding his divorced father hanging:

> I needed to be in a place like that [prison], I think. I was turning violent and everything. Me head had gone.

When asked to identify what the *need* was to be in prison, Gavin continued:

> Caged up. You can't do nowt'. You can't do owt' to hurt anybody.

If Gavin had remained in society he reflected:

> … I could have had a lot longer sentence. I was controlled ... [in prison] by staff. I don't think *I* felt safer, I think it felt safer for everybody else. I didn't want to kill somebody, but I nearly did. I thought like the world had, fucking, shit on me.

For both Sam and Gavin, the notion of *escaping to prison* was ironically very real. For whatever reason, their social structures within society were unable to provide a place of safety. Gavin's mother died during his current sentence. Having previously been married, he was shortly due for release but had little, if any, security to return to:

> She [former wife] found somebody younger at work. This time when I get out, I get out with fuck all. They've throw[n] all my clothes out, the Council, or I don't know if they got stolen or owt', so I go out with nowt'. It's like, I've only got a shirt, a pair of trousers and a jacket. And you can't talk about reform. It's a fuckin' joke innit, really?

Ex-offenders have the loss of the deceased to contend with, and any associated secondary stressors. They also have additional social loss to

confront as a result of imprisonment, ie meeting basic needs such as food and shelter, re-establishing social ties, and navigating the labour market with a criminal record (Harding et al, 2014). When prisoners are removed from their default support systems (Leach et al, 2008) the society of the prison becomes a temporary replacement. Therefore, this substitution implies that the organisational structure should be robust in its provision of adequate and appropriate support. Danny was asked how he coped following his mother's death:

> … if I'd have been out there when me Mum went, … I'd have ended up *lifed-off*. … I wouldn't have been as equipped as I am now to deal with it. I know that, without a doubt. … I'd have gone out and got drunk. I'd have got into a fight, and I wouldn't have stopped. (pause) … That's all I'd ever known.

Drake (2012: 8) comments:

> The trouble with human beings is that they sometimes commit terrible acts of violence against one another – for a whole variety of reasons. We continue to fail to fully understand this problem due to the persistent belief in the idea that people who do such things are somehow inherently bad.

The examples in this section provide evidence of what would be construed as *overload,* ie 'having more to cope with than one feels one can manage' (Stroebe and Schut, 2016: 97)*.* Being faced with the sudden death of a loved one, *in addition to* coping with post-traumatic stress and/or other significant stressors, may leave these men feeling out of control. Unable to turn either inwards or outwards for trustworthy support may result in an inability to function as society deems it acceptable, with basic raw emotion driving the most readily available means of maladaptive coping. Thus, an inability to reach out for help, and society failing to provide the right kind of support, may result in the potential for the public to be placed at risk, thereby instilling a lack of trust towards the individual; all the while potentially not recognising that he is struggling to cope with symptoms of grief. Thus, unresolved loss and the cumulative effects of grief may play a significant role for some men as they go on to commit atrocious crimes against an *other*, due to an inability to cope.

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Glicken argues that males often believe that others are not able to, or not willing to help as they are growing up, or that help-seeking may be pointless, resulting in them dealing with extreme emotions by themselves (2005: 99). For the ex-offender, when one's immediate society becomes impersonal and distant, and expected/needed support is out of reach and absent, returning to prison can act as a place of safety against the familiar and unfamiliar - and *oneself*, thereby perpetuating the revolving door syndrome. This small, but important, sector of society cannot readily obtain relief through recognised routes (actively grieving, immediate support from family and friends, socialising, working, formalised counselling and more specialised therapies, etc). Such factors may be absent or difficult to access, but reason may also rely on a failure to use information less 'strategically' in their own favour (Liebling, 1999b) ie the preference to continue being self-reliant through inability to recognise a better way of coping at the time, or refusal to repeat a poor past experience (ie seeking help and receiving a negative reaction).

In the cases highlighted in this section, rigorous enforcement of a tough, punitive sentence would not act as a deterrent. The need for stability, compassion, to feel secure and to have someone/thing in control - when life felt out of control - were far more relevant issues of concern. In such cases, social support, stability and the feeling of security were of more significance than simply meting out punishment.

It is unknown when the men's destination (imprisonment) would have become apparent to them, nevertheless, Bowlby (1969) suggests that when faced with perceived danger, individuals possess an innate goal-corrected behavioural system to seek physical proximity to an individual (but perhaps in this case an institution), to help re-establish a degree of safety. However, adhering to the mores of a specific community within any society can mean losses and gains: the balance between obtaining security at the expense of giving up freedom, and thus, autonomy (Bauman, 2001).

Critically, resorting to illicit means of coping with grief stressors damages society, for example through violence/murder/theft, and dishonesty - in order to fund a drug habit. These scenarios support the assertion that society is

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currently failing to provide the *right* type of bereavement support, particularly for males. This may be linked to masculine expectations of avoidant coping patterns and the ineffective regulation of grief.

The level of institutional trust depends on the power dynamic between the prisoner, staff members and the institution. Autonomy is relinquished upon incarceration, with prisoners losing their capacity to exert power and control their destiny (Irwin and Owen, 2005: 98). Furthermore, one of the crucial lessons taught to new staff members is that they must 'develop a suspicious mindset when dealing with prisoners' (Crawley and Crawley, 2008: 143). Moreover, prisonization (Clemmer, 1940/1958) 'inures prisoners to a deeply embedded set of unconscious habits and automatic responses' (Irwin and Owen, 2005: 113). Thus, I would argue that the negative psychosocial effects of incarceration can result in dysfunctional responses to both prison-related and grief-related stressors. The ramifications of institutional distrust result in becoming socially withdrawn and inconspicuous, leading to an inability of the bereaved to form a strong connection with those representing the institution. The following accounts explore the relevance of trust during confinement for the bereaved prisoner, where atypical norms are commonplace.

Confidentiality - "I wouldn't trust 'em as far as I can spit!"

Bereaved prisoners often find themselves in highly emotional states. They can be further aroused by being processed through a system that is designed to punish and control them (Knight, 2014: 2). Vulnerable prisoners, psychologically wounded in the past, can commonly struggle to identify and communicate complex feelings, and often find prison life both frightening and dangerous (Liebling, 2012). Crewe et al (2014: 67) described occasional displays of emotion as being 'deemed acceptable if they are an outcome of bereavement [or due to some other significant reason] .… But to unload your emotions perpetually was unwelcome.' Thus in developing emotional self-restraint, Crewe et al found this resulted in a collective coping function.

Many carceral spaces are never far from intrusive eyes and ears. Theresa (Probation) considered the issue of confidentiality when holding a private

discussion with an upset prisoner in a wing office. She would allow five or ten minutes before they re-emerged into public gaze.

> Because if they walk out there the way they're looking at that moment, then it's going to be a nightmare for them. ... Often people will be very understanding. They'll say, 'What's wrong?' ... And I think you're *always* suspicious of another prisoner in here, of why someone's being nice to you! Because, is it going to be turned against you? Unless you know that person really well.

When a prisoner is already feeling vulnerable, being wary of others' responses in this macho dominated culture can bring added pressure; in this case, trust being associated with vulnerability and risk (Liebling and Arnold, 2004). While Goffman (1959) uses the terms 'frontstage' and 'backstage' to describe the display or concealment of feelings and emotions socially and privately, Crewe et al (2014) take a more defined approach, finding that a wider display of feelings and different emotions are acceptable at differing times in different domains, with character becoming masked and modified. Masculine norms become temporarily altered according to location, with impression management (Goffman, 1959) demanding the constraint of what may be regarded as *softer* emotions, to constantly maintain a socially accepted identity.

There was lack of collective trust between inmates due to lifestyle and delinquent behaviour. Pete was asked if he was able to speak about the historic death of his mother to other prisoners:

> No. … I wouldn't trust 'em as far as I can spit! Except for maybe one person, ... He's a sensible person, same as me …. The majority of people inside *lie*. ... Everyone lies or they take drugs.

Importantly, Pete identified just one person who he *did* trust, but not enough to discuss unresolved grief. Despite being a peer mentor in Education (a trusted position), Shadan commented:

> I can't trust anyone that I've only just met in prison. I don't know these people.

Mark responded:

> No. I don't (mouths words but can't get them out), I don't trust (pause) a
> lot of people, … in gen-general. I mean, prison Listeners I wouldn't sp-
> speak t-t-to anyways.

Due to the transitory nature of prison, the men often remained distant from one
another. Forming a close bond under these circumstances could inevitably
result in feelings of abandonment when one of them was released (Cohen and
Taylor, 1972). This was not strictly true for all prisoners, though, because some
interviewees originated from families and communities where imprisonment
across the generations was commonplace.

Danny found that appearances were deceptive in terms of trust and seeking a
confidante:

> To open up to someone like that, … It's very trusting. (voice gets louder)
> And sometimes in jail, these big, hard men that walk around the wings,
> they're just looking for somebody that they can confide in. And they can't
> confide in the officers. The chaplains are great but they're still seen with a
> set of keys, and every now and again you just find someone on t' wing that
> you can sit and have a genuine conversation with.

Selective peer support is hinted at above, and also in the following extract. For
inmates with a strong tendency to adhere to the inmate code and adorn a rigid
masculine identity, peer support from a *trusted* other may be extremely
beneficial. In contrast to most of the men, Woody was the exception to the rule
in his ability to trust, however, he didn't self-identify as a prisoner:

> … I'm in for arson. 'Cos I got addicted to that amphetamine to stay
> awake, to try and stop me having [frequent severe, epileptic] fits. All the
> medication what I wasn't taking for me fits, I was throwing in t' kitchen
> drawer … to try and kill meself. … I'd had one argument with t' girlfriend.
> I thought she were gonna leave me and I thought, 'Well if she's leaving
> me, who have I got left [following his mother's death]?' I set me house on
> fire. … I ended up in a coma for two month.

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Although Woody never knew his biological father he stated he had been very close to his mother and step-father, and his sisters. His account inferred he came from a relatively stable background, which is in contrast to many of the men who become incarcerated. Woody recognised himself as being generally *trustworthy*:

> … I don't class myself as a criminal. I'm in here for a total accident what went wrong. … if my neighbours had been in [their house, the fire could have killed them], I could have been in for a bloody long time.

At the time of the interview there was little distinction between staff Woody felt trusting towards, and prisoners who he deemed as trustworthy:

> … *They are good friends* since I've come into prison. I didn't know 'em before I come in. … I'm close to quite a few officers on there, especially two of 'em. … They got me through it [bereavement] well. They'd take me in t' office and sit me down and we'd talk. … they look after me 'cos of my illness [frequent epileptic seizures] as well. I trust every member of staff that I sit with. Every member. When it comes to t' prisoners, there's 49 on that wing, minus me – 48 – there's about two that I wouldn't trust.

Rob (DARS) appraised the concept of trustworthiness, based on his experience of working with prisoners and ex-offenders:

> Yeh, when they can start to *trust* you and you can break down that bravado they have to put on in front of peers, *they're just nice men that have been dealt not the best hand in life.* And I can also see how, if anyone was put into some of the situations that these guys find themselves in, you know, you don't want to be in that situation. They'll literally use anything to take them away from it. … a lot of them have got a lot of potential.

While mistrust and distrust were rife, the commonality of grief could cut through this as a means of establishing trust through shared understandings. This theme, when considering staff support, is picked up again during the second section of the chapter.

The Prison Officer culture

Bereaved prisoners are managed and variously supported by professionals of different disciplines, with staff-prisoner relationships helping determine the quality of the prison encounter (Liebling and Arnold, 2004). While staff such as POs are recognised for the significant role they can play in mediating the pains and harms of imprisonment in their relationships with prisoners, there is scepticism that supportive relationships *can* develop when officers maintain authority over prisoners (Sparks and Bottoms, 1995; Sparks et al, 1996; Tait, 2012). The study enabled a representative voice to comment on how job role brought workers into contact with prisoners' grief. While they were not questioned directly about length of service, the following unsolicited information was recorded:

Table 3 *Participants' length of service, working in the prison environment.*

	Not disclosed	1-5 years	6-10 years	11–20 years	21+ years	Total
Number of years staff and volunteers had worked in a prison setting	8	5	4	5	4	26

Staff culture is inextricably linked to the particular history and ethos of a prison (Liebling et al, 2011; Sparks et al, 1996) with traditions, habits, rules, attitudes, and customs (Clemmer, 1940/1958) and physical courage (Crawley and Crawley, 2008) contributing. '*Cross-posting*' was introduced in England and Wales in 1982, meaning that POs could begin working with prisoners of the opposite sex (Tait, 2008). As at 31st March 2018, 47.2% of HMPPS staff overall were female, this statistic being comparable to the previous year (MoJ, 2018a: 14). Additional factors such as the availability of staff recruited from the locality can affect its fluid nature (Crewe, 2011), in addition to the governor's personal

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style, and the position adopted by the Prison Officers' Association in each prison (Liebling, 2004). Physical courage also forms part of prison officer culture (Crawley and Crawley, 2008). According to Liebling (2004: 147), some of the best practice has been found in local prisons, but conversely, most of the worst 'performance' staff cultures and attitudes have been found in local prisons. Sim (2009: 145) views prison officer culture as 'central to the reproduction of the prison as a place of punishment and pain'. As such, staff culture in this institution became a significant force, and the levels of trust abiding within it became central to the bereaved prisoners.

Michael (Governor grade) described the components needed by staff members for relationship-building:

> Relationships are absolutely essential ... building that dynamic is equally as important as being able to have the life experiences that you've had. But those life experiences will help you build those dynamics. You cannot have a level of trust unless that's worked on. And that's built over a period of time.

Participant observation confirmed that many staff members were successful in achieving effective relationship building. This was evidenced by the *manner* in which prisoners reacted to staff, and vice versa, and through informal two-way '*banter*'. Rob's (DARS) perspective could be considered as aspirational for many officers, bearing in mind he works with drug and alcohol addiction and is not viewed by prisoners in the same light as a prison officer. Nevertheless, his extract provides an important message, inferring empathy, mutual respect and trust:

> … I can, sort of, build up strong relationships with people where they feel quite comfortable talking to me, sharing quite personal issues. … I've got a sort of personality that people seem to find, sort of, caring, and I do empathise and, you know, what I've always said, even in that 14 years [of working with drug addicts and alcoholics], I've probably met a handful of people that, whether they use drugs or use alcohol or didn't use drugs or alcohol, they just weren't nice people.

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However, the following accounts reveal fallibility on the part of the institution, the staff and the prisoner. Kirsty (FLO/SO) talked about anniversaries triggering the risk of self-harming, and the importance of staff being alerted to this knowledge:

> … we have lads that go to the absolute extreme where they will massively self-harm, and when we open t' ACCT document, they'll say (speaks quietly and meekly), 'My Dad died today.' And we'll say, 'Why didn't you tell us?' And they'll say (quietly), 'I can't. ... This is what I've always done on t' anniversary of my Dad's death.' ... One lad that had an affair with his brother's wife, and his brother killed himself, he mutilates his face. … so every time he can look in t' mirror and remind himself what he's done. … All you can do is offer 'em the support ….

Staff cannot trust prisoners to divulge how they have been affected by a bereavement, especially if they are avoidant copers. Effective communication is vital between staff in managing a prisoner's limited agency and decision-making in his coping responses to grief. This is often dependent upon having the right information to hand, which may not come up as part of routine data gathering, and which the prisoner may refuse to divulge, for whatever reason. In the security-conscious prison, collection of information involves the use of CCTV monitoring, routine searching of cells, dog patrols, surveillance and intelligence information gathering (Drake, 2012). Therefore, while data intelligence is gathered explicitly and implicitly, unsurprisingly, the thoughts and feelings of those men burdened by the weight of unresolved and traumatic grief will remain deeply buried until their limited agency allows them to expose it at a time and in a manner which feels acceptable to them, *regardless* of anyone or anything else.

Trust in terms of *identity* and *position* was relentlessly being gauged by both prisoners and staff members, demonstrated in this and later accounts provided by prisoners:

> CHARLIE (FC Chaplain): I think it's mainly because they're classed as prison officers, screws. … Officers are a threat. They might get on well

with some officers.   … but in general the white shirt and the black tie is *the enemy*.

The above assertion contradicts Crewe's (2009) argument, which suggests that officers are no longer seen in this regard, with the collective power of officers having been greatly diminished. Crewe (2011: 456) comments that power often operates 'at a distance', anonymously, and without the need for direct staff intervention. Nonetheless, if a prisoner has an inherent mistrust of authority figures, and if officers do not value a prisoner as another human being, both situations can become problematic (Butler and Drake, 2010). The following sections indicate when support is most and least likely for the cautious bereaved prisoner.

Barriers to support – "officers do gossip … It hurt …."

Relationships may be impaired by: having a perceived need to assume moral superiority, poor boundary setting, incorrect judgements, and an absence of compassion. The following accounts indicate how mistrust and distrust can arise within prisoners. Sam's mother and brother died within three months of one another in 2015, as mentioned earlier.

> SAM: I was in education [at a previous prison] .... And (name of tutor), I got, like, a good relationship with her, she gave me a cuddle an' that before I left. … The other lads hated it like, 'cos 15 lads in t' classroom, and every day she'd come and sit next to me, bring me a coffee, bring me a cup of hot chocolate, she'd download me songs and stuff off the internet. … I think she felt sorry for me because of that [bereavements].

Teachers and instructors can help to motivate, support and encourage (Bayliss and Hughes, 2008), and they have the capacity to develop positive relationships with prisoners which may be different to those commonly experienced by operational staff (Nichols, 2017). Such statements may be valid, but clearly the above account provides an example of poor boundary setting - by overstepping the mark - with the potential to badly affect group dynamics within the learning environment.

Gavin was entitled to phone calls by staff at the time of his mother's dying/death. However, he refused, taking the moral high-ground and remembering his own experiences of their incompetence (evidenced elsewhere):

> They're 'turn-keys'. ... I don't like authority really, so I won't ask 'em for nowt'. If you do ask 'em for something, you get knocked back anyway, don't you? (the anger in his voice subsided) … The *system* doesn't care. *It never has done.* ... They haven't got any clue.

Respect could be lacking:

> SHADAN: (pause) Ooaahh. … officers do gossip about things. … when my ex-partner left me, I told one officer and then the officers on the whole wing knew about it … a couple of officers … decided it was a bit of a joke just to, kind of, take the mickey out of me a little bit. And I laughed it off because I didn't want to show weakness. … But when I went back to my pad I thought, 'It hurt.' … That's why I didn't mention it [grandmother's death] to any of the officers.

Barry too, disliked staff members not taking him seriously:

> Yeh, they just tek, they just tek the mick. … they're not interested in your life. … You get on with some, but others you don't.

The above examples demonstrate staff members belittling prisoners and asserting power over them. Indirect aggression can be used as a means of ostracising and excluding individuals, leading to additional stress and feelings of social and emotional loneliness (Ireland and Qualter, 2008). Features making up the prison officer sub-culture can include cynicism, emotional detachment, solidarity and humour: all providing a protective role against physical, psychological and emotional strains inherent in this work (Arnold, 2016: 279). Prisoners' hurt becomes obscured if offence is taken, as a means of self-protection against further vulnerability and not violating the macho, inmate code. Furthermore, prisoners can pick up when staff members are being inauthentic, and recognise their own diminished sense of control over some situations:

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LES: … whether the staff was to blame or not, they'd either oomph it up a lot, or they'd take their own blame out of it or whatever on [p]NOMIS [National Offender Management Information System]. … either manipulated truths or it's complete fiction. … I asked an SO about some information. He just shot me down. I was a bit blown away, … the same guy was doing my ACCT [review]. ... And then later that afternoon, the guy come in all jolly, 'You all right mate?' And all that. And it was so superficial.

Being resentful towards some staff members, although he acknowledged that some *did* care, Les's deduction was that,

... we are ultimately just statistics … and ... for the majority of them we are just cattle.

The first remark made by Les is perhaps borne out by Rhodes' (2010: 459) comment on OASys (Offender Assessment and Sentence Management) evaluations which are used to assess prisoners' interpersonal skills, risk of possible escape and of serious harm, and are conducted by prison staff. The evidence provided can be ambiguous and open to interpretation. Rhodes asserts such evidence then becomes information and this interpretative process, thus becomes *fact*.

Lewis recollected a conversation with a mental health worker concerning his medication around the time of his grandfather's bereavement. Having been diagnosed with ADHD outside prison he maintained he particularly needed medication to help regulate his disorder because his grandfather's death had affected him, "A million per cent":

… she had that face on her, … (name), … as if to say, 'Stop trying to blag.' … (in an authoritative tone) '…. We've got the power. … we're taking you off this.' ... *That hurt more than anything because of what I'm going though.* I don't know if it's a reality thing where they want me to see.

In Das' (2017) experience as a prison psychiatrist, mental illness occurs on a spectrum, with some prisoners faking or exaggerating symptoms; thereby *muddying the waters* and making it harder to genuinely pick out the unwell and

vulnerable. *Emotional labour* is a term used to describe the acceptance by a worker of the *feeling rules* of emotion management which are used to serve the purpose of an organisation (Hochschild, 1983). Positive, negative and neutral emotions can be displayed. The function of applying *emotional labour* is to produce 'the proper state of mind in others,' with dynamic confrontation producing a reactive effect (1983: 7). The use of *emotional labour* can either bolster the prisoner or send him tumbling, according to the level of *felt* trust, the type of emotion being conveyed (anger, joy, sadness), and how it is received (authentic or inauthentic). Moreover, for new officer recruits, a process of enculturation takes place during immersion into the working practices, rules of prison work and day-to-day realities of prison, which helps shape their particular attitude, behaviour and work 'style' (Crawley and Crawley, 2008).

Mitch had a reasonable experience in terms of how he was treated by staff and alluded to emotional labour:

> I reckon naturally inside … they are feeling for us. … dealing with all this in here. 'But what can I do?' (laughs) They've still got a job to follow through haven't they? At the end of the day they can't make it any easier for me, even if they wanted to. … obviously, they don't want to show too much emotion because it crosses a line of their job and their personal life.

When undertaking duties on behalf of society, Garland (1990: 183) comments on the level of 'social distance and professional objectivity' required to undertake one's job role, however, in reality he highlights the common occurrence of injustice, brutality and indifference used as an excuse for 'administrative convenience', resulting in resentment and opposition (1990: 262).

"How much do you trust staff?" "Not at all."

When trust comes into focus in supportive relationships, the process of dealing with strong emotions and previous negative coping strategies can take place (Skuse and Matthew, 2015). However, the situation is more nuanced. '*Getting on'* with staff for Jason was not the same as trusting them:

> JASON: Yeh, nine out of ten [staff] I get on sound with, yeh!

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MARION: How much do you *trust* staff?

JASON: Not at all.

Given that trust is an important issue, interestingly, direct discussion about the concept of prisoners' *trust* towards staff has been absent from (at least) the last four HM Inspectorate Annual Reports 2014 to 2018 (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). While trust was clearly of significant concern for many participants, it is perplexing that this concept has not been given more attention within these reports.

Liebling et al (2011) undertook a piece of research at six prisons using the SQL (Staff Quality of Life) survey. Seventy-seven per cent of staff reported trying to build trust with prisoners, and 70% of discipline staff thought they had good relationships with prisoners (2011: 38). These scholars found that while staff felt trusted by the prisoners they were much more cautious about trusting prisoners back, with 78% of discipline staff agreeing, or highly agreeing with the statement, 'you can't ever completely trust a prisoner' (this being principally in relation to security and control). It is unknown what percentage of prisoners would be able to trust staff members. Mark was asked if he would speak to a member of staff about the death of his father:

> … most of 'em – are just, they just l-l-look at you like c-crap, … I don't really hheeaahh trust a lot of people, to be honest.   ... t' officers, they *speak* t-t-t-to you like shit. (pause) ... I-I-I t-t-try not to s-s-speak much t-t-to 'em because I know that I'll just end up l-lo-losing it (big intake of breath).

> MARION: Would you speak to a member of staff about it [bereavement] if you were really struggling?

> MARK: (pause) No.

From this and his earlier account, Mark generally trusted neither prisoners nor staff. Prisoners have long mistrusted staff (Clemmer, 1940/1958; Cressey, 1961; Crewe, 2011; Goffman, 1961; Liebling, 2004; Sim, 2008). Paradoxically, even some officers working in '*specialist*' regimes such as a Therapeutic

Community were reported as being unconvinced that, 'someone wearing a uniform, and with the power and authority to punish, could at the same time 'counsel' inmates and persuade them to confide their innermost worries and fears' (Crawley, 2004: 208-209). Staff body language demonstrates internal thoughts and feelings, with prisoners being astute in recognising staff discomfort, superiority and aggression (Tait, 2012). The accounts provided concur with Harvey's (2007) view that perceptions of support are linked to safety and trust. Anne (Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer), an *outsider,* recognised mistrust among both male and female bereaved prisoners only too well - trust being pivotal within her work:

> 'Trust' is a word that is just not used in either jails [this male category C prison and a women's open prison she had worked at]. They don't trust anybody, even the Listeners they don't trust. … So their relief at speaking to somebody who is from outside, who is not going to judge them, and who's not going to pass on anything, I think is a big relief. … Even their probation officer sometimes hasn't got the trust. ... overall I would say the majority of them have no trust. … 'You can't tell anybody anything.' … The only time that ever happens is when somebody else has a bereavement, and then they can sometimes share it with that person.

When no-one can be trusted, *holding onto* his grief and not letting go, at least gives the prisoner *personal power* over his innermost thoughts, feelings and emotions. However, support is mentioned in Anne's comment whereby circumstances immediately change. When two people are both known to have experienced a bereavement there is a tacit understanding that the *other* becomes more trustworthy. Anne has to abide by prison protocol regarding disclosure of particular information on the same basis as prison staff. However, this type of information would not necessarily come into the type of conversation she held with a prisoner – the focus would be concentrated on bereavement and loss. Being an *outsider* and forming a connection through mutually shared experience (albeit through non self-disclosure by the supportive party) has the potential for valuable support. Anne was asked to provide an example of an untrusting male prisoner:

> I saw one chap, … I think he was slightly psychotic. And he would talk to me because he only *just* trusted me that I was not … going to say anything. … I came out of the appointment and the Prison Officer got hold of me to ask me something. ... Well, this chap then took a bender because he thought I was telling them what was going on. … the next time I saw this chap, I said, 'No', there was nothing going on. It was something completely different. … He came back.

Trust is often very fragile. Identifying barriers to forming a solid foundation for her work, Anne stated:

> … Some Officer has said, you know, 'You should come.' … they're ticking a box. … I start work with them and … I'll say, 'It's a two-way thing is this. You have to work with me otherwise I can't help you.' … [sometimes] … they've *no* intention of letting it go [their grief]. I had one recently and he said, 'I'm going to wait until I get out and *then* I'm going to address it.' … He was *very* upset about it anyway, and he said, 'I can't go through it here,' because he had nobody to … share the grief with. There was only *me* and I only saw him that one day. So he wasn't trusting me at that moment in time. I felt we did make progress and he did say he felt better at the end of the session, and we made another appointment but he never turned up.

The accounts provide evidence that trust needs to be earned. For those who have had to suffer earlier feelings of being badly let down or abandoned, tentative and slow reactions to taking up offers of support are bound to be demonstrated until the griever is emotionally ready to connect. Glicken (2005: 121) asserts that men are often very fearful of getting hurt by those they believe they should trust the most, suggesting that if trust hasn't developed, men may self-disclose and then not return for support because the self-disclosure has prompted feelings of vulnerability and self-loathing, which they mistakenly believe the service provider will share.

Sara (Psychologist) commented:

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I think there might be issues around trust … I've certainly heard prisoners say they would be reluctant to talk to staff, that's generalising.

The timing of different levels of support may be useful to follow up, according to where a prisoner is on his sentence. Moreover, support from an external agency may ameliorate mistrust amongst avoidant copers more readily than from prison staff. One significant issue concerning trust evolved around pressures of time. Rob (DARS) spoke about staff members' best intentions:

> … The worst case scenario is that they'll say, 'Yes, don't worry, we'll sort that out,' and nothing gets done for them. And then the prisoner will then think, 'Well, I've gone to ask for some support. … We get a lot of, 'What's the point?'

Adrian (Seg PO) was asked about his job role in the Segregation Unit:

> No disrespect to Chaplaincy, because again they're so busy … the Samaritans' phone, it gets offered all the time. Sometimes it's not going to be enough. We'll talk to them, but we don't have the – it sounds horrible but – we don't have the staff or the time to do it.

Adrian (Seg PO) then confirmed Rob's comments regarding length of time he could be available:

> I could maybe say, '... Give us five minutes and I'll come back.' … I get stuck with an incident. ... It could turn into hours. And then me shift's finished. ... It makes you feel like you don't care … It's a joke, like: 'Oh yes, of course you're going to come back!'

Numerous comments blamed staff shortages for the many shortcomings encountered by staff, volunteers and the prisoners:

> HASEEB: Even if they could get you out on time [to visit a dying relative or attend a funeral] they may not have an officer to take you.

> LYDIA (RC Chaplain): If at all possible, we try and get them out to the dying relative. It's not always possible. Lots of times it's because of staffing issues.

DANNY: there are … hundred lads in here and we're all going through something. It's hard to get an officer to make time, sometimes.

Speaking on behalf of officers, Michael's (Governor grade) comment corresponded with the above accounts:

> … We've got the five-minute interventions and the one-on-ones that we do, but there isn't sufficient time to be able to address for an hour, for example, every now and then, just the *deep down feeling* of what they are actually going through.

Anne (Cruse volunteer) often could not provide support:

> … they're very short staffed at (this prison). ... They either had a shut-down - which they have regularly - or there was only one person in the Chaplaincy because one of them was away. … So, you know, I just couldn't get in.

According to Rob (DARS), all agencies working across the site felt the pressures of funding cutbacks. When he was asked the extent to which fire-fighting was part of his job, Rob replied:

> A lot of the time, yes, definitely.

Malcolm and Eve (IMB) observed the impact on work patterns:

> MALCOLM: We went in the Seg [Segregation Unit] today and the guy who was showing us round, … said, 'Well, I don't usually work on here.' You've got that business, constantly moving the person from here to here.

> EVE: … you get someone who's on a 24 hour watch. You need three staff, just sitting outside someone's room, making sure that they're not harming themselves. And with spice, … some of them almost die. … they need at least two people to go out with, to the hospital. ... they are getting more staff come through, albeit starters, new starters.

If the prison was working towards having almost full staff capacity, experience may still need to accumulate to develop competence. Unless they had prior training to offer specialist support or could draw upon personal experience,

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these new starters would be limited in their capacity to be of real benefit to the bereaved prisoners. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Peter Clarke (2017: 30), commented several times in his 2016-17 Annual Review that staffing levels in many prisons were too low to keep order and run a decent regime; leaving staff extremely stretched and prisoners feeling unsupported and frustrated at not being able to get day-to-day concerns addressed.

The above examples confirm that distrust is exacerbated by the inability of staff to provide support due to shortage of time. This structural problem also hinges on leadership; whereby effective leaders encourage staff at lower levels to use initiative in implementing policy (Coyle, 2005: 99). However, with an influx of inexperienced staff seemingly unable to contain problems; Sykes (1958: 55) viewed guards as 'caught in a conflict of loyalties', with both them and captives suffering at the hands of 'irritants of power'. Prison officers are thus positioned in the middle ground, often having to act as intermediaries between management and prisoners (Liebling and Arnold, 2004).

Provision of trustworthy support by staff

Notwithstanding the fact that three-way trust issues plague the carceral space, several pockets of beneficial interactions were nevertheless observed, particularly when there is belated recognition of continuous support being available for the taking, as recognised by Danny, below. More recently, he had developed a much closer relationship with staff members following the news of his mother's death and subsequent attempt to end his own life:

> They got me over into the Safer Custody suite, cleaning for 'em. … because the last thing you want's to be left in a pad, door locked, with everything going on non-stop, round your head all the time. ... And they come over and check on you, even, even when you're not being looked after by them anymore, because they had me on an ACCT initially. … And the officers on the wing, … they *want* you to talk to them. It makes the environment better for them and for us.

Not having conversed with staff at emotional depth before, Danny identified with a female Custody Manager who gained his trust:

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> She reminds me very much of me Mum. … And it was like the first person I felt I could confide in (voice becomes softer) … She's an awesome officer, and I've never really (grins) found meself saying that about officers, but she is.

Positive moves by staff to assist a bereaved prisoner meant putting things in place so he was not *passive* but *active*, the prisoner could personally *identify* with a staff member, there was *caring concern* but not to the detriment of others, and behaviour was being *modelled* which *inspired*. Other factors considered essential for all officers are: known and consistent boundary keeping; 'moral fibre'; an awareness of the effects of their power; an understanding of the pains of prison; professionalism; and a realistic and optimistic outlook, with the capacity to maintain hope during difficult times (Liebling et al, 2011: 52). The chaplains were invited to comment on wing staff:

> LYDIA (RC Chaplain): I think a lot of the staff are aware. If you get a good officer they'll be looking out for the signs and trying to help them. You know, allowing them that extra time to make a phone call.   ....

> DON (CofE Chaplain): Generally speaking, … they'll be sympathetic. And it depends on the prisoner; how they are behaving and so-on.

Don's quote implies an element of judging the prisoner against recent poor behaviour (and possibly offence committed) impacting on the in/ability to provide compassion. Prisoners have unique needs, with informational, material, emotional and physical support being those most commonly requested (Harvey, 2007). While some inmates seeking help from staff are desperate to the point of risking disapproval, inviting harm, and compromising self-image (Toch, 1977) others (for example those involved in drugs) may have little social support from family and friends, and be glad of the more formal support of custodial and treatment staff (Day et al, 2010). The chasm between autonomy and dependence may feel vast, especially in the light of the masculine dominated culture. To pursue autonomy in theory means sacrificing support, while help-seeking may be interpreted as reducing the range of one's independence and freedom of choice (Toch, 1977), and challenging entrenched masculine identities.

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Harvey (2007) found the most commonly accessible sources of support in prison can include: another prisoner, prison Listener, volunteer, medical staff, officer, chaplain, drug worker, outreach worker, education, workshop instructor, and the Samaritans. His study found that many young prisoners did seek support (not necessarily bereavement-related), although somewhat cautiously; being more likely to seek practical support rather than emotional support. Of these, Harvey found the most likely means of practical support to be accessed was through chaplains and officers (ranked 1st and 2nd respectively). When approaching someone for emotional support, chaplains were ranked highest, followed by Listeners, Drug workers, Outreach workers, another prisoner, and officers, in that order.

Experienced staff described how they worked deftly, in different ways, to discretely build connections and improve relational dynamics across the estate:

> COLIN (PO): One of t' blokes, (name), lost his dad. And he used to just sit there. And I says, 'You lads come here. You know (name)'s lost his dad?' 'We do, Mr …. We'll look after him.' And they looked after him. And them lads went up in my estimation a hell of a lot. ... you see a softer side to them then … at the end of the day they are human beings. … Make yourself available, and they open up. And they never forget what you've done for 'em. Never forget.

Kirsty (FLO/SO) stated:

> I'd just let 'em come in t' office and let 'em sit with me while I'm doing me work, and just have a chat and stuff. … as long as they see you doing something to support them, most lads are really grateful for what you do for them.

Crawley's (2004: 97) findings included a recognition amongst both staff and prisoners that there was an air of pessimism about rehabilitating prisoners, nonetheless they believed that doing *something* was better than doing nothing, despite the futility of the action. It needs to be borne in mind that support can be provided on many different levels. Low-level support was provided more

readily, with an almost complete absence of (painful), deeper level support (notwithstanding Chaplaincy support and Cruse Bereavement Care support).

However, an inmate can refuse to connect:

> ADRIAN (Seg PO): Some of them don't engage. … Which, then, what do you do? You can't force them to talk.

The majority of staff were perceived as being indifferent to prisoners' grief, and particularly following the funeral. This could be largely due to the impersonal structure of the regime, the need to keep the balance of power in the regime's favour, and the sheer number of people occupying the carceral space. There was an overwhelming consensus amongst many prisoners that greater compassion and empathy (and not sympathy) *were needed* from the regime and from prison staff, collectively.

Staff empathy levels following a staff member's bereavement

Personal grief had a profound effect on some workers. Lydia (RC Chaplain) had, "*very significant bereavements* in *tragic circumstances.*" Charlie's (FC Chaplain) mother's death, occurring when he was a young adult, allowed him to become more "empathic", and his father-in-law's death (this relationship not being regarded as *close*, according to prison protocol) "walloped" him. Don's (CofE Chaplain) experience made him, "more aware of what they [prisoners] might be going through ...."

A murder occurred in Kirsty's (FLO/SO) wider family. Kirsty stated, the FLO attending to the family "was absolute rubbish", which "had a massive effect" on her applying to become a FLO herself. Adrian's (Seg PO) grandfather died when he was 15, and he, "reacted like the Young Offenders did [became angry and aggressive] (laughs) … and that's why I try and relate to them ...."

Due to a prior personal bereavement, Heidi (Mental Health) felt she could say to a bereaved prisoner,

> 'Yes, *I do really understand* how it feels. *No, I'm not locked in jail but I do know how it feels, and I do know you won't always feel like this*.' … I can

> say, *'… what is going on is normal.* And … the way you feel about it will
> change. It won't be so raw.'

While personal experience was found to be beneficial in relating to others as a
gauge to indicate trustworthiness, it is imperative not to assume that a staff
member would have the same experience as a prisoner.

Jail craft and life experience

Several prisoners' accounts related to the recurrent theme of distrust based on
staff inexperience and lack of jail craft. Nadia (Psychologist) and Colin (PO)
stated that prisoners often identify with just "one or two members of staff". This
message was borne out by the prisoners' combined accounts. Officers and
prisoners trade in *gradations* of trust, with almost every officer and every
prisoner having at least one or two good relationships with members of the
other group (Liebling et al, 2011: 98-99). Considering age in respect of
authority and compassion, two of the inmates gave their impression of younger
staff members:

> HOWARD: ... It's hard being told what to do by somebody who's 21-year-
> old, that's just out of college.

> DANNY: (pause) … some of 'em have come straight out of Uni into this
> job … would they know how to cope with a thirty-odd year-old prisoner
> that's come up to 'em and gone, 'I've had a really deep loss in me life –
> someone close to me – and I'm feeling like ….' … some of 'em are more
> like, wanting to be your friend: put their arm round you and be your best
> mate.

Being new to the job can arouse fear if novice recruits are perceived by
prisoners as being inexperienced (Harvey, 2007). In contrast to the prisoners'
accounts, Warwick (Nurse) believed young POs were "more approachable"
than the previous "hard" mindset, while Adrian (Seg PO) believed they were
less "black and white". Adrian compared bereaved Young Offenders who could
not express emotion, which came "out in anger" and "violence", which he *had*
been able to deal with in a previous post, but less so with an adult prisoner who

was getting emotionally upset and displaying *soft emotion* rather than *hard emotion*. He recalled, "… where do I go with this?"

The above account implies far greater attention is placed upon training on the security of prisoners as distinct from use of soft skills. Kirsty (FLO/SO) recognised the importance of life experience and transferring knowledge and expertise onto the next generation of prison personnel:

> I'm passionate about 'em because they're not going to learn anything without us. … I've never felt so naïve when I first walked through them gates. … I was ... 34 when I started. But I'd been a nurse *and* I'd worked in Social Services. I'd seen quite a lot of bereavement.

In terms of displaying empathy and coming across as professional, Colin (PO) stated:

> … a young member of staff, say 24, 25, he's probably not had a bereavement. Now he doesn't know how to handle it. ... Say if the lad wants to give his mother a cuddle or his wife a cuddle [at a funeral], a young member of staff might not know what they can do.

Interestingly, Adrian (Seg PO) bore out Colin's concerns:

> I haven't done a funeral. … you've got to say, 'It's time to go now,' … even cuddles with, like loved ones, you have to, kind of, stop it. In that funeral, how do you stop someone getting upset? 'Can you stop getting upset please?' I can't do it.

When Miranda, the youngest staff interviewee, was asked what kind of support she would be able to give the prisoners as part of her remit, she stated:

> Well, … as a wing officer we can't really do a right lot. … if I'm able to authorise it or, if we're able to get it for them, then. Really I'm just the *ears* and if they need to speak to me, if they want to, erm, vent, then that's me. Yeh, I can obviously *try* and understand.

Crawley (2004) comments on the inappropriateness of POs demonstrating *fear* to prisoners in response to violence and aggression. However, it is argued that evocation of fear would be just as relevant if the PO was fearful of *soft emotion*.

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Moreover, the tender forms of emotion could be more difficult to manage successfully than anger, violence or aggression; especially for male staff members who conform to an established work culture. In this respect the pressures placed on a male staff member may be to respond in a way which is more conducive to cultural expectations. This would be particularly relevant for the inexperienced PO, resulting in the prisoner feeling potentially more vulnerable and subsequently more distrusting. Kirsty made reference on a couple of occasions to the young POs. I suggested it may be difficult for them and invited her to expand on the topic:

> KIRSTY: Members of staff dealing with things that eighteen- and nineteen-year olds should never have to deal with. … I can't imagine having to deal with something and going home and being a kid. ... We've got a lad on C wing at t' minute that wants to die. And he cuts up quite badly and yesterday he'd got [cut] an artery. … there were four new members of staff watching. It were like a pantomime. And they were just all gobsmacked, looking at each other, and pure white in their faces. We just put our gloves on and held a towel to him and stuff, … 'Yeh, have some life experience before you come into such a - the prison service has changed so much – before you come into this kind of environment.'

The above accounts indicate that staff training is badly needed in terms of responding to bereaved inmates and traumatic events, and the use of enhanced listening techniques.

The effects of a prisoner's bereavement on staff

Powerful memories can abide with staff members. These significant life experiences can impact on their competence in the here-and-now if particular emotions and thoughts come into consciousness, evoked as a result of the bereavement-related duties they have to perform. Ian (CM) was annoyed when describing his feelings concerning being told to be a funeral escort:

> I don't like 'em [funerals], and what I really resent about it, you don't get asked … I had to go to one, … like, the anniversary of my dad's funeral is May, and I didn't get asked [if he minded]. … They never *ask* you.

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Colin (PO) also spoke about escorting duties:

> I don't mind doing me fair share but when it's all the time you've got to (pause) think about yourself as well. … it brings it back to you [significant personal losses].

Concerning the above two predicaments described, Knight (2014) provides evidence of probation practitioners also having a sense of not being able to openly display feelings within their organisational work role. Knight (2014: 173) believed the *silencing* of such discourse, relating to issues such as gender and mental health, was believed to originate from the culture of managerialism within their organisation. Some life events may be regarded as *special* while others have the potential to leave lingering, *intrusive* thoughts and images. So they are not beleaguered by unrelenting daily events, staff members develop strategies for coping with their awfulness as a means of maintaining resilience:

> DON (CofE Chaplain): So it's, it's, you not necessarily switch off but it's got to be done, so it's got to be done.

Don recalled a particular memory, but admitted others blurred into each other:

> The amazing thing is when the lads come to the jail, and they say, 'Oh yes, I remember when you came and told me.' I can remember their face but I can't remember a thing.

Kirsty (FLO/SO) stated:

> … it sounds awful – I think you've got to have a mechanism where you *switch off* from it. Because otherwise it'll burden you, but sometimes (pitch get higher) you feel for 'em. … it's about making sure you have ticked your boxes and crossed your t's and dotted your 'i's. If anything does happen to that lad then at least you can say, 'Well I did everything right to support him.'

Kirsty continued speaking about a deceased prisoner's mother, whose husband was also dying:

> He'd died in prison. [Described the traumatic circumstances surrounding how son had died.] … And then she came to t' prison to meet us all …

erm, (pause) - I'm not going to say what I was going to say because it still upsets me to this day – … She was stood in the middle of a load of prison officers and she said, 'You're all *great*,' … But in her world we're not - in her son's world we were, you know, in her husband's world we're not - *horrible*. … Sometimes we're a bit, 'Good cop, bad cop', kind of thing.

Family members often perceive most jail staff as 'hostile and dehumanising' (Arditti, 2003: 135). Kirsty's emotive recollection demonstrates the arguably disparaging view of many people in society who perhaps do not fully appreciate the difficult, and at times extremely sensitive, nature of prison work. Although it occurred rarely for her, Kirsty thought it was natural to get upset when dealing with the prisoners' circumstances:

> … when (name of inmate)'s little girl died. Me and him had a right good cry in t' cell one day. … And one, when I had to tell, erm, (first name of inmate) that his wife had died. … I did have a cry. ... We're human … at t' end of t' day. … It doesn't matter who you are or what you wear or what your job is.

Kirsty's example provides evidence of what Hochschild (1983) describes as *physical zones* or *circumstances* in which alternative emotional rules apply, allowing the expression of informal norms to emerge. It also amply demonstrates the humanity and compassion that *can* be found in the custodial setting. As a first-time escort, Miranda (PO), visiting a prisoner's dying father, recollected:

> Yeh, I was upset. I cried whilst I was there. …, it didn't affect me as in I wasn't able to go home and I was affected, erm, massively.

Heidi (Mental Health) reflected on the effects of bereavement on her ability to cope with her job:

> The only rule I stick by is, if I go out of those gates and I'm still thinking about a prisoner, I need to turn around and come back in again and open up an ACCT document and tell somebody else about it. I don't believe I should ever go out of those gates worrying or thinking about a prisoner. Then I will have *done* something.

She continued:

> … I had to cut a boy down a week off after my own father died. … And
> that was *awful*. So yes, if you're having *current* issues then I would
> probably ask a colleague to go and see someone if I was in that sort of
> emotional state. And I would do the same for my colleagues.

Clearly, staff members have to deal with traumatic incidents on a frequent basis
in a Category C prison, thus self-care is of paramount importance. Wright et al
(2006) identified the incidence of PTSD in a sample of 49 POs who had dealt
with a death in custody in the period 3-7 months prior to their study, and found
an incidence rate of 36.7%, although they suggest the figure to be higher as a
number of POs who had been clinically diagnosed as being affected had been
signed off work. The researchers propose that a significant percentage of
those affected are not being identified as needing care following such an event.
Moreover, Wright et al (2006: 167) found denial and avoidance to be common
strategies amongst staff, thereby suggesting that any margin of error would be
in the direction of under-identification of PTSD. Heidi put forward her opinion
on staff burnout:

> … it's more volume of work than actual individuals. … you can't afford to
> get emotionally involved. ... You do learn the hard way because you get
> emotionally involved early on in your career and I think you can get burnt,
> and … you're leaving yourself wide open to manipulation.

Importantly, the extreme situation of becoming desensitised to the plight of the
prisoner becomes problematic for both parties. The more recent introduction
into prisons of substances such as NPS also contribute to staff competence
levels. NPS is known to be having a detrimental effect on regimes, and a
physical and emotional strain on staff members (Norton, 2017: 37). Speaking
about the impact of spice and levels of prisoner self-harm, Warwick (Nurse)
commented that:

> Prison Officers *are* leaving the service due to burnout within six months of
> them training - I sought counselling in the past.

Sickness rates amongst staff are more than double than comparative rates among the population average (Prison Reform Trust, 2015). Lambert et al (2010) examined the relationship between social support and burnout among correctional staff, reporting that those officers who felt supported by their supervisors had lower levels of job stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. However, their results pinpointed the need for different forms of social support to deal with different dimensions of burnout.

Kirsty (FLO/SO) described a couple of possible thoughts upon arriving home:

> … you come home from work and you just think, 'Oh God, I hope he's all right when I get back in, in t' morning.' Or, 'I hope I've wrote t' right thing down,' ….

Thus, not only prisoners - but staff - have to find the best means of coping with prison-related stressors so they do not ultimately become debilitating, resulting in a detrimental impact on both prisoners and themselves. The reality of this state of affairs is that neither prisoners nor staff members can be authentic due to the prevailing staff and macho dominated prisoner culture. This *must* have a deleterious effect on the grieving process.

Training – learning through "osmosis"

The topic of grief awareness training arose during some interviews, and how knowledge accrued:

Lydia (RC Chaplain) received none but had learned from her "own experiences" and through "osmosis" at work. Neither had Michael (Governor grade), but he gained from "general on-the-job experience, as well as life experiences."

Of the most recently trained POs, Adrian stated, "… you didn't get anything like bereavement [training] and how to deal with it [during mandatory training]." Miranda (PO), who stated she had not experienced a significant bereavement, commented, "It's nothing what you expect, at all. … You've just got to be strong and do it [provide support to bereaved prisoners]." New prison officer recruits have to undergo POELT (Prison Officer entry level training), lasting twelve weeks. While Liebling et al (2011: 134) suggest training in the

development of courage, honesty and integrity may be of value, training in the effective support of soft emotions (Knight, 2014), and bereavement awareness, would be equally as beneficial.

None of the four Psychologists stated they had experienced the death of a significant family member. They were asked what their job role entailed:

> NADIA: A risk of reoffending: all the risk factors.
>
> MARION: … Do you talk about bereavement?
>
> NADIA: If that was significant, in their lead up to their offence. If we thought it played a part, we would. … It will be like an interview as part of a risk assessment for the Parole Board, looking at what the risk is of reoffending.
>
> MARION: Did you have any training on bereavement issues as part of your psychology training?
>
> NADIA and MADALENE (in unison): No. (The remaining two focus group members also shook their heads.)

The study highlighted the fact that no training was officially provided on the effects of bereavement, and awareness of the symptoms of grief, implying a skills deficit. Instead, there is an expectation that knowledge and skills will accumulate experientially. If grief has not been experienced first-hand, this may limit the level of understanding and empathy a worker has, especially when making critical decisions which relate indirectly to prisoner grief and levels of adjustment made during a prisoner's sentence, as in the above example. Also, assuming a staff member *has* experienced personal loss, he/she may not have been able to successfully adjust, which may be retriggered if working alongside bereaved men. This may, in turn, result in heightened staff vulnerability.

In terms of gender, Tait (2008: 85) found that there was a tendency for women to adopt a more caring approach than male officers. They were perceived in general to be more approachable than male officers, shouldering the burden of care work, while male officers faced cultural pressure to be 'hard' and to

maintain distance from prisoners. Boyd and Grant (2005) found no difference between men and women officers' overall competence when measuring the dimensions of Discipline and Control, Communication and Empathy.   However, they found high scores on the Professionalism dimension. This suggested women officers were perceived to be more honest, better able to avoid argumentative situations, and more able to remain calm in difficult situations with prisoners. Further, female officers were respectful of prisoners' privacy, more effective at getting things done for prisoners, smarter and more presentable, and more polite with prisoners (Boyd and Grant: 2005: 72).

People who provide formalised support to vulnerable others are often encouraged to recognise their own life experiences and process related thoughts, feelings and personal views so they are more resilient to cope with others' difficulties (Dryden and Thorne, 1991). In this way, their own unresolved issues are not unconsciously affecting the supportive relationship.

Support for staff following a personal bereavement

Inevitably, some staff members will experience bereavement. The consideration a member of staff is afforded following a close bereavement can be contrasted with prisoners who are notified of a death:

> BRIDGET (Education): … a member of staff lost her father and she had an appropriate period of time off out of work. In comparison, the prisoner wasn't able to have anything like that amount of time. Because the system just doesn't allow it.

When Colin's (PO) mother died he couldn't sit at home, "moping", but, "carried on working". He empathised when, "The lads have time on their hands and that's what brings it on [rumination]."

The IMB members were asked about their responsibilities concerning staff welfare:

> EVE: If the conditions are bad for the prisoners, the staff have got to work in it as well and, therefore, it all impacts on how they treat each other ….

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As well as an in-house Care Team (comprising a range of different volunteer-staff members on a rota), supervision and line management, staff described alternative support:

> THERESA (Probation): Obviously the emotions you go through with bereavement are terrible, and also because of the nature of the work we do, a lot of people in here have done things that are highly unpleasant. So the sharing of information is part of the job, I think. … share it at work before you take it home and create problems at home!

> NADIA (Psychologist): ... And then there's, like, *My Services* which is a kind of HR [Human Resources], a national thing. There's lots of helplines. And staff can get free counselling. You used to have to go through your Line Manager, but it doesn't any more.

Prisoners' and staff members' perceptions of how their own bereavements may be managed by the prison institution provides a useful comparison of normative, societal expectations.

Conclusion

For some bereaved men living in the community, the outcome of their limited coping mechanisms following a death did result in (or may have resulted in) them becoming a danger to the public and *escaping to prison* for security. This situation implies a breakdown of the social contract and collective failure within society. Once inside, due to the nature of many relationships in prison, mistrust and distrust became apparent on different levels. Moreover, an absence of one's social support system and additional losses contributed to the experience of cumulative loss. A consequence of imported trust issues as a result of insecure, avoidant attachments (see Chapter One, Literature Review), was a reliance on self-sufficiency and corresponding inability to reach out for support.

There was often a ready supply of NPS and other drugs (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2018) available for those who had the means to pay for it, or become beholden to the suppliers for any who did not. Those bereaved men and non-bereaved men who became psychotic as a result of taking NPS, made living on the wings even more disturbing, with the culture taking on an uncertain and

unpredictable turn. The residual effects of staff members' unresolved grief issues may have unconsciously impacted on their work roles. Also, cultural compliance for both staff members and prisoners paradoxically emphasised inauthenticity of emotion/emotion regulation as a means of coping. A range of staff-related issues had the potential to affect the grieving process, including staff shortages, resulting in lack of time for meaningful support to be provided. Other barriers which could lead to increased mistrust and distrust towards staff members, and resistance in seeking meaningful support, included: poor boundary setting; an absence of experiential learning opportunities; few life skills due to age; no bereavement awareness training provision at entry level or through CPD training; and, no experience of significant personal bereavements.

Research has found that prisoners view male and female officers as equally effective in their duties. With parity in the gender ratio of male to female POs becoming more embedded, former macho cultural expectations may give way to a staff culture in which gender plays an increasingly diminished role as both genders adopt similar working strategies. The innate strengths of *one or two* trustworthy peers were recognised as being helpful and, importantly, most prisoners trusted *one or two* competent members of staff. Influencing staff members' strategies included: helping a prisoner to identify with them through empathic concern and behaviour, which could in turn be modelled; organising meaningful work opportunities for prisoners; and collaborative involvement to ensure grief *could* be processed at the prisoner's pace. Finally, the accounts contrast how the MoJ manages and supports grief issues encountered by staff members, as distinct from prisoners.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEREAVEMENT AND COPING - "HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN TO A 5-YEAR OLD WHAT DEATH IS?"

Chapter Five examines some of the bereavement experiences the prisoners have had to face, and also charts their coping strategies. Ferszt (2002: 250) considers that:

> Grief in relation to the death of a loved one is experienced in the full context of one's life past and present, not as a separate incident.

The accounts demonstrate how former losses were handled at the time, thereby shaping later means of coping. The first section provides narratives evidencing bereavements occurring during: early childhood; late childhood and adolescence; pre-prison; and, during imprisonment. They demonstrate the prisoners' capacity to comprehend such events at different life stages. The second half of the chapter examines the prisoners' most common forms of coping, pre- and during imprisonment. Culturally-recognised strategies imported from the men's former communities are indicated, which subsequently became adapted for use in prison.

A significant finding of the research was the number of bereavements some of the men had experienced over the life-course. Importantly, as referred to in Chapter Four, several men experienced overload in society following bereavement/cumulative loss, and found refuge behind the prison walls. Of the 23 prisoner participants, 20 experienced a total of at least 41 significant deaths while they had been serving time. Over the men's life courses, 11 mothers and 13 fathers had died. Deaths not revealed (ie only alluded to in general terms) have not been included in the figures provided in the chapter, therefore, numbers of actual deaths of significance will be higher.

Early loss

Following a significant death, if a child or young person has a range of resources at hand such as a strong supportive network, and access to any interventions needed, they can develop resilience against future losses (Steele

and Kuban, 2013). However, if they have limited connections and are brought up in an environment in which resources and opportunities are lacking, the future may not be so positive, with the potential for developmental growth needs failing to be met (Steele and Kuban, 2013). Five of the 23 men had significant, death-associated traumatic experiences between the ages of five and six, and another encountered a traumatic event at this age, which nearly resulted in a sibling's death. Yameen, the youngest of four children, lost his mother to death, aged five:

> I came home from school one day. They said, 'Look, go and see your mum in hospital.' I still remember the smell and taste of mashed potato and fish. (voice sounds disgusted) It's got a really weird smell, hospital food. … Er so she said to me dad, 'I was born in Pakistan. ... I want to die there.' So we all went to Pakistan. … All t' courtyard was just packed. … it was mainly women at that time, crying and screaming, really. I just focused on me brother that's older than me. He was sat in me nanny's lap, crying. And I started laughing, me, 'cos I didn't understand what was going on. … All these women coming up to me, kissing me on me cheeks … It didn't sink in what it was, … it were my first time in Pakistan. These are all my extended family and relatives, (pause) .... But (pause, large intake, and exhalation, of breath) I can *still* feel what I felt then. (speaks with conviction) I *know* I'd completely and utterly *changed*. I went as a five-year old and I come back as somebody else or summat' else. Erm, (pause) but I wasn't the same person that went. Definitely not. Then I started dossing off school (begins laughing) – at five-year old! I'd come back at dinner-time and I wouldn't go back. I'd go to t' park or jump over t' wall into t' graveyard. I wanted to be on me own and be left alone, irregardless.

> MARION: Can you say why you wanted to be on your own?

> YAMEEN: Me mum died. I didn't understand … how do you explain to a five-year old what death is? … Nobody really made the attempt. Me dad … he's now got four kids and no wife. ... He's got a mortgage. So he's gone straight back to doing seven nights in a textile factory. … it affected

me confidence. … It were just mad. … I've got a step-mother that I never saw eye-to-eye really from 1975, from when me real mum died. … I didn't understand what *death* meant.

It has been found that 59% of adult prisoners regularly truanted from school, compared to 5.2% of the normal population in England (MoJ, 2012). At such a young age, Yameen recognised his identity had changed irrevocably, and a somewhat isolating coping pattern began to develop following his mother's death.

Kieran's mother, brother and sister died when he was aged five, in a road accident. He was also in the car. Kieran's parents had divorced and his step-father was driving.

> Well I knew it was a car crash obviously. … all I know is, you know them car transporter wagons, *that* come over t' top of us and crushed us. ... I don't really want to know more, well I do want to know but I don't in a way. … me dad protected me from it and didn't really mention it up until I was 18, sort of thing. He talked about it but I didn't want to know. I just put it to the back of me head, …. All I remember is being held in the ambulance woman's arms. And that's what I used to get dreams of and nightmares of. … That's the *only* thing I can get in me head. … It's me head that's affected. … I can't even remember what my mum was like. I can't even picture her. That's the worst thing. It's like I look at her photo and, pphhoohh, that's just a woman to me.

Kieran's somewhat illusory experience impacted heavily on his life. He stated his PTSD had been recognised in the prison.

Jason also experienced a sibling's death, aged five, having found the infant:

> … it's my first memory. My mum says, 'Go and check on your sister. … I go back to my mum, 'She's not talking.' ... She went, 'Grab her!' I grabbed my sister. Took her back. She was dead – a cot death. … It all went mental in t' house. T' police have come, neighbours have grabbed me and my brother. … They took us across the road to one of the neighbours. (big breath) It's all kicked off in t' house. … my mum didn't

want, obviously, to give my sister to t' police. They wanted to take her off
of her so they've had to restrain my mum to get the baby off her. … I'll
never forget. She were crying and that. I was, like, 'Don't worry Mum, I'll
look after you.' … I remember it as if it was yesterday.

Following this traumatic event, Jason indicated a strong urge to care for his
bereaved mother. This coping behaviour is highlighted in a later description of
Jason's identity, ie as a *rescuer, '*needing' to care for other inmates as a result
of recognising their pain.

Gavin found the murdered body of a schoolgirl when he was five:

(immediately started speaking in a rushed manner) She was coming
home from school and me and me [nine-year-old] sister found her the next
morning … [at] an adventure playground. We had gone down there early
one morning to go and play. We seen a puddle, like, you know, like a line
of blood. I thought it were a dog's paw, me, a dog had cut itself, but we
followed it and found out it was (name of deceased girl) ... (provided
explicit details of the mutilated body). … (Gavin took another loud gulp of
coffee) We moved from (area) … I used to think t' (murderer) were in t'
toilet cistern. I couldn't go to t' toilet on me own for years. … That
affected me for years, that.

Gavin went on to experience another traumatic event, which is outlined later.

Aged six, Pete found his grandfather dead on Boxing Day, with whom he and
his mother lived. Pete stated he never knew his own father and was
exceptionally close to his mother:

… he used to whip me mam, …, to be honest, me mam said that was one
of the best days of her life because he died. … I went upstairs,
screaming, 'He's dead.' … I was on the stairs, crying, obviously shocked,
going up the stairs to me mam. I don't think about it – except for the big
wide belt I used to get hit with! … one day he left it … on a chair
somewhere. I cut it up. He could hit us but he couldn't whip us anymore.
(pause) That hurt, that. Right on the back of me legs. I had shorts on.

Describing how he remembered his grandfather that day, Pete continued:

> What shirt he had on, braces he had on, the big wide trousers that he had
> on. ... Sitting in the chair, facing the. Can you remember the old Aga
> fires? ... He was facing that way and the fire was there.

Despite these events occurring when the men were aged between five and six,
they nevertheless made a resounding impact on them. Although a death did
not occur, Ronnie recalled an event at the age of six, involving himself, his
father and brother.

> … I still remember it to this day. I always will. I was frightened … my
> mum and my sister, they were out. … My dad … was an alcoholic when
> he was younger ... Me and my brother had been playing with toys in t'
> living room. … he ended up tripping or standing on one of t' toys, … my
> brother would have been about ten. … And my dad being drunk and
> abusive, … was literally kicking him around the house, punching him left,
> right and centre. ... At the time, he tried locking me in a cupboard. ... He
> took his belt off, he started beating my brother black and blue with t' belt,
> and, and from what I remember he put the belt round my brother's neck
> and threw him over t' bannister on the staircase. He tried hanging my
> brother. … if it wasn't for me hitting my dad over the head with summat'
> he would have killed him. … my dad got locked up.

Carey (1985) proposed that between the ages of five and eight an important
shift occurs in the way in which children understand biological phenomena,
including death. It is suggested that pre-school children lack a biological
framework for understanding death, but between the ages of around five and
six they begin to 'construct a biological model of how the human body functions
to maintain 'life'' (Slaughter, 2005: 179). A shift occurs in a child's
understanding of death, and by the age of seven a child realises that death is
caused by the breakdown of bodily functioning, thus preventing the body from
functioning to maintain life (2005: 183). Accordingly, Slaughter (2005: 184)
suggests explanations about death are likely to be meaningless to a young
child who cannot recognise death as being characterised and ultimately caused
by the cessation of bodily function in biological terms (2005: 184). Whether it is

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coincidence or not, these events occurred at around the age of five to six; which may be an important transition period in developmental understanding of life, dying and death, and may warrant further attention in terms of children's (and particularly males') evolving coping strategies as a result of such significant stressful events.

Oltjenbruns (2001) argues that the level of understanding (or misunderstanding) a child has of the concept of death, and availability of certain coping mechanisms, should be based upon developmental capacity. Often unable to describe emotions or ask for what they need, children commonly cannot draw comfort from spoken statements, may regress to an earlier level of functioning or act out behaviours as a means of communicating their need for attention; and may cope through repression, denial, and displacement (Oltjenbruns, 2001: 170-171). Additionally, when attachment bonds are formed with primary caregivers during early childhood, these may be secure or insecure (Bowlby, 1973), resulting in particular attachment styles which predict ways that individuals deal with emotions and bereavement (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2008; Stroebe et al, 2005).

Losses occurring during later childhood and adolescence

Mathew spoke of his grandmother's death, aged 11½ to 12 years:

> … there was *that* strong a connection between me and me nana. I could feel what she was going through, .… And people say as kids you don't … really understand death, but some kids are quite adept to have them feelings like that. Although she was me nana, I loved her just as much as me mam. … the next night I was in bed crying me eyes out. [following the death] … The bedroom door were open. And my nan was stood there. … She said, 'Don't worry, I'm not in pain any more.' … with that I just went to sleep. … In my head ... *It was real.* … when me nana died me mother didn't let me go to me nana's funeral. Why? [condescending tone] 'Because you're too young. You don't understand, love.' [sounded angry] 'How do you know I don't understand? ... You don't know what I'm capable of understanding at twelve year old.'

Despite evidence to the contrary, there is often a perception that the young have little comprehension of, or react to, the death of a significant other (Doka, 2008) and importantly, shared mourning practices can be just as important for children as adults (Young and Papadatou, 1997). Mitch explained his grandmother was more of a mother than his own mother. His mother had twins and one died of a cot death. The mother coped by drinking and a younger brother was taken into care. Mitch's grandmother died when he was twelve. His mother was still alive.

Woody stated he was diagnosed with testicular cancer, aged 15, but made a full recovery. His mother went on to develop bladder cancer when he was 19. Following an incorrect diagnosis, Woody's mother had received a correct diagnosis, dying seven or eight months later. Woody explained:

> Me and my mum were such (squeezes hands together), like that. Just so tight. (smiles) … Because … I've been through cancer and she was there. … She were basically couch-bound [with cancer]. … She died at home. … We were there when she died. Me and me sister both said we wasn't going to start work …. And we just said 'We'll take it in turns in looking after her.' … We didn't look at it as that she were dying, 'cos we didn't want to look at it that way.

Similarly to Pete (mentioned earlier), Woody also had an exceptionally close bond with his mother. Correspondingly, he never knew his biological father. In contrast, several men had a poor relationship with their mothers, some of whom had alcohol and drug addictions. This resulted in them being unable to care sufficiently for their offspring, with alternative support being provided - potentially from a range of differing attachment bonds. Seven men experienced ten significant deaths between the ages of 15 to 19, including: Mother (2); Father (5); Grandfather (1); best friend (1); close friend (1).

Mitch explained:

> I lost my dad when I were 17, to cancer. … my grandma. She pretty much brought me up. I lost her when I was 12.

At the age of 17, Sam's father died, and his best friend died as a result of a drug overdose in the same year. Sam was involved in a road accident, aged 18:

> I were in a car accident and my mate [the driver] died sat next to me. …
> We crashed at 80 mile an hour, … I were in a coma for two weeks ….
> They said my brain was going to be a cabbage.

Gavin, who found the murdered schoolgirl, had committed an offence as an adolescent, and had been sentenced. He was released on the Thursday (aged 17), and went to see his father:

> I should have gone to see him on the Thursday. … I went down on the
> Sunday and as soon as I opened t' letter box I could smell he was dead.
> … Death's got a real bad smell. … I kicked t' glass in and turned t' key.
> He were in t' kitchen. He'd done it with one of them er, you know, clothes
> horse things that you pull to the ceiling. Yeh, I were pretty bad. ... (took
> yet another loud gulp of coffee) Yes, it affected me hard, did me dad.

Having recognised that in general, boys are more vulnerable than girls when responding to family stressors and adversities, Rutter (1970, 1982, 1985) posited that some coping processes could increase the risk of maladaptation or disorder whereas others may improve adaptation and reduce the risks of a deviant outcome. The men's accounts thus far indicate they experienced psychosocial adversity, including bereavement, breaks in relationships, ongoing stress, health problems, domestic violence, and parents with drug and alcohol problems (Jacob, 2013). Chronic psychosocial adversity can make it more likely that a child will suffer ill-effects from acute stressors, and when combined with environmental stresses or hazards, the child may develop increased vulnerability (Rutter, 1985). It is important to highlight the cumulative nature of loss and trauma occurring during childhood, and the manner in which it can be replayed in later life, particularly when not explored satisfactorily at a young age.

Deaths occurring during adulthood, prior to imprisonment

It may be that some bereavements took place which are not accounted for. For example, it was Shadan who revealed his father's (Haseeb – participant) first wife had died. Haseeb chose not to mention his first wife's death while being interviewed. The following three accounts describe events concerning the deaths of a partner, colleague and a pet. The fourth excerpt describes how the death of the participant's father affected him, to the extent that the death may have indirectly resulted in his imprisonment, following murder.

Howard's partner died three years earlier, from the time of the interview:

> I went to sleep one night. … I didn't know where she was …. (big exhalation of breath) 'Cos there's nowhere else for her to be at half-past-four in the morning. ... I just phoned t' police. I said, 'I'm not sure if I'm doing t' right thing but I believe my partner has committed suicide.' There were loads and loads of police come … they explained, 'There's a woman with t' same tattoos and that, ra-ra-ra, had been found under (name) bridge.' It's left me devastated …. I've known her all my life, from being five-year-old. … And then, all t' arguments with her family then. I wasn't allowed to t' funeral. … Her motive was her children … to her first marriage. Her ex-husband put the kids up for adoption. … which made it an awful lot harder for us. Then as soon as that had been rubber-stamped, the arguments that me and her had been going through, I think it were just too much for her. But she did say to me a few years before, …. If she doesn't get her kids back and this relationship doesn't work, 'Yeh, I'm jumping off that bridge ....' Two, three years down t' line it didn't click. … She'd been a mother since she was 14 year old. She was 31 when she lost 'em, so more than half her life she'd been a mother. Now from having four kids, three kids, to none.

In addition to coping with the suicide of his partner, Howard's narrative also describes the challenging relationship with his partner prior to her death, additional instability and conflict. Several accounts described sudden, traumatic and disturbing events in which the interviewees played an active part

in assisting the dying individual. Fergus was at work, approximately 2½ years ago, when a traumatic industrial accident occurred:

> I had dinner with him, you know, see him every day. He just did everything by the book. … (sharp intake of breath) … it could have been me brother. Obviously me brother'd swapped jobs for him to go for his canteen – for his dinner. I helped him, dragged him out of t' machine, outside of t' machine, and just. I got under of his armpits (work colleague), got under his legs and put him in t' recovery position (provided explicit details).

Pete was asked what other problems he had which had been grief-related:

> If you want the truth, the only other one … is me dog. I've had him for fifteen years. … Me and mam had a dog …. And he's the only close relation – shall I say – that I've ever had in me life (voice wobbles).

It is interesting how Pete refers to the dogt as being a family member. Pete's much-loved family pet was a symbolic link to his deceased mother, to whom he had a strong attachment. Mathew particularly recognised his inability to process his father's grief. I asked him:

> MARION: If a bereavement has been dealt with earlier, does that prevent other problems from getting worse?

Mathew responded:

> I would say so, yes. … in myself it would have made things different …. I might not have done a lot of the things I've done. … Committing some crimes. (speaks very quickly) I'm not going to blame me parents because it was my choice, but I think if I'd dealt with all the negative emotions and understood things better, ... I probably wouldn't have killed somebody. … I wouldn't have gone down that road if bereavement counselling had been available to deal with a lot of me emotions when me old man died.

Violence inflicted on innocent victims following a traumatic loss may represent projection of hate onto other 'objects', thereby offering a temporary sense of relief and psychic well-being (Holligan and Deuchar, 2015). This striking

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account demonstrates that a poor adjustment following bereavement can become of serious societal concern.

Notification of deaths during imprisonment

Significant deaths which occurred while the 23 men were imprisoned, include: mother (six); father (three); step-mother (one); step-father (two); grandmother (five); grandfather (two); brother (five); sister (two); best friend (four); cousin (three); close aunt or uncle (three); good friend (five), totalling 41 deaths. The lengths of the sentences varied (ie short, medium and longer term), and some of the men had been in prison once before or several times previously. Only deaths which were mentioned specifically have been included within these data. Others occurred which were not discussed, for example, the associates Yameen knew (previously mentioned), and the numerous deaths which Les had to cope with, as outlined below. Les had been in prison for at least the past 16 years. He had been released but was then recalled after 18 days.

> I've lost so many, I think I've kind of blatted it out. … (nervous laugh). … Close friends in prison. … they've been like my brothers, you know?

Dale was in prison when, at the age of 28, his best friend was found hanging, in another prison.

> He got eight year and he were [due] out in three months. ... (big intake of breath) I was writing to him every week, a couple of times a week and he didn't say anything in t' letters. … We've grown up since, like, four. … Hhmmpphh. … He felt closer to me than me brother and sisters. … obviously we didn't see in his letters that he was depressed at all.
>
> MARION: … Did he have any losses?
>
> DALE: … he had it bad. His mam … and his sister died, then his dad died. And that's what must have built up in his mind in jail. … That's why he was right close to me, …, the first person that had ever died [in Dale's experience] was him, who I'd loved, … it affected me 'cos I felt sorry for him. … You know, some people blame how they've been brought up and that, but he was like a lost cause, … the schools … didn't know why he

was naughty and stuff, you know. But what he had to go through as a child, growing up. … his mam died when he was 10. His sister died 4 years later, so 14, and his dad died when he was about 20.

MARION: It seems as though you'd been supporting somebody else for a long, long time, with three traumatic bereavements.

DALE: You see, I'm really good at giving advice and things, me. But, pphhoohh, taking it myself, you know, I just don't know.

Although it is not a representative sample of the prison population, the examples nevertheless demonstrate that bereavement of significant people and loved ones occur relatively regularly for prisoners, particularly in relation to sudden and traumatic deaths and as a result of lifestyle choices. Relationships with deceased grandparents had often been exceedingly close, as in the earlier accounts of Mathew and Mitch. Jason ranked his female family members in order of closeness:

Number one, me Gran. … then me sister. And then I'd put me Mum, like, after me Aunties.

Not only was Jason's grandmother's death difficult because he was imprisoned, but he describes the additional losses incurred:

It affected me badly. She meant everything to me, my granny. When she died, it's like also I take away my address, where I live, everything.

The fact that grandparents often featured strongly in the lives of some of the men cannot be understated. Due to complex family situations grandparents often helped with childrearing. It may be that the relationships between some grandparents and prisoners resulted in stronger bonds than the ties with their biological parents. Moreover, following a grandparent's death this may also represent loss of a key figure who offered unconditional love. Westerink and Stroebe (2012) comment that there has been no scientific investigation into the death of a grandparent, with the impact on children and adolescents potentially being under-estimated. Moreover, they assert the death of a grandparent may become an unrecognised loss. Consequently, this could result in an

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underestimation of the problematic consequences amongst this sub-group; either before or during imprisonment.

Draper and Hancock (2011) attempted to establish delinquency rates in parentally-bereaved children. Their assertion was that one in five parentally-bereaved children is likely to develop a psychiatric disorder, and children who have not experienced parental bereavement are significantly less vulnerable to delinquent behaviour than parentally-bereaved children. Using the Rutter Behaviour Scale, their study found higher rates of emotional and behavioural difficulties in boys, thereby supporting Dowdney's (2000) research that children become at risk of a range of negative outcomes following death of a parent. When children suffer parental bereavement their wellbeing is negatively affected; threatening an adverse impact on society as a whole, as a result of heightened vulnerability (Draper and Hancock, 2011). The situation can be correspondingly similar when they become adolescents and adults, and arguably when other significant deaths are experienced.

Other social losses had to be contended with, which were more ambiguous (Boss, 1999) and at risk of being socially unacknowledged (Doka, 2008), for example several instances of abuse. Absenteeism from school and often mixing with older children affected educational attainment and instilled poor values. Trauma, early alcohol and drug misuse, violence and other risky lifestyle choices could result in physical and mental health problems. Relationships with partners often dissolved. Old family bonds between siblings and parents and others could become fractured or destroyed, some men were excluded from seeing their children, and old friends severed relationships. Some families broke up due to death of a parent. All these losses affected valuable social support. Possessions and homes had been lost, and regular employment had been cut short, causing financial and other economic problems. Thus, the socio-economic context of the men's lives resulted in a wide range of deprivations which will undoubtedly have compounded the losses and bereavements experienced. The men had

heightened levels of vulnerability as a result of the deaths, and the specific ways they coped with their grief symptoms are described below.

Coping behaviours adopted

Coping has been defined as 'constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person' (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984: 141). Healthy coping following bereavement requires the individual to confront aspects of loss and at other times avoid them (Stroebe and Schut, 2010). However, Coyle suggests that prisons are highly regulated environments, allowing little space for prisoners to use their initiative or exercise personal choice (2005: 125). Many of the strategies adopted in response to bereavement were common, having been imported into prison. As will be illustrated, apart from some mentioned in the previous two chapters, which depended on trust and effective interpersonal relationships, the majority were self-instigated - and maladaptive. Some of the men may have engaged in alternative coping activities which they did not disclose, for example illicit drug use in prison, but this section will examine in detail the various means of coping adopted to counter stressors which *were* discussed during the interviews.

Coping with murder and manslaughter

Two of the men had to live with causing loss of life, in addition to close personal bereavements. The first conversation focuses on Mathew's circumstances at the time of his mother's death, when he was convicted of murdering a man. He describes his thoughts and how he coped with the murder:

> I just felt lost. Just like a part of me was gone [following his mother's death]. I didn't even realise I was doing a murder trial the week after she was buried. I just didn't even give one monkey or another about the trial. My thoughts were with the funeral and how I was feeling after that. … The murder just went to the back of me mind, the back of me mind. Well it's still there but it's not been processed. If that makes any sense?

Mitch had been imprisoned as a result of manslaughter, and had a number of other personal bereavements to cope with during imprisonment:

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> (big sigh of regret) Obviously I'm sorry to his family ... I'm trying to do restorative justice here at the moment where his widow comes in and speaks to me. That's started …. She was supposed to come the other week but it got postponed for some reason. … I made some poor decisions …. But it was an accident, I didn't do it intentionally.

It seemed that Mitch was unable to begin actively coping with addressing the death he caused until the victim's widow was ready to engage in restorative justice.

Imprisonment as a means of coping - "I'd have probably ended up killing somebody with my grief."

The narratives in this section also provide examples of how grief affected the course of some men's lives, culminating in imprisonment. However, they stopped short of ending another's life (see Mathew's comments and my reflections on page 169).

> GAVIN: Well, a direct result of me dad dying were the charges. … Me head had gone. … When me dad died I got 11 years. ... I did 6½ years out of that. I went in at 18. …   If somebody told me to do something I'd just go tell him to go fuck himself. I was fighting with inmates and, you know, I was fighting it all the way through. It was a really hard sentence, that. … if I hadn't have got sent down for … [crime] I'd have probably ended up killing somebody with my grief.

Danny was asked what the consequences would have been if he had not been imprisoned at the time of his mother's death:

> DANNY: I'd have gone out and got drunk. I'd have got into a fight, and I wouldn't have stopped. ... (pause) It's the only way I've ever dealt with anything, until the last year or so, of my life. Before I lost my Mum (inhalation and exhalation of breath) all I'd ever done is fight.

Sam had been imprisoned and was then released on licence. He was released for 36 days but had to return as he had broken the law:

> SAM: It was probably when it hit me more 'cos I couldn't see them [deceased mother and brother] out there. … I know that if I was out there, I would end up dead 'cos I was taking coke [cocaine] all t' time.

Importantly, Sam's *reality* became much more apparent upon returning to society, where his inner world and societal reality became synchronised once more. The account provides evidence that final *acceptance* of this stark truth may have led to subsequent feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and potential re-offending as a means of poor coping.

When Dale was asked whether he had taken drugs before his mother had died prior to his sentence, he commented:

> DALE: Yeh but I hadn't touched owt' for about six year, seven year (big breath.
>
> MARION: And what prompted you to start again?
>
> DALE: (pause) Well, when me mam died. But obviously I'm not blaming her. … I coped by doing drugs. It helped me not to think of my mum, obviously.
>
> MARION: And were you working?
>
> DALE: Yeh, I'd been self-employed for 8 year. … It probably did me good coming to jail, to be honest. … Just to sort myself out.

General Strain theory argues that the experience of strain or stress can generate negative emotions such as frustration, anger, depression and despair which, in turn, are believed to create pressures for corrective action, such as crime or delinquency (Brezina, 2017). Multiple stressors, for example actual or anticipated loss of significant relationships, may lead to violent behaviour (Agnew, 1992, 2001). Moreover, it is suggested that General Strain theory is the only major crime theory to recognise the role of negative emotions as a cause of offending (Brezina, 2017). The accounts suggest that for some men, they were unable to cope adequately with grief, and possibly other losses or stressors, and their lives spiralled out of control. Additionally, narratives

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contained in the second half of this chapter highlight negative emotions which led on to negative behaviours.

Howard, whose partner took her own life by jumping from a bridge prior to his imprisonment, described how he coped:

> I got back on to t' drugs so I was on a methadone script that I was trying to get off, but there was only one chemist in (town) that provides methadone … in t' town centre. I had to walk … every day … and look at this bridge for 45 minutes. … Which was soul destroying. … I just ended up walking down to town and thinking I'm not walking back up there to do it again tomorrow. I just committed a load of burglaries to end up back in prison. … I give me two-bedroomed house up, everything I owned …. So now eighteen month later, I am now doing this sentence for the burglaries.

A secondary consequence of Yameen's father's death was the strain it put on the family's relationships:

> YAMEEN: I was getting me step-mother … my eldest brother … his wife giving me shit *all t' time*. Then me sister would come over from (city) and give me shit. … I was thinking, do you know what, 'I'm going to fucking explode here. I've got no outlet.' … I went back to using drugs, *because I could not cope*. It was either that or I would end up in a mental hospital. … One of me friends, she come close to ringing t' police and getting me sectioned. 'Cos she could see me head were going. … I was that *smashed*, I couldn't think. … I needed more money for more drugs. I went from nothing to unlimited in a matter of (clicks fingers) minutes. So, pphheeww.

Vaswani (2014) found that family breakdown following the death of a family member was common amongst the young men she interviewed, with a prevalence of engagement in drug taking. The next section accords with Vaswani's findings.

Drugs

Sam, Gavin, Les, Yameen, Barry, Dale, Howard, Woody, Ronnie, Lewis, Mark, Kieran, Lenny, Danny, and Jason had all used drugs at various times. It is assumed that some of the men had ongoing access to drugs during imprisonment, but this is just an assumption as current usage was not discussed. Notably, Dale, Ronnie, Lenny and Danny had all successfully stopped taking drugs as a result of imprisonment. Several of the men had been brought up since birth around drugs and alcohol:

> BARRY: I've seen me mam and dad … *rattling* in the back, and spewing, ….

Barry described how, and when, he began using soft drugs:

> I had friends. I'd go out and smoke a bit of weed when we had a drink. But if I was at home constant, I would be with t' kids [caring for Barry's younger siblings]. Then I would try and pinch a bit off 'em …. Wait 'til they got outside, go in their pocket and take a bit out. It was mad. But I started when I was 18, when me dad passed. That's when it started. Numb. … I wasn't bothered about owt', anything, anybody. Owt'. There was no bond [between Barry and his father]. I just wanted to sit there and get obliviated. For it to just go away.

Ronnie, aged six, subjected to seeing his father trying to murder Ronnie's brother, which he stated resulted in PTSD, said:

> Nine year old, I started smoking cannabis. … at the age of like 11 or 12 I started taking harder drugs. I was taking ecstasy tablets and from there it went to ketamine …. I've been clean since I was 17.

Jason was asked how he coped following the death of his grandmother in 2009, when he was 28, and imprisoned:

> I went as high as a kite. Drugged out of me head for a week. … That's how I dealt with it. That's my way of, that's probably been my way of dealing with everything. I just get high.

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The Chief Inspector of Prisons (2018) reported that one in four prisoners said they had developed a drug problem while being in prison. Allen (2007) interviewed 26 working class heroin users living in deprived urban areas across a city in the North West of England, and found that ten described using heroin to help them to cope with bereavement. Their reasoning was that: they did not know how to 'deal with' their grief; heroin blocked out feelings which could not be controlled; it helped them cope with meaninglessness; and, allowed their loss of self-significance through risky drug abuse (Allen, 2007: 87, 88).

Alcohol

It seems that excessive alcohol consumption featured rather less than drugs as a coping strategy. Nevertheless, Sam, Gavin, Howard, Fergus and Kieran utilised it. Sam had been able to get hold of it in prison:

> My mum died on the [date]. After me mum died I bought a litre of distilled for £50 and that's like, pure alcohol. I drunk it and I got *steaming*.

Sam was caught and transferred. This reaction implies decision-makers seemed to have ignored the root cause and pushed the *problem* onto another establishment. Whatever support mechanisms Sam might have had (ie relationships built with other inmates, connections to staff and chaplaincy) at the prison, had to be abandoned immediately.

Fighting

Gavin, Howard, Les, Mathew, Fergus and Danny had all formerly used fighting as a means of coping to externalise energy and emotion. Danny received news of his mother's death at another prison:

> (pause) It was, it was the worst news I could have got. … I ended up fighting a bit. … You know, one lad will say something about you and then they'll say something about your Mam and unfortunately he didn't know what had gone on with me Mam. … Afterwards he come and apologised to me.

Anger can be a commonly felt emotion, particularly when a death is perceived as being a waste of life (Vaswani, 2014). While a degree of 'controlled

aggression' is needed in order to survive the psychological and physical rigours of imprisonment (Jewkes, 2002: 56), violence can break out when an individual feels threatened and/or violated, often brought about by a need to 'save face' and regain a sense of 'respect' (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007). Jewkes (2012b: 47) argues that once a tough façade has been established, this has to be maintained, resulting in additional pressures.

Damage to property and the prisoner's cell

As well as venting frustration and anger on other prisoners or staff, inmates may also damage the fabric of the building (Coyle, 2005). Woody, Fergus, Lewis, Mark and Lenny caused damage to property and fittings in their cells:

> LENNY: … the day I got told [in nearest local prison]. … I started smashing everything up. … I know that if I wasn't in here he would have still been here. I was his shoulder to cry on, .… He told me stuff, about him taking drugs and that. No-one even knew. … Certain people did but others didn't .… I was the only person that he could talk to.

While damaging inanimate objects may be a preferential strategy to physically hurting an other, the men nevertheless often had to undergo sanctions to indicate to themselves and others that such behaviour cannot be tolerated.

Humour

Humour can be an effective coping strategy (Worden, 2010), often flourishing where there is conflict and extremes, as in the prison environment (Terrinoni, 2014). In such situations it has the potential to neutralise asymmetrical power relations and reduce one to an infantile state; with both disciplinary and rebellious humour being understood in relation to social order (Laursen, 2016). Humour assists in alleviating the pains of imprisonment (Mathiesen, 1965). Laughter seems to play an important role in helping people regulate negative emotions, 'a function that may be particularly important during emotionally tumultuous periods such as bereavement' (Bonanno, 1999: 19). There were differing reactions to humour following bereavement. Howard stated:

[Previously] I'd make people laugh and stuff, yeh. This time … I'll specifically go and sit down and be quiet.

Conversely, Fred, Danny, Jason and Yameen all used humour as a means of coping. This was evident during the interviews, when conversations were occasionally garnished with humour, yet, interestingly, not so when Yameen was interviewed. The humour Worden and Bonanno had in mind is perhaps dissimilar to the humour which takes place in prison. In this environment humour is often offensive, it acts to provocate, and is used as a means of one-upmanship, whilst also projecting a positive, stable identity in order to conceal a prisoner's private self (de Viggiani, 2006: 79).

YAMEEN: Every three or four months I seem to go on a downer. If you go on my wing they'll say, 'This fucker is the life and heart of the wing. He'll play pranks, he'll fuck about.' And it's all to try and stop everybody thinking about where the fuck they are and what they're doing and … what they're *missing*. ... It is a weird way of doing it.

Perhaps Yameen felt he did not need to mask his true feelings while being interviewed. There may be reticence for some men:

WAYNE: … I'm really outgoing, having a laugh and stuff, but when I have a laugh, then it'll come into me head, 'Why am I fucking laughing? Yeh?' It's his name. He's there again [deceased brother], ….

The bereaved are commonly affected by guilt: real guilt (implying culpability) and false guilt (which is irrational) (Worden, 2010). In this case Wayne was experiencing normal behaviour when thoughts of his deceased brother affected his temporary modicum of enjoyment. He needed to find a new *normality*. Aside from humour, other strategies were used to prevent thinking about loss.

In-cell memorialisation

Memorialisation provides, 'a focus for social transition and a psychological and spiritual link between the living and the dead' (Holloway, 2007: 161). Some men chose to use the privacy of their cells to cope with bereavement, and one

way was through memorialisation. Woody and Lenny made simple memorials in their cells, while Dale deliberately avoided photographic reminders:

> WOODY: …, if you walked into my cell now you'd see on my wall I have a memorial. … It's just like a picture, 'Rest in Peace', signed and a *prayer of remembrance* poster. … I kiss the picture of me mum and [step-]dad. … in the morning and at night. 'Cos I don't want her [mother] to be out of my life.

> MARION: Are you able to cry in your pad?

> LENNY: Yeh, yeh because there's no-one there, … I just look at his pictures and I start crying. Or I look at my [deceased] daughter's pictures and start crying. It's best to face the other way and watch TV or just go to sleep, if I can.

> MARION: On the one hand it's good to have those pictures there but on the other hand it makes you upset?

> LENNY: Yeh, it's if I go in a pad now in (prison) with someone I don't know, I won't put them pictures up because I wouldn't want them looking at them.

> DALE: I've got no photos of her or owt', you know.

The examples clearly demonstrate individualised coping behaviours, therefore, any corresponding interventions need to take this fact into account. Reactions concerning work are similarly individualised.

Work used as a distraction

Russell found that bereaved employees in society may not go to work, on what they regard as 'bad' days, (1998: 13). Gavin, Dale, Yameen and Pete used work and keeping occupied to remain distracted from their grief. Gavin was a Chaplaincy orderly:

> And down at work an' that, he (inmate work colleague) told me not to do anything. … even though I'd rather have done summat. 'Cos I'm a worker. I don't like sitting around.

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MITCH: … I stayed in my cell on my own for pretty much a week, so, just trying to deal with it.

WAYNE: I did get some time off work. … Two weeks, maybe. … I stayed in my pad most of t' time. (pause) … it's nice, but you get sick of people coming up to you, you know. (coughs) I know they only mean their best but it just gets a bit, at times.

YAMEEN: Out there, my coping strategy needs to be work.

Pete was self-employed, stating he formerly earned a good, honest income:

PETE: I suppose after that [mother's death] I did seven days a week for nine and a half months solid, work. … So I don't know what closure is.

Distraction and avoidance were commonly used coping behaviours, however, they were often used exclusively, seriously impeding grief adjustment.

Other coping strategies

Pete, Yameen, Ronnie, Fergus and Danny found their own way of coping:

PETE: … them's [other bereaved prisoners] better off getting a squash ball. … I went to the funeral [Pete's mother's]. Took two squash balls. Take them, and if you put them like that [demonstrates], it takes your mind off things.

Writing was found to help Yameen and Ronnie:

YAMEEN: I've been in rehab: I quit counselling again. I wouldn't open up and talk.

MARION: How does writing help you?

YAMEEN: … I look at it and I read it back. I think, 'I can't fucking say that, I can't put that.' I'll rip it all up and burn it or flush it down t' toilet. And I start all over again. Erm, sometimes it might take two, three, four, five days of me doing it, until I calm down.

RONNIE: I write to my sister a lot. … explaining how I've been feeling. Like, when I write letters, my emotions come out. … it stops me from

bottling it up. I used to bottle me emotions up all the time and it caused me to get really bad depression. I used to self-harm, as you can see. (spoke more assertively) I don't do that anymore.

Fergus used distraction and family to help:

FERGUS: (exhalation of breath) Always watching t' tv, stereo, colouring my pictures. … work's a big one, yeh. Associating with people. … family.

Distraction, writing as a means of externalising emotion, and benefiting from the company of others were three forms of coping behaviours. However, the inability to express emotion became a barrier for some men, thereby reducing possible healthy ways of coping.

Avoidance

Several men used avoidance or blocking tactics to prevent having to think about the bereavement. While the study places focus on a greater understanding of the grief experience amongst male prisoners, several men nevertheless had additional non-death related trauma to contend with, such as Jason, for example, at the age of eight or nine:

So when I thought about it, … I thought, 'Fucking hell man, I got raped by this guy.' … I've never dealt with it. An, and I blocked it out of my brain.

Gavin, Dale, Wayne, Kieran, Mark and Pete used various strategies to prevent them thinking about the deaths incurred:

GAVIN: This time with me mam I buried me head in the sand. We wasn't that close. I always blamed her for me dad [ending his own life]. Because she was going off with other fellas. … she ended up leaving when I were 13. … there were things I wanted to say to her that I didn't say [before her recent death]. … They told me I was going to go on a visit but they never told me when or owt' like that. If I'd had had a bit more information about where I was going and stuff I could have worked out what I was going to say, ….

Gavin's issues may have been compounded by his inability to process the final conversations he wanted to have with his dying mother. Dale was asked how his mother's death had affected him:

> DALE: (pause) (cough), I didn't let it affect me. …, pphhsshh, ... (big intake of breath) So, I … just change me thought process to summat' else. … if it's Mother's Day and things like that, you know, [and the other men are] talking about their mams … I've thought about it after and, 'What a knob head.' You know, it's like, I just didn't want to say to other people, 'Well, me mam's dead.' … Instead of just saying that I just went along with their conversations. … I haven't accepted it yet. ... When I'm on t' wing I think, 'Shit, I need to phone me mam.' And then I remember, she's dead. … It was, like, too much. … That's why I've changed me thought processes. I've done it about eight times since we've been in this room. ... I won't allow myself to grieve for her.

Using an avoidant strategy can contribute significantly to maintaining complicated grief (Boelen and Van den Bout, 2010). *Anxious avoidance* refers to avoidance of confrontation with the reality, implications, and pain of the loss, driven by the fear that this confrontation will be intolerable and unbearable, while *depressive avoidance* refers to the avoidance of potentially pleasurable and meaningful activities (Shear et al, 2011a: 142-143), which will be severely limited or absent during imprisonment.

Mental health

Snacken (2005), commenting on auto-aggressive behaviour, ie attempted suicide and self-harm, stated these behaviours occur when there are few out-of-cell activities, strict regimes, and when individuals are retained in disciplinary units. Snacken gave examples including: lack of contact with families, loss of a partner or family member, and refusal to attend a funeral, as being occasions when such behaviours may be triggered. Self-injurious behaviour may also take place due to guilt which is connected to a death, and a need to punish oneself (Stevenson, 1995). Significantly, Liebling (2007) found that some staff viewed self-harm and suicide attempts as a form of manipulation and attention-seeking rather than an expression of genuine distress and a sign that support

was required. Some men, including Ronnie, Kieran and Mathew, had self-harmed. While Mathew had stopped, he stated that he still developed strong urges to do so:

> I've been self-harming for over seventeen years now. … I've self-harmed *a lot* while I've been in prison.

Lewis' parasuicidal behaviour implies a cry for help to effect some change rather than necessarily wanting to seriously end his life. Fortunately his attempt was unsuccessful:

> … me mam told me to prepare me for me grandad. … Obviously there's a lot of drugs in the prison, yeh? And the first thing I was thinking of was to numb this feeling … I've just promised to me grandad that I would change and be a better person.' … So when I got back on the wing, er, I didn't tell anyone … [A]bout my grandad. I had no television, I had no radio. I had nothing. … I was placed on basic, yeh, and then I started thinking, 'Me grandad's dying in hospital. He might not make it.' All I was thinking, was, 'I need to be somewhere like solitary or somewhere on me own. Where I can grieve properly and where I can get off me medication properly and *not* numb myself, ….' (sounded angry) I put a bag over me head and a rope round me neck, yeh. I tried killing, I tried doing it, … if I hadn't have done that though, all this, I wouldn't have been where I am now. ... I'm paying for the damages and stuff.

Rates of self-harm amongst imprisoned men have doubled in the last six years (Prison Reform Trust, 2016), with self-harm at the highest level ever recorded, resulting in 40,161 self-harm incidents reported in prisons in 2016 (National Audit Office, 2017). Thoughts of seriously ending their own lives at the prison occurred for several men, including Wayne, Mark and Danny:

> DANNY: … I stopped smoking spice when I came here. I'd not touched it for a couple of month and all me emotions started coming back. All of a sudden I got a slip under me door, telling me that I'm due for release in a couple of months. I set fire to me cell and tried to hang meself. I'd had enough. The thought of getting out without me Mum there, I just didn't

want to do it. I was in hospital for two days … I just couldn't see anything. (sounded anxious) I couldn't see getting out past the gate. … I didn't want to go out there.

Mark's father had died the month he had been imprisoned. He had just been transferred, having been in another prison for a month. His failed attempt also assumes a fear for the future, brought on through similar circumstances to Danny:

> … I'm j-just g-g-getting to t' point where (pause) I know that I'm out in about eleven w-w-week. … I just don't want to get back to where obviously I went absolutely *mental* on the D wing. I remember there were a load of SOs there and d-d-do you know, for p-p-people who who come down it was, I just l-l-lost the plot, honestly. I went *mental.* S-s-s-smashed up everything, getting rope [dressing down cord]. … hanging meself and er, s-s-smashing up everything. Threatening everyone if anybody c-come near near near me. … I g-got ev-everything ag-against th-the door. … he went [died] and I just thought, 'Oh, I've had enough!' … it's, (pause) *hard* me b-being in 'ere and everyone's out there and they're gr-grie-griev, do you know, like? I'm g-g-g er (pause). ... I've not really let out any (pause) emotion. … I need to give a good, you know, h-hu c-cry and that. I think, because (pause) I'm s-s-s-scared of going out of pr. … I'm s-s-scared if I r-r-r-reoff-reoffend. I know if something, like, g-gets me (pause) annoyed, I will go pphhuuhh. I'll go absolutely mental out there.

Prisoners may be at disproportionately higher risk of suicide compared to individuals in the normal population (Wright et al, 2006). Hales et al (2015) found significantly higher levels of psychiatric/psychological morbidity, ie anxiety, depression, hopelessness and heightened suicidal ideation among those men who had contact with other young men's fatal or injurious suicide-related behaviour in prison. Furthermore, Hales et al found that stressful life experiences, personality factors, witnessing bullying in prison, and previous own suicide-related behaviour, were factors associated with higher morbidity. Liebling et al (2005) suggest that there have been few systematic attempts to investigate which aspects of the prison experience are the most relevant to

suicides and suicide attempts. Significantly, for Mark and Danny, it was the thought of having to face up to their bereavements upon release, rather than imprisonment, that they could not cope with. Following a close bereavement, it would seem that notification of release may trigger the prisoner into realising whether or not he could imagine facing a future without the loved one, as well as coping with life back in society. Lydia (RC Chaplain) spoke of the link between bereavement and self-harm:

> Sometimes they may self-harm, ... They maybe won't give their grief as a reason, but if you look back in their records you'll maybe see they've had a death in the family and it's their way of coping.

Gavin, Dale, Wayne, Yameen and Fergus spoke about taking anti-depressants:

> WAYNE: (big intake of breath) I've never been depressed but I am on anti-depressants, … not long since this [bereavement]. I've been a couple of months on them. But they're not working. I told t' doctor last week.

In contrast, anti-depressants *were* helping Gavin:

> I've had depression for t' past seven years. My back went. I couldn't walk. … I can tell when I don't take my antidepressants. I can feel my mood dropping. The last four year out there – I've been on t' cocaine … and that were covering me grief of losing me wife [divorce], … I've put three stone on while I've been in here. ... I looked like a smackhead. I've been taking my antidepressants regular so now I know when I don't take 'em – 'cos I wasn't taking 'em out there as much as I am in here – and I know that me depression drops. … I'll cope better. … When I was out there last time, when I was put on this sentence, I didn't think they were working. … 'Cos I was still depressed, I was still doing drugs, drink and all that. … I was trying to cover it all. ... When I've been in here I haven't been taking nowt' and I have been taking antidepressants and I can tell they do work.

In the prison environment it may be considered more beneficial to stabilise prisoners than begin to address bereavement-related stressors if staff are insufficiently competent at providing adequate bereavement support and

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prisoners are reluctant to seek support. Barry, Ronnie and Fergus encountered problems and the unavailability of resources while on the basic level of the IEP scheme (PSI 11/2011) (NOMS, 2011a). This comprises three tiers: basic, standard and enhanced level. The aims of the scheme are for prisoners to earn benefits in exchange for responsible behaviour, encourage engagement with sentence planning and create a more disciplined and safer environment. Prisoners view being placed on basic as a punishment, although its purpose is to provide a disincentive for deliberate failure to engage with the regime. A prisoner is not eligible for access to an in-cell television while on basic level, and must wear prison-issue clothing. Prisoners placed on basic must be reviewed within seven days and notified of steps they need to take to return to the standard level.

> MARION: Did they cut you any slack after your nanan died?

> BARRY: Not really. They kept me on basic still. I got off basic, I think it was t' 19th December, just before Christmas.

> FERGUS: Yeh, I've been on basic but obviously, like (Mental Health worker) said, 'We can't put you in t' mental health gym until you've come off basic.' But I've got a review at t' end of this month. … just to take that mental health gym three times a week, four times, just to … get me stress out.

Fergus explained the response from staff members when he had damaged his cell, as he had done previously (mentioned earlier), following his request to move to a friendlier wing:

> I was explaining meself over to 'em, this and that, and it was like I was invisible! ... So t' only way to get off that wing was just to smash t' window through. … I asked to go down to t' block [Segregation Unit] anyway. … I went through (Mental Health staff member). … I said, 'Can you put me back on t' mental health gym?' She said, 'It's a three-month waiting course, waiting time.' … obviously all this paperwork went missing. (Mental Health staff member) said it had gone missing. … I put another app in … to see (a different Mental Health staff member) and she said,

'You're on basic, so as soon as you come off basic I'll put you another appointment in.' … I was just *stressed out.* Obviously I just needed someone to talk to. Nobody came to see me when t' paperwork went missing.

Howard commented:

(voice changes to a more determined one) ... Whatever they did do was wrong. … I've got another side. … I goes to prison. All the medication, depression tablets, the medication. They just took me off it. … I didn't think that helped. You are struggling then they see your bad behaviour coming out of us, yeh. And I'm thinking, well I'm not surprised. Them tablets were stopping this bad behaviour. … I'm warning, I'm saying, 'Me bad behaviour will come back and there's not a thing I can do about it.' I'm on clonidine and mirtazapine. One for migraines, one for depression. Neither of 'em work. They'd rather give me methadone, clonidine, amitriptyline, and all t' other ones rather than one tablet that *does* work.

Lewis' response was:

… the day I got back [from a visit to his dying grandfather] they brought me down on me diazepam which is the only thing which was holding me together.

MARION: What was the reason for that?

LEWIS: 'Cos he says I'm not clinically prescribed it. I've been on it 19 *years, prescribed off me own GP* and off all t' GPs out there. ... This is a thing that should be changed [Mental Health procedures] because, the thing that hurts the most is it's not about the drugs or anything like that. I'm on diazepam for a reason. … the withdrawals are *horrendous.* They last for six to 12 months. I'll be out in seven weeks. They brought me down, they brought me down though *the day* me grandad passed away. *That's what hurt.* … Obviously I don't know what it was – to make me see clearly as a person inside, you know, the real, the issues, everything that was going on. … 'cos diazepam numbs the body a bit, yeh. So this could be a good thing to change. Because I was already coming off methadone

which already makes your emotions come back ten times as much as anything. To do two at the same time is illegal.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) gave her own perspective:

> … there's just so many mental health problems in the jail. A lot say, 'Oh, they're just using it as an excuse.' Some do, but there are lots of lads that if they'd have had the right care, … they wouldn't have been in the situation that they're in now. … there are so many lads that don't have the support, and have never had that family background that most would just expect that everybody would have. But when you come into a place like this you realise it's the exception rather than the rule. … they've never been shown any affection. So when they're shown any … kind of care, they either find it hard to accept or they don't believe that anybody can care about them. ... We just have to be there to pick up the pieces, as it were, and do our best for them.

The problem of legal and illegal medication/drug use is complex, with no straightforward answers. Opportunities exist to address mental health problems, including addiction, but one of the problems arising is that changing patterns of substance misuse can be difficult to achieve as prisoners are often released before lasting change can be achieved (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2015). Granek suggests that medicating people who are grieving affects their self-understanding and how they make sense of their grieving experience (2016: 118). This may be the rationale for prescription medication being disallowed to some of the interviewees immediately following a bereavement. Some of the men had poor experiences with the Mental Health department as described above, whereas Mark spoke about how helpful particular staff members were:

> (pause) ... I can ex-x-p-press how I am t-t-to her. She's a r-r-eally n-nice, you know, like, a c-c-caring person.

An investigation undertaken by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2016: 38) revealed that while impressive efforts were found to support prisoners with mental health needs who were having difficulty coping in prison, the

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Ombudsman found 'too many examples of poor communication and disjointed care'. When a prisoner is put on the basic level of the IEP scheme, association time, access to gym facilities or the amount that can be spent in the prison shop is affected (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016). Moreover, the Prison Reform Trust (2016) argue that the treatment of people on the basic regime is overly-punitive, including being held in conditions like segregation units, but without the same safeguards. Being bereaved whilst on the basic level of the IEP scheme arguably makes some symptoms of grief more intolerable. In contrast, some men could begin to engage with grief work pro-actively, within their cells.

A fear of discussing death with loved ones

A prisoner's contact with family is restricted and mediated, with visits from family and friends only being allowed by those who have been added to their list of visitors, and incoming calls not routinely permitted (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016). Additionally, phone calls have to be made from phones provided [affording little privacy], and telephone contact may be monitored by the security department (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016). Many of the men developed problems speaking about their losses to significant others. Dale, Wayne, Kieran, Lenny and Shadan struggled particularly, largely for fear of emotions getting the better of them, and in one example, due to a perceived fear of losing their remaining loved ones too:

> MARION: So you said about your family: your brother and two sisters, and your dad. And you stopped speaking to all of them? [following mother's death]

> DALE: … we was a close family and … I thought, if I just cut 'em off now, if owt' bad happens, then I won't. … It's lesser feelings … Does that make sense?

> MARION: You said that you'd started speaking to your dad.

> DALE: Yeh, … I've got a visit on Saturday off me [older] sister. She's bringing t' kids up. … It'll be t' first time I've seen me sister, to be totally honest, since about six months before I came into jail.

Not having seen his four siblings and mother since his brother's funeral in September 2016 (Wayne's father died in 1995), Wayne was reluctant to communicate with his mother at the time of the interview. She had been diagnosed with cancer.

> WAYNE: … I don't speak to me mum. … I do speak to her out there but ... I just don't want to be ringing home. I'm, just to hear me mum's voice … I just break down straight away, 'cos I haven't mourned with 'em, ….

> SHADAN: I haven't let my mum visit me in jail for the last 2 ½ years because I don't want her to visit me. … it's too emotional for me every time I get a visit. I speak to her on the phone every day. And I said, 'It's best to come home and see you in one go'. … my mum's mostly affected by this [bereavement]. When I talk to her on the phone, she just, she's always upset because *her* mum's not there.

Some prisoners who cut off all contact due to the difficulties in managing such relationships are known to engage in 'hard-timing' (Condry, 2012: 75). Barry, Howard, Yameen, Fergus and Mathew all described problems with family members and loved ones, causing general feelings of *abandonment*:

> HOWARD: My friends didn't want to associate with me no more 'cos I was a liability.

> FERGUS: I lost my girlfriend through it, I lost two years of my life, I lost … the *time* with me son. These little things meant quite a lot to me.

Although they wanted family support, many refused family visits as they were deemed too painful for both party. It was not uncommon for parents and siblings particularly to distance themselves from male prisoners due to past strained family relationships, and substance misuse and the pressures this placed on them (Durcan, 2008). Barry, Ronnie, Shadan, Fergus and Lenny all yearned for greater family support:

> LENNY: … my mum. Her head went all messed up as well, like. She's still out of work now. ... She went to her friends in Scotland. I haven't seen her since I've been in [current] jail. I've seen her once in (nearest

local prison). … what I need is to be round my mum, to be fair. That's when it will sink in, really [brother's suicide].

MARION: What about your girlfriend?

LENNY: Yeh. Me and her, we've lost our own daughter … We managed to stay strong and pull through that because we had each other. … I just feel alone in here. There's only you I've spoke to about that, really.

MARION: Do you talk to your girlfriend about it?

LENNY: I try to make conversation about other things.

Thus, valuable social capital in terms of family and friends outside prison is not being utilised, with inability to express emotion and feeling being common factors.

Coping through talking

For those willing to discuss their loss, talking was one effective means of coping. However, the men were always very selective about who they felt comfortable speaking with, and at what level. Lydia (RC Chaplain) explained:

On the wing they'll maybe talk to their mates. … a good officer that they've got a good rapport with, ... Often, Chaplaincy. They'll phone for Chaplaincy and they can come over here or we'll go and see them. Their own family, maybe. You know, if they get a visit. They'll speak with their family and that will maybe help them.

Examples of particularly good sources of support experienced, include:

LES: Chaplaincy here have been absolutely fantastic, absolutely fantastic.

DANNY: … Miss … and Miss … [prison staff] have been brilliant.

Despite encountering many difficulties in attending his mother's funeral, Fred stated:

All the staff have been very good throughout the whole process. Err, got back in here about an hour afterwards. The same officer – she's a wing officer – walked up the wing with me and I said, 'You know, the air smells

so fresh out there. It smells so different in here.' I said, 'Is it me being paranoid?' 'No', she said, 'it does smell different.'

Being able to speak on a level as a human and not as a prisoner were valued. When building relationships with prisoners, useful components include: understanding others' emotions; not allowing the listener's emotions to intervene too powerfully; the demonstration of empathy; getting close and building trust while negotiating and maintaining boundaries (Knight, 2014: 127).

The provision, and acceptance, of peer support

Interestingly, some of the men *provided* formal support through various work roles assigned to them, while others provided informal support. However, because of the strong identity they wished to portray, possessing the humility to *accept* support was too difficult to face up to.

> PETE: … That's what I do Listeners for. … Strange, isn't it? We do this to help other people. I can't cope meself!

Some men found peer support useful. Colin (PO) stated:

> And also the lads do offer support, believe it or not, to each other in a big, big way. … It relieves us a bit, yes. Because in all honesty, if a prisoner's had a bereavement he doesn't want to be talking to staff. He'd rather be speaking to his mate or one of his neighbours about it.

> DARIM (Imam Chaplain): I think what I've been pleasantly surprised about is the friends' network, or should I say, not even 'friends'. Sometimes it's just the *empathy network*, should I call it … these so-called hardened criminals all gather around the [bereaved] person and support them. But … Some guys will just shut down and they won't tell anybody about it. They might tell one or two friends about it, and that's about it.

> WOODY: When me [step-] dad died, … I think it were most of the lads on my wing that were getting me through it. … asking me how I was every two minutes of t' day. … the main lad called (name) and another one called (name). It were them two mainly.

Lenny mentioned he had shared a cell with a friend and in some respects that was helpful for him:

> …, his dad died near enough at the same time, so. (laughs) We both had … each other's shoulder to cry on really.

Lenny continued:

> ... I hadn't cried for a long time and I broke down with a pad mate. … a couple of lads on t'wing, I've spoken to them about it. Because they've had losses theirselves, (sniffs) … it's kind of comforting … to know that other people are going through what I've gone through … but …. You wish you'd found friends to, in a better way …, rather than having to comfort each other over losing someone that's close to you.

The above examples demonstrate how some men have a natural inclination to provide support for others and demonstrate empathy, and when there was two-way trust the men benefited from peer support. However, for some inmates such as Pete (a prison Listener), he could support others, yet he struggled to cope with his own abiding grief.

Formal sources of support as a means of coping

Some prison workers recognised the real possibility of unresolved loss and the importance of therapeutic interventions to ameliorate it:

> EVE (IMB): It can be years before something can trigger it and off it goes. I suspect in here…, people don't understand that in terms of, 'That person died a year ago. Why is he just now starting to feel that?' … I suspect there'll be less understanding of that in prison as outside.

> ROB (DARS): Maybe being in prison, because the other side of it is, 'You've talked to someone.' Then where do you go after that? You go back into your cell with all these raw emotions coming up. And that's not always positive. So, it's about getting the right times. Quite often I will say, 'Look, not that we don't need to work on that, we do. But it's about the right time.' So I will sometimes say, 'Look, make sure that this

[bereavement] does get picked up outside,' where they maybe have a bit more support.

Some men did not want to receive support:

SAM: I didn't want no-one to say nothing to me. I wanted to be left alone. I didn't want people fussing over me and stuff.

Several of the prisoner participants and some staff members were unaware a Bereavement Support volunteer was available half a day a week:

PETE: Well how come it's not on the notice boards anywhere? … There's loads of prisoners want things like that.

DON (CofE Chaplain): Here we have Cruse, but they can't see Cruse just like that. There's a waiting list. … Though it can be (sounds frustrated) frustrating. Cruse come in and they see lads but the frustration is sometimes they just don't turn up. … that's just their lifestyle, you know.

People with an avoidant attachment are less likely to seek help, however those with an anxious attachment are more likely to accept support (Vogel and Wei, 2005).

Adrian (Seg PO) was asked if he knew anything about the Cruse bereavement support:

ADRIAN: ... You'd probably offer it if you knew but a lot of the time you don't figure out what's going on.

Prison staff need to recognise more readily if negative behaviour arises from unresolved loss, and think in a more holistic way about how a prisoner can be more effectively supported. Anne (Cruse Volunteer) spoke about the bereavement support she offered and the fact that staff members frequently told her, "It changes their [bereaved prisoners'] behaviour":

…, just the fact that they can talk about it and share it makes *all* the difference. And I'll go back … and they'll say, 'Oh, I'm all right now. Everything's clearer now.' It's just being able to talk about it, … maybe I'll

put something in a different way, you know, that they hadn't thought of: 'Oh, I never thought of that'.

Conclusion

Several prisoners brought to life through emotion, sight, smell, sound, and felt sensation, a series of traumatic life events which punctuated their earlier years. Some accounts indicated symptoms redolent of PTSD, and this disorder was formally identified in some men, but perhaps had been recognised less well in others. Anxious, avoidant and disorganised, insecure attachments with significant others can be recognised within the accounts. Common, primary defence mechanisms included: avoidance, rumination, suppression, repression and regression. The experiences undoubtedly heightened feelings of vulnerability, stress and anxiety, and concretised maladaptive patterns of coping in anticipation of future losses. Moreover, '*encoded messages*' may have been externalised through violent or other forms of behaviour as an indirect call for help.

Some negative coping behaviours would be familiar to family, friends and the local community, albeit not perhaps automatically recognised as emotion-focused forms of coping in response to unresolved bereavement. Losses were exacerbated by complex psychosocial situations such as earlier, unstable parenting and an inconsistent home environment, alongside an accumulation of later losses following imprisonment. These included loss of: close ties with family members and friends, employment, accommodation, material possessions, mental and physical health. The deaths of grandparents were particularly difficult events for some men as these caregivers had often contributed hugely towards helping raise them, having formed close attachment bonds. Moreover, such a death may have represented the loss of a key attachment figure who previously had provided enduring, and unconditional, love.

Historically, the root problem of grief, other loss and trauma, seems to have often failed to be adequately addressed when it contributed to unlawful behaviour, self-harm and potential harm to others. If several men had not been imprisoned following bereavement, or were not imprisoned when they received

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notification of a death, their belief was they would have been a real danger to the public as a result of inability to suppress their emotions, or to themselves through drug addiction. Withholding the administration of formerly prescribed medication to alleviate mental health conditions immediately following bereavement, by possibly allowing the men to be more in touch with their emotions and feelings, was concerning. This caused considerable anger, confusion and frustration, and needs further investigation. The findings raised important new questions regarding the prior unresolved grief issues of murderers, and how prisoners coped with loss, when they had caused death to another - with or without intent.

Due to the nature of imprisonment the men were stymied in attending to problem-focused tasks because their current circumstances afforded no agency in actively effecting change at home. Instead, they were mainly engaged in emotion-focused coping. When they were unable to deal with problem-focused stressors, anxiety and stress mounted, leading to a need to manage emotions, often through negative behaviour. Rather than engaging in processing the grief in a healthy manner, focus was instead centred upon those emotions arising from the inability to either confront the grief or address secondary stressors arising from the bereavement. One potentially important finding for avoidant copers was the trigger point, when a prisoner received notification of his release several weeks' hence. This forces the prisoner to confront the reality of the death and begin to process how life will be, without the deceased person.

The findings in this chapter support the notion that for many of the men, inflexible coping strategies alongside a range of other factors contributed to causing more complex – as opposed to normal - grief. The men chose various means of hiding their grief, thus contributing to self-disenfranchisement: this term being used to describe self-initiated disenfranchised grief, as contrasted with disenfranchised grief that is initiated by societal disenfranchisement (Kauffman, 2002: 61). The reasoning behind this was as a means of self-protection against the inmate culture and those men with a tendency to bully and intimidate when others' low vulnerability levels could be recognised. In the light of these findings, culture forms the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW PRISON CULTURE AT THE MESO LEVEL AFFECTS A PRISONER'S EMOTIONS

The examination of attitudes to grief in prisons at a meso level is largely absent within the literature. Meso level research explores processes occurring on a community level (Calverley, 2013), and in terms of this study, it was important to examine those sociological processes taking place on the wings and across the site in order to inform what was happening on a psychological level (Rousseau and House, 1994). When family systems and similar support networks determine the social meaning of what has been lost following a bereavement (Machin, 2014), such investigation is pertinent. Exploration involved learning more about the immediate social network to ascertain its structure, various interactions and levels of support. This necessarily intersects with how grief is experienced through emotion at a micro level - on a one-to-one basis or intrapersonally. By examining culture at a meso level, this has illuminated how prisoners' grief can lack progression. It also demonstrates the limited range of possibilities for adjustment on both intra- and interpersonal levels.

As identified in the previous chapter, coping with emotion formed a large part of the prisoner participants' grief experience, which became enforced upon them as a result of incarceration. The first section explores how they negotiated the embedded inmate culture. The course this took was more often determined by time since the death and length of sentence than the effects of grief. Thus, a key finding was that the association between inmate culture and the display of emotion by bereaved prisoners could be explained in temporal terms, with a prisoner's grief quickly becoming disenfranchised or self-disenfranchised. The second section of the chapter looks more deeply at emotion which is directly influenced by the inherent bereavement-related stressors occurring, set against the culture. The most profound reactions, having particular salience in this setting, included: protracted numbness, tears, frustration, anger, and guilt; with

frustration recognised as an unusually strong emotion compared to societal grievers.

Prison culture and the inmate code

Prison culture has been widely documented, with arguably the most well-known text being Gresham Sykes' (1958) classic study exploring the psychological and organisational dynamics of prison life. Sykes identified five deprivations. These were: loss of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security. Despite the prison experience being sensitive to the immediacy of both macro- and micro-politics (Crewe, 2007), much of Sykes' text remains relevant within contemporary penology, according to the prisoner participants' accounts. The area in which there has been some change, however, is in terms of heterosexual relationships, with an influx of female prison officers and other female workers (education, healthcare, probation, etc) populating the previously all-male domain.

The inmate code - a cultural mechanism for alleviating the pains of imprisonment - comprises: 'Don't interfere with other inmates' interests', or 'never rat [grass] on a con'; 'don't lose your head … play it cool'; 'don't exploit inmates'; 'be tough, be a man'; and, 'don't be a sucker' (don't ever side with or show respect for officers and representatives) (Sykes, 1958; Sykes and Messinger, 1960). Notably, the last tenet suggests that a prisoner should not trust staff. Sykes recognised the code was an 'ideal' to be adhered to. In reality he found that prisoners did not always show allegiance to it. Interestingly, the essence of all five tenets came through to some degree in the prisoner participants' accounts as still having substance, with the exception of, 'don't exploit or steal from other prisoners,' which failed to be acknowledged once a prisoner's grief had become disenfranchised and some men could become a soft target due to vulnerability.

Michael (Governor grade), opens the topic up, defending the decision-making process of the regime while acknowledging the inherent difficulties of the power imbalance between staff members and the prisoners:

… we have a culture here that is extremely supportive of prisoners and we do pull all the stops out wherever possible to ensure that prisoners get … the support that they need when such issues as bereavement come our way.

MARION: What do you think are the most notable difficulties for you when you're trying to work with grieving inmates in terms of your decision-making?

MICHAEL (Governor grade): We have a catch-22 situation … in the community, for example, you could go to family members …, use the phones, ... Prisoners … have the phone calls, they have the interactions. … visits at short notice. … it's … the frustrations that come with that restriction. … prisoners wanting to move away and distance themselves from it [the bereavement], but if you put it on its hat there, … prisoners *want* to be out there when grief does come their way. Loss of liberty is stopping them from doing that. So the natural instinct for some of them is to start challenging that organisation … the behaviour that they are displaying is because of the frustrations that they feel, … we want order and control, but at the same time we have to appreciate the reasons why those individuals are doing it. And if we do have to go down the autocratic route where we have to place them on report and they go through the adjudications process, I would expect that any adjudicating governor would take those things into mitigation when he has to subsequently come with an award, should the guilty finding present itself. ... we have to strike a balance between security and compassion.

Michael begins to identify some of the frustrations bereaved prisoners face, which are directly related to loss of liberty. While on one level the bereaved prisoner may be identified as a *powerless victim*, on another he has some *limited* agency in how he manages his symptoms of grief, eg obtaining drugs through the sub-rosa economy. This message of the culture working on two levels is also to be found within Sykes' text.

Rob (DARS) explains how he works with men who use drugs and alcohol to cope:

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MARION: … a lot of the men I've spoken to try and manage it themselves and they think they're dealing with it.

ROB: Mmm, but they're not really. They're *existing* but they're not *dealing with it*.

MARION: ... So how can that culture change?

ROB: It's really difficult and I don't think it will change until there's a lot more support available. … you can say to them, '… you need to do some work on grief or bereavement issues,' …. And it's like, 'Well, where is this going to come from?' There isn't the support in prisons.

Currently, the depth and length of support is inadequate, with the men often being encouraged to address their grief following release. When discussing support for the prisoners, many staff members' accounts indicated signposting, usually to Chaplaincy. Signposting may be regarded as a helpful strategy, or a convenient means of *passing the buck*. The chaplains *were* able to provide pastoral, practical and spiritual support, and bereavement counselling to restricted numbers through the third sector, ie Cruse Bereavement Care. However, due to insufficient time and chaplains' other pressing duties, and site-wide lack of awareness of more formalised bereavement support through Cruse, longer-term support could not be sustained for many men. Furthermore, there is currently nothing in place to provide joined-up, impactful provision through the prison gate.

Some men felt they were undeserving of support, based upon high levels of guilt, resulting in self-disenfranchisement. Secondly, a substantial number could be described as *avoidant copers*; unable to trust anyone sufficiently to provide support and relying instead on self-support. Thirdly, refusal to seek help may be based upon meso cultural pressures. Rob (DARS) believed:

Everyone needs support, people see it as a sign of weakness.

Nadia (Psychologist) suggested:

That's what they feel they have to show, that: 'I'm not someone that's going to ask for help.'

Inmates, Danny and Woody concurred:

> DANNY: And it makes you vulnerable. … you think, 'Oh, if I ask for help the lads are going to hear it. …, unfortunately it counts for a lot. ... with a lot of them on the wings. … it's not seen as a manly thing to do, to ask for help.

> MARION: … How could it change?

> DANNY: (pause) Us, us, the prisoners have to make it happen. And you have to want it to. … We don't need more lads taking their own lives through, you know, not being able to ask and talk to officers, or to staff, … a lot of lads, they don't know how to talk. … (exhales breath). If you've never really been one asking for help.

> MARION: What about … Listeners?

> DANNY: I've never used one. ... too many people won't use 'em just because they're not sure about the confidentiality of things. … A 23 year-old lad, you wouldn't really want to offload … onto him [as a 34 year-old], .… I do think they're a good thing, though.

On a macro level prisoners are impotent to the enormity of the inmate culture by themselves. However, as Chapter Seven reveals, some prisoners did develop strategies for coping on a micro and meso level, which became mechanisms for building their own sense of agency.

Woody described the costs and benefits of offering informal bereavement support to a peer. Importing earlier masculine strategies, he stated:

> Before I come here I wouldn't have wanted help off anyone (pause) …. Look, pretend you're a man. (We both laugh.) (Looks into my face and becomes empathic and sure-footed in what he says as he imagines facing a fellow inmate who has been bereaved.) 'Right, I know what you're going through. … Now, I'm *here* if you want to speak to me. If you just want me to go away, just say and I'll leave you be. … No matter what, I'm here for you'. … If they don't want the help, they've got to say, 'Go away.' Some

people will be consistent in saying, 'Look, (speaks extremely slowly) *I don't want your help, I don't want your help.'*

MARION: … Something's got to happen to them in order for them to say, 'Right, the time has come for me now to accept help'?

WOODY: Yes. Summat's got to happen, … You can't force somebody to do it. … You can only offer the help.

Vaswani (2014) reported that Young Offenders *were* able to provide informal peer support and genuine empathy to one another following a close death, with the ability to reach out for support being dependent on the trustworthiness of the young man offering the support. While some men appreciated offers of help from peers, several accounts implied that the men did not necessarily appreciate being *pestered* by other prisoners. Prisoners separate acquaintances (whose relationships are frequently based on self-interest, and at risk of exploitation as distinct from affection and admiration) from a very small number of trusted friends, often known prior to imprisonment (Crewe, 2016: 87). How and who the support could be accepted from depended very much upon trustworthiness, timing, and readiness to engage. Due to a prisoner's home locale and the likelihood of recidivism, Luke (Custodial Manager) stated,

A lot of them know each other.

Additionally, Heidi (Mental Health) confirmed that because,

… some of them live in violent communities and have gang affiliations, they're going to be losing quite a few people on a regular basis.

These accounts accord with Vaswani's (2014) findings. She found that many of the young men imported stoicism, learned from the immediate family, and particularly used cues learnt from their fathers. Danny described his previous strategy:

I was at home fighting with me Dad. I was at school fighting with bullies. ... I'd be the one standing at the end, … that's how I grew up.

Danny continued:

… [I] didn't want to discuss it [the death of his mother] with anyone.

Similarly, Vaswani (2014) found that the Young Offenders did not openly express emotion. Gavin, aged 45, who used avoidance and distraction techniques, stated:

I'm not really the talkative type.

Mitch reinforced Gavin's and Danny's messages of stoicism, comparing how *he* believed he should respond, with how *others* may cope:

Nobody else can do it apart from myself, … I like to think of myself as quite strong-willed. So, I wouldn't seek out support anyway if it were offered to me. … I could see how support would have been there for somebody else. … I were never offered counselling and stuff. It's not for me.

Connell (1995) put forward the idea of multiple masculinities, with the social construction of hegemonic masculinity being commonly established when there is some correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power, with this historically being a mobile relation. Multiple masculinities can be found with [male] staff on the one hand and prisoners on the other; masculinity being further demarcated by dominance and subordination within the male prisoner population. Archer (2010) suggests there is an association between hypermasculine values and marginal groups in modern Western societies. All three of the prisoners' accounts imply that identity plays a substantial role in choice of coping strategy, and to be accepted as a *hard-core* prisoner, identity *has* to conform to cultural expectations. Parallel with this is the need to engage in Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analysis, ie impression management, by putting on a temporary *performance* in the *front region*, in the company of those from whom one's true character has to be carefully hidden.

Conforming to a masculine identity - "underneath it they're just crying out for somebody to listen …"

The inmate culture has implicit rules on how other prisoners should react following a bereavement:

> FRED: 'I'm sorry to hear about your mother,' … they go off, laughing and talking to other people. … 'Thank you for your sympathy, but it's only lasted a couple of minutes, if that.'

Although platitudes abounded, their perceived insincerity could be damaging. Mitch came across as a prisoner the other men may identify as being a *real man* (Sykes, 1958) generating admiration from peers because he, 'personified its collective ideals' (Crewe, 2007: 126). He commented:

> (yawns) Everyone's always said their condolences and been very respectful about the matter, and give you your distance or ask, say, 'Have you got enough tobacco?' or 'Have you got enough coffee?' They do try to make it as comfortable as possible for you. Even more so, your friends do.

Sam reflected:

> MARION: So what would work for you?
>
> SAM: … 'Stay away from me.'
>
> MARION: Would you talk to other men about your bereavements?
>
> SAM: Maybe my friends, my good friends but no, you don't come to prison to make friends, do you? But ma friends from the outside, I would talk to them about stuff but I don't talk about all my feelings …. I talk to people like (female RC chaplain) easier about things like that.

Sam and Mitch provide glimpses of hegemonic masculinity (Connell et al, 1982), positioning themselves above their peers. Sam reveals he can only discuss highly personal issues, if at all, with a mature, trustworthy female – in confidence. Additionally, inmates often develop social clusters based on their home locale (Crewe, 2016), therefore, hegemonic patterns will invariably transfer across the two cultural milieu.

Rob (DARS) was asked what the most notable difficulties were when working with bereaved prisoners:

Just them not wanting to, saying, 'I'm not ready to deal with it.' Saying, 'I've always coped with things on my own,' even though they're not really coping.

MARION: How do you get round that one?

ROB: I just sort of say, 'Look, you know,' this is just me personally, but I say, 'everybody needs help along the way in life, whether it's because of bereavement or support to try and help get a job ....' People see it as a sign of weakness [asking for support].

Within the tense environment, prison institutions are identified by their levels of mistrust, fear, victimisation, 'physical and emotional deprivations, boredom, overcrowding and an intense lack of privacy' (Phillips, 2007: 81). Therefore, the bereaved individual must seriously consider his masculine identity set against this meagre existence before considering reaching out or accepting support. Some participants had an internal struggle between doing what some staff and other prisoners thought they *needed*, while *conforming* to the hyper-masculine culture. Heidi (Mental Health) thought,

Young men have a harder time than young women.

Also comparing gender, Sheena's (Probation) experience was that,

… in general men don't feel as comfortable talking about their emotions.

Madalene (Psychologist), concurred:

So, with a group of women, you try to, kind of, erm, sometimes try and shut the conversation down. Whereas with men it's more about trying to open the conversation up, with those difficult topics.

Western cultures share the stereotypical belief that women are more emotional than men (Fischer and Manstead, 2000). Kruttschnitt (2005) found that women also have an inherent distrust of other female prisoners. Women prisoners' emotional resources are culturally grounded: being simultaneously provocative and constrained (Greer, 2002), thus providing a similar experience to their counterparts. Greer (2002) found that intrapersonal techniques such as diversionary tactics, spiritual pursuits and blocking exercises, together with

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humour, were also used to manage their emotions, which they preferred to do rather than share feelings with others. Typical gender stereotypes assume that femininity is associated with the ability to experience, express, and communicate emotions effectively, and provide empathy to others, while masculinity is defined as having the ability to, 'suppress and control' one's emotions (Fischer and Manstead, 2000: 71). In this regard Brody (1997) asserts that emotional stereotyping is imprecise when measured by gender in a cultural context – such as the prison setting - within which emotional expression occurs. The total institution of the prison (Goffman, 1961) severely limits all prisoners, whatever their gender; leaving such individuals with, 'little else to use in their efforts to assert an identity than the emotions they feel, control, and display' (Greer, 2002: 118). Accordingly, the need to suppress emotion becomes a crucial factor in cultural terms while concurrently severely impeding the grieving process.

For first-time prisoners, Don (CofE Chaplain) considered,

> … it's possibly the first experience of death, because of the age. So in a sense they don't know how to react, really. … inside they've seen lads cut themselves, … so much is learnt.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) also explained:

> They might be *'Jack the lad'* but underneath it they're just crying out for somebody to listen to them. … I think a lot of lads get stuck in their grief.

Kirsty's (FLO/SO) experience corresponded:

> …I might get a lad, he'll be a *bugger*. He'll cause arguments on t' wing and stuff and I'll go and see him. But then in a room he'll break down crying to me, saying, 'It's because ma Mum died and I haven't told anybody. Why should I tell anybody?'

Some of the men were in touch with their *inner child* (Bradshaw, 1990)*,* despite maintaining an outward masculine identity. Yameen remonstrated at his eldest sister's lack of concern or empathy for him as the youngest *adult* child, when he

found their father dead, but having uttered this he immediately remembered his adult macho identity, slipping back into the mindset of a mature prisoner:

> All right, you're not a '*baby'* at 40, or whatever.

Yameen's mother died when he was five years old. Not only does prison have an 'infantilizing effect upon prisoners' (Crewe, 2006: 403), but the bereaved often need to revisit earlier bereavements at different life stages, particularly if they occurred during childhood, to make better sense of death. Furthermore, confusion and ignorance about death are additional forms of hurting (Marshall and Davies, 2011).

Cultural expectations strongly concur with Vaswani's findings (2014) in that the young men in her study adopted two strategies: remembering (non-avoidant) or forgetting (avoidant), with the vast majority self-medicating to avoid thinking about their loss. Furthermore, she found that avoidant strategies often gave way to the young men acting out their frustrations. Despite Yameen's inner cravings for his sister to recognise and respond to his feelings of vulnerability, his normal stance was:

> You shut yourself down emotionally because there is no grieving process in prison. (voice sounds more assertive) I can't show weakness in prison.

Some men imported macho roles, implying males were the stronger sex:

> WOODY: (sounds perturbed) I didn't want any help off my sister. *I* wanted to help *her.* I'm the man, she's the woman.

Macho culture expects adornment of a mask to conceal reality following bereavement:

> MATHEW: You put a brave face on: 'Yes, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm great.' Inside you're absolutely heartbroken. You feel like you just want to hurt yourself or hurt somebody else or do something to get away from it all.

Phillips (2007: 84) asserts that displays of power within the prison are inherently shaped by identity practices, which are themselves culturally and socio-economically constructed. Notwithstanding the need to display power over one's own insecurities and vulnerabilities through bravado, bereaved prisoners

are multiply disadvantaged due to compliance to the culture, environment and regime. Having to struggle on a daily basis with symptoms of grief makes their *punishment*, ie loss of liberty, all the more debilitating.

Tensions between the prison and staff cultures

Not only does the bereaved prisoner have to be cognisant of, and adhere to, the inmate culture, but the staff culture also has to be navigated. A central assumption of the inmate code is that a prisoner should not 'grass' another up to a staff member (Clemmer, 1940/1958). Crewe (2005) suggests that the situation is not always so clear cut, but Pete provided an example of when he believed there was no perceived leeway in this decision-making process:

> PETE: A lad got bullied on our wing. ... Nice gentleman. Same age as me, ... He didn't tell the officers who it was because you're not supposed to. You get accused of all sorts. … the next day the officers bugged him for one hour, at dinner time: 'Tell us who it is. What's happening? ... By which time, he was stressed out. Then he started to smash his cell up … Because they kept pestering him. Because if he doesn't give a name then nothing will be done to the person. Even though everyone on the whole wing knows about it. … And now he's gone from Segregation to … a VP wing – for vulnerable people. So he's now got depressed as well, ... the person who bullied him got away with everything. … So if I told someone about me mam [dying] … if it got to the wrong person they might say, 'Okay, we'll tackle him.' … I want to get out of prison, … to be with my wife and family. If … someone … saw it as a sign of weakness, I'd have to beat the crap out of him. … Which means I don't get home to see me wife and bairns. … But if it's happened there, straightaway [recent bereavement], the other prisoners would … try to help you a little bit. … But because mine happened that long ago, it's a different scenario. … some of them [prison staff] are power crazy. They wait for 'code blues'. ...

> MARION: Code blues?

> PETE: It's either fighting or people taking drugs. And some of them race to get there so they can hit them … and kick them. … I've heard officers

actually shout, 'Damn, I'm too late.' … They're supposed to be here for protection, … But it happens.

Les's mother had died and an ACCT document had been opened for him while he was residing in another prison. He was being routinely checked through the night.

> I wasn't in a great place because I ended opening my leg up. There was a couple of sadistic staff … every half an hour with a torch, they were making sure they were waking you up, .… I was saying, 'Listen, I need me sleep …', 'cos I'd just lost me mum … if I give my word, … I'd rather lose my life than my word, yeh? That's extremely rare in prison now. … 'If that woman wakes me up with that torch again I *will* open myself right up'. And I says, 'After that, *I will* cut my own throat. …' She wanted to put me to the test. It blew up in her face. … And when I went like that with t' razor, in front of her, and it were spurting and what have you, I just put me hand on it, together. 'I gave you my word. I don't go against it!' And t' PO, I could hear him screaming at her. … Anyway, this bullying started … I'd rather have a bullet in me head than let someone bully me. … I've come here, me head was shot still when I come here. ... Most of the lads were sound with me. But there was a lot of that, still, err, people coming asking for stuff because once they see that people are on their feet, in any prison, everywhere, right, you get ponces coming asking for things, yeh, but they're all offering spice for a roll-up … '… I don't take drugs mate, I've done all that.' They're not bothered about if you're grieving or whatever, the lads. The mentality in prison nowadays – that's got to be half the reason, which is quite massive, is the other half of the reason why I'm never coming back. … I'm finished with this. … sometimes I feel … like (pause) I've been moved to a country where I don't speak the language, and they don't speak my language.

Difficulty in accepting his mother's death and not attending the funeral resulted in Les, self-identifying as one of the *old school*, self-harming when directly faced with an abuse of authority. Such a detached state often gives way to a feeling of numbness: 'that you know you're not really connected to reality'

(Vaswani, 2014: 348). In this sense, a further aspect of the prisoner's life becomes suspended within the environment, discretely separated from societal and familial reality. The injustice of death and an absence of agency left Les feeling totally isolated. Forced to confront this situation, Les eventually began to recognise growing ontological differences between his former self and current self. In addition to self-harm, a range of maladaptive strategies are employed due to a limited sense of agency and a *felt* need to cope largely alone.

Alternative maladaptive coping strategies

More serious maladaptive strategies than smoking, alcohol and established drugs are becoming prevalent. These have been employed particularly by the younger generation, who have found their own way of coping through the use of new psychoactive drugs (NPS). In a bid to conceal emotion Heidi (Mental Health) explained,

> … they might mask it with drugs or hooch. … I would say the main thing about the culture in prison that has changed is drugs, and NPS - spice.

The presence of spice causes, "unpredictability" (Nadia, Psychologist), and the prison becomes "more dangerous" (Rob, DARS), affecting staff safety and leaving the prison less stable. Spice is readily available, making it a "drug of choice" (Rob, DARS). Having acquired drug-taking habits in prison (if they were not already addicts), Rob (DARS) stated that due to lack of time it became,

> difficult to find any time to rehabilitate them, etc, so they don't get rehabilitated, really. … It's *highly* addictive, and their behaviour, we get a lot of self-harm, under the influence of these drugs.

Kirsty (FLO/SO) confirmed that spice has:

> … turned it [prison culture] *absolutely* on its head … for self-harm, for near-misses. It's higher than ever. And the majority is debt to spice. Or addiction to spice. … we've had quite a few lads that are psychotic

> through taking spice. … We do have 'em come back [recover] in a (speaks tentatively) *different way* than what they were.

The drug economy has had an effect on social status and stigma (Crewe, 2016: 90). Not only was the culture altering due to NPS, but at the time of the study a ban on smoking was being introduced. Rob (DARS) stated that:

> the majority of prisoners do smoke. … as a release for stress.

Whilst a full support package including vaporised cigarettes and nicotine replacement therapy was being introduced, it is uncertain how this regime change would affect grief-related stress levels.

Prison culture as a shifting phenomenon?

Culture can be regarded as transient and fluid at the meso level, according to the make-up of the local prison population and staff members at a set point in time. Simultaneously, it maintains a heavy, enduring and viscous quality, which will not readily submit to a paradigm shift. The indigenous inmate culture alters in a nuanced way according to age, ethnicity, religion, cause of crime, levels of mental and physical health, educational ability etc. Time and generational difference also impacts on shifting coping patterns. Mathew, aged 49, stated:

> Years ago, … I wasn't really telling people how I was feeling.

Despite a shift in Mathew's attitude towards help-seeking and opening up to others, on another level the younger prisoners were *still* abiding by the culturally established lores. While complying with the prison's norms during grieving, implicit messages needed to be self-assessed concerning the expression of *feminised* emotion, which may *identify* a prisoner as being "weak" (Mathew), or "vulnerable" (Shadan). A prisoner was expected to display "bravado and humour" (Bridget – IT tutor), "tough it out" (Heidi, Mental Health), and "not look[ing] like you've got issues," because, "people get taken advantage of" (Shadan). If emotion did erupt this would cause "a bigger problem" (Shadan) amongst peers. Thus, suppressing emotion became an act of self-protection.

Heidi (Mental Health) saw prison and societal culture as interrelated:

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I think society has to accept that men can talk about their emotions before they will in the Prison Service. … men – and particularly young men – are almost emasculated in society. So I don't think the prison community, concentrated though it is, is any different from the outside community.

Mike (Probation) *could* see the culture changing at some point in the future:

… there's been a big shift in better awareness for mental health issues in general - massive in the last ten years, I think - and it's still moving in the right direction. You could class bereavement possibly under that umbrella because it's depression, it's anxiety, that initial period after the death.

Les reflected on his perception of the changing prison culture:

It's absolutely zero morals now. … people had …, some level of integrity and now there isn't any. None. And it's embarrassing.

Having conformed to the culture himself, Jason, "remanded to t' Local Authorities" when he was 11, and having been locked up, "twenty out of t' last 21 years" explained the identity he had created for himself:

I kind of like, over the years, have seen meself as a bit of a saviour. I'm here to look after t' boys, me. If I'm not here looking after 'em, who's looking after 'em? … They say 'You don't know no better.' *I don't know no better!* This is *all I know.* I've never been taught anything else.

As indicated in Chapter Five, Jason's identity had been largely shaped from being institutionalised. His *need* to rescue his peers was present from early childhood, upon finding his baby sister dead, and wanting to protect his mother when the Police became involved. He was also unable to rescue himself as a result of childhood sexual abuse and other negative life events. Jason's account implies that if his identifying strengths could be positively redirected rather than being identified by himself and others as a *loser,* he may be able to see a changed future. Theresa (Probation) provided a perspective based on men who had recently been bereaved:

Most of my experience of people who have lost people, and especially when people have died in prison, the guys are just *unbelievably*

supportive. They really, really are. *But* there are some people in here who wouldn't necessarily take that view or for whatever reason take the *mick.*

Even if peer support is offered, the extent to which it is accepted may depend upon how much a prisoner values his social identity. Moreover, the nurturing aspect of masculinity may be interpreted as a way of exerting power over the recipient by making him or her beholden to the provider (Archer, 2010).

ACCT Reviews – "a little different universe …"

When stress levels become unbearable and a prisoner himself, another inmate or staff members believe a prisoner to be vulnerable, an ACCT document can be opened for him. Will (Probation) explained his perspective on ACCT reviews, in which three or four staff members representing different departments may be present, alongside the prisoner:

> … it's like a little different universe, just for an hour or half an hour. For men to be able to just get loads off their chest.

Theresa (Probation) believed prisoners *would* "talk in the ACCT [reviews]." When Kirsty (FLO/SO) was asked what she found most difficult about her job role, she described the ACCT process as being very challenging and demanding:

> Erm, (exhalation of breath), at the minute I would say working with ACCT documents [is the most difficult aspect] because that's all we're doing, *all t' time.*

It must be highlighted that this reactive stance is taken when prisoners are in an acute state and at risk of danger to themselves or others. Kirsty's comment is of considerable importance in this regard, suggesting that the ACCT process has become too commonplace, with insufficient pro-active work being undertaken to address the root causes of problems. It also implies some staff members are consistently undertaking *'crisis management'* work; thereby affecting their own capacity to work continually at optimum levels.

The above accounts describe the intersection between living in a macho dominated environment where, arguably, certain *mores* (moral and ethical behaviours) are ascribed to by the majority, with a range of heightened emotions being produced as a direct consequence of the immediate culture and regime. For the grieving prisoner, the management of emotion is a major consideration in terms of identity and security. The second half of the chapter examines the main emotions and how they are (mis)managed.

Emotions following bereavement

The environment can have profound emotional effects (Strongman, 2003). Lazarus (1999: 61-67) contends that four substantive environmental variables influence emotion and stress: demands (implicit or explicit pressures to abide by socially correct attitudes); constraints (leading to punishment if violated); opportunity (which could arise from possessing the wisdom to recognise it); and, culture. Arguably, demands and constraints already implicitly reflect culture. Vaswani (2014) found that sadness was the predominant response to loss through bereavement for the young men in her study; becoming an enduring emotion, regardless of the length of time that had lapsed since the death. Naturally, a wide range of other emotions are felt, and many have been alluded to from the accounts in the previous findings chapters. The following emotions were most readily discussed.

Numbness

Many men experienced numbness and feelings of detachment. When a bereavement was experienced by the Young Offenders Vaswani spoke with, they talked of being in shock and described the unfolding situation as 'an unreal experience' (2014: 348). This state became protracted for many of the men, as the following accounts describe:

> MARION: When you were in prison between June and October [between notification of a death and release], … how did you cope … from day to day?

> SAM: Yes. [mid] June 2015. I felt numb until I got out. … And when I got out there, it were hard. It was the hardest thing I've ever done.

A similar question was posed to Dale, Wayne, Kieran and Barry:

> MARION: Did you feel numb when your mum died [September 2015]?

> DALE: (pause) Yeh. (pause) I still do now.

> MARION: Did you feel numb when he [brother] died [September 2016]?

> WAYNE: ... I'm still feeling numb now.

> MARION: A lot of people, when they get told the news, feel numb.

> KIERAN: It's not numbness is it? … I don't know how I feel now. …
> There's not a feeling there.

Barry described one reason for numbness lingering:

> … it hasn't sunk in. ... It won't hit me 'til I get out and I actually see that
> she's not there.

Denial, commonly occurring following notification of a death, is characterised by
a *psychic numbing* (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Although it can be beneficial
at times, it can lead to pathology if it impedes the grieving process (Lazarus,
1999). While numbness was an invisible feeling, tearfulness, although not
widely regarded as being synonymous with machismo, was nevertheless
openly displayed at specific times. The need to display tears was validated,
under particular circumstances.

Emotional tears

Wayne, Lewis, Pete, Lenny and Mathew were all tearful at times during their
interviews. Danny stated the interview was the first time he had *not* cried when
speaking about his deceased mother. Staff responded to tears in different
ways:

> BRIDGET (Education): It's very difficult to deal with a grown man in floods
> of tears.

> CHARLIE (FC Chaplain): Some guys want to be big and, 'I'm a big guy,
> men don't cry.' Some lads just literally collapse on the floor and when we
> tell 'em they just sob their heart out. … One of the things I often say to

'em is, 'Look, it takes a man to cry. Just let it go.' Because that's nature's way of dealing with things. … I don't mind, as a chaplain having a cry with 'em. … The real big, powerfully built blokes, you break the news to them and they're the ones that just crumble. And they let it out.

Sam, Mitch, Howard, Lenny and Mathew all reported crying when they received bad news concerning the death of a loved one. Tears are a double-edged sword, with the expression and suppression of tears featuring regularly in the men's accounts; relating to both interpersonal and intrapersonal emotion regulation. Crying was activated according to time, location and who was - or was not - present. Mitch stated:

… if I felt myself getting upset on the landing, … I just took myself to my cell, chucked myself behind my door and cry it out. … So you're not doing it in front of people on the wing ….

Crying seemed to subside after the first few days, but various triggers evoked future bouts of tearfulness over the months and years. Mathew revealed,

The emotion's there and it's raw. … You think you've dealt with it and it's still there!

Pete had great difficulty in suppressing his tears and this had remained an ongoing problem for him since the death of his mother in 2003:

Right, what's bugging me is that I keep breaking down … and I shouldn't be doing this. … I suppose because I didn't say goodbye to her. That might have made it a bit easier. But it, (pause) pphhoohh. (pause) (eyes fill up again).

Gavin, Dale and Sam actively avoided thinking about their deceased loved ones so they would not become upset.

GAVIN: I'm not really thinking about it.

Mark, Sam and Kieran were unable to cry:

MARK: I need to give a good, you know h-hu c-cry and that.

MARION: So can you cry normally?

MARK: No.

SAM: I find it hard to cry.

KIERAN: I don't know how to [cry]. That's the thing. … I don't understand why.

For those able to cry, this form of release could be beneficial:

HOWARD: … I quite like crying, yeh. It's supposed to be good for you, innit?

JASON: … When I had that cry the other week, last week, it made me feel a little bit better.

Jason had not been able to cry since childhood:

I must have been 11 or 12 when I got beat up by these guys. … I'm at the funeral, I think, 'Why can't I cry? It doesn't make sense.' So then they were falling out [tears]. … I was thinking, I need to see Mental Health me, 'cos I've not been crying. I was thinking summat' mustn't be right, 'cos somebody called me heartless and said, 'You're, you're ruthless, you, mate.'

Jason surmised several traumatic childhood events had been blocked from his mind, causing his inability to cry. Amnesia can manifest as a trauma reaction following a significant event (Horowitz, 1986). Jason continued:

When I'm sat with my girl friend and she's crying, and says, 'I don't understand why you don't cry.' I say, 'Please believe me, inside I'm crying, but I just don't cry.'

Jason's situation regarding his ability to be tearful had recently altered:

… a month ago, [it was] me [deceased] Grandma's birthday, … I'm sat in my cell, gets up, puts Jeremy Kyle on. Starts crying. ... I phone my sister and that. She's, 'What's up?' I said, 'I don't know. I've been crying today and I've not got a clue why.' She went, 'It's my Grandma's birthday,' … I put t' phone down, went back to me pad and thought, 'Wow!' (claps hands together) How did I not remember? … I'm kind of like, 'Is this the way I've

grieved? It's just taken me a few years to have a little cry for your [my] Nana?' … when I was younger I used to think crying was for girls and wimps, … [it's] 'Long Lost Families' [television programme] and stuff like that what gets me. … At t' same time I've sat and watched Jeremy Kyle and t' kids next to me have sat and cried in jail. 'Look at you, 20 stone, black, look at fucking size of you!' … (laughs) 'Make sure nobody else is looking!' Two of t' biggest lads in t' jail, both (makes a blubbering sound).

Similarly, Danny did not previously cry, however, his behaviour had changed:

DANNY: I've cried more on this sentence than I have done in the last ten years. … I'm just more at ease with my emotions.

MARION: So you're saying that previously it wasn't okay to cry but now you realise it is okay to cry?

DANNY: (sounds upbeat) Yeh. 'Course it is. … (sounds passionate) Yeh, it's not good bottling your emotions up. They come out in the wrong kind of way. And it affects people all around you. I live on a wing with 49 other lads and there's a lot of emotions in all them lads. If I come out and I'm having a bad day and I put it on to the wing, then, … it can cause arguments and fights. People need to be a bit more open with each other. … I've set an example, me ….

Danny's parting words were:

DANNY: … thank you. It's been good to talk.

The empathy provided from other inmates when someone becomes upset may be carried out publicly as a display of defiance against prisoner norms (ie bereavement being one event when it *is* permissible to display temporary vulnerability), and to remind other inmates of the limits of tolerance levels, with a need to show respect and compassion following a close bereavement. Some men were crying in front of *selected* others and at different times they were shedding tears in the privacy of their cells. Gračcanin et al (2014) found evidence to suggest that criers were most likely to report mood improvement if they received comfort from others, ie inter-personal support in the form of

social-soothing. However, they found converging evidence in terms of whether crying in isolation as a means of self-soothing returned mood to baseline levels.

Bylsma et al (2008) assert that when individuals observe others crying this can negatively relate to mood improvement. Thus, some prisoners already coping with the pains of imprisonment may find watching someone else being upset lowers their mood, hence the need to diminish signs of low mood and crying in others, and use humour and other coping strategies to lift general mood levels, particularly on the wings. At times suppression was exerted, but when a trigger touched their *inner being* it was difficult to refrain. The accounts demonstrate that shedding tears openly in front of a number of mistrusted prisoners perhaps induces more embarrassment and fear of future repercussions than instilling a sense of relief.

Frustration

A notable finding in terms of emotion was the *level* of frustration experienced by all of the men. Response indicators of frustration include behaviours such as aggression, enhanced goal striving, fixation and regression (Weiner, 1992: 93). Vaswani (2014) found that when bereaved young offenders used avoidant coping strategies, in the longer term they proved problematic, leading them to often act out their frustrations. Two inmates and some staff members provide accounts of prisoners' frustrations levels:

> MATHEW: I think a lot of people say their primary emotion is anger. It's not. The primary emotion is frustration. … Because they can't deal with that thing in prison. Because it's seen as weak. (claps hands) They've got to put on a false front (claps hands again). It's that thing they've got to live by in prison.

> MITCH: The biggest part of going through grief in jail, I would say, is frustration. … Because you're unable to be there for your family, your friends or whoever needs you. You feel frustrated.

Michael (Governor grade) acknowledged the inmates' "level of frustration when a decision is taken [eg not to allow a visit to a dying relative or attend a funeral]." Theresa (Probation) also recognised the men could be, "frustrated

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because they can't go." Ian (CM) felt their "frustration, that they can't go out to do anything." Colin (PO) agreed, that:

> … they can't help their family. They're not there to organise it. That's the main thing.

Bridget (Education) also picked up on the same point concerning frustration, and it lessening, adding,

> And there are others who will cope with their emotional grief because that routine is there to support them while they do that.

Adrian (Seg PO) recognised the additional frustrations of normal prison life:

> Yes, if you have the time to *listen*, [that] would benefit them a lot. Because three-quarters of the problems in prison are probably due to frustration. But then if you've got frustration with the fact that you're grieving for a loved one, it's a horrible mix, isn't it?

Charlie (Free Church Chaplain) linked frustration to poor lifestyle choices:

> It *is* frustration, you know. … 'You came in here three years ago. You'd no idea your Mum was going to get cancer. These are things that you've got to start taking into account in your life in the future.'

In addition to the recognised stressors of incarceration, *additional* frustration arises in relation to grieving: for the loss of the deceased; the fact that imprisonment prevents involvement in extended family mourning and mutual support, particularly when family do not visit; and because problem-focused coping cannot be undertaken. The grief literature does not widely recognise frustration as being one of the predominant emotions. In contrast, the criminology literature reports frustration as being common in the custodial setting (Harris, 2015; Irwin and Owen, 2005; Knight, 2014; Liebling, 2012).

In raising the question as to whether prison suicide is primarily a psychiatric problem, or whether sociological, environmental and structural issues contribute, Liebling (2007) reports that high levels of distress felt by vulnerable prisoners is associated with frustration, amongst other factors. Moreover, Jewkes refers to the palpable sense of frustration when the outside world can,

and does, impact on prisoners, but they can do little to impact on it (2002: 183). Linked to frustration is the emotion of guilt.

Guilt

Guilt may be an especially predominant emotion due to the men being viewed as perpetrators of crime. In addition, Sam was "frustrated" because,

> … If I hadn't have been in prison it [his brother's death] wouldn't have happened.

Lydia (RC Chaplain) explained:

> The fact that they can't be there for the family, that's what we hear *all* the time. … Lots that have just been, 'I'm so guilty. … I should be out there helping me mum because me dad's gone,' or vice-versa. ... And then they are resolved to, 'I'm going to try better when I get out this time.'

Sam and others, "felt guilty." Reasons included: "it's the stress of me that killed her" (Les); "I'm not there to see 'em all. I wasn't there to say goodbye … I didn't know she were that ill" (Barry); "because of not going to see her, not thinking about her … If I wasn't in here I'd have been able to see him more .…" (Wayne); "I've bled her dry, … me nana, through drugs. And I feel selfish. … I've got all these problems" (Lewis); "I ruined her [deceased step-mother] and me dad's life, really" (Kieran); "I put a lot of stress on their lives [deceased mother and father]" (Mathew); "My Mum's gone .… Just guilt for not being there for me Mum" (Danny). The shock of death provided new insights.

Colin (PO) suggested the men felt "helpless" because it fell to other family members to make the "funeral arrangements". Malcolm (IMB) stated some had, "done terrible things to their family," and as a result, Eve (IMB) commented, "… that one brings in the guilt which of course always comes with bereavement."

Finally, Anne (Cruse), who had worked with prisoners causing murder and manslaughter, stated:

> … the fact that they've killed another human being, it brings about a different type of guilt.

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Vaswani's (2014: 347) study indicated that the young men in her study wished for the opportunity to clear the air with their loved ones before death occurred, with the shame, stigma and practicalities of imprisonment adding an "extra layer of complexity to their ability to achieve this."

Anger

Similarly, Vaswani (2014) found anger to be a common response among young, imprisoned men who were bereaved. During the interviews some men, for example Gavin, were visibly angry. Disturbingly, Yameen stated:

> I've converted my grief, not being allowed to grieve, into just pure hatred pphhoohh for certain people. I can't stop myself doing it sometimes.

Rumination and the inability to grieve healthily may serve to strengthen dark, intrusive thoughts.

Mitch was "angry", "Not at anyone in particular, just with the way it unfolded."

Dale was, "angry with her, … that she'd died"; Howard experienced, "anger at her for how she did it and stuff" [took her own life]; Woody was "more angry because I wasn't there to help him" [deceased step-father].

Luke (CM) empathised:

> They're really upset obviously and it's their way of coping. … If you haven't got the answers to the questions they're looking for, that's when the anger will start.

Lydia (RC Chaplain), too, recognised anger as:

> … a defence they put up to protect themselves. They don't want bad news.

Lazarus (1999) suggests that the perceived failure of others, or self, not to have cared more for the deceased person, can result in anger, as can feelings of abandonment following a death.

Negative emotions often have to be dealt with in some way to provide a level of catharsis. How they are managed currently often results in equally negative

behaviours often affecting others, thereby generating a negative 'ripple effect' (Vaswani, 2014; Wilson, 2010).

Conclusion

As an environment which is distinct from any other in society, it is essential to understand the ways in which prison culture impacts upon *how* a prisoner is able to grieve. The study demonstrates that the inmate culture operating at a meso level influenced the regulation and expression of emotion. According to the traditional inmate culture, requesting support was viewed as *a weakness* and not seen as *manly.* In terms of a possible future paradigm shift in the inmate culture's attitude towards grief, prisoners are powerless to effect change by themselves. Instead, structural institutional change, increased trust levels, inclusive and more regular mourning rituals, a willingness to seek support, a range of tiered support, and a change in society's collective mindset must also take place. Reasoning behind this supposition is based on the following conclusions.

Negative coping strategies were often picked up in prison and copied by younger prisoners. The assumption is made from the findings that such strategies would be exported out following release. Thus, the underpinning attitudes and responses within both the inmate culture and localised culture in respect of bereavement and grief become mutually reinforced. This duality of transferred values across the two cultures, often occurring due to recidivism and imprisonment of successive family generations and members of friendship groups, would result in both the internal culture and external local culture remaining largely static, unless a different force could effect change.

The culture expected other inmates (and staff members) to formally recognise a bereavement following notification. Regardless of how well or little the bereaved inmate was known, the men often rallied round to *proffer* support. For some bereaved inmates such unwanted attention could become overbearing, and a *nuisance* factor, when they often wanted privacy. On the other hand, due to the notion of camaraderie some repeat offenders who became institutionalised spoke of other inmates in the manner one would speak of close family members. Thus, the prevalent cultural customs and mores were

adapted and formed the basis of a set of '(prison) family values', especially when biological family members were not around.

Based on Jung's (1963) description of *animus-anima*, whereby masculinity and femininity proceeds along a continuum, Doka and Martin (2010) refer to *masculine* and *feminine grieving patterns*. Findings demonstrate that within the community of a male prison, the feminine aspect of the spectrum can be privately glimpsed on a micro level, while hypermasculine aspects are observed more overtly on a meso level. Many prisoners who adhered to the meso prison culture in a stoic manner contained their grief, but were not actively processing it, thereby causing an *elevated* risk of unresolved and cumulative loss. This supposition concurs with Corr et al (2009), who posit that the expression of emotion and ability to seek social support are critical in effectively coping with bereavement.

It is suggested that grief-related stressors viewed in relation to the regime, the environment, and adherence to the inmate culture, contributed to heightened feelings of frustration. Significantly, commonly-felt frustration was usually linked to another emotion, such as guilt, anger, sadness or remorse. A sense of guilt following loss through death is also associated with the carrying of an additional burden for the bereaved (Chapple et al, 2015), and the effects of this may be exacerbated during imprisonment.

At a meso level, length of time since notification of the bereavement was found to play the most significant role in the cultural expectations of both the griever and those living and working alongside him. This bore no relation to where a prisoner may have been in regard to his actual grieving process.

Having paid their initial respects and allowed the bereaved inmate some space for several weeks, the identity of the *bereaved prisoner* would eventually have to return to that of *prisoner* once more. Identity had been temporarily altered by sympathetic others, and subsequently returned to one of a more homogenetic nature following a prescribed time. The nature of this temporal change needs much more nuanced examination.

Resulting in a sense of *stuckness*, public mourning of the loss ceased to be culturally acceptable, apart from anniversaries and special dates on the calendar such as Christmas. Furthermore, the ongoing suppression of emotion would continue to remain as a form of self-protection due to the loss being recognised from a different gaze, ie from the [now] largely unsympathetic onlooker. Some of the men, who formerly abided strongly by the historical inmate code, were beginning to challenge it and revise their values and identity from an ontological perspective. As a direct result of positive support from chaplaincy and other workers, several were altering, to the extent that they were willing to use themselves as an example to some of the younger men who remained bound by the more traditional cultural norms.

There were discrete pockets of care in which a prisoner could obtain solace. These occurred with one or two trusted chaplains, inmates and/or staff, and through Cruse Bereavement Care support. *Reactive* support was frequently provided in the form of the ACCT process. The degree to which ACCT documents are opened – rather than a last resort to prevent risk to the prisoner or others – may be rapidly becoming more a *norm* than an isolated incident. If so, the situation is extremely concerning.

Some peer support was discarded for being hollow, low level and *thin*. Additionally, there was nothing in place to provide *through the gate* bereavement support as a precarious transition was made from one culture to another. Some prisoners chose to wait until release before actively grieving, and especially if a death occurred relatively late on in their sentence. However, neither the grief literature nor the criminological literature has thus far recognised to what extent the grieving process is affected by: length of sentence, and how far one is into one's sentence when the bad news is delivered, nor how effectively an ex-offender can process his grief when perhaps other family members have already begun to make significant adjustments following the bereavement.

Many prisoners adhered strongly to the inmate culture because, apart from chaplaincy support, there were few other markers to signify that seeking bereavement support was an acceptable route to take. A small number of men,

having reached the depths of despair, reasoned how they could successfully negotiate a new way forward which did not align with the dominant inmate culture; allowing them to acquire a new identity which would still keep them safe, despite cultural assumptions. Trust of oneself in the light of new insights became one important factor to effect change. This topic is covered in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

[MAL]ADJUSTMENT TO GRIEF AND RECIDIVISM OR PUTATIVE DESISTANCE

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight 'the individual, social and cultural complexity and diversity of the ways people grieve' (Valentine, 2008: 2), which may have the effect of triggering recidivism or putative desistance from crime. Continuing Bonds theory (Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996) recognises the importance of maintaining an adapted bond with the deceased, expressed in a new and individualised format, developed by the griever. The first section of the chapter reveals how the effects of flimsy/strong maintenance, or severance of continuing bonds with the deceased during imprisonment is determined, particularly as a temporary means of coping with death.

Making sense of loss caused by death has not been examined in detail with prisoners. Within extreme cultures and environments such as prisons, the existential issues of death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness (Yalom, 1980) may be of unerring, daily concern. Equally, they may be vehemently avoided, being considered too ambitious or awful to contemplate. However, meaning-making following bereavement is an essential component in the process of coping (Park and Folkman, 1997), as described below:

> Following life-altering loss, the bereaved are commonly precipitated into a *search for meaning*, at levels that range from the practical (*How* did my loved one die?) through the relational (*Who* am I, now that I am no longer a spouse?) to the spiritual or existential (*Why* did God allow this to happen?) (Neimeyer and Sands, 2011: 11).

The middle section of the chapter explores the meaning prisoners take from dying and the finality of death when delineated against life, as meagre as it is during incarceration. Whilst it is frequently acknowledged, the criminological literature has not paid a great deal of focused attention to the impact of bereavement as a key factor in the cessation of criminal activity. Accordingly, the inmates' final accounts will infer whether recidivism is likely, or whether entering a different trajectory which points towards putative desistance from

crime as a result of adjustment to the loss of a significant person or persons, alongside other connected factors, could be possible following release.

Continuing bonds

The prisoner, having accepted the relinquishment of physical proximity to a significant person following bereavement through finally accepting the reality of death, may subsequently engage in Loss-Oriented (LO) 'grief work'; as identified in the Dual Process Model (Stroebe and Schut, 1999). This would involve reorganising or relocating the relationship with the deceased as a mental representation (Field, 2006). Having cognitively accepted this reality, there may be many reasons as to why a bond *'cannot'* be maintained. For example, for those prisoners experiencing guilt due to a perception of having contributed to causing a death, they may defensively avoid a continuing bond, leaving it closed off from 'conscious scrutiny and challenge' (Field and Wogrin, 2011: 39). Previous findings chapters have begun to suggest that negotiating the continuum of maintaining or severing a temporary bond with the deceased in prison is of considerable relevance in terms of healthy or maladaptive coping, which ties in closely with adjustment/non-adjustment.

It should be borne in mind that prisoners already have to grapple with the concept of maintaining or relinquishing continuing bonds with the living, ie family members and friends in society. Indeed, if they do visit the prisoner it has to be 'by appointment', with some visits being far from pleasant and successful (National Association of Official Prison Visitors, 2018). Therefore, prisoners have to reorganise their continuing bonds with the living, particularly as they are unable to see or speak to them readily.

Accordingly, inmates are faced with the double bind of continuing bonds with both the living and the dead.

"I maybe don't have to say, 'Goodbye'."

As mentioned in previous chapters, many of the men had difficulty in accepting the reality and permanence of death as a result of imprisonment. Barry didn't find out about his grandmother's death until several weeks after the event. This hiatus is not uncommon. Grammatically, his sentences were often spoken in

the current tense, as though she was still alive:

> Me nanan's got … - see what I mean, ... I can't compute what's
> happening an' that until I get out. Me grandad keeps bollocking me 'cos
> it's not registering ... It won't hit me 'til I get out and I actually see that
> she's not there.

Barry's comments implied the maintenance of the same type of connection with his grandmother, despite this being something of a *false* reality. Being unable to accept the reality of a death is incredibly confusing and disorienting, especially without the ongoing support of wider family and friends, which Barry stated had been his experience. Pete was also in a state of confusion. He referred to the term '*closure',* which is widely used in society, and especially during media reporting. His mother died in 2003:

> People go on about 'closure' and stuff like that and I don't know what
> closure is. … I haven't said, 'Goodbye' to her. I'm thinking, 'How can I
> actually get closure?'

After a brief discussion about maintaining a continuing bond, Pete replied:

> (pause) I maybe don't have to say, 'Goodbye'.

Critically, Barry (mentioned above) had not yet cognitively accepted his grandmother's recent death, while Pete's loss was much older. With some losses, 'one cannot ever get to a place where grief has ended' (Rosenblatt, 1996: 50). These two accounts clearly demonstrate the integral concept of time, the importance of the grieving process being triggered, and the recognition that seemingly small detail in the 'story' can become a key component in remaining 'stuck' in the process for many years. Despite a physical link being lost, enduring physicality can be recognised in other ways.

Physical reminders

Having accepted the reality of both his parents dying some years earlier, Mathew, imprisoned in 2000, spoke about the deceased enduring through physical resemblance with other family members:

I've got a picture of me and me brother and me sister … from a family day visit in (prison) and even when you look at the photo, we're very similar to our mam in our facial features ….

Similarly, character and personality traits of the deceased may be evident in family members. This source of recognition may bring comfort to those who do not believe in an afterlife. Another form of physical recognition can be made through permanent memorialisation on the griever's body. Tattooing as a practice has existed for thousands of years, with its popularity being currently high, and particularly amongst prisoners (Hellard et al, 2007). Jason revealed a tattoo on his collar bone signifying a date, in remembrance of the baby sister he found dead. Despite Mitch having experienced four bereavements in prison (brother, sister, cousin, best friend), he only intended a physical reminder of the most significant of these relationships:

… I'm going to get a tattoo of (best friend) on my arm. It was good memories, a lot of them, with him. … I can carry him around with me then.

Five central features of memorial tattoos are: 'their ability to continue bonds; their permanence; as help adjusting to loss; for opening dialogue; and as visual representations of change' (Davidson, 2017: 35). Moreover, memorial tattoos serve as an embodiment of that which is commemorated, with the viewer creating meaning from the image (Letherby and Davidson, 2015). While formulating plans to acquire an indelible representation of the deceased will provide comfort in the here-and-now and the future, simple, in-cell routine provided evidence of a continuing link.

Daily personalised rituals

Small rituals are often undertaken on a daily basis, with the most common reason being cited as maintaining a bond with the deceased (Vale-Taylor, 2009). Mitch, Barry and Woody discussed daily remembrance rituals, separately. Mitch said:

(Big sigh.) Pphh. Pphh. Every day. … every night before I go to bed. Like I say, I'm not religious or anything but I have a fascination with 'touch

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wood'. … I've got a wooden bed. And I'll say, … 'Goodnight grandma and granddad.' They were my grandma and grandad in Scotland. 'Goodnight grandma,' who I lost down here. 'Goodnight (deceased) dad.' 'Goodnight (deceased sister), goodnight (deceased brother). (name of deceased sister's twin baby brother). Goodnight (deceased best friend), goodnight (deceased cousin).

In addition to continuing bonds, this extract clearly signifies a catalogue of social and other types of loss, with death always occurring in a social context (Read and Santatzoglou, 2018). Some men's individualised rituals embodied continuing links with the deceased, contained in an environment where privacy is rare and mockery can be commonplace. It has to be remembered that cell doors have a viewing flap, which may be opened at any time of the day or night.

As described in Chapter Five, Woody, Lenny, Mark, Mathew and others stated they had photographs on display in their cells as triggers for experiencing memories of the deceased. However, many of the men spoke about their ambivalence in ignoring or maintaining a bond with loved ones; often using avoidant coping strategies due to the regime, environmental and implicit cultural constraints. This ongoing tension often proved difficult in their cells:

> MARK: I've got a photo of 'im [father] in me pad [cell] but, er, erm, I try not to th-think-k a-about it. And then I'll, d-d-d, the the th-thing w-w-with me is, I do it like, I d-deal with things totally d-di-dif- like I won't think about him 'til I go mental. ... It's just them small things and I can (clicks fingers) *switch* like that. And (clicks fingers again) th-then I-I j-just go.

Despite the dehumanising effects of imprisonment (Goffman, 1961; Jewkes, 2002) and the desire to punish and segregate from society (Garland, 2002), prison cannot penetrate and destroy past memories. However, it can seriously impede the ability to grieve *well*. Imprisonment can rob the prisoner of a meaningful present and immediate future, and so former memories become precious to the griever (Normand, Silverman and Nickman, 1996).

Lack of a bond with the deceased

Original Continuing Bonds theory makes a general assumption that the pre-death relationship was a positive one (Root and Exline, 2014). If this is not so, the griever has to decide whether to maintain or relinquish a continuing bond (Field, 2008; Stroebe et al, 2010). Pete's grandfather physically abused his mother when the three of them lived together:

> MARION: What are your thoughts on a continuing bond with grandad?

> PETE: None. … He upset me mam.

Continuing bonds in the form of unbidden reminders through cognition can serve to reassure, yet they may emit fear, stress and anxiety for the bereaved prisoner, especially if the former relationship with the deceased was poor. Instead of maintaining or relinquishing bonds, Kieran had trouble initiating a bond following his mother, brother and sister being killed in a car accident, which he survived at the age of five. He had no emotional connection with the deceased, although he had very recently begun engaging in some work with the Mental Health team in this regard.

> I've got pictures of holidays but I can't remember nowt' of 'em.

While investigating prisoners' experiences of prison mental health care, most of the 98 prisoners Durcan (2008) interviewed reported at least some traumatic experiences during childhood and adulthood, with few receiving any support in living with the impact of trauma and its continued effects throughout their lives. Examples provided included emotional numbness, difficulties in relationships, anxiety symptoms and intrusive thoughts. Exploring continuing bonds from a transpersonal angle, some prisoner participants felt a connection with the deceased through sensing their presence.

Sensing a 'presence', dreams and nightmares

Steffen and Coyle (2009: 273) argue that 'sense of presence' experiences are expressions of the continuing relationship with the deceased that can pose challenges for their meaningful integration into the bereaved person's worldview or meaning structure. Mathew (covered elsewhere, and occurring during

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childhood), Pete (at home) and Gavin (at a previous prison) spoke of sensing a presence of the deceased. These events had been reassuring or disturbing:

> GAVIN: I looked in t' mirror and it were like me dad [whom Gavin had found following his suicide] was looking back, … and screamed …. Like, me dad was expecting me to do meself in to be with him. I had, like a vision in the mirror. Me dad was telling me 'What's teking you so long, son?' To hang meself and join him. … As I say, it was like a flashback.

Conant (1996) interviewed 10 widows and all reported at least one event whereby they sensed a presence of their deceased spouses; the widows having transformative experiences which altered their self-esteem. In contrast, Gavin's experience was negative and frightening. His recollection implies an inability to escape from his *vision*, which he had not sought help for. A similar situation can arise in the form of bad dreams and nightmares.

Mitch, who was not a drug user, frequently dreamt about his best friend:

> I see dreams as, obviously like it's unanswered, well it's all the issues in your life sort of coming back in sub-consciousness. Still here I sometimes dream about (deceased best friend) three or four times a week. ... As for (sister), I've only dreamt of her once since she passed away. And (brother), I haven't dreamed about him yet, or (cousin). So, I think that sort of puts it in order as well, about how I feel.

One may surmise that to escape the pains of grief in prison, sleep could bring much-needed respite. However, several of the men reported having disturbing dreams and nightmares. If an avoidant stance is taken to cope, it is suggested this may be more prevalent for those men. Some prisoners had very close links with the deceased, and maintaining a bond during wakening hours helped make sense of what had happened and provided hope and a sense of security for the future.

The deceased acting as a guide for the bereaved

As Mitch's and several other accounts suggest (Jason, Les, Sam, Dale, Yameen), immediate relatives aren't necessarily the closest ties prisoners have

with significant individuals who have died, which is contrary to the assumptions of PSI 13/2015 (NOMS, 2015a). Some prisoners' families may come from communities where prison is normalised and reasonable relationships are maintained (Codd, 2008). Alternatively, families may be reluctant to continue providing emotional and financial support (Condry, 2012), and be unwilling to bear the stigma (Codd, 2008). Partnerships may end in divorce due to the stresses of enduring separation (Codd, 2002). Thus, such family ties may become distal, with non-family and less close family relationships becoming more proximal. In contrast, some parental bonds *were* exceedingly strong.

Woody spoke of being in a coma for two months following arson, and his belief that his deceased mother was influential in helping him survive the ordeal:

> I believe she pulled me through it and made me stop the drugs. … Even the judge in t' court said, 'Look, sorry but I've got to send you to prison ….' … So I think she's up there looking after me. … It might be a weird way of looking after me but she's doing it.

Woody was able to recognise how his past informed the present (Silverman and Nickman, 1996), with a representation of a past relationship serving to guide and encourage in the future (Conant, 1996: 181).

Religiosity, spirituality and personalised connections with the deceased

Positive adjustment to grief includes recollection of the importance of the deceased and memories of particularly happy or profound times together (Rosenblatt, 1996). This section recognises the role of religion and spirituality in this context. The ability to look back with fond memories rather than having predominantly negative emotions signifies some positive movement within the grieving process.

The relevance of religion and spirituality has been covered in detail in Chapter Three, where findings confirmed that for some men religion and spiritual beliefs were important or very important; thereby influencing one's meaning system, and strongly impacting the process of grieving (Park and Halifax, 2011). A systematic literature review examining 73 empirical articles found that relations between religion and grief adjustment are generally positive, however, they are

inconsistent and can vary according to how religion/spirituality is measured (Wortmann and Park, 2008). The following accounts describe prisoners with a strong faith; that faith simultaneously bringing about a strong connection with the deceased. Danny was asked about his mother after he tried to end his own life in prison:

> She'd brought me up Catholic. … I'll see her again some day.

Speaking about his grandmother's death, Shadan commented:

> She was just saying …, '… I've already seen the light and I'm ready to go. ...' … these are the things that are in our religion [Islam]. … it's a good sign … Death. It makes you think about your life more. What are you actually *doing* with your life?

The deceased can become useful in helping shape one's life in a positive way, in the form of moral guidance (Valentine, 2008). Haseeb, Shadan's imprisoned father, had also ascribed meaning to his own life as a result of contemplating death, anticipation of his own mother's death, imprisonment, and his faith. Having the time now to devote to a variety of religious texts, he commented:

> I'm doing mentoring seven hours a day in English and Maths, … I don't think this is a prison. … if you keep on thinking about being in prison …, you'd go *mad*. … When I was out there ... I always was religious in that sense but I never cared to follow the scriptures in a way. … most of the things in the Quran and the bible is all to do with your death … in the scriptures – any scriptures – ... Death is inevitable.

Haseeb was able to *rise above* the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958) and capture something of what Frankl (1959), a psychiatrist who survived the Nazi concentration camps, wrote about. When he was held captive under the most extreme of circumstances, he recognised the challenge to change oneself when a situation cannot be changed. For some, death can invalidate spiritual meaning (Shear et al, 2011a). However, as indicated by the narratives, religious and spiritual affiliation can bring a great sense of comfort and acceptance of death.

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Summary – continuing bonds

The difference and diversity recognised in relation to continuing bonds demonstrates the nuanced and multi-faceted nature of grief. From the very moment that bad news is delivered against the backdrop of the prison environment, a prisoner's grief – and thus his relationship with the deceased - begins to be coloured by the prison experience. The findings suggest that imprisonment can have an injurious effect on the continuing bond some prisoners have with significant people who have died, especially if they are using avoidant coping techniques. Recognising the *reality* of death is the first step towards reorganising a bond with the deceased. This can be difficult, especially if: the prisoner had not seen or spoken to the deceased for some time before the death; there was little or no public involvement in mourning rituals; there was little tangible evidence of the death having occurred; or news of the death was not relayed immediately following the event.

Prison cannot take away abiding memories. However, possibly due to low self-esteem and related emotions (guilt, remorse), the prisoner may actively resist bringing to mind the deceased to engage in an *interactive* relationship until following release, for to do so would be too painful. Sadly, this and previous findings chapters have indicated that many prisoners disengage from the grieving process - and thus their loved ones - as a means of coping with the pain of grief, on top of the pains of imprisonment and managing other social losses. Their perspective may be that the losses incurred in maintaining a connection during incarceration far outweigh any meaningful benefits which may usefully ensue.

Some men had been able to successfully *relocate* the deceased. This resulted in an ability to speak of them in a positive light, without becoming unduly upset. Factors which have to be taken into account in terms of a prisoner's continuing bonds with the deceased, include: prior degree of attachment to the deceased; length of current sentence; use of either a largely avoidant or confrontive coping strategy in response to the death; levels of guilt, anger, blame, and remorse about imprisonment and lifestyle and/or thoughts of contributing to the deceased's death due to imprisonment (eg heightened stress resulting in heart

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failure or the development of cancer); level of *trust* in the deceased as a potential future *guide*; ongoing or revised existential and spiritual views; and the ability to become a *living legacy* to the deceased following a radical change in lifestyle.

In line with Stroebe et al (2005), I would argue that the concept of continuing bonds needs more nuanced consideration, due to the preponderance of possible insecure attachment styles among prisoners (Vaswani, 2018a). An inability to reorganise a continuing bond with the deceased in prison may result in further difficulties in processing the death, thereby resulting in less chance of successful adjustment following the loss. The concept of maintaining a continuing bond with the deceased is intimately linked with meaning-making; both being compatible and complementing one another (Neimeyer et al, 2006). Continuing bonds is invaluable in enabling the deceased to 'retain a significant social presence in the life of survivors' (Valentine, 2008: 1), while the grieving process provides an opportunity for '*reconstructing* a world of meaning that has been challenged by loss' (Neimeyer, 2009: 1).

Meaning-making following bereavement

Viktor Frankl (1959) believed that suffering is a fundamental human experience. His position was that for life to have meaning, suffering – and death - must necessarily have meaning too. Therefore, the way in which a prisoner accepts his destiny and suffering, according to Frankl, may result in providing his life with a profound sense of *meaning*. When the death of an individual is anticipated and classed as relatively normative, it is suggested that only a minority of the bereaved report searching for meaning (Davis et al, 2000). However, an inability to make sense of sudden and traumatic deaths has been found to be a strong indicator of debilitating grief reactions (Prigerson et al, 2009). Moreover, Jervis suggests that prisoners witnessing or being bereaved of a sudden death within the confines of the criminal justice system have additional complexities (2018). Thus, sense-making in prison becomes an important factor in adjusting to a particularly difficult loss. Referring to the formulation of a self-narrative, Neimeyer (2004: 174) describes it as being an:

> … overarching cognitive-affective-behavioural structure that organises the 'micro-narrative' of everyday life into a 'macro-narrative' that consolidates our self-understanding, establishes our characteristic range of emotions, goals, and guides our performance on the stage of the social world.

Finding meaning in micro-narratives

For Fred, the length and brevity of time became of fundamental importance in terms of meaning-making. He spoke of his elderly mother in relation to two micro-events:

> The last time I saw her was the day I went to court. When they handed out the sentence I thought, 'I'll never see her again. I'll never see her alive again.' … I managed to do [see her again] for the final four hours, in the final twelve hours of her life. … she *was* aware I was there.

Following an inability to attend his mother's funeral, Les spoke about being the one to bury his mother's ashes during a special escorted visit to a graveyard (an unusual event for the incarcerated), sometime later:

> I was the one who put the ashes down on top of her first husband. … It meant a great deal to me. … it turned out to be a happy day as mad as that sounds. Because all me brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews who were there come and give me a hug and all that.

Les stated he previously had extremely poor relationships with some siblings, who badly physically abused him during his childhood. The act of him reuniting his mother with her beloved first husband seemed cathartic. Moreover, the day symbolically presented a potential new future as a more accepted family member - tinged with sadness - yet providing a unique situation to forge stronger bonds with the *living.*

These two divergent examples illustrate the notion of temporality, intersecting with the social importance of sense-making. Some men had been using, or were continuing to use, coping strategies which were destructive. Lewis was trying to make sense of his life through bad dreams:

I've got a good friend out there who I was hanging about with. … She was a drug addict, yeh. … But I knew she was a lovely person inside, … a blood clot's come off and killed her. And I've got a blood clot in my left leg. … after that I started, you know, going to bed on a night, trying me hardest to sleep. You know, with my socks off every night, properly. Tossing and turning, tossing and turning. And then I'd get like a five to ten minute sweaty, horrible-like nightmare with colours and, you know, a woman's body. … I'd woke up crying because of the pictures that I was seeing: a woman's body overturned and in a grave, right. And then I found out after three nightmares, four nightmares, that (name of female friend) had had a blood clot and it had gone to her heart. And it was a warning. … Honest to God, on a night time I'm scared to go to sleep and I can't sleep because of the diazepam. You get withdrawal for six to twelve month. … These nightmares. It's horrible. *It's telling me something.*

The largest concentration of problem drug users within the population reside in prisons (Lee and George, 2005). Therefore, dealing with the effects of bereavement becomes all the more complex due to the precarious and risky nature of this coping behaviour. Dreams are a means of retaining a relationship with the deceased (Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996), but without an opportunity to openly express thoughts and feelings it is suggested the above situation will not easily resolve itself. Far greater attention is needed to examine the effects of drugs/the administration/withdrawal of medication on bereaved prisoners.

Time having put space between a traumatic event and the present, Howard, Fergus and Ronnie had gained a wider perspective. Howard's partner jumped off a bridge three years earlier:

MARION: … you said about that bridge ... Could you go out and walk up to that bridge now?

HOWARD: …, at first it *did* do me head in. Now it is what it is, innit? It's just a bridge.

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Fergus imagined that his work colleague, who he saw die under traumatic circumstances, could easily have been his brother, as he also worked for the same employer:

> I've started to just think a little bit more, really. … life's too short. One minute you can be here and another you can be gone.

Ronnie's father nearly killed his brother when Ronnie was aged six. He coped through drugs and self-harm. Following his father's quite recent death he said:

> I think I just (voice changes to one of responsibility) grew up … one day and decided, 'Look, it's about time I let everything out.' It's like I was angry with myself for what my dad did. … Like, I was blaming myself for it. … since I was a kid. … through my teenage days, I was depressed. … I used to fake my emotions … pretend that I was happy all the time. … Now I look back on it I *was* a kid. … *I've come to terms with myself*. I've grown up. … *it's not my fault*. … My sister decided to get him cremated so when I get out we can spread t' ashes together. … she's done that so I can actually say, 'Bye'.

Howard, Fergus and Ronnie had different issues which became barriers towards adjustment. Their individual views on their particular barrier were eventually able to be transformed. This only came about through facing up to the barrier and cognitively processing the problem rather than avoiding it.

The polar opposite of living

Danny's siblings were angry for him being imprisoned again:

> When me uncle (name) passed away I was the one where everybody come to me. Everybody else fell apart around me and I fell apart on my own somewhere, well after the event, … I was back in jail again at thirty-odd. I'd not learnt my lesson still. … I've done a lot of things without thinking about other people. … I feel my age for the first time in a long time [age – 34], and I feel like I've moved on. … I grew up fighting. … And then losing me Mum (pause), it's like she took that out of me. … That fight went with her.

MARION: You've lost your *fight* because of your Mum dying?

DANNY: … I try and stop fights and wind situations down, and that's just so out of the ordinary for me (grins), but it's refreshing! It's scary! … that's me Mum! ... she knew my biggest downfall was my anger, my temper. (soft voice) And she took that away. … She's *tooled me up* with everything I need. You know, she's opened my eyes. (smiles) … She's never been able to do it before but she can do it now. …, it scares people. ... (voice becomes angry) They get angry (voice becomes soft), when you stand there smiling at them, (voice becomes clipped) 'What's up mate! (voice changes to one of uncertainty) What's going on with you at the minute, pal?' (both laugh) … It'll benefit me children. I hope that I'll be able to sit there with my brothers and sisters. … I want to talk about the past and bring my Mum up. I look forward to it. … a lot.

Danny had been able to fully comprehend the meaning of life and death, only as a direct result of his own lived experiences and his mother's death. Self-narratives have to be rewritten following a 'seismic' life event, for example a close bereavement, in order to adapt the earlier plot and make sense of one's life again, set against significant events (Neimeyer, 2006).

Summary – meaning-making

Several men could not make sense of events, especially when bereavement had been very recent and they were unable to take any meaning from dying and death. An intense struggle to make sense of loss can be especially acute for people bereaved by suicide, homicide, or following a fatal accident (Neimeyer and Sands, 2011). A small number of men were looking for clues to help them and were struggling to interpret what they might mean. Regarding the *transformative* effect of death, the various meanings assigned by some of the men on an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and existential level, included:

Intrapersonal level

New insights had been gained, leading to *maturation* following a close bereavement. The possibility of internal positive change for some was brought about as a result of much closer alignment with values and the belief system

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formerly held by the deceased loved one (more acutely recognised following death).

Interpersonal level

Rather than coping alone, several men had the humility to accept support and be open to new perspectives. Death often forms rifts in families, but some accounts demonstrated how it could also draw families together with a new and energised sense of purpose. Following reflection on the bereavement, a change to lifestyle and values was to become an *example* to the next generation.

Existential level

There was a recognition that adverse life events can occur, over which one has no control. On the one hand, some people died unexpectedly. On the other, some people did not die, even though they may have wanted to; or were expected to, according to professional opinion; or there was a high probability of a fatal event occurring. As a result, the brevity and fragility of life was no longer taken for granted. A small number of men had reached a level of contentment in 'not knowing' the answers to the big 'Why' questions of life, and that being *okay*. Furthermore, some recognised the relevance of the underlying messages of the world's major faiths as a basis for living, ie living a humane life, demonstrating compassion and love towards others, and seeking forgiveness.

In a very similar vein to Neimeyer (2000b, 2001) (grief scholar), Maruna (2001: 7-8) (criminological scholar) recognised that former prisoners needed a 'coherent and credible self-story to explain (to themselves and others) how their chequered pasts could have led to their new, reformed identities'. This meant rewriting their personal life scripts.

Recidivism or putative desistance from crime?

The major themes within the philosophy of existentialism are rooted in ontology and decision (Yalom, 1980), and from the prisoner's perspective, attributing existential meaning, arguably, can play a role in whether a prisoner begins a

future life of desistance from crime, or whether he is more inclined to avoid pondering on such matters and chooses to reoffend. Michael (Governor grade) was asked whether he believed the concept of grief could be a trigger for the men to change their behaviour:

> I've seen prisoners who have been difficult prisoners and they've had a death in the family, … and it's changed them for the (voice gets higher and brighter) better. ... But I've also seen on the other side of it where prisoners have experienced bereavement and then made it their life intentions to make people pay for how they feel. So it comes out in violence and refractory behaviour.

From the narratives provided, there were mixed responses.

Uncertainty about the future, and retaining fixed coping strategies

Some accounts provide evidence of an uncertain future in terms of desistance or reoffending:

> BARRY: I'm knocking on now, I'm 30 odd, … I need to buck up. … Instead of coming to jail, serving these silly sentences. … All I've ever wanted, yeh, is a house, missus, couple of kids, you know, car, job. … I'd like to think it'll be rosy but I can't see that happening. Not for me. (pause) (big intake and exhalation of breath)

Howard was not going to change his established coping mechanism following release, which was imminent:

> The alcohol I stay away from. … drugs'll probably be part of me life, innit?

Statistics indicate that 44% of adult prisoners are reconvicted within one year of release, and for sentences of less than 12 months, this increases to 59% (MoJ, 2017). It is widely argued that prisons continually fail to deter offending behaviour (Carlen, 1990; Cavadino et al, 2013; Mathieson, 1974; Sim, 2009; Woolf, 1991). In terms of dealing with the stressors of bereavement at least, the accounts suggest that men who carry on avoiding confrontation of their grief will potentially continue to cope inadequately, thereby perpetuating unhealthy strategies which may lead to further imprisonment.

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Recognition of outdated coping strategies

It is possible that the interviews had made some of the men think about revising their previously limited coping strategies:

> KIERAN: It's probably time now to do it [find out more information about his deceased mother, brother and sister].
>
> MARION: You think it's time to do it?
>
> KIERAN: Mmm. When I get out it's probably time to find out everything about it [fatal car accident].

Pete stated:

> I don't know if I've actually dealt with it properly. I suppose squash balls and work isn't the proper way to deal with it, is it?

These accounts suggest that despite spending years locked into ingrained and limiting coping patterns, chance conversations may help a griever to consider alternative coping strategies, thereby influencing more flexibility in how bereavement and other future obstacles can be more successfully negotiated.

Additional factors leading to desistance or reoffending behaviour

It may be that existing coping strategies do remain effective, while other factors which are non-bereavement related play a more significant role in desistance or recidivism. Gavin stated he, "Won't be coming back." Instead, he just wanted to get back to, "work". For other men, family was a priority. Sam, aged 24, was asked what life held for him upon release:

> I've met a new girl [initially as a pen friend in prison and then through regular visits] … I'm kind of excited, to go out to a family environment because I've not had a family environment ppsshh since … I were about 14 or summat'. … She knows what I've been through. She's older than me. … And she's going to keep me on the straight and narrow. … I feel positive about the future, … (energy levels rise in voice) I feel like I'm gonna be able to do summat' good with me life.

It could be argued that Sam's new partner will fill an empty space left by Sam's mother. Before his mother's and brother's *deaths*, contemplating a future life with them helped him cope with prison. However, upon release on temporary licence, their deaths shattered his assumptions about future hopes and dreams. Eventually, in time, Sam was able to construct a new set of dreams and aspirations based on the *living*, which have become an effective coping strategy for the remaining few months of his sentence. The above accounts concur with Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory of informal social control, whereby social bonds can become stronger if people become invested in work or family. Thus, structures in the form of a family unit and employment may serve to provide informal social control and valuable social support for some men.

A fresh start

Men such as Mathew, Fred, Les and Ronnie were glad to be given a chance to begin afresh:

> MATHEW: I've gone through treatment at (prison) for personality issues and everything else. So that's made me …, deal with things in a lot different way … I think about my emotions more now. (pulls his sleeve up). … I've not self-harmed now for over ten months. I just said to meself one day when I got up, I tried to cut my arm …, but I just couldn't drag it. It's just a weird feeling. … My [deceased] parents knew me as a nasty person. I don't want to live that life any more.

> RONNIE: I look back at it [life] and I go, 'I don't want to be like my [deceased] dad.' ... I want to be better than that. *… I've come to terms with myself.*

While there was a recognition of regret in the past, release back into the community gave an opportunity for pro-social modelling, a chance to identify with a change in moral standards by dropping outdated values, and the use of a 'redemption script' (Maruna, 2001: 11).

The deceased as a role model

The memories of deceased loved ones were to feature positively in the lives of several men upon release:

YAMEEN: Me [deceased] dad was one of the most pious people you could get. Well known, well respected … if I could even be 1% of what my dad was, or achieve that, I'd be fucking happy. … I'm trying to give myself goals or aims that are realistic.

Danny's mother was mentioned earlier as being a significant factor in his changed attitude towards life and death, and a positive role model:

MARION: Can you remember a turning point?

DANNY: (pause) I was withdrawing from smoking spice and I remember falling asleep, and sleeping a first full night. … And I woke up the next day, and they'd just started cutting the grass … I could smell the grass, I remember 'em cutting the grass at the back of me [deceased] Mum's house and to me that was summer. That was me Mum putting the barbecue on and getting out on me bike and that, ooh, it was just a good memory. And I just started crying. … '*Wow*! I've got to go back to work and I've got to go back to (town). I've got to go to the crematorium and (big intake of breath).' I could smell someone cooking toast on the wing …. It was like being reborn. ... I didn't feel numb and I could (excitement in his voice) hear all these sounds. I could smell familiar smells and I come out of me pad … and I felt so good. … A bleeding advert come on. (voice gets louder) It was a ridiculous advert, and I burst into tears!

MARION: Can you remember what it was?

DANNY: (excitedly) An Andrex (toilet roll) advert! (laughs). … The dog had done a runner and the kids were looking for the dog … I just felt like I'd, I'd just lifted a weight off me. It was like I'd been bottling it up and bottling it up so long it just had to come out. … (broad beam on his face) … *I've matured*. (energy and enthusiasm in his voice) … them young lads need our help more than anyone. They do. 'Cos they're the ones that keep coming back in, and keep the jail system going. And they're not getting the proper help they need.

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Yameen was able to concentrate on self-improvement as a direct consequence of his father's death. Danny could look beyond himself and use insights gained purely as a result of his mother's death to improve the lives of family members, other prisoners etc. In other words, he was able to attribute meaning to the death and bring about transformational change within, and also beyond.

"… people go off with all the best intentions …. But if they haven't addressed the reasons why …."

Leach et al propose that prisoners often suffer numerous unresolved loss and grief issues. If left untreated, they, 'result in a cycle of behaviors such as substance abuse and criminal activity which will continue until the core of the problem is acknowledge[d] and resolved' (2008: 12). How grief is addressed in order to ameliorate its effects in prison needs careful consideration. Rob (DARS) spoke about support arising as a result of a prisoner's personal experience:

> There's nothing more powerful than somebody sat there hearing someone's own story of where they used to be and where they've come to now. … a lot of the culture is they only see people in prison who aren't changing. That makes them think, 'How am I going to change?' Whereas if you get people to share their experiences of how they have changed, hopefully that will plant the seed for someone else: 'Actually, if they did it, I can do it'.

Heidi (Mental Health) and Theresa (Probation) explained the revolving door syndrome:

> HEIDI: … they get all the bad habits, still take drugs etc. Because we can't stop the drugs coming in, because we're only Cat[egory] C. In these prisons it's difficult to find any time to rehabilitate them etc, so they don't get rehabilitated, really. They just get what we call, the revolving door, because it needs time.

> THERESA: … people go off with all the best intentions: 'I'm not going through this again. I need to be there for my family.' But if they haven't addressed the reasons why they're using and that sort of stuff.

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Finally, Nadia (Psychologist) commented on a male prisoner whose partner had died some time earlier:

> MARION: So the guy that had the bereavement, how did he change as a result of the bereavement?
>
> NADIA: … it was massively upsetting for him. That was the only, kind of, hope he had, and the only person outside. … about a year later when he had a parole chance he decided he didn't want to go out anyway because there was nothing out there for him anymore. I think he lost hope.
>
> MARION: What happened to him after that?
>
> NADIA: He's still in here. He said he'd prefer to stay in here, take drugs and that's his life. He's got his social life in here. … So yeh, he's still in the system, as far as I know.

This last account illuminates the wider social challenges of surviving in society without the close attachment figure who had died. Moreover, it raises important questions concerning what it is about society which makes it so difficult to endure loss outside the prison walls. The various accounts in this chapter demonstrate the powerful effects of grief having the ability to almost destroy inmates' lives, or strengthen, enrich and invigorate their and others' present and future lives.

Summary – Recidivism or putative desistance from crime?

Desistance – the cessation of criminal behaviour (Maruna, 2001) - is increasingly being recognised as a process of cognitive transformation (Giordano et al, 2002) whereby the reconstruction of one's self-narrative subsequently leads to a changed identity (Bushway and Paternoster, 2014; Giordano et al, 2002; Maruna, 2001; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). While the men could not fully escape the dominant culture, some demonstrated an ability to capture a level of independence from it (Layder, 2006). When confronting the loss of a significant person as a result of death, some of the narratives demonstrated a small number of men achieved clarity; pinpointing micro-events which marked a defining *internal change*. However, for others,

the change process occurred much more slowly and falteringly (Bottoms et al, 2004; Farrall, 2005). Maruna (2007: 660) argued that the process of desistance can become protracted, leaving too many victims in its wake. The grieving process cannot be rushed but I suggest it may be helped along. Unresolved loss may become a wholly negative experience, leading to recidivism. Alternatively, although currently unproven, the findings point towards putative desistance in due course for some men, if bereavement is confronted and cognitively processed. Hence, the unfortunate death of someone close may lead to a transformative effect, but it comes at a tremendous cost.

Chapter conclusion

Iverach et al (2014: 585) contend that secure attachments, positive worldviews and positive self-regard may act as a buffer against existential anxiety when meaning is viewed positively, however, adverse events in early childhood, temperament, insecure attachment, lack of meaning, trauma, stress, genetic predispositions, and other difficulties can lead to psychopathology. The findings chapters indicate these factors were present for many of the bereaved prisoners interviewed. In this regard, the notion of inability to maintain a positive bond or make meaning may hamper any thoughts of desistance from crime, if the past is seen in a wholly negative light. Moreover, Farrall and Calverley (2006) suggest that for many, prison is not a place to reflect; rather boredom characterises many people's experiences. Thus, for the bereaved during this time of 'limbo' (Maruna and Toch, 2005), where time being served becomes 'wasted' (Matthews, 1999), confronting grief alongside coping with Sykes' (1958) pains of imprisonment becomes a significant challenge. Due to the predominant avoidant strategy many men used, I would suggest that in some ways, not confronting grief in prison becomes a *'missed opportunity'*.

In support of my line of reasoning, Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) assert that it *is* possible for individuals to achieve positive change following trauma, for example after a bereavement. However, I further suggest that three factors need to be evident: a level of trustworthiness; suitable and sufficient support in place, and an inmate's willingness to engage.

When considering desistance from crime, criminologists suggest that traumatic events in themselves do not cause a catalytic process of change within prisoners, but rather an identity crisis (Maruna et al, 2006). According to Neimeyer (2004), for those who can confront a life event such as a significant bereavement, rewriting a *self-narrative* can bring about a new sense of order and self-understanding. Having recognised this revitalised identity, the bereaved can become more authentic and congruent, enabling them to work towards *self-actualisation* (Maslow 1968). Thus, a change of identity requires introspection based on a newly developed schema. It also needs extrospection in terms of how one successfully adjusts back into the family and society. Both have their distinct cultural expectations, and assuming a different *normality* as a result of the changed identity will be a challenging experience.

Successful adjustment to grief following the death of a significant person can be a precarious and painful journey for anyone in civic society. When experienced in prison, the grieving process becomes even more protracted and gruelling. Moreover, the process of grief adjustment can become a life-long process. What has been illuminated within this chapter is the extent to which an inmate is able to develop a new form of bond with the deceased, reflect on a changed identity and make sense of the loss. If such change is possible, the next step would be working towards a future law-abiding life *in spite of* and *as a result of* the death of a significant person.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

Ontological and epistemological positioning

Social constructionist epistemology positions realities as they are produced, as a result of human interactions; these being both multiple and subjective (Gergen, 1985). Related theory building develops inductively from real life, to further understanding of how individuals intersubjectively generate, understand, and reproduce social situations (Turnbull, 2002). Therefore, theory emanates from multiple and subjective perceptions of 'reality' (Berger and Luckman, 1966).

In respect of my positioning on the nature of grief, I support the social constructionist assertions of Neimeyer, Klass and Dennis (2014: 485), namely that grief is not merely an intrapersonal process, but a phenomenon that is, 'intricately social'. This supposition challenges essentialism and absolute truth, instead placing emphasis on processes occurring within a social context, in order to understand subjective experience through negotiation with one another (Valentine, 2006). Thus, through interactionism, meaning becomes created and recreated. The findings confirm that the experience of grief is shaped by culture. I recognise that despite its temporary containment in prison, the effects of a prisoner's grief can be far reaching, for example nationally, on an economic and political level. As the accounts have clearly illustrated, a significant loss caused by death can profoundly affect one's 'being' in the world.

Theoretical developments

The findings chapters demonstrated that grief is significantly disrupted by imprisonment. This chapter synthesises theoretical concepts found within the criminological and thanatological literature, based on themes drawn from the rich, reflexive narratives provided by the research participants. The findings repeatedly provide examples of how grieving inmates are subjected to risk factors which may be associated with the development of a complex grief reaction. Yet paradoxically, there are implicit cultural norms which expect the griever to 'control' his responses in ways which do not deleteriously affect those

residing on the same wing, nor those working there. Inevitably, this reaction can negatively affect the griever in this closed institution, giving rise to an overall feeling of frustration, hopelessness and helplessness. Thus, prevailing socio-cultural norms and structural impediments currently impinge on the capacity for grief to be processed on the same basis as it would be within wider society.

The accounts demonstrate how the effects of grief can shape and influence the onset of criminal activity. They also illuminate how, for some, this situation can deteriorate. Due to an avoidant coping mechanism, conformity to the macho dominated culture, and enduring daily life within the confines of a carceral setting where agency is meagre, with few perceived opportunities for meaningful social interaction, grief remains absent or blocked. In contrast, some accounts clearly demonstrate that when there is an openness to exploring the effects of grief, real possibilities can emerge, pointing to the beginnings of positive adjustment. Some men responded to a grief trigger by developing a new outlook on life and experiencing post-grief growth. It must be emphasised, however, that there are currently many socio-structural barriers needing to be navigated in this carceral setting before such a change can ensue.

It is considered that the following are particularly germane contributions, and so become the focus of this chapter:

- A commentary, contributing to the international discussion on the proposed Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (PCBD) (APA, 2013).

- An inventory of positive and negative grief stressors arising solely from incarceration, situated within the Dual Process Model (DPM) (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016).

- Exploration of the relationship between overwhelming grief stressors, culminating in offending behaviour and imprisonment. Analysis has led to a proposed new theory – 'Prisoners' Grief Overload theory'.

- A proposition is put forward for future inquiry concerning grief adjustment and putative desistance from crime.

The following section highlights the increased biopsychosocial complexity of grief experienced in prison compared to the normal population.

The proposed 'Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder'

Grief reactions are experienced on a continuum, but the literature has little to say about excessive grief. If, as the findings indicate, individuals commit crime which is indicative of an inability to cope with excessive grief, greater recognition of this is clearly needed. Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder proposes a range of criteria which have been set out to diagnose a complex grief reaction. However, as the criteria are currently worded, and with the fixed timescale indicated, they fail to adequately take the socio-cultural factors of a restricted custodial setting into consideration.

It is speculated that 5-11% of the public faced with a natural loss experience what is considered as a more *complex* form of grief than would typically be construed as *normal* grief (Lundorff et al, 2017; Nielsen et al, 2017; Prigerson et al, 2009), with this percentage increasing slightly to account for sudden, unexpected and traumatic loss (Kristensen et al, 2012), stigmatised loss (Valentine, 2016), and death of a child (Lichtenthal et al, 2015; McCarthy et al, 2010). Moreover, bereavement risk and support needs within the general population for low-, moderate- and high-risk are estimated to be 58.4%, 35.2% and 6.4% respectively (Aoun et al, 2015), with individuals at moderate risk often benefitting from support to prevent further deterioration to a more complex grief outcome (Newsom et al, 2017).

Boelen et al (2006: 123) propose three processes which account for the occurrence of complicated grief symptoms, each having been found to influence one another:

- An inability to accept the reality of the loss.
- Continuous negative thinking leading to dysfunctional negative assumptions.
- The predominant use of an avoidant coping strategy, which causes anxiety and depression.

Additionally, motivation can be a problem for individuals suffering from complicated grief (Shear et al, 2011a). The findings chapters confirm the complexities prisoners face in the first three areas, with de-motivation being particularly salient when grief quickly becomes disenfranchised within prison (Chapter 6).

The reality of death needs to be cognitively and emotionally accepted before the grieving process can commence (Worden and Winokuer, 2011). However, prisoners rapidly became out of touch with *social reality* as it occurs within society, ie beyond the prison walls. Chapters Three, Five and Six amply describe how the reality of death was difficult to comprehend, with frequent numbness and an initial struggle with sense-making, exacerbated by the temporal and spatial confusion of imprisonment.

Accounts of ontological experiences uncovered serious mistrust and distrust (excepting one or two individuals), which links to insecure attachment and coping styles (Bowlby, 1969) (Chapters Four and Six). With a higher proportion of prisoners experiencing mental health issues in comparison to the general population, potentially due to a dysfunctional family environment, neglect, various forms of abuse and illicit substance abuse etc, prisoners have adopted a lifelong position of trusting no-one (Soulsby, 2018). Mistrust, shame, guilt, confusion and isolation were commonly felt, all of which can contribute to dysfunctional negative assumptions, as outlined in Erikson's (1950) Psychosocial development theory. The most significant finding concerning emotion was that of frequent *frustration*, largely brought about through lack of agency. Frustration is only minimally recognised among societal grievers. If the multiple stressors of a bereavement caused by incarceration (identified in Chapters Three – Six) are added to the mix of other stressors, the ability to reconsider global beliefs (ie the lens we view the world through) in a positive light is going to be somewhat difficult.

Avoidance is commonly regarded as an adaptive response to loss and an essential function of an initial, acute grief response (Baker et al, 2016). Eisma et al (2013: 961) suggest such coping becomes maladaptive if sustained for a lengthy period of time, with rumination increasing and perpetuating 'symptoms

of psychopathology'. This situation is brought about by fixating on issues and the individual's feelings towards them, while abstaining from taking action (Nolen-Hoeksema et al, 2008). It is critically important that all insecure attachment styles (avoidant/anxious-ambivalent/disorganised) are recognised as they may point towards a more complex outcome (Maccallum and Bryant, 2018), with an avoidant style particularly indicating a prolonged grief reaction (Boelen and Klughist, 2011; Jerga et al, 2011). Using interviewees' examples, the activation of an avoidant strategy denied the bereaved individual an opportunity to incorporate the loss into his '*attachment working model'*, ie to sufficiently integrate the loss and readjust to life without the deceased (Shear et al, 2007). Those grievers displaying attachment avoidance socially withdrew from others to minimise emotional pain. This concords with Shear et al's (2007) research, with a negative effect being that the grieving prisoners failed to make use of social support available to them. Avoidant copers experience difficulty in allowing themselves to depend on others (Hansen et al, 2011) and instead prefer to use themselves and their internalised (and potentially distorted) thought processes as the most '*reliable'* means of support.

Having imported particular coping behaviours, these often became concretised in prison, for example, avoidant (Clifford and Benson, 2018) and emotional strategies were used more widely, in comparison to problem-focused strategies (Ferrer et al, 2010). Emotions were held in to avoid displaying vulnerability within the masculinised culture and to prevent worry to family and friends (Gonçalves et al, 2016), as outlined in Chapter Six. While withdrawal and isolation to avoid exposure may have been viewed as useful strategies in prison, it may have resulted in mental health problems and victimisation due to an absence of peer support, also outlined by Gonçalves et al (2016).

Bereavement can trigger a variety of mental disorders within the normal population (Parkes, 2014), including major depressive disorder (MDD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety-related disorders (Nielsen, et al, 2017). The study's findings suggest that a combination of grief and other disorders may be found in higher numbers within the prison population. Findings chapters were replete with examples of maladaptive coping strategies.

Correct assessment is critically needed to identify bereaved individuals at risk of severe health risk for meaningful support and effective and timely interventions (Boelen, 2016; Litz et al, 2014; Pohlkamp et al, 2018). However, identifying complex grief within this community may not currently be straightforward. Bereavement is recognised as being associated with mental and physical health difficulties, with the added risk of the bereaved person also subsequently dying (Stroebe et al, 2007). Given the propensity for pre-existing mental and physical health problems in prison, and the proliferation of past (and possibly current) drug abuse and suicidal behaviour as a means of coping with grief-related and other stressors, the participants' accounts substantially bear out both propositions.

Arguments put forward for lack of attention paid to bereaved prisoners were staff shortages, limited resources and insufficient time. The research data suggest the limits of psychological survival have moved closer to the norm in prison, with *'spice'* and other drugs worsening living conditions, and '*lesser'* issues such as complex grief attracting a level of attention which corresponds with the paucity of resources available at the time. Some accounts confirmed there was evidence of excellent work being carried out by the Chaplaincy team, additional competent key staff members, the Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer, Healthcare professionals and those possessing 'jail craft'. They 'took up the slack' and provided what support they could within the narrow scope of their work role, and according to the very limited resources available at that time. However, the findings of this study point to a crucial first step in more accurately identifying and assessing the severity of the symptoms of grief amongst prisoners.

Dysfunctional grief - as a diagnosable mental health condition - is currently under review within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (APA, 2013), pending empirical evidence (see Literature Review, Chapter 1). The DSM-5, produced by the American Psychiatric Association, along with the World Health Association's International Classification of Diseases, the ICD-11, are both respected publications in international medical circles as being reliable sources of criteria used to diagnose Mental and

Behavioural Disorders (Parkes, 2014). To meet the criteria for caseness, ie provide an accurate diagnosis of Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (PCBD), a range of criteria have been put forward for discussion.

The findings strongly suggest that the criteria for the proposed PCBD (APA, 2013: 789-792) currently fail to take account of factors such as a bereaved prisoner's cultural and environmental circumstances and the possibility of excessive grief (grief overload). As a means of contributing to this important debate, the following commentary is provided, highlighting issues of concern pertaining to PCBD.

The APA (2013: 791) states that females are at more heightened risk than males in being diagnosed with PCBD. In light of the findings, it is not clear whether this applies to excessive grief reactions. While the functional consequences of PCBD include harmful health behaviours (APA, 2013: 792), no mention is made that an excessive grief reaction may lead to offending behaviour.

Section A of the PCBD criteria (APA, 2013) states that the bereaved person has had a *"close relationship"* with the deceased person*.*

Findings demonstrate that the term *"significant relationship"* is perhaps a more appropriate description within DSM-5, than the term *"close relationship"*. Twenty of the 23 prisoner participants faced a total of at least 41 significant deaths during imprisonment. As prisoners are physically absent citizens, relationships often become severely strained or permanently damaged within family structures. Furthermore, at least seven inmate participants struggled badly following the death of a grandparent. The definition of a *"close"* relationship provided by HMPS (PSI 13/2015, NOMS 2015a), does not recognise grandparents as being *"close"*, meaning that usually a prisoner could not attend such a funeral unless loco parentis could be suitably documented. Strong peer bonds in prison were reported by some medium-longer term prisoners as often carrying more significance than certain biologically "close" family members, but are unrecognised within the PSI.

Section B A minimum of one of the following symptoms are required to be experienced by an adult *"on more days than not and to a clinically significant degree",* lasting a minimum of *"12 months"* following the death: *(1) "Persistent yearning/longing for the deceased …"; (2) "Intense sorrow and emotional pain …"; (3) "Preoccupation with the deceased"; (4) "Preoccupation with circumstances of the death …" (APA, 2013: 789).*

Critically, this extended timescale (12 months) could result in symptoms not being recognised, particularly within short-medium term prisoners. An inaccurate assessment may also be influenced by the (sometimes mistaken) belief that the prisoner states he will deal with his grief and make a healthy adjustment following release. Prisoners have a different relationship with the concept of time during incarceration (ie time left on one's sentence), with time potentially playing a significant role in the degree to which adjustment is/is not made following bereavement. For the prison population, the 12-month inflexible timescale proposed for PCBD becomes wholly inappropriate. If an excessive grief reaction is experienced, the description, *"clinically significant"* needs to take account of more extreme grief stressors and their imminent impact on a societal level.

Additional disorders included in the DSM-5 (APA, 2013), ie acute stress disorder, adjustment disorder, major depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, may be recognised as co-occurring, however, these criteria are fundamentally distinct from the PCBD criteria. Although a diagnosis may be made prior to the 12-month PCBD activation point for these disorders, clearly, none would take sufficient note of the heightened grief stressors such as those indicated by PCBD, resulting in lack of recognition of the extent of excessive dysfunctional grief earlier than 12 months post-loss.

Because prisoners are physically detached from significant individuals from whom they had a strong bond upon imprisonment, the cognitions, *yearning* and *longing* (criterion B1) for them are often present before the death.

The macho culture expects that intense *emotional pain* (criterion B2), will be controlled and suppressed after an immediate short duration. Rumination is common, resulting in prisoners often becoming *preoccupied with the deceased*

*person (*criterion B3). Despite this, findings demonstrated that prisoners commonly used avoidant coping mechanisms in the medium-longer term, resulting in preventing acceptance of the reality of death, arguably leading to absent or blocked grief (absent/blocked grief not specifically recognised within PCBD) for an extended timescale.

Significant others often died in sudden and traumatic circumstances, with the prisoner sometimes being present or causing a death, potentially resulting in much *pre-occupation* concerning *the circumstances of the death* (criterion B4).

The findings suggest that incorporating the coping strategy, *"Continual avoidance of thoughts connected to the bereavement*" under section B instead of section C, would be more logical. As an avoidant coper, a prisoner may have eliminated the first four PCBD symptoms highlighted in section B as being irrelevant, despite being *bereaved* and actively working hard not to experience the four symptoms. Thus, a complex grief outcome may fail to be picked up.

Section C   At least six of the following symptoms identified should be persistently experienced*, "on more days than not and to a clinically significant degree",* for a 12-month period following the bereavement (APA, 2013: 789-790)*.*

(1) "… Difficulty accepting the death."

Factors influencing how well or otherwise a prisoner accepts a death include: adhering to the authoritarian regime 24 hours a day, with little agency; a time delay in the bad news being given (due to confirming accuracy of the information and for security purposes); inability to attend a funeral (for security or other reasons); non-participation in limited funeral rituals available in the prison; the prisoner having had little or no contact with the recently-deceased for some time; inability to discuss the deceased person during visiting times due to causing too much upset for both parties; the prisoner or the deceased person having broken relationships off with the other at some time in the past.

(2) "… Disbelief or emotional numbness."

Prisoners are prevented from experiencing society's norms and daily interactions. The physical boundary and associated restrictions distinguishing the inmate from the civilian, commonly impair the ability to accept the associated facts of death for a period of several months.

(3) Difficulties positively *"reminiscing about the deceased."*

Criminal lifestyles and maladaptive coping frequently instilled a heightened sense of guilt and remorse. To bring the deceased into awareness would induce associated negative thoughts and feelings about the self. This particularly applied to relationships which had benefited from a strong, loving bond. Alternatively, some men felt ambivalent, especially if the deceased had been abusive or a poor role model.

(4) "Bitterness or anger ...."

Five men reported damaging the contents and fabric of their cells in order to redirect heightened emotions when bad news was given. This resulted in consequences such as being removed to the segregation unit, or withdrawal of privileges, or reimbursement to the MoJ, depending on the severity of the damage. Bitterness and anger may be aimed at the institution (for holding the prisoner captive) or other inmates and staff, by displaying overt, macho behaviour. Similarly, for bereaved people in society at risk of criminal behaviour, this is a particularly important criterion.

(5) "Maladaptive appraisals (eg self-blame) ...."

Prisoners commonly carry the burden of guilt due to lifestyle, imprisonment and impact on family members. Low self-esteem is common amongst this vulnerable population. Distinguishing between pre-existing levels of additional self-blame as a consequence of a significant death may be difficult to measure. Further, several of the prisoners spoke of thoughts of indirectly bringing about a significant person's death (eg through the stress of worrying about one's lifestyle).

(6) "Excessive avoidance of reminders" connected to the loss*.*

Suppression and repression (particularly during long-term sentences), and drug-taking, were common. Avoidance may be strongly linked to attachment and coping style (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). Some men had become proficient in cognitively avoiding triggers which prompted emotional pain, but this prevented the processing of grief and failure to integrate the loss. The ability to form a (different) meaningful, continuing bond with the deceased person (Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996) was prevented. Also, any possibility of meaning-making (Neimeyer, 2000, 2001) was blocked due to excessive avoidance.

On a different level, a bereaved prisoner needed to be aware of the macho culture. Known and unknown peers offer genuine empathy immediately following notification (and sympathy, but sympathy was commonly viewed as unhelpful). However, when several months had elapsed, if recognised as vulnerable by other inmates (and sometimes staff members), he could be in danger of manipulation, bullying, etc. Also, to avoid the overall mood on a wing from degenerating, he would often resort to avoidance tactics, for the wellbeing of peers. Incarceration enforced the physical avoidance of locations connected to the deceased. The avoidance of visits from family members and significant friends associated with the deceased, was common.

(7) "A desire to die … to be with the deceased."

A number of prisoner participants had regularly self-harmed (some seriously), at least two engaged in parasuicidal behaviour, and at least three actively tried to end their own lives.

(8) "Difficulty trusting" others following the bereavement*.*

A larger number of both prisoners and workers confirmed that inmates commonly have serious issues of trust with both staff members and other inmates. As a general rule, they would only trust a couple of peers and staff members. Therefore, from an initial low base point prisoners would find it difficult to gauge changes in trust levels following a death.

(9) "Feeling alone or detached ...."

Prisoners commonly experienced past feelings of abandonment and having been let down in the past. Consequently, they often separated themselves from others socially as a result of the prevailing macho culture, as a means of keeping themselves safe.

(10) "Feeling that life is meaningless, …" or one is unable to *"function without the deceased."*

A prisoner may have had to endure life without the deceased, physically, prior to death. As described earlier, if this was the only relationship to provide unconditional love owing to a prisoner's lifestyle, news of the death may impact heavily, once reality had sunk in. Prison life can be mundane, resulting in life already feeling meaningless. Starting from this low point, a sense of meaninglessness following the death could decline further.

(11) "Confusion about one's role …" and *"a diminished … identity."*

Imprisonment consistently leads to a changed identity when an individual is cast out from society. Some prisoners had a continuous struggle with identity due to feeling emasculated within a macho culture. Gauging the extent to which self-identity has become even more confusing following a significant death may not be easy to determine.

(12) Difficulties in pursuing *"interests"* or *"plan for the future."*

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2018) covering England and Wales rated only 43% of prisons as being "good" or "reasonably" good in how they responded to offering interests and pursuits to prisoners, in line with social norms. Prisoners are often confined to their cell for hours at a time. Non-conformance to stipulated routines and requirements through a need to take back some control may result in removal of privileges. Therefore, for some inmates it can often be very difficult pursuing absorbing and meaningful interests in prison. Furthermore, pragmatic forward planning may be impossible during imprisonment. Realistically, one may assume that a prisoner copes from one week to the next. Following release, other basic needs often take precedence

over the ability to grieve properly, eg, finding accommodation, attending to financial problems, searching for (legal) employment and rebuilding relationships.

Section D   This section highlights *"distress or impairment"* to a *"clinically significant"* degree *"… in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning."*

Imprisonment can already cause significant distress. Inmates are constantly monitored, however, unless a prisoner reports difficulty with grief symptoms, staff may not readily make a connection between those and maladaptive coping. This may result in consequences such as removal to the segregation unit or removal of privileges. Additionally, a prisoner's grief would commonly become self-disenfranchised as a means of protecting himself from signs of vulnerability. This criterion is particularly relevant for bereaved people in society, struggling with excessive grief stressors, who turn to offending behaviours to cope.

Importantly, it needs to be highlighted that "*frustration*" was frequently suggested by both prisoners and those working in the prison as being the strongest emotion felt. This was often caused by conforming to the regime, with limited agency over decision-making concerning the death. Additionally, it may also have been related to several of the PCBD criteria proposed. Frustration is not recognised within society as being a strong emotion following bereavement, but is commonly experienced during incarceration.

Section E   Recognition is taken of *"cultural, religious, or age-appropriate norms"* and the fact that the bereavement reaction is *"out of proportion"* to those norms.

Excessive coping behaviours become normalised within this isolated environment. Normal reactions include violence and aggression, substance abuse, self-harm, para-suicidal and suicidal behaviours. Further refinement and understanding of what constitutes *"out of proportion"* is critically needed.

Arguably, those individuals living on the margins of postmodern society who are the *least* able to deal with complex grief, are remaining disenfranchised. It is

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vital to recognise the profound differences in stressors and means of coping between bereaved prisoners and societal grievers in relation to contemporary forms of assessment, models and theories. Arguably, one of the central grief frameworks put forward which has helped provide improved international understanding due to its cultural relevance is the DPM (Stroebe and Schut, 1999). Evidence is provided below which offers more finely grained clarification on the differentiated loss- and restoration-oriented stressors prisoners have to contend with.

Inventory of prison-related stressors, couched within the Dual Process Model

The DPM (Stroebe and Schut, 1999) provides a straightforward taxonomy of coping when an individual is bereaved. The benefits of this model over the limitations of the 'Grief W`ork hypothesis' are that it aligns with social constructionism. The model recognises: interpersonal processes; the dimension of time; the dynamic nature of grief; gender variations; different health outcomes; and is valid across a range of cultures and historical periods (Stroebe and Schut, 1999). Accordingly, the model recognises difference and diversity in ways which other grief theories and models have thus far failed to encapsulate.

Grievers are faced with stressors, which can broadly be defined as Loss-Oriented (LO) and Restoration-Oriented (RO). The former include engaging in '*grief work*', ie confronting the loss and grieving for the deceased person, and recognising a changed bond within this relationship. RO stressors arise solely as an indirect result of the bereavement, ie such secondary stressors would not occur had the individual still been alive. Secondary stressors relate to reorienting to a world as a result of the loss and include daily life changes, altered care arrangements for other family members, learning new tasks and re-engaging socially, changes to financial status, reinvesting in work, different roles and new goals, etc. Stroebe and Schut (1999) propose that for healthy adjustment to take place a griever must *oscillate* between both LO and RO stressors, while also taking time out from both sets of stressors in order to relax and recuperate.

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Responding to Stroebe and Schut's (2016) invitation for an inventory of grief stressors to be identified which cause overload in different cultural domains, my thematic analysis of the research data drawn from the 49 accounts resulted in an inventory being produced. This delineates the subjective relevance of a few of the many LO and RO stressors which would not be present within the general population. Moreover, I have defined them as either positive or negative stressors, resulting in a more finely grained definition of key indicators. These serve to demonstrate why grieving in prison is so antithetical to grieving in society.

Individuals suffering from complicated grief are proposed as being unable to access positive emotions effectively (Shear et al, 2011a). The *'positive'* stressors, identified by the study – linking to positive emotions - indicate a somewhat '*idealised'* positive experience for a grieving prisoner. Theoretically, this would lead to more successful adjustment. However, given the current under-resourced and extremely restrictive nature of grieving in prison, in reality, the findings tentatively suggest that a greater proportion of negative stressors in either/both the LO/RO domains have to be confronted or avoided, leading to exacerbated grief symptoms.

The findings infer that a combination of the unique negative stressors – or strains, outlined in the inventory below - can result in an excessive level of emotion-focused coping and avoidance-oriented coping. Moreover, if an offender is found to be high in negative emotionality, he is more likely to react to strain with offending behaviour (Agnew et al, 2002). Offending behaviour within and without prison attracts punishment as a consequence, thereby worsening the grieving prisoner's predicament if the root cause is not established and/or if the offence is deemed to require a punitive response.

Stroebe and Schut (2016) assert that the grieving process can be exacerbated when there is an imbalance of attending to either LO or RO stressors. Chronic grief occurs if a griever spends too much time focusing on the lost relationship (LO) to the exclusion of attending to the RO stressors. Absent grief occurs when the griever avoids confronting the reality of the death (LO) and uses distraction as a means of coping (RO). Furthermore, difficulty in achieving a

smooth oscillation between attending to either LO and RO stressors may arise as a result of traumatic or cumulative loss.

Consistent with Vaswani's (2018a: 181) findings concerning Young Offenders' inability to cope well with grief, it is anticipated that the adult male, Category C prison regime and structure can compound loss as it currently disallows 'individual or optimal ways to process loss and grief,' leaving grief unresolved. The findings demonstrate that grief work often cannot be confronted (LO stressors) for fear of an inmate feeling too vulnerable within this hegemonic and highly restricted, unsupported culture (Chapter 6). Conversely, due to the many structural restraints imposed institutionally (Chapter 5), the prisoners were often prevented from confronting and adequately addressing secondary, or RO stressors due to physical removal from family, thereby preventing the opportunity to attend to significant life changes as equal family members. Additionally, the opportunity for a range of facilities to serve as a healthy means of distraction from grief (ie meaningful and challenging work opportunities, ability to become absorbed in interesting hobbies etc) (RO), were somewhat lacking due to the fact of imprisonment. Furthermore, some of the usual stressors occasioned as a result of grieving in society could not be confronted until sentence release. Hence, it is proposed that this milieu provides a distorted - or fractured - form of grieving, which may be influenced by temporal, spatial, structural and environmental factors, potentially providing distinct grieving patterns. This is assuming that the prisoner is also struggling to deal with the prevalent, additional losses incurred prior to – and as a result of – imprisonment, which are not connected to the presenting bereavement.

I have produced the following inventory, which delineates a selection of *positive* and *negative* grief stressors found within the prison milieu. This list is not exhaustive and some items may be both LO and RO stressors.

Table 4 *Inventory of Positive and Negative stressors (Loss-oriented and Restoration-oriented), based on the DPM (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016).*

LOSS-ORIENTED (LO) STRESSORS WHICH MAY NEED TO BE CONFRONTED, TO ACCOMPLISH PAINFUL 'GRIEF WORK'	SECONDARY, OR RESTORATION-ORIENTED (RO) STRESSORS WHICH MAY NEED TO BE CONFRONTED, BROUGHT ABOUT SOLELY AS A RESULT OF A SIGNIFICANT PERSON DYING/HAVING DIED
Positive stressors Confronting and becoming actively involved in a wide range of stressful 'grief work' (despite the difficulties of living in an oppressive, authoritarian environment within a macho culture), while keeping self safe. Visiting a dying family member once and attending the funeral, even though physical restraints have to be worn (causing shame and stigma). Seeking permission to attend a simple ritual on an anniversary, arranged through the Chaplaincy. Grieving openly with trusted others (Chaplain, Cruse volunteer, inmate, other staff member) and owning feelings and emotions, in spite of the difficulty of this in terms of perceived vulnerability). (This could also be an RO stressor.)	**Positive stressors** Confronting and becoming actively involved in attending to secondary stressors, in spite of the frustrations of severely limited agency as a result of institutional structural limitations. Supporting other family members in different ways, at visits and over the telephone (despite having to manage both sets of heightened emotions in a public setting). Feeling vulnerable following the bereavement, but resisting conformance to the inmate code (despite fear of retribution). Working towards a changed (socially constructed) identity within the prison and also as an absent family member (notwithstanding difficulties arising in the face of the inmate culture and any

Being open to exploring the death through spirituality/religion or existentialism within a multi-faith chaplaincy department as a means of adjusting to grief (while accepting stigma from other inmates). Finding (eventual) personal meaning in the death from the perspective of a '*prisoner*'. Managing to develop a newly-formed, continuing bond with the deceased person.	inherent cultural expectations within the family). Pushing oneself to be involved with other unknown prisoners in a limited range of new groups and activities soon after the death, as a means of healthy avoidance of the death. Striving to be involved in practical arrangements through limited involvement in decision-making with family, following changed family circumstances as a result of the death.
Negative stressors Active withholding of bereavement-related information for some time by family as a means of protecting the prisoner/as a vindictive act towards the prisoner, or delays due to tardiness of external sources, resulting in difficulties processing the reality of the death. Not receiving news of a dying or deceased relative in time to allow temporary release to visit or attend the funeral, causing stress despite wanting to be involved in societal rituals to honour the dying/deceased. Refusal by the prison (due to risk), or the prisoner's relatives, for the	**Negative stressors** Actively avoiding grief work stressors to an excessive degree using a cognitive approach. Dismissing thoughts of the deceased by using mindless pre-occupation as a distraction. Coping with the stress of succumbing to avoidant coping, ie through self-harm. Having to be beholden to the authority of staff members who do not recognise the humanity of the situation, due to inexperience. Choosing to conform to macho cultural expectations concerning one's

prisoner to engage in social, external mourning (may also be a RO stressor)/finding wearing handcuffs being too humiliating for family/self.	temporary identity, for fear of the unknown.
Choosing not to engage in simple mourning rituals in prison for whatever reason. Although not able to engage in the mourning, nevertheless still having overwhelming negative thoughts about the deceased (eg guilt, anger).	Stress over the allure of involvement in drug-taking activities as a means of blocking the pain of grief, due to the ease in obtaining drugs in prison.
Avoiding attending to secondary stressors to an excessive degree, because of perceived/actual limited agency due to institutional structural limitations (such as future lack of permanent accommodation, disposal of the deceased's possessions).	Failure to play an active role in supporting family members due to embarrassment of displaying emotion/or the situation being too painful for both parties/or due to practical/geographical reasons.
Heightened stress due to an inability to make amends or prove to the deceased the prisoner *is* capable of change.	Coping with the stress of suppressing soft emotions (tears etc) in front of other inmates, to avoid possible bullying and intimidation when the grief has become disenfranchised.
Demonstration of hard emotion as a means of displaying the pain of grief (abuse/violence) and recognising the stress of its consequences.	Having to cope with the stress of the consequences of maladaptive coping ie subsequent punishment.

The above contribution extends existing DPM theory by distinguishing between unique positive and negative grief-related stressors prevalent during imprisonment. It recognises time as a significant factor in the grieving process and, set against this, the natural inclination to choose certain coping strategies

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over others, for short term gain during incarceration and to lessen the overall range of stressors uniquely present within the custodial setting. In contrast, confronting positive stressors as much as possible, demonstrated by those listed initially under the LO and RO headings, may produce longer-term gains.

The inventory highlights the fixed aspects of current prison protocol that serve to intensify or attenuate a prisoner's grief experience. It also recognises the importance of any choices able to be made, despite severely restricted agency. Furthermore, it raises awareness of the interpersonal nature of grief, ie with other prisoners, workers and family members, despite the grieving process often becoming a profoundly personal and isolating journey.

An accumulation of stressors can result in an inability to cope. Illuminated within the findings, overload was particularly relevant when it was recognised by the prisoners themselves as being a determinant of imprisonment. Grief became pervasive and some men lacked the necessary healthy coping resources to deal with the pressure of an accumulation of grief-related and additional stressors in the community. The topic was addressed in Chapter Five, and is explored, juxtaposed with the beginnings of a possibility for putative desistance, in the following section.

The proposed Prisoners' Grief Overload theory, and proposition relating to putative desistance, put forward for future inquiry

Major themes and key theories were drawn together in the analysis stage. Theories included attachment and loss (Bowlby, 1944, 1969, 1973, 1980), continuing bonds (Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996), meaning making (Neimeyer, 1998), disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1989), strain (Agnew, 2001), crime resistance and susceptibility (Agnew, 2016), cognitive transformation (Giordano et al, 2002), phenomenology of desistance (Maruna, 2001) and post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995, 1996, 2004). Building on earlier theories I am proposing a new theory – '*Prisoners' Grief Overload theory*', and putting forward a proposition for future inquiry, relating to the potential for future desistance*.*

Stressors leading to grief overload

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The narratives in Chapter Five suggest that unresolved loss and grief issues incorporating trauma and separation distress (Leach et al, 2008), ie grief overload, significantly contributed to at least eight of the 23 men becoming imprisoned at some point in their lives, with one situation having potentially led to murder. Importantly, at least four men who were notified of a significant bereavement expressed gratitude they were incarcerated at the time. If they had not, their fear was that the repercussions not only on self but on society would have been far more detrimental due to their maladaptive mode of coping.

These significant findings raise critical questions concerning a group of men in a particular cultural and socio-economic context. Due to managing grief according to *'rules'* of hegemonic masculinity, it is strongly suggested that bereaved male prisoners are left in a dilemma: unable to grieve according to uniform societal expectations, or access support which would more adequately meet their needs through avoidance and/or through a paucity of such support. It would appear that power, oppression and control impinges upon the grieving process. Importantly, while prison was described as becoming a temporary place of refuge for some men, as the proposed DPM inventory illustrates, there are numerous *supplementary* grief-related stressors to contend with.

Not until relatively recently did Stroebe and Schut consider *overload* to be an important missing link in the original DPM (2016: 100): this phenomenon being defined as, 'the bereaved person's perception of having more than s/he feels able to deal with – too much or too many activities, events, experiences and other stimuli.' Notably, cumulative loss also becomes a vital factor. Those men who were exposed to a proliferation of adverse stressors, particularly relating to sudden and traumatic bereavements, may not have been able to process the symptoms of grief sufficiently before subsequent loss ensued, leading to poor resiliency levels and alleviation through 'problematic self-medication and risk-taking behaviour' (Pitt and Thomson, 2018: 118). The findings concur with Leach and colleagues' (2008) assertion that if grief has not been confronted and processed, it has the potential to cause the *revolving door syndrome.* The consequence of this is that individuals cope through substance abuse and criminal activity until the underlying issues are acknowledged and resolved.

Variable maladaptive coping styles adopted by the participants raised the potential for grief overload, leading to, or exacerbating, offending behaviour. Alternatively, a prisoner may also arrive at prison with no recent bereavement experience but has a major bereavement in prison. Grief was found to become unbearable in prison for some men. Effective oscillation through meaningful *time out* was often impossible because some negative stressors were ubiquitous. Thus, *'overload'* occurred in some instances. It would appear that at least one interviewee who reached overload, pro-actively tried to end his own life and became hospitalised. At least one other participant seriously self-harmed following his mother's death, when he experienced an altercation with an unempathic PO in a different prison. Many men had self-harmed or taken drugs. These events were ostensibly caused by an inability to contain emotions or cope with negative stressors, causing an adverse grief reaction. Lacking in perceived agency with no immediate means of escape from the pain, violent and abusive acts were often inflicted on the *self* in an effort to temporarily or permanently ameliorate the agony of grief. The continued use of a maladaptive style, or even a more normal style, may lead to the revolving door syndrome.

Coping and the possibility of putative desistance

The thesis highlights the importance of recognising patterns of positive and negative stressors within a prisoner's grieving process, and raises awareness of how these can be managed much more effectively. Either the bereaved prisoner coped with grief-related and other stressors by continuing to use a maladaptive strategy, or used a more adaptive coping style. For a small number of men a grief-related trigger, linked through intrapersonal/interpersonal/transpersonal processes, led to an increased ability to cope with all stressors, and to apply meaning-making. Accordingly, a proposition is put forward for future inquiry: a significant bereavement can become a factor in putative desistance from crime if grief stressors are adequately confronted and processed, and a new individualised truth is attained. The diagram on page 276 demonstrates both the proposed theory and proposition.

As indicated earlier, the proposed Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (APA, 2013) currently fails to recognise excessive grief reactions. The DPM has more recently recognised grief 'overload' (Stroebe and Schut, 2016). Because the DPM (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016) can account for tremendous variation in grief stressors and later means of coping it is well suited to a social constructionist understanding of the varied realities of bereavement. However, to date there is nothing in the form of a visual representation which identifies the onset of offending behaviour and path into prison caused by grief overload. Further, the literature has thus far failed to explain whether grief can act as a trigger for post-grief growth and possible future desistance from crime. The findings infer that maintaining a continuing bond with the deceased and applying meaning making (Neimeyer, 1998) can contribute to improved adjustment through the maintenance of an ongoing inner relationship with the deceased person and construction of a new self-narrative.

Figure 3 *Diagram demonstrating proposed Prisoners' Grief Overload theory and Putative Desistance proposition (which needs further inquiry).*

Figure 4 *Possible patterns of coping with grief and other stressors, adapted from the Dual Process Model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016).*

Key: L-O = loss orientation   R-O = restoration orientation   + = positive stressor   - = negative stressor
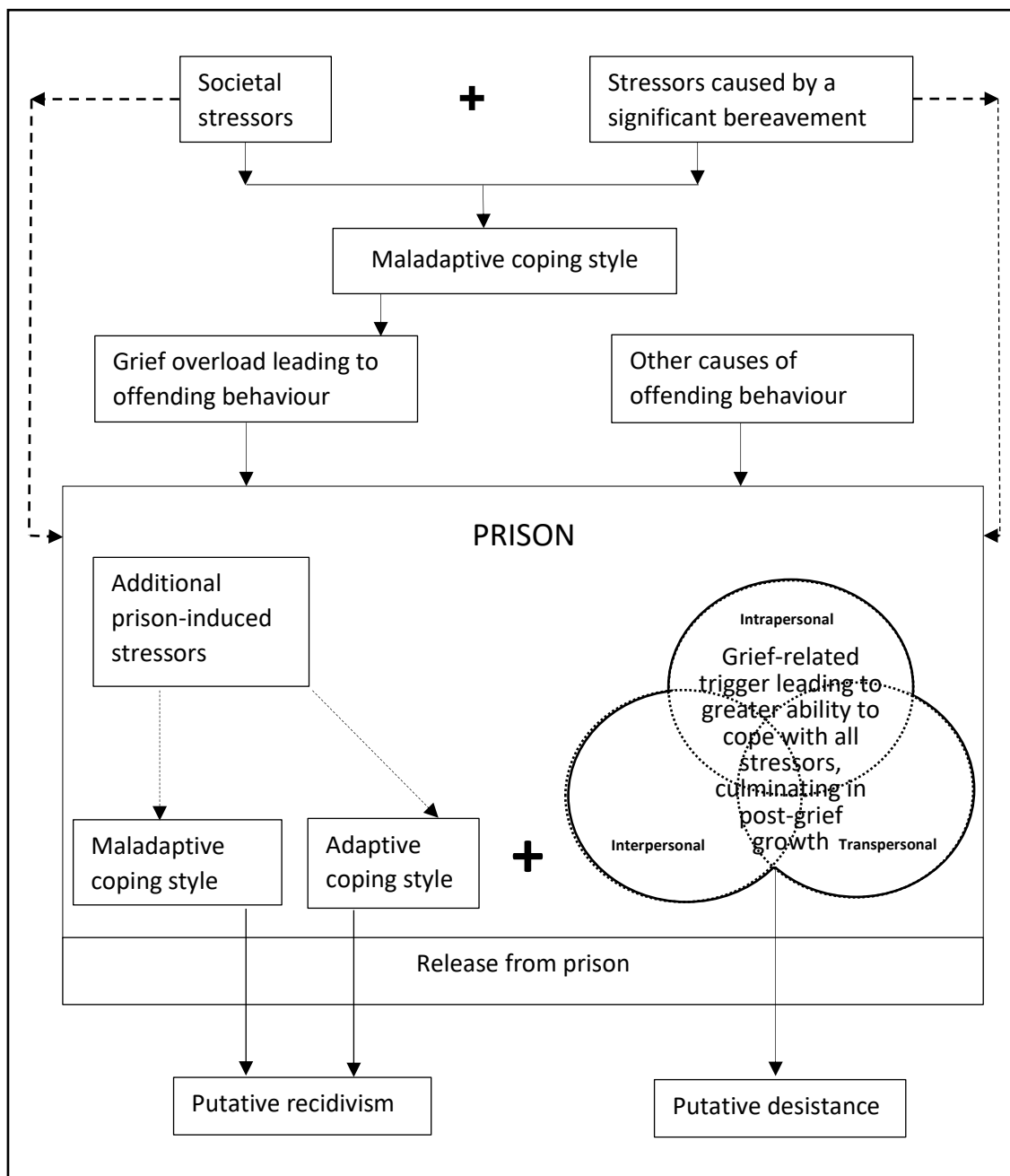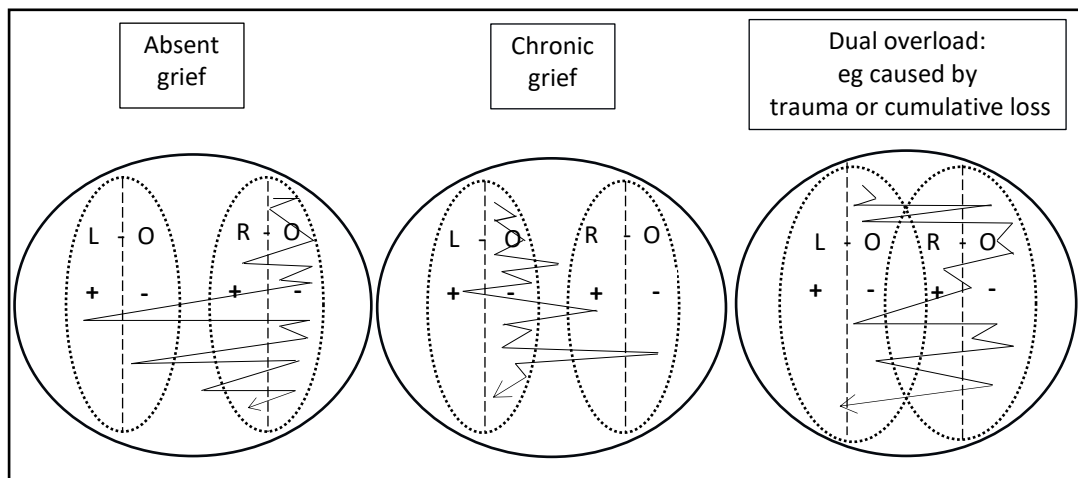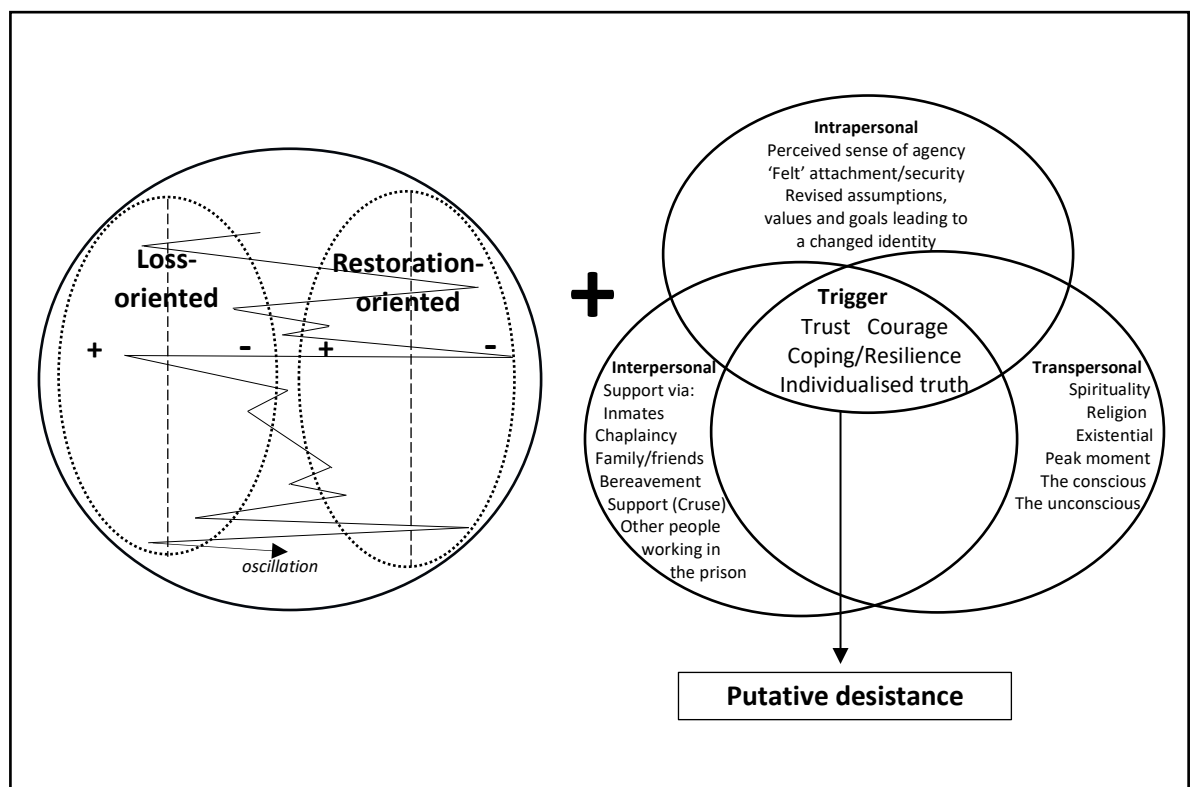
Figure 5 A healthier pattern of coping with grief and other stressors, adapted from the Dual Process Model of coping with bereavement, (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016), combined with a grief-related trigger which may promote putative desistance. This is subject to future inquiry.

If a prisoner is willing to adapt his usual coping strategies and confront both negative and positive LO and RO stressors, and identify how to take time out from both, a more normal grieving process may be activated. Those factors in the Venn diagram to the right of the normal grieving process are suggested as being factors contributing to a grief-related trigger, based on the prisoners' accounts. Critically, the findings suggest that change *may* occur when significant processes such as the grieving process and the desistance process become interdependent. This was promoted intrapersonally, interpersonally and transpersonally through a trusted *self* and (deceased and living) *others.*

Some of the desistance literature makes an assumption that it is a positive life event which becomes a trigger for eventual cessation of deviant behaviour. Examples include fulfilling employment, a loving relationship, and sociable activities (Irwin, 1970), resulting in positive relationship influences which stem from such associations (Sampson and Laub 1993). However, people can *'make good'* in the bleakest of life situations by putting a 'shameful past' to use and becoming a role model for others (Maruna, 2001: 11). For one group of people the research demonstrates that it is principally a negative life event – death - which subsequently has the potential to transform and act as a factor in criminal desistance.

In addition to a range of social factors having the potential to influence desistance, the possibility for motivational change (Uggen and Kruttschnitt, 1998) assumes an intrapersonal shift, through *'symbolic interactionism'*, or the presence of a *'turning point'* (Uggen and Massoglia, 2003). This pre-supposes that simultaneously there exists sufficient motivation to change, an openness to change, and the ability to engage in making sense of events which have occurred (Maruna, 2001). Accordingly, 'processes of within-individual change in offending and desistance from crime can be very complex, often involving multiple, context-specific processes' (Carlsson, 2012: 1). Some prisoners' accounts provided strong evidence of the men 'finding themselves'. This process is compatible with Maruna's sense of creating a new 'life script' and thus a new identity (Maruna, 2001).

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The findings do demonstate that a small number of men were slowly beginning to confront their grief, having harnessed trustworthy support provided by an *other*. Over a period of time, when some assimilation had taken place and grief had been processed sufficiently well, the once overwhelming effects were seen to have the potential to act as a significant motivating force for future desistance. Accounts in Chapter Seven highlighted that a revised bond could be recognised with the deceased and meaning could be ascribed to the loss. This reshaped potentially faulty underlying ontological and existential assumptions, and prompted identity transformation.

The findings sharply exemplify the divergent effects grief may inculcate in the bereaved prisoner. Uggen and Piliavin (1998) assert that offending and desistance can be attributed to 'asymmetrical causation'. In other words, the factor which predicts offending behaviour is different to the one which leads to its eventual termination. The findings demonstrate how grief can lead a prisoner towards offending behaviour and subsequent imprisonment. They also illustrate different outcomes dependent upon restrictive, avoidant/maladaptive coping, or a more healthier, flexible and confrontive means of coping. In the case of the latter, symmetrical causation could ensue, in principle. It is also suggested that in some cases, asymmetrical causation may occur, ie the cause of crime was not bereavement-related but it could be the cause of desistance, and vice versa. Accordingly, longitudinal research in this area is imperative.

When the final corporeal event of life takes place – physical death – this, under normal circumstances, is a very *tangible* concept. However, the mystifying process of adjustment to a new life following death for significant others left behind becomes *intangible,* abstract*,* and uniquely personal to the griever.

Inasmuch as scholars of desistance have difficulty in accurately defining desistance, grief resolution is similarly an enigma. Desistance is now widely regarded as a temporary rather than a permanent state of non-offending, with the end-point arguably being that of death, as suggested by Maruna, (2010). Similarly, grief adjustment can become a lifelong process (Arnold and Gemma, 2006).

The thesis argues that the courage taken by prisoners to confront grief is a different type of courage to that needed when someone is embroiled in a violent exchange. Slim (2004: 175) argued that the young can learn such courage from parents, school or religion,

> But to inculcate it in a grown-up who lacks it requires not so much teaching as some striking emotional experience, something that suddenly bursts on him ….

Furthermore, Slim (2004: 173) believed that,

> … courage is not merely a virtue. It's the virtue. Without it there are no other virtues. … Courage … gets its strength from spiritual and intellectual sources.

Confronting grief requires the griever to embrace his fear and pain, and this in itself is a courageous act. A repositioning of the self assumes taking a large step into the unknown, and with this brings existential fear. For the prisoner participants, whose tone of voice and body language – and not just their words – intimated a particular determination and a sense of something *guiding* them towards desistance, it is proposed that this takes real courage and implicit trust. Accounts suggested some men reached a point of *knowing*, whether that was a *'lightbulb'* moment or a step forward within the transitioning process, whereupon there was perhaps less to confront, with more distance covered in the hinterland. Thus, hypothetically, the griever was well on his way to a changed identity.

Interestingly, a common thread woven among the would-be desisters'/grievers' accounts was that of spirituality and religion. It may be that the actual fact of imprisonment provided a more sacred 'space' and a 'secure' base removed from society, which brought about trustworthiness and attachment to a higher entity or a cognitive appreciation of a deeper connection with the wider world. Examples provided more commonly came from the Chistian and Muslim traditions. Calverley (2013) found that Islam featured in the route to desistance among Bangladeshi Muslim prisoners, which included the ability to mix with 'good' friends and have a pro-social identity recognised. Additionally, religious

beliefs (a sense-making theme) and the desire to help others who are suffering (a benefit-finding theme) were the most common themes of a cohort of parents who had experienced the death of a child (Keesee et al, 2008). Several of the prisoner participants had been engaged in these two tasks. In terms of making sense of the *living* and the *dead*, the concepts of attachment and security were described by some men as helping maintain integral links with the deceased. Some criminal justice professionals consider that many inmates with no faith belief feel uncomfortable accessing religion-based activities and consequently do not receive the bereavement support they need (Hunt and Read, 2018). Thus for those who espouse no clear religious convictions, the process of exploring existential uncertainty becomes poignant (Machin, 2014).

Notwithstanding the competing arguments put forward, it is proposed that research assessing the impact on psychological adjustment being influenced by spirituality and religion within the body of empirical grief literature should be interpreted with caution due to serious methodological limitations (Park and Halifax, 2011). As the current research identified, which concurs with Holloway et al's (2010: 258) findings, individuals were often inclined to rely on *'lived experience'* rather than necessarily solely on *'institutionalised belief'*. Moreover, personal belief systems are often difficult to clearly define, are fluid, and may change over time, particularly following events such as a significant death. Parkes (2011) suggests that there is much to learn about how people from different cultures cope with bereavement, and how spiritual and religious beliefs and rituals influence our response.

For those participants who spoke openly about their beliefs, values, world views and the meaning of life with others they trusted, the social aspect of this was invaluable. In the light of the findings, intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal elements all played a part in the would-be desisters' narrative accounts. Through self-reflection and obtaining a much broader view of life circumscribed by death, some prisoners could begin to gain new, individual insights which, arguably, had a life-changing impact.

Thus, the notion of the death of a significant other may result in the deceased becoming the principal reason for drawing 'a line in the sand' in terms of

offending behaviour and working towards a new life potentially devoid of crime. Having *relocated* the deceased, some participants seemed able to demonstrate a new sense of responsibility and a different form of courage, which - during the deceased's former lives - they failed to achieve. The transformative effect of loss through death served to potentially redefine '*the offender*' to '*the responsible citizen and family member*'.

Accordingly, death was found to affect the trajectories of the prisoners' paths either extremely negatively or extremely positively. The findings demonstrate that while on the one hand grief cannot be rushed, on the other, an improved range of support mechanisms put in place could *ease the process* of adjustment. Critically, this is dependent upon whether or not prisoners with insecure (attachment and thus) coping styles are able to accept and fully engage with such support. It should be highlighted that although there is an expectation that some prisoners may use a significant bereavement as a trigger towards eventual desistance following release, the findings demonstrate that there are many barriers currently preventing this.

How the theoretical desistance frameworks relate to post-grief growth

Defining desistance can be problematic. Desistance is recognised as a process rather than an end-point (Weaver, 2019). Maruna and Farrall (2004) termed behaviour which leads to a crime-free gap within a criminal career as primary desistance, and the movement from non-offending behaviour to taking on a non-offending role/identity as secondary desistance. Tertiary desistance has been used to describe social recognition of the changed behaviour, and recognition of a need to belong within society (McNeill, 2016). To prevent the assumption that desistance is linear, Nugent and Schinkel (2016) put forward the following corresponding terms: act-desistance, identity desistance, and relational desistance.

The main theoretical frameworks used to explain desistance are: maturation/ontogenic, social/structural and identity/agentic. These are briefly described and then considered in relation to the study's findings.

Maturation/ontogenic theories – being the oldest theories - focus on the relevance of age and maturation. Glueck and Glueck (1937) proposed that criminal activity diminishes as offenders mature with age. Studying desistance across the lifecourse, Moffitt (1993) distinguished two groups within her adolescence-limited and life-course persistent taxonomy – one group commenced deviant behaviour early on, which continued into adulthood, while the other began criminal activity during adolescence, finishing at the end of teenage years, prior to becoming young adults. The assumption was made that in time, people grow out of offending behaviour (Gove, 1985; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983), however no indication was provided as to how or why this occurred (McCulloch and McNeill, 2008). Further, as highlighted by Weaver (2019) this line of reasoning failed to account for the onset and curtailment of activities such as white collar crime (Piquero and Benson, 2004) or sexual offending (Laws and Ward, 2011).

Social/structural theories recognise attachment and social bonds, which relate to both onset and desistance (Hirschi, 1969; Matza, 1964). Sampson and Laub (1993, 2003) argued that criminal tendencies may become evident when social controls are absent. However, when these informal controls are in place, for example within education, the family, religion, work and marriage, they act to reduce compatibility with an offending lifestyle, strengthen bonds with law-abiding others, and allegiance to moral values recognised within society. Thus, people 'transition' out of crime (Laub and Sampson 2003). However, these theories fail to explain how social structures and institutions shape decision-making (Weaver, 2019).

Identity/agentic theories focus on changes to one's identity. Maruna (2001) proposed that desistance can occur when a pro-social identity is attained, a new sense of purpose develops, and there is a strong desire to help others. These components contribute towards a re-scripting of one's personal narrative. Although Giordano et al (2002) described through symbolic interactionism the stages towards desistance (see Literature Review, Chapter One), they were criticised for not indicating how cognitive transformation occurs, or why 'one institution at one time rather than another exerts this effect' (Weaver, 2019: 9).

Donati's (2011) relational reflexivity theory, used to understand social change, may help understanding of how the concepts of grief and desistance are managed through social relations. Desistance has become conceptualised as a process dependent upon the interplay of 'objective' (external factors) and 'subjective' (internal factors), with desistance developing through the prioritising of either the role of social contexts or agency within this process (Weaver, 2012). Donati's framework recognises relational reflexivity - including institutions - if they act as social subjects. Subjects orient themselves,

> to the reality emerging from their interactions by taking into consideration how this reality is able (has its own powers) to feed back onto the subjects (agents/actors), since it exceeds their individual as well as their aggregate contribution to it by virtue of their personal powers (Donati, 2011: xvi).

It is widely recognised that social relations can constrain, enable and sustain desistance, and Weaver (2016) has analysed the dynamics of social relations and their relationship to individuals and social structures (friendship groups, families, employment and religious communities) in respect of desistance. The interplay between the individual and the various social structures influenced re-evaluation of personal values connected to behaviour, priorities and lifestyle, and culminated in a combination of different outcomes. Identity, agency and structure featured in the process of desistance. Weaver found that over time, individuals developed unique concerns, while simultaneously, a life of criminality became increasingly incompatible. The most influential social relations were those which provided a sense of 'we-ness', or subsidiarity. Subsidiarity was described by Weaver (2016: 4) as providing support to another which allows the other 'to do what they need to do for themselves to realise their goals or aspirations'. Further, it depends upon a reciprocal relationship, implying interdependence. Clearly, difficulties arise in squaring this assumption in the light of my findings as any empirical exploration of reciprocity occurring between grieving putative 'would-be desister' and the deceased is hampered by the now absence of the latter. However, emotional bonds are not 'knifed off' and social

bonds with others may be strengthened and offer sources of support and subsidiarity that may help support desistance.

Relating the theories mentioned earlier to the findings, if grief stressors are not addressed sufficiently during imprisonment, then punishment through incarceration can frustrate and exacerbate the grieving process, and potentially lead to unresolved grief and future recidivism. However, when grief is viewed (in due course) as a factor which may prevent future offending, this can lead to a sense of maturation in cognitive thoughts and a different way of 'being' through recognition of the desire to become a more responsible citizen (in memory of, or modelled on, the deceased). Therefore, maturation occurs at the age the inmate happens to be when adjustment to grief begins taking place. Such changes arise as a result of relational and individual reasoning. On a relational level this is usually with one or two trusted individuals such as chaplains, peers who have also been bereaved, officers with jail craft, or a bereavement support volunteer. Shared understandings are verbalised and pondered over. While it is necessary for these social bonds to help with grief adjustment, at the end of the day they are not sufficient. Introspection and agency help bring about a new identity, but again these are not sufficient. What differentiates the findings from current literature on desistance is the powerful impact of the griever's relationship with the deceased person and the nature of the strengthened, continued bond. Using the Venn diagram (figure 5) to help explain the process - with a coming together of the interpersonal, the intrapersonal and the transpersonal – these different aspects culminated in the attainment of a new, individualised truth which demanded trust and courage. This individual change could lead to an improved ability to cope with future losses and stressors. Empirical evidence is currently absent to fully support the proposition concerning whether or not a significant bereavement can become a factor in putative desistance from crime if grief stressors are adequately confronted and processed, and a new individualised truth is attained.

The actions identified by both the worker participants and those few inmates actively confronting grief stressors, demonstrated that these men *were* in the early stages of engaging in 'act' desistance behaviours (Nugent and Schinkel,

2016), for example through mentoring, offering informal bereavement peer support, showing authentic concern and closeness to family members and others. Such actions echo generativity and identity transition (Maruna, 2001).

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter briefly covers what has been achieved as a result of undertaking the research. It provides policy recommendations and improvements put forward by the prisoners, those men and women working alongside them, and myself. The prisoners were asked to provide recommendations to future bereaved prisoners and these are also stated. The chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and critically argues for social justice to be employed from a humanitarian standpoint when the criminal justice system takes charge of bereaved prisoners.

The central research aim was to explore and understand the grief experience of male prisoners as it occurs, and the impact of cumulative loss caused by death, prior to custodial sentencing. The responses of other inmates and the ways in which staff facilitated and managed prisoners' grief were also the focus of enquiry. Twenty-three bereaved prisoners participated, along with 23 members of paid staff of different occupations and grades, and three volunteers. All participants were residing or working within a male, Category C prison in the north of England, between March – August 2017.

The study provides a major contribution to both the criminological and thanatological fields, as demonstrated in Chapter Eight. It widens the current international debate by providing a critique of the proposed Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (PCBD) (APA, 2013). The narrative accounts have produced evidence of positive and negative stressors unique to the setting, and these have been situated within the Dual Process Model (Stroebe and Schut, 1999; 2016), demonstrating how they can impact on the grieving process in a new way. A new theory is proposed and a proposition is put forward for future inquiry.

Synthesis of the findings chapters

The data suggest that as a result of cumulative loss, grief overload tipped the balance for some of the men, resulting in deviant coping strategies and removal

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from society as a means of punishment. Hence, both society and the prisoner became vulnerable due to the impact of grief: a position which may be repeated if a prisoner is released back into the community with an unresolved grief outcome. Some men received news of a death during imprisonment. Several considered incarceration had been fortuitous, thereby preventing an adverse grief response directly affecting society and a significantly extended sentence. Nevertheless, inability to accept the reality of the death in a custodial setting was a real problem for many. I argue that the enforcement of a punitive sentence will not act as a deterrent. Instead, the need for stability, compassion, and to feel secure, when life feels out of control, are far more relevant issues of concern.

Findings revealed how the institutional structure heavily influenced how grief was experienced and managed. The social underpinnings of a power imbalance (Bordere, 2016) became pronounced, whereby staff had '*control over*' prisoners, and prisoners struggled to become empowered. A common perception among many was that grieving was best done in isolation, and as a means of regaining some control maladaptive coping strategies such as drug-taking (including NPS such as spice), violence, self-harm and suicidal behaviour were commonplace.

Prison culture was arranged on a meso and micro level and the dual aspects of this impinged on the patterns grief took. Following receipt of bad news, an outpouring of grief reactions was culturally acceptable. After a very short period of time, though, suppression of soft emotion was expected, alongside a need to conceal vulnerability for fear of bullying and intimidation. Although other inmates frequently demonstrated sympathy at the time of loss as a cultural expression of validating the bereavement, it was empathy the men stated they actually needed. In other words, the participants did not want others to feel sorry for them. Instead, they needed a greater level of understanding and heartfelt compassion.

An unusual finding from a thanatological perspective, not recognised within societal grievers, was the level of felt *frustration* experienced, brought about principally by the punitive nature of incarceration, lack of agency and the inmate

culture. There was overt three-fold mistrust and distrust between staff members, inmates, and the institution. Unless workers were regarded as possessing *jail craft* (acquiring competence and trustworthiness as a result of long periods working in the prison service) and empathy, they were often mistrusted. For those lacking in competence it would seem there was an element of *'pass the prisoner'* so that the problem was often placed at another department's door – invariably the Chaplaincy team's - as this work was widely recognised as being an integral element of the chaplains' remit. Arguably though, supporting a person grieving in any community is *everyone's* problem, with compassion being 'a key element of the basis of community and society' (Thompson, 2016: 40). Problems arose particularly for young and new staff members who were perhaps indifferent to grief, lacking in confidence, competence and life skills. The institution was mistrusted due to its highly authoritative nature and inability to flex sufficiently towards ameliorating grief issues. Peers were not easily trusted, as outlined above.

Grief became disenfranchised (Doka, 1989) relatively quickly through: staff being able to devote little time focusing on it; the inmate culture expecting an atmosphere on the wings not to deteriorate to the detriment of those residing there; and prisoner self-disenfranchisement via controlled expression of grief to allay fears of intimidation and bullying. The study found much cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) in direct response to the meso culture, particularly after a death was no longer newsworthy on the wings. This resulted in the men behaving differently to how they were actually thinking and feeling, as a means of self-preservation. Staff, similarly, had to undertake *emotional labour*, to maintain authority and prevent over-identification with prisoners' bereavements.

Findings suggest that in this masculinised environment there was excessive '*avoidant emotional coping*', negatively impacting on both physical and mental health. Significantly, many prisoners have enduring mental health problems. Active emotional coping results in the ability to express emotions or cognitively reframe a stressful situation, while avoidant emotional coping results in suppressing emotions (Holahan and Moos, 1987). Problem-focused coping, ie problem-solving, was barely possible due to the perceived lack of problems

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which could be practically addressed within this environment and the corresponding perceived lack of agency.

The evidence suggested distinct patterns of grieving (based on attachment loss/coping theories) such as absent (or delayed) grief and chronic grief, as well as patterns brought about through cumulative loss and traumatic loss. Prisoners were physically detached from (living) family and friends they may have had a close attachment bond with. They commonly worked hard to also become emotionally detached, particularly following a bereavement, due to fear of inability to cope with their own and/or loved ones' emotions, which necessarily become heightened as a result of imprisonment. Despite its age, Sykes' (1958) inmate code still came through strongly in the narratives on a meso level. There was reprieve in the form of the Chaplaincy team for those who proactively sought pastoral, practical, spiritual, or religious help. Some participants became involved in religious (Christian and Islam), spiritual and existential contemplation and discussions. However, Chaplaincy support may have been problematic for those with little or no faith.

For a small group of men who safely confronted grief stressors, they were able to adjust more readily, to the point of putative desistance also seeming possible in time upon release and integration back in society. Prisoners were able to trust just one or two individuals who provided encouragement to openly discuss their grief issues with, despite the pain of this process. These may include peers, chaplains (due to their entrusted position within the establishment), the Cruse Bereavement Care volunteer (although there was limited access due to a waiting list), staff members possessing jail craft, and family members. Postmodern grief theories, for example, continuing bonds and meaning-making, capture what helped with healthy adjustment.

Grief became a trigger for change. Accounts demonstrated that a growing trust in self and one or two others, a different, new-found form of courage, and attainment of an individualised truth, could result in a changed personal identity. The narratives suggest this process led some prisoners towards enhanced compliance to the regime through augmented relationships with staff.

Criminological researchers have posed two questions: what are the reasons individuals begin engaging in offending behaviour and what are the contributing factors towards desistance from criminal activity (Laub and Sampson, 2001; Sampson and Laub, 1993). This thesis suggests – although not proven - that for some individuals they may be one and the same thing – the death of a significant person. In this regard, engendering wider levels of understanding and challenging traditional cultural attitudes will improve the situation. This said, grief is not time-bound and adjustment can be an exceedingly slow process. Moreover, the assertion concerning desistence is nuanced and complex, and reliant upon a range of processes occurring interdependently.

Prisoners' recommendations for other bereaved inmates

Strengths-based activities can allow stigmatised individuals to overcome their labels (LeBel, Richie and Maruna, 2015). The concept '*wounded healer*' (Jung, 1963), infers that individuals can develop insight and resilience as a result of their own life experiences. When people with a problem are able to help others with the same problem, this exchange may particularly benefit the helper (Riessman, 1965: 27). Accordingly, some of the men were asked what advice they would pass on to future bereaved prisoners, based on their own experiences. Interestingly, despite the majority using an avoidant coping strategy themselves, a good number of men paradoxically were unanimous in providing one recommendation:

> "… talk to people. Don't let it build up." (Kieran); "Don't bottle up … talk to someone .…" (Ronnie); "… Just get it out. (speaks with conviction) 'Cos if you just bottle it up it kind of makes things ten times worse. … No matter how hard it is, you need to open up" (Woody); "… speak to someone in Chapel .…" (Pete); "… talk .…" (Fred); "Even if you're suffering from depression ten years after somebody's died, you've still got to ask for help. If you don't, that problem's just going to snowball and get bigger (claps) and bigger (claps) until something goes, 'pop'. … if you don't, …, it will cause you more serious problems in life" (Mathew); "Talking to someone you trust really helps." (Shadan); "… Try and talk to someone." (Howard).

Other tips included:

> "… what might work … might be different for someone else" (Sam); "Make your [deceased] loved one proud of you in a pro-social, pro-active way" (Les); "… keep on going because the people that you have lost would … want you to keep going. So would your family on the out. … always know that you're not in here forever. … If you've got children or family, just focus on that" (Mitch).

The men's suggestions infer they could see the relevance of overriding the established macho inmate code on a meso level, in order to better deal with grief. Significantly, this advice-giving suggested the possibility for a future cultural paradigm shift from their individualised perspectives. However, such a shift cannot be realised without co-operation - societally and institutionally - as the findings demonstrate that the processing, expression and outcomes of grief are to a large extent both culturally and institutionally determined. Thus, crucially, prisoners' grief is of political concern.

Suggested recommendations

As a duty of care, to provide parity of support for bereaved prisoners and particularly those with complex grief needs, the following suggestions are made. Some require greater time and resources than others and, therefore, economic costs and gains need to be carefully assessed.

Wider recommendations within the criminological and grief fields

When considering the formulation of official measures and international Standards for the recognition of *normal, moderate, complex and excessive* forms of grief, extreme environments and cultures need to be considered, to accurately identify structural barriers and limited agency such as may be found within the carceral setting. Moreover, from an ethical standpoint and to improve *social justice,* the findings are of particular salience for the broader judicial system in how it sentences and manages vulnerable, bereaved prisoners, currently placed in its care *as punishment* and for *effective rehabilitation*. In terms of what is regarded as *offending behaviour*, not only should consideration be given to what is deemed an *'offender's'* overtly legal or illegal behaviour, but

far greater recognition of covert *underlying stressors* and *coping behaviours* is crucial.

Recommendations concerning Prison Service Instructions

The extent to which the relevant PSIs (NOMS, 2015a, 2015b, 2016) are observed depends upon local interpretation and what resources are immediately available. Arising from the findings, it is recommended that some would benefit from review, for example:

PSI 05/2016 (Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners: Section 17)

- Section 17.7 fails to take account of complex grief or length of time elapsed since the death, specialised support, and the need for any longer-term support which may be needed.

- To instil the reality of death, the provision of regular communal rituals for social mourning in which the dying and deceased are the main focus, with active involvement by bereaved prisoners, if they so wish. Notably, provision should incorporate the needs of prisoners with atheistic/agnostic beliefs.

PSI 33/2015 (External Prisoner Movement)

- Review the level of stringency required in the wearing of restraints/consideration of more up-to-date means of restraint, to ameliorate embarrassment for the prisoner and family members. The current PSI can put prisoners off from attending funerals.

PSI 13/2015 (Release on Temporary Licence)

- To prevent maleficence, despite the timing of death being imprecise, consider extending the timescale to visit a dying relative, ie not solely at a point hours from death. The current situation may be neither ethically beneficial for the dying relative due to deterioration of faculties, nor the prisoner if communication is not possible.

- Review and record which biological relationships are deemed by each prisoner to be 'significant', not 'close'. Findings infer that the PSI currently fails to sufficiently recognise the strength and significance of proximal relationships between some prisoners and grandparents, etc.

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- Consideration of a home visit between the death and funeral in respect of some particularly traumatic losses.

Complex Grief and mental health

- Routine assessment (including through qualitative assessment) and monitoring of grief (and PTSD) to accurately and easily identify moderately severe, complex and excessive grief reactions. Arguably, an assessment tool does not currently exist which accurately takes account of prisoners' unique circumstances and the effects of incarceration. The recognition of complex or excessive grief reactions may provide reassurance for prisoners and improve management of unresolved grief through using more compassionate and less punitive means. It may also avoid levels of grief deteriorating further as a result of incarceration when remedial steps can be identified.

- Recognition of the deterioration of mental health due to negative grief stressors for those men with ongoing mental health diagnoses, and potential increased susceptibility to depression.

- A review of the practice of removal of medication immediately following a bereavement, as was indicated by two prisoners.

- Clear, written guidance for prisoners concerning mental health, medication and bereavement.

Bespoke training/education packages

- Mandatory training for POs and other members of staff on bereavement and grief awareness, and transformational compassion, ie 'spiritual, emotional, and practical growth that arises through the process of being attuned and responding to other people's suffering' (Thompson, 2016: 48) (also applicable to Higher Education students wishing to enter the Prison Service).

- The opportunity for psychoeducation in grief awareness for prisoners.

- In-depth training provision for all chaplains.

- Training for mental health professionals and psychologists in recognising more complex forms of grief, use of appropriate assessment tools, etc.

Improved family cohesion

- Organise planned events for a small number of families to grieve as family groups, facilitated by Chaplaincy/bereavement-trained volunteers.

- Greater involvement of one or two willing family members in the ACCT process, to help those grieving men most at risk of self-harm and suicide.

- To lessen levels of frustration, improved and increased telephone contact with family in the form of: emergency phone credit at the time of a dying/deceased family member; and, provision for purchasing additional phone credit through private 'cash'.

Increased bereavement support provision

- Prisoners would benefit from being asked in-depth information about recent and unresolved bereavements during their reception interview. Furthermore, equivalence of care should be provided for bereaved prisoners in direct proportion to the level of complex/excessive grief currently being experienced in prison, with a range of clearly identified, tiered support, including in-depth, and longer-term, support.

- A trained 'bereavement care team' comprising prisoner Bereavement Representatives who have begun to successfully adjust to their own bereavement, to reduce feelings of isolation and vulnerability, and improve trust levels.

- Expansion of third sector support, such as Cruse Bereavement Care, through recruitment of recently retired prison officers via the Prison Officers' Association (formerly possessing jail craft), with mandatory training offered in bereavement support to these potential volunteers.

- Revision of local prison procedures for bereavement support, ie, in line with Cruse Bereavement Care national standards, prisoners should be able to access specialist support despite a bereavement being less than 12 months old (assuming adequate provision is in place).

- Provide bereavement support that plays to the strengths of individual attachment/coping styles, with support being accessed voluntarily and not necessarily as a requirement of sentence planning (to ameliorate the power imbalance between inmates and the institution).

- Investment in improving third sector provision to enable joined up, through-the-gate support upon entry to, and release from, prison.

- The provision of clearly written leaflets for prisoners explaining: the common symptoms of grief, why grieving is often more difficult in prison, and what levels of support are available, distributed during induction.

- Provision of more varied physical exercise, bringing holistic benefits to the mind, body and spirit, and help relieve tension.

- Fostering an inmate culture on the meso level whereby rather than avoiding it, confronting and processing grief is recognised as a *courageous* act.

Staff

- Increase staffing levels. This could provide a more efficient and collaborative, proactive response to grief, rather than the inadequate, reactive response illustrated by several participants.

- Improved internal communication between POs at times of visits to dying relatives and escorting at funerals.

- Improved logging of application requests to reduce the number of grievers' applications getting 'lost' in the system.

- Monitored use of a smartphone or video-link if unable to attend a funeral, to help with accepting the reality of a death.

- Consideration of staff members becoming bereaved, and having their own grief to contend with. Awareness of possible difficulties around anniversaries of the death and other important calendar dates.

- Recognition of *'emotional labour'* as an aspect of staff members' work roles, and the demands of workers' involvement in the ACCT process, etc. The provision of suitable staff support for all involved in supporting bereaved prisoners.

Chaplaincy involvement

- Greater acknowledgement of the importance of regular communal mourning rituals as part of Chaplaincy provision to promote social recognition of loss across the prison estate (thereby alleviating the

problem of disenfranchised grief), particularly if permission is not granted to attend mourning rituals organised within the family setting.

- Adopting a more inclusive approach which does not discriminate against grievers with no faith.

- Increased opportunity for faith awareness, with the Chaplaincy team working collaboratively to assist in individual discovery of spiritual, existential and religious concepts arising from grief.

- Consideration of a humanist Chaplain (dependent upon availability).

- Clearer guidelines for external organisations when verifying information to chaplains concerning dying and deceased persons in response to GDPR (2018) (Gov.UK, 2018), to prevent unnecessary delays and additional stress on the bereaved prisoner.

Limitations

A limitation of the research is non-involvement of chaplains and prisoners of minority faiths. The study incorporated the main faiths (Christianity and Islam), alongside those men with a '*pick and mix*' belief system or no faith.

The research comprised a qualitative study across one Category C male prison, of six months' duration, in 2017. Not all of the findings may be applicable to Young Offenders' sites, women's prisons and male estates categorised at levels other than Category C.

Recruitment was purposive, using convenience and snowball sampling. Prisoner participants were constrained by structural and personal factors, as outlined in the criteria set out for involvement in the study. Therefore, rates of bereavements accrued and coping strategies identified may be different in relation to prison norms.

Further research

The topic needs *considered* debate and further research, and suggestions include:

- Research on the impact of early loss, particularly around the age of five to six, which may be an important transition period in developmental understanding of life, dying and death, and evolving maladaptive coping

strategies.

- More detailed evidence of grief overload leading to offending behaviour, as a direct consequence of a significant death.

- The potential for exploring further the relationship between desistance and grief, including using released prisoner populations within a longitudinal study.

- Investigation of the prevalence of *excessive grief, complex grief* and *moderately complex grief,* in contrast to what would be regarded as a *normal grief* reaction. A gender diverse population needs to be involved, using a control group, and involving individuals who have and have not committed an offence.

- In a bid to reduce violence, self-harm and suicidal behaviour, identify key trigger points across the prison sentence which exacerbate grief symptoms, including: anniversaries and special 'calendar' dates; entry to, imminent (upon notification of release) and actual, release from prison. Use of the prison database system (p-NOMIS) and the adjudication process to identify longitudinal deviation in behaviour.

- The concept of trust and its link to insecure attachment styles and coping behaviours, to help with improved support mechanisms.

- Longitudinal action research into the efficacy of a range of tiered interventions eg support via chaplaincy; staff; informal peers; third sector, one-to-one and group; and semi-formal peer support.

- The effects of grief for prisoners when they themselves have caused death to another individual, with or without intent.

- Research exploring cultural variance in the grief experiences of other excluded groups, for example, grieving foreign national prisoners.

- Exploration of the dichotomous strands of the current inmate culture ie the traditional meso culture versus the progressive micro culture: culture being a somewhat fluid phenomenon based partially on the transient prisoner population and the staff in post at any one time.

- The extent to which society believes the needs of a bereaved prisoner should be embodied within the notion of having '*control over'* or displaying '*humanity and compassion towards'.*

Concluding comments

The pattern of grief for some prisoners is overlaid with, and obscured by, offending behaviour. The judicial system needs to have a greater awareness that the root cause of some offending behaviour lies in unresolved and cumulative loss, following an inability to cope with stressors due to maladaptive coping strategies. The far-reaching effects of grief have implications for the bereaved prisoner, other inmates, those working in the prison, family and friends, and wider society. Policy structures need to recognise the social determinants of successful grieving – which may link to putative desistance (this being subject to future research) - and incorporate them much more successfully into the currently constrained lives of bereaved prisoners.

Maladaptive coping strategies in response to grief and other stressors need to be recognised as often becoming fixed during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. The accounts provided challenge us all to become much more culturally conscious of the discrete needs of a minority of bereaved males, both in society and in prison. Consequently, third sector bereavement charities, social services and other public sector bodies need to be cognisant of the effects of early grief on coping behaviours, and far more alert to the possibility of future offending behaviour, particularly among young males.

The combined narratives reveal that HMPS would benefit from finding ways of absorbing prisoners' grief in a much more humane and empathic way whilst being mindful of resources, temporal and spatial constraints, populism and the political arena. Bereavement may act as one of the most powerful levers for eventual desistance, whereupon a prisoner may be able to break free from crime. However this is, as yet, unproven. Within the grieving process is the propensity for negative health consequences and resistance to the regime due to inherent frustrations and distrust, resulting in an unsafe space for both inmates and workers. Such incongruity is a concept which prisoners, prison psychologists, Parole Board members and others assessing them for the likelihood of reoffending behaviour, and those working and living alongside them on a daily basis, need to have a much greater awareness and

understanding of. Accordingly, improved mechanisms of trust are badly needed.

The interviewees' disclosures reveal subtle injustices which are pertinent to the wider discussion on the suitability of incarceration in its current structural format as an effective means of punishment. While issues such as self-harm, violence and drug abuse deserve the high level of attention that they do within this unique setting, they may be viewed as a means of coping. The thesis critically suggests that a dominant root cause – the range of grief stressors associated with bereavement – needs to be attended to principally, with consideration of the coping mechanisms employed becoming a vital adjunct.

Finally, the study provides a more informed understanding of the effects of grief in prison by synthesising the criminological and thanatological literature with empirically-derived accounts. Key findings concern unique, prison-related stressors which impact on the grieving process, the resulting frustrations causing tension, and the depth of capacity to cope with them. Chapter Eight evidences how the Dual Process Model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe and Schut, 1999, 2016) has been developed, and a new theory – Prisoners' Grief Overload theory – has been proposed. A proposition has been put forward for future inquiry: a significant bereavement can become a factor in putative desistance from crime if grief stressors are adequately confronted and processed, and a new individualised truth is attained. The criteria for PCBD have been critiqued (Chapter Eight), recommendations have been provided to future bereaved prisoners by the prisoner participants, and policy recommendations have been put forward, alongside future research possibilities. For possible future desistance to ensue, ethically-justified policy and enhanced support needs to be in place in prison, and the prisoner needs to be freely willing to engage with the grieving and desistance processes. Building on this, the broader narrative on grief needs opening up to provide a much more informed discussion, taking account particularly of how significant loss following a death affects marginalised individuals, and the secondary impact this has on society as a whole.

APPENDIX 1

Marion Wilson   (author's name and
(my address removed   email address removed)
for confidentiality)

                                          Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist
                                                      North East Forensic Psychology Service

24.01.17

Research title: Exploring and understanding grief in prison

Dear Ms Wilson

Thank you for your second amended application to undertake the above research project in NOMS.

I was pleased with the clarity of the resubmission and am happy that the modifications required have been undertaken. As such, your application is supported.

Please note, whilst North East & Yorkshire Psychology Service's may support an application, unless the project is commissioned by MoJ/NOMS and signed off by Ministers, the decision to grant access to prisons and facilitate the research ultimately lies with the Governing Governor/Director of the establishment/s. It is therefore your responsibility to gain approval from the Governors of HMP (name of prison removed for anonymity) to undertake this research.

Yours sincerely

(signatory's name removed)
Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist
North East Forensic Psychology Services

Cc: The National Research Committee

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APPENDIX 2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR INMATES INVOLVED IN SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (TO BE READ OUT, IF REQUESTED)

EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING GRIEF IN PRISON

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet, which is about a study taking place in the prison. The sheet explains the reason for the study and what will happen if you want to take part. The research is being carried out for a PhD at the University of Hull. It has been approved by the University and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

What is the study about?

It is to understand how grief affects a prisoner. It also will look at how staff and other prisoners respond to that grief. Grief can affect how we think, feel and behave, as well as in other ways. It will be important to hear the views of bereaved inmates and people working in the prison. A conversation about the effects of grief on both the prisoner and those around him will take place. Some prisoners may cope well, others less well, as a result of being in prison. Knowing about all ways of coping will be of use to the study.

What would taking part mean?

You will have volunteered for this study because someone important to you died. This might have been recently or at some time in your past, including a long time ago. Or you might have been very affected by a death which you saw or were aware of even though you did not have a close relationship with the person. We are sorry for your loss. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. However, you will have to have been in *'HMP North of England'* for longer than a month. As far as you know, you will not be leaving this prison in the next month. You would need to confirm you are not thought to be 'at risk' of harming yourself or other people because you do not have a 'live' ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody & Teamwork) document. If you do get involved, you are invited to take part in an informal interview. This will be held in a room on a day and at a time that you can make. Arrangements will be agreed with staff. It will take no more than 2 hours. If you want to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you are clear about what will happen.

The Researcher will ask for a brief note to be made on your prison records stating that you have agreed to take part. If you cause the Researcher to be worried that you may harm yourself or another person, be involved in a security risk, or you talk about a threat of terrorism, this will need to be reported to a member of staff.

You are free to stop being involved *at any time* up until the study finishes in the prison on 30th August 2017. Please tell the Researcher in person, or speak to a member of staff if you change your mind afterwards. You do not have to say why you want to withdraw. Any data you have provided up to the point of withdrawal will be used in the study, unless you request otherwise. A reply back to you will let you know the message has been received. Withdrawing from the study will not have any effect on your prison sentence.

If the Researcher has concerns that you become distressed, she will tell a member of staff on the wing.

What will happen if someone wants to take part?

You will have a conversation with the Researcher. This is called a research interview. You will be asked about the deaths of any important people in your life. The aim is to find out how grief has affected you while being in prison. Also, how you have dealt with your grief and any issues caused because of it. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions you will be asked. It is your personal experience which is of interest and this will provide valuable information about how grief is managed in prison. What is said will be audio recorded. Hand written notes will also be taken. The audio equipment can be paused or stopped if necessary and sections deleted if you do not feel comfortable.

How will the information be kept safe and private?

Your real name won't be used in the study. Also, your real name will be kept separate to anything you talk about, in the typed-up record of the discussion, and other records. Information will stay secure with password protection and an encrypted memory stick. This and any papers about the study will be stored in a lockable cabinet/room.

How do you make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any unintended harm you may suffer will be dealt with. If you need to make a formal complaint, please write to the Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise, Larkin Building, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. You can also speak to someone on the Independent Monitoring Board in prison and they will help you make a complaint.

What are the down sides of taking part?

Some people find it had to talk about grief at any time. It may be harder if you are struggling with grief now. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not wish to. If talking about the topic affects you and you no longer want to take part, we can end the interview straight away.

Information about types of support in prison will be given out, for you to use if you feel it would be helpful to you.

What is the point of taking part?

You will not be rewarded for taking part. Speaking about the topic, though, may be helpful to you, as you share your thoughts, feelings and experiences. By taking part, you will be able to help other people to understand how grief affects prisoners, and staff in prison. The results of the research will be available to you if you want them. If you are interested, please let me know. Printed articles and conference presentations will also be used to make the findings more widely available.

If you would like to take part, please make arrangements to let me know. If you have any further questions about the study, please ask.

Marion Wilson, Research Student, School of Education and Social Sciences, Wilberforce Building, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Tel 01482 346311.

APPENDIX 3 CONSENT FORM FOR PRISONERS

EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING GRIEF IN PRISON

Before you consent to take part in the study you need to understand what it will involve and how you may be affected. Please tick either YES or NO to the following statements. I understand that:

I have been in *'HMP North of England'* for longer than a month and I have more than a month to go before I will leave this prison.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I do not have a live ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) document at the moment.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I am in agreement for the Researcher to ask for a brief note to be made on my records in prison, stating that I have agreed to take part.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
If the Researcher is worried that I may be a risk to myself, to others, or I have some information about a breach of security or terrorism, this will need to be reported to a member of staff.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I will be taking part in a recorded interview that will be like a conversation. We will talk about my grief in this prison as a result of the death of someone who was important to me.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
Due to the topic being talked about, I may feel upset. I understand we can pause or stop the recording at any time.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I will be given information about different types of support and how to get support if I wish to do so.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
In the research report and in any publications my real name will not be used. People will not know who I am from what is written about me.	YES	☐
	NO	☐

Documents and data stored at the University will be securely stored and kept confidential.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I can stop being involved *at any time* up until the study finishes in the prison on 30th August 2017 without giving a reason. This decision won't affect my prison sentence. Any data I have provided up to the point of withdrawal will be used in the study, unless I request otherwise.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
If the Researcher has concerns should I become distressed, she will tell a member of staff on the wing.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I will not receive a reward for taking part in the study.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I have received details of how to make a complaint through the University of Hull. I can speak to a member of the Independent Monitoring Board if I need help in making a complaint.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
The study may be printed in publications and also presented at conferences.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I have read the information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and am clear about what will happen if I take part.	YES	☐
	NO	☐
I agree to take part in the study.	YES	☐
	NO	☐

Participant's signature ……………..…………………

Researcher's signature ….………………………..

Date ………………..…………………………………

APPENDIX 4

TOPIC GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

BEREAVED PRISONERS

1 What bereavements have you experienced in prison, and before that?

2 How have you reacted due to being bereaved?

3 How have staff and other inmates behaved towards you while you have been bereaved in prison?

4 In which ways, if any, has bereavement changed you?

5 How could the prison have helped you manage your grief more effectively?

6 What recommendations do you have for other bereaved inmates?

Thank you for your time and contributions, which have been most helpful.

PEOPLE WORKING IN THE PRISON

1 In which ways do you respond to a prisoner with grief issues as part of your job role?

2 What are the most notable difficulties which arise for staff when dealing with grieving inmates?

3 What influence does a staff member's own experience of significant deaths have on his/her dealings with grieving prisoners?

4   What can be done to help improve support for grieving prisoners?

Thank you for your time and contributions, which have been most helpful.

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