

**LOCUS OF CONTROL IN CHILDREN WITH  
EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL  
DIFFICULTIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

**VOLUME TWO**

by

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## **Appendix I      The origins of the locus of control construct**

### **Rotter's social learning theory**

The locus of control construct was borne out of the social learning theory of Julian Rotter, first presented as a systematic statement in a 1954 text entitled Social Learning and Clinical Psychology. This title reflected Rotter's interests not solely as a theoretician but, first and foremost, as a practising psychotherapist.

Although the construct has often become isolated and distanced from social learning theory, it would seem necessary to offer a brief account of its theoretical origins and observe how one discrete aspect of this theory gained in popularity and, like a fledgling cuckoo, gradually outgrew and supplanted all other aspects.

Rotter's doctoral studies were completed at the beginning of the 1940s and his work was greatly influenced by the behavioural theories of Hull and Spence, the ideas of Skinner concerning reinforcement and the notion of expectancy developed by Tolman. He was also influenced by the field theories of Lewin and was a keen follower of Adler's teachings (see Mosher, 1968). These latter theorists convinced him that behaviour should be described from the perspective of the person whose behaviour is under scrutiny rather than from the viewpoint of the observer and also that it was necessary to consider the perceived social context in addition to intrapersonal factors as determinants of behaviour. Rotter's theory, therefore, represents an attempt to integrate the reinforcement approaches of the behaviourists with the field theories of cognitive psychology (see Rotter, Chance and Phares, 1972, p.1).

As a trainer of clinical psychologists, Rotter worked closely with George Kelly and Carl Rogers at Ohio State University prior to moving to the University of Connecticut in 1963. He retired in 1985.

A central tenet of Rotter's theory is that most learning occurs in interpersonal situations.

“It is a social learning theory because it stresses the fact that the major or basic modes of behaving are learned in social situations and are inextricably fused with needs requiring for their satisfaction the mediation of other persons” (Rotter, 1954, p.84).

Although Rotter draws heavily upon learning theory, particularly upon the concept of reinforcement, he argues that this does not mean that cognitive factors can be ignored. Unlike animals, whose behaviour in experimental situations had been extensively studied by learning theorists and which, as a result, had acted as the progenitors of stimulus-response theories, humans do not passively respond to reinforcement, but actively interpret, predict and evaluate it while monitoring their own performance:

“The role of reinforcement, reward or gratification is universally recognised by students of human nature as a critical one in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. However an event regarded by some persons as a reward or reinforcement may be differently perceived and reacted to by others. One of the determinants of this reaction is the degree to which the individual perceives that the reward follows from, or is contingent upon, his own behaviour or attributes versus the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of himself and may occur independently of his own actions. The effect of a reinforcement following some behaviour on the part of a human subject, in other words, is not a simple stamping-in process but depends upon whether or not the person perceives a causal relationship between his own behaviour and the reward” (Rotter, 1966, p.1).

### **The basic concepts of Rotter’s social learning theory.**

Rotter’s theory has four main variables, behaviour potential, expectancy, reinforcement value and the psychological situation. Each of these will be dealt with in turn.

#### **a) Behaviour Potential**

Rotter argues that in any particular situation an individual selects from a range of possible behaviours that which is most appropriate to achieve a specific goal. For example, when a teacher enters the classroom, a child, wanting to create a favourable impression, may rise to his or her feet, call out a welcome, get out their books and start working or engage in some other form of behaviour aimed to please. Each of these behaviours has a potential for occurrence and in any specific situation, according to Rotter’s theory, the greater the

likelihood of its achieving a particular goal, the higher its potential and the more likely such a behaviour will occur in the case of that individual. Thus, to predict the potential of a particular behaviour occurring in a given situation one must take into account the alternative behaviours available.

Rotter defines behaviour broadly to include not only observable actions, but also cognitive or implicit behaviour which cannot necessarily be directly observed and has to be inferred from the presence of other behaviours.

#### b) Expectancy

Expectancy is the:

“...probability held by the individual that a particular reinforcement will occur as a function of a specific behaviour on his part in a specific situation or situations” (Rotter 1954, p.107).

It is the concept of expectancy which introduces a cognitive element to Rotter's theory. Expectancies involve subjective estimates of probability and, in any given situation, may depart significantly from what observers might consider to be 'realistic'. Sharing the view of Kelly, Rotter considers that it is an individual's personal construction of his world that determines his behaviour rather than the supposedly more objective perceptions of others.

As the individual matures, expectancies for behaviour-reinforcement sequences develop, with increases or reductions in expectancy resulting from the occurrence or non-occurrence of reinforcement:

“As an infant develops and acquires more experience he differentiates events which are causally related to preceding events and those which are not” (Rotter, 1966, p. 1).

The theory differentiates between specific expectancies based on experiences in similar situations and generalised expectancies which arise from a wide range of related situations:

“Expectancies generalise from a specific situation to a series of situations which are perceived as related or similar. Consequently, a generalised expectancy for a class of related events has functional properties and makes up one of the important classes of variables in personality description.....Such generalised expectancies in combination with specific expectancies act to determine choice behaviour along with the value of potential reinforcements” (Rotter, 1966, p.2).

Thus, the child who has learned that a particular teacher tends to respond favourably to a greeting on entry may develop a generalised expectancy that all teachers are very likely to react to such behaviour in an equally positive manner.

Rotter stresses that the proportionate influence of generalised and specific expectancies will largely be determined by the novelty of the situation in which the actor finds him or herself. Where an actor has had little experience of a particular situation, generalised expectancies will be more important. As greater experience of such situations is gained, however, the relative importance of specific expectancies will increase as that of generalised expectancies decreases.

To illustrate, suppose a child is stopped by a policeman for riding a bicycle without lights. If there has been no prior contact with this particular officer or, indeed, policemen generally, expectancies concerning the reinforcement value of various responses such as running away or apologising may be determined by the child's overall experience of broadly similar situations with other authority figures such as parents, teachers and social workers. Rather than holding specific expectancies based upon prior dealings with this officer, the child's responses are likely to be determined by generalised expectancies accumulated over a wide range of related situations. Should the child have further dealings with this officer, expectancies will be increasingly determined by these particular experiences with generalised expectancies having an increasingly marginal influence.

Rotter points out that the more narrowly the term generalised expectancy is defined, the higher the resulting prediction. The term is arbitrary in the breadth of situations that can be included. The distinction between generalised and specific expectancy is similarly arbitrary. Rotter (1975) points out, however, that:

“Generalised expectancies are interesting in their own right, since they may be thought of a) as important personality characteristics, b) as defining dimensions of generalisation, and c) as allowing broad predictions from limited data. They do, however, have their limitations, since they represent only one of many variables that enter into the prediction of behaviour, and their relative importance is a function of the novelty and/or ambiguity of the situation” (p.59).

#### c) Reinforcement Value

If an attempt were made to predict a specific behaviour such as apologising to the policeman in the above illustration, or alternatively, striking out or denying the alleged offence, one would need to know the value to the child of the reinforcement that might result in each instance. For some individuals, an opportunity to infuriate a policeman may have high reinforcement value. As there will usually be a range of possible reinforcements, however, a decision concerning relative value needs to be made. The child, for example, may wish to return home speedily to watch a television programme and, for this reason, decide that angering the policeman would be unwise.

#### d) The Psychological Situation

Rotter maintains that the focus of personality study should be

“...the interaction of the individual and his meaningful environment” (1954, p. 85)

He argues that personality theorists have often placed too great an emphasis upon traits or dispositions with a corresponding neglect of situational contexts and their influence upon behaviour. Reflecting his phenomenological orientation Rotter’s reference is to the situation as perceived by the individual rather than to its physical characteristics. As psychological situations determine both expectancies and reinforcement values they consequently affect behaviour potential. To illustrate, the child’s response when confronted by the policeman may be influenced by rather different expectancies and reinforcement values if he is accompanied by a group of delinquent peers rather than being on his own.

## Predicting behaviour

Rotter indicates the relationship between the above variables as they are used to predict behaviour at a specific time and place by the following formula:

$$BP_{x1s1} R_a = f(E_{x1s1} R_a & R_{Va,s1})$$

This formula is read:

“The potential for behaviour  $x$  to occur in situation  $1$  in relation to reinforcement  $a$ , is a function of the expectancy of occurrence of reinforcement  $a$ , following behaviour  $x$  in situation  $1$ , and the value of reinforcement  $a$  in situation  $1$ ” (Rotter, Chance and Phares, 1972, p.14).

Such a formulation is limited for it deals only with the potential for a given behaviour to occur in relation to a single reinforcement. Although it may be useful for testing hypotheses in highly controlled experimental situations it has less relevance to clinical settings for which the theory was originally developed. Clinicians are more concerned with broader classes of behaviour involving multiple behaviours, expectancies and reinforcement values.

Thus Rotter (1954) provides a second formula:

$$NP = f(FM \& NV) \text{ which reads:}$$

“The potentiality of occurrence of a set of behaviours that lead to the satisfaction of some need (need potential) is a function of the expectancies that these behaviours will lead to these reinforcements (freedom of movement) and the strength or value of these reinforcements (need value)” (Rotter, 1954, p.110).

The terms, need potential, freedom of movement and need value can be considered to be parallel constructs to those outlined above. Where they differ is that they reflect a personality-oriented shift of focus from particular to classes of reinforcements and behaviours. According to Rotter, different behaviours and reinforcements become functionally related and thus can be classed together as a group. For example, a teacher's smile to a child or a gentle pat on the back could be considered to be functionally related and both classed as approval. In the above formula, therefore, need potential refers to the probability that one of a group of functionally related behaviours will occur; need value refers to the average

preference value of a group of functionally related reinforcements and freedom of movement is defined as:

“..the mean expectancy of obtaining positive satisfactions as a result of a set of related behaviours directed towards the accomplishment of a group of functionally related reinforcements” (Rotter, 1954, p.194).

Although the latter formulation, with its emphasis upon classes of behaviours and its shift from single to average values, may have greater appeal to the clinician, it is likely that many, overwhelmed by the seeming precision of the notation, and unaware of Rotter’s cautioning that:

“It should be remembered, however, that these formulas do not at this time imply any precise mathematical relationships” (1982a, p.242)

will reject the formulae on the grounds of pseudo-precision and, as a result, perceive the theory to be irrelevant for work with clients in the ‘real world’ as Rotter intended. In the opinion of this writer, such a conclusion would be unfortunate and could be considered akin to throwing the baby out with the bath water. To dispense with mathematical notation in no way discredits Rotter’s theory nor the relevance and relationship of his variables in theoretical or clinical work. Such formulae may over-simplify complex phenomena or be well-nigh incomprehensible. For example, the formula of multiple behaviours, expectancies and reinforcement values ( $NP = f(FM \& NV)$ ) might mislead as it fails to include the concept of the psychological situation which is here held to be implicit. Finally:

“It is with the term ‘freedom of movement’ that we approach the location of the locus of control construct in social learning theory” (Lefcourt, 1982, p. 33)

Freedom of movement, as has been stated, refers to expectancies that certain behaviours lead to the satisfaction of certain goals. Such expectancies develop over one’s lifetime and generalise to a range of situations.

Rotter argues that there is another important class of generalised expectancies which are derived not, as in the case above, from the similarity of particular kinds of reinforcement (achievement, approval, etc.) but rather from similar aspects of problematic situations. In

this latter case the nature of the reinforcements may vary. This generalised expectancy dimension will reflect individuals' perceptions of a range of situations as presenting similar problems to be solved. To take account of problem-solving expectancies, Rotter, Chance and Phares (1972) have provided a further mathematical formula which states that an expectancy in a given situation will be determined by:

- a) the expectancy that a given reinforcement will occur based on previous experience in the same situation
- b) expectancies generalised from other related situations
- c) a variety of problem-solving generalised expectancies

divided by a function of the number of experiences the individual has had in that specific situation.

There are an infinite number of generalised problem-solving expectancies. These include the extent to which others can be trusted (Rotter, 1971), the belief that problems can be solved by looking for alternative solutions, the expectancy that interpersonal relationships will be facilitated by understanding other people's unexpressed, as well as expressed motives, and, the generalised expectancy which has attracted most interest, the notion of locus of control, i.e. the degree to which people believe in internal or external control of reinforcement (Rotter, 1966).

Although it is clear from the foregoing discussion that locus of control is but one of many problem-solving generalised expectancies, to the chagrin of Rotter (1975), many writers have tended to treat it as the central concept in his theory. This can result in not only a disregard of other expectancies but also a failure to recognise the importance of the reinforcement value and the psychological situation in predicting behaviour.

### **Locus of control as a personality variable**

It has been noted that Rotter's work was greatly influenced by his practice as a clinician and,



as such, he has consistently endeavoured to derive theoretical ideas which have relevance to the practice of psychotherapy (see in particular Rotter, 1970, 1978). The stimulus for the study and development of the concept of locus of control stemmed from consideration as to why some clients in psychotherapy:

‘... appear to gain from new experiences or to change their behaviour as a result of new experiences, (while) others seem to discount new experiences by attributing them to chance or to others and not to their own behaviour or characteristics (Rotter 1966, p. 2).

This observation was stimulated by the case of Karl S. which is described at some length by Phares (1976). This client was seen in 1954 by Phares who acted as therapist with Rotter acting as clinical supervisor. Karl was receiving therapy for social-sexual and education-employment difficulties and it was considered by his clinicians that his problems centred on his virtual lack of interpersonal skills. For this reason, treatment took a didactic, educative form. Despite following his clinician’s advice and highly specific directions and, as a result, becoming increasingly successful in his social and interpersonal dealings, Karl continued to be pessimistic about his future, failed to seek relevant information to help him to cope more effectively and continually ascribed his eventual successes to mere good fortune. Phares began to recognise that his initial assumptions were insufficient to explain this phenomenon:

“Therapeutic efforts were predicated on the assumption that as Karl tried out various behaviours and witnessed their reinforcement, this would increase both his expectancy that these and similar behaviours would be successful in the future and his willingness to repeat them .... This seemed to be the path of a ‘tried and true’ psychological principle” (Phares, 1976, p. 2).

Karl’s response to reinforcement demonstrated to Phares and Rotter the inadequacy of learning theory:

“The view that behaviors followed by reward tend to be repeated while behaviors not rewarded tend to disappear is just too simple” (Phares, 1976, p.3).

Gradually, it was recognised that Karl saw reinforcement as beyond his control, that his behaviour was not a major determinant in the receipt of rewards and, correspondingly, there

was little reason to expend energy in the pursuit of success. It was from this insight into Karl's phenomenological world that the locus of control concept developed as an element of Rotter's existing social learning theory (Phares, 1976).

It was several years later that Rotter produced a systematic outline of the locus of control concept in a 1966 paper entitled Generalised expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement.

Rotter's 'ideal' definition which describes the internal-external variable is as follows:

**"When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, we have labelled this a belief in external control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behaviour or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control"** (Rotter, 1966, p.1; emphasis as in original).

Although the research literature often makes reference to 'internals' and 'externals' it is important to note that this is merely a semantic convenience. Rotter (1975) points out that at no time did he hypothesise a typology or bimodal distribution:

**"Rather, we assumed that with internal-external control something approximating a normal curve described the populations that we were interested in"** (Rotter, 1975, p.57).

As, has been the case with many of the great theorists in psychology, Skinner, Piaget, Eysenck, aspects of Rotter's work have been seized upon by researchers whose interpretations and recommendations do not necessarily suggest a sound grasp of underlying theory.

Early attempts to examine the influence of control expectancies upon an individual's behaviour took place as controlled experimental studies. Several studies involved the manipulation of control expectancies through the allocation of subjects to what they were led to perceive as skill or chance conditions (e.g. James, 1957; James and Rotter, 1958;

Phares, 1957). In one such study, Phares (1957) presented subjects with a perceptual discrimination task involving the matching of colours and length of lines. The tasks were ambiguous to the extent that subjects could not know with any certainty whether their answers were correct. Half of the subjects were informed that the task was so difficult that success was primarily a matter of luck. The others were told that task success depended on skill. All subjects received the same prearranged feedback informing them of success and failure and were asked to wager poker chips to indicate their expectancy that they would be correct on each succeeding trial.

The results were as anticipated. Shifts in expectancy were much greater and more frequent under skill than chance conditions although in the chance condition there were significantly more expectancy changes which failed to reflect the experience of prior trials.

This series of experimental studies demonstrated that when reinforcement is perceived as contingent upon skill and thus under personal control, subjects are more likely to draw upon their past experience as a basis to predict their likelihood of future success or failure. However, when subjects believe they do not control the occurrence of reinforcement they generalise less from the past and fail to learn from experience. Thus reinforcement alone cannot explain or predict behaviour; it is necessary to understand how that reinforcement is interpreted.

Although the ecological validity of these early experiments is open to doubt, given the artificiality of the laboratory setting and the use of simple tasks, they nevertheless proved instrumental in developing interest in the notion of internal-external control and led researchers to believe that such ideas may play a significant part in everyday behaviour. Arising from this work was the development of paper and pencil assessment scales and it was these measurement devices which ultimately led to the phenomenal growth in locus of control studies.

## **Appendix 2 Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: do they represent a discrete population?**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 briefly addresses the above question and suggests that the literature has tended to represent such children as an homogenous group. The chapter argues that the unifying feature of the present sample is that all the children have been perceived as manifesting behavioural difficulties of a magnitude which requires referral to Educational Psychology Services. The nature and frequency of these behaviours vary substantially from one child to another, and the writer considers it appropriate to address issues of definition and categorisation. As these issues inform, but are not central to, the present study, they are only briefly raised in the main body of the text and more detailed discussion is undertaken in this appendix.

### **The nature of problem behaviour**

“Diagnosis and assessment are crucial in clinical practice and research. In the clinic, diagnostic assessment facilitates treatment, and the success or failure of particular treatments in turn illuminates the diagnostic process. In research on psychopathology, groupings, however tentative, of persons having similar problems and characteristics are essential to the testing of theoretical positions” (McReynolds, 1989, p.83).

“Definitions are usually clear and concise at the extremes of a condition... As one moves from the extreme of a handicapping condition toward the mean, one reaches a point where the waters are sufficiently muddied to cause serious definitional problems. If such controversies were relegated to academics, scientists or interested philologists, it could be a merry and instructive debate. However, where such definitions limit or prescribe who may or may not receive services, the definitional problem becomes significant for children, their families, and school systems” (Bower, 1982, p.55).

These two quotations point to the dilemma which confronts this study. The investigation concerns locus of control beliefs in children whose emotions and behaviour are perceived by others to be problematic. But are these children in some way ‘different’ from the rest of the child population? Given that a set of children comprise the subjects of this investigation

an implicit affirmation of such a notion might be assumed. It will be argued, however, that observed differences between children are generally of degree (i.e. largely quantitative) rather than categorical (i.e. qualitative). Although, as McReynolds suggests in the above quotation, it is often valuable to group children with similar behaviours and characteristics together for research purposes, one must also recognise the danger of iatrogenic consequences resulting from placement decisions. As Bowers' quotation acknowledges, the establishment of typologies or clinical descriptors may have significant implications for children by virtue of the way in which they are classified and the effects this may have upon others' responses to them.

To describe a child as 'maladjusted', 'emotionally disturbed', 'disruptive' or having 'emotional and behavioural difficulties', even in informal classroom interactions, is to risk the attachment of a label which may significantly affect future interactions (e.g. Lemert, 1951, 1967; Hargreaves, Hestor and Mellor, 1975, Hargreaves, 1976). As Hargreaves points out, publicly labelling a child can have deleterious and unanticipated consequences. Rather than deterring such behaviour the label may be accepted by the child. By living the label, the child's deviant behaviour is further established and maintained.

“The reactions of the labeller, his indignation and his punitive orientation generates further deviance in the sense that labelling fails in its intended purpose (to deter, to punish etc.) but creates problems for the labelled person which are paradoxically, partly solved by further deviance” (Hargreaves, 1976, p.203).

The formal attachment of such labels by clinicians and/or administrators may have equally far-reaching consequences. Such a process can result in substantial life changes for the child who may be placed in a special educational setting or, in some instances, be removed from home and placed into residential schooling or the care of the local authority. Alternatively, not to describe the child in such fashion may make it difficult to obtain greater adult time and support together with those additional material resources which might enable the child to maximise his or her social and emotional development. The positive and negative implications and consequences of such 'descriptors' are such that clear understanding and agreement of the meaning of such terms by all parties would seem essential.

In textbooks which address the subject of children whose behaviour is seen as problematic one will invariably encounter questions of definition, classification, identification and diagnosis. As Kauffman (1985) points out, there are relatively few behaviours (e.g. self-injurious behaviour, muteness, and the eating of faeces) which represent discrepancies from universally accepted developmental norms. Most behaviours are judged by sociocultural norms, and behaviour which is acceptable in one setting, subculture or community (e.g. talking, swearing, hitting others, stealing) may be considered abnormal in another. The relative influence of differing perceptions in official accounts is often a reflection of status and power rather than veridicality:

“Perhaps there is a science of behaviour, but the objective methods of natural science do not play an extremely important part in assigning the status of deviant to someone. Disordered behaviour is whatever behaviour the chosen authority figures in a culture designate as intolerable. Typically, it is behaviour that is perceived as threatening the stability, security, or values of that society” (Kauffman, 1985, p. 16).

In addition to cultural differences, the developmental aspect of children’s behaviour should also be recognised. Children are developing organisms and behaviours which might be perceived as appropriate at one age could give cause for considerable concern at another. A temper tantrum is more worrying in a fifteen year old than a two year old. Enuresis might be considered similarly. In contrast, preoccupation with sexual matters would not be particularly worrying in the adolescent but perhaps would be in a seven year old.

There is, as yet, no universally accepted definition of any of the terms which are used to describe children whose behaviour is seen as problematic. Definitions, of course, serve a number of purposes; Epstein, Cullinan and Sabatino (1977), in their discussion of the difficulties of defining behaviour disorders, list three:

- a) to guide the delivery of services to children through administrative channels
- b) to reflect a particular theoretical position or structure a discussion

c) to describe populations of children for research purposes

A significant number of locus of control studies have examined the beliefs of subjects who are said to represent 'emotionally disturbed/behaviourally disordered' populations, yet rarely has there been any description or definition of the behaviours which have been seen to be problematic (see chapter 2 for discussion). In some cases a list of diagnostic categories (e.g. autistic, psychotic, unsocialised aggressive) is included yet the categories vary considerably from one study to another.

Administratively, this issue is little clearer. D.E.S. Circular 23/89 entitled Special Schools for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties describes the range of behaviours in a fashion which is virtually inclusive of any form of difficult behaviour:

"Emotional and behavioural difficulties are manifest in many forms and severity of behaviour. Children with these difficulties exhibit unusual problems of adaptation to a range of physical, social and personal situations. They may set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive, bizarre or withdrawn behaviour. Some children will have difficulty making sense of their environment because they have a severe pervasive developmental disorder or more rarely an adult type psychosis. These children may need exceptional arrangements" (p. 3).

This writer would caution against the tendency of locus of control researchers to suggest, explicitly or implicitly, that children who present with various problematic behaviours constitute a qualitatively different population in clinical terms. Although a 'population' can be derived from administrative procedures (e.g. those who receive special education, who have been suspended from school or who have been referred to specialist agencies because their behaviour is worrying to others) it is important to note that such groupings are somewhat arbitrary and reflect current and often competing philosophies, different tolerance levels and the availability of resources which may vary substantially from one geographical area to another.

In order to explore the validity and usefulness of diagnostic classifications, and their

potential relevance to the study of locus of control beliefs, the following perspectives of 'problem behaviour' will be briefly examined:

- psychiatric classification: neurotic and conduct disorders
- the concepts of maladjustment, disruptiveness and emotional and behavioural difficulties
- empirical/behavioural classification

- **psychiatric classification: neurotic and conduct disorders**

Rutter and Graham (1968) state that the term, psychiatric disorder, refers to:

“...abnormalities of emotion, behaviour or relationships which are developmentally inappropriate and of sufficient duration and severity to cause persistent suffering or handicap to the child and/or distress or disturbance to the family or community” (p. 563).

In the most widely accepted psychiatric classification systems, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (A.P.A., 1980, 1987) and the International Classification of Diseases (World Health Organisation, 1988) the two largest psychiatric groupings for children are those disorders which appear to be characterised by neurotic (or emotional) problems and those by problems of conduct (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970). These categories are not mutually exclusive and many children may present with both.

Neurotic disorders involve an abnormality of the emotions (although, unlike the psychoses, do not involve a loss of reality sense). They include incapacitating and disproportionate states of anxiety, fear, depression and hypochondriasis.

Conduct disorders refer to abnormal behaviours which give rise to social disapproval. They include some forms of legally defined delinquency yet also many non-delinquent behaviours such as bullying, fighting, and disruptiveness. Most such behaviours are observed in all



children and it is important to note that conduct-disordered behaviour is marked by its abnormality within its sociocultural context and by the presence of abnormal or impaired social relationships. Rutter (1975), however, argues that the fact that diagnosis of conduct disorder depends upon social norms illustrates the logical fallacy of such a category.

Rutter and Graham (1968) argue that their use of the term 'psychiatric disorder' does not involve any concept of disease or illness. Such a conception, however, is often at odds with that of the lay public who may often consider a psychiatric condition to be a form of sickness. For those who are closely associated with a particular adult or child, the attachment of a psychiatric label may prove highly distressing.

For many, the medical model, within which psychiatry is subsumed, is inappropriate for dealing with social phenomena. Szasz, a radical psychiatrist, has argued that rather than conceiving of problematic behaviours as illnesses requiring cures, it is more meaningful to consider them as foreign languages - as alternative means of communication. Szasz argues that while in particular situations it may be desirable for an individual to adopt a different form of communication, such a behavioural shift should not be seen as representing a 'cure'. For Szasz, an individual's behaviour, however challenging, has meaning and purpose:

"Personal conduct is always rule-following, strategic, and meaningful. Patterns of interpersonal and social relations may be regarded and analysed as if they were games, the behaviour of the players being governed by explicit or tacit game rules" (Szasz, 1961, p.275).

Although many cannot accept Szasz's extreme *laissez-faire*, non-interventionist position, his theories have served as an important corrective to disease models of behaviour.

For many, analysis of problem behaviour does not easily fit within a traditional medical model. Diagnosis in medicine is undertaken in order to determine the appropriate form of treatment. Unlike other branches of medicine, psychiatry can rarely determine the causes of a particular disorder and this results in an unclear relationship between diagnosis and treatment (Heather, 1976). Hoghughi (1978) attacks psychiatric diagnoses as:

“...hypothetical, inductive judgments which go, to varying degrees, beyond the ‘facts’ and cannot be substantiated unless the hypothesis is tested by appropriately detailed treatment measures” (p.213).

Hoghghi argues that hypotheses are rarely tested out with disordered children and such omissions must place into question the validity of the diagnosis. He points out the high status and prestige of the psychiatrist whose opinion is less readily questioned by others yet whose individual assessment of a child can result in:

“...influential labelling of ... (the child’s) ... state, the reliability and validity of which is open to serious question” (p.213).

Given the difficulties in gaining agreement about such diagnoses as schizophrenia (Cooper et al., 1972) one must seriously question the validity (and value) of diagnoses of ‘conduct’ and/or ‘neurotic’ disorder. Compared to schizophrenia and autism, conduct and neurotic disorders:

“... represent less extreme degrees of departure from normal ... in which the exaggerated feelings and types of behaviour involved represent basically a **quantitative** rather than a **qualitative** deviation from normal” (Kolvin, Garside, Nicol, Macmillan, Wolstenholme and Leitch, 1981; emphasis as in original).

It is, perhaps, for this reason that psychiatric diagnoses of conduct and neurotic disorder have little bearing upon educational assessment and resourcing in this country or, indeed, the U.S.A. The Warnock Report (D.E.S., 1978) on the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People, argued that, in an educational context, the term ‘children with psychiatric disorder’ was less satisfactory than ‘children with emotional and behavioural disorders’ or ‘maladjusted children’. The committee argued that it was impossible to draw a sharp distinction between ‘psychiatric disorder’ and these other terms and, furthermore, use of the former term may erroneously suggest that all such children require psychiatric treatment.

Psychiatric diagnoses of conduct and neurotic disorder often have little influence or meaning to professionals outside of the medical profession although certain other diagnoses such as autistic, hyperactive or psychotic may, at times, have resourcing and treatment

implications.

This writer chose not to utilise psychiatric terminology to classify, describe or analyse the behaviours of the children in this study, not only because psychiatric classification generally has little relevance to educational settings but also because the two main classifications, conduct disorder and neurotic, would not have enabled sufficient differentiation between the children.

- **maladjustment, emotional and behavioural difficulties and disruptiveness**

- a) The maladjusted pupil**

As the influence of the medical profession in the field of special education has waned so has the acceptance of a medical model which invokes:

“...the whole conceptual apparatus of symptom, syndrome, diagnosis, aetiology, pathology, therapy and cure” (Hargreaves, 1978, p. 70).

This writer has frequently been asked by other professionals whether a particular child is maladjusted. Affirmation of this suggestion is likely to reinforce the interregator's likely belief that 'something is wrong with the child' but it is unlikely to offer greater understanding of the child's difficulties. The role of 'diviner' of children's psychological wellbeing may be seductive to those professionals who relish the status and prestige which accrue from perceived expertise in the eyes of colleagues, yet it will be argued that, in essence, this term has little meaning.

Since the 1944 Education Act there has been a significant shift from medical practitioners to educational psychologists and other educationalists for the major responsibility of identifying, assessing and recommending appropriate provision for children with learning and behaviour difficulties. This has resulted in a gradual move from medical and quasi-medical conceptualisations (e.g. maladjustment) to increasing emphasis upon behavioural,

interactionist and systems analyses.

The category of 'maladjustment' was established through Regulations, introduced in 1945, immediately following the 1944 Education Act. The Regulations defined maladjusted pupils as those:

“... who show evidence of emotional instability or psychological disturbance and who require special educational treatment in order to effect their personal, social and educational readjustment.”

This definition was of little value in clarifying an already amorphous and subjective construct and the terms 'emotional instability' and 'psychological disturbance' had no more explicit meaning than that of 'maladjustment'. A subsequent definition provided by the medically dominated Underwood Committee (Ministry of Education, 1955) hardly improved the situation:

“Maladjustment is not a medical term diagnosing a medical condition. It is not...to be equated with bad behaviour, delinquency, oddness or educational subnormality. Nor is it the same as a deviation from the normal; while it is true that many deviations are signs of maladjustment, some may involve only one side of a child's development and may not affect his mental health..... (Maladjustment) is a term describing an individual's relation at a particular time to the people and circumstances which make up his environment. In our view, a child may be regarded as maladjusted who is developing in ways that have a bad effect upon himself or his fellows and cannot without help be remedied by his parents, teachers and other adults in ordinary contact with him” (Underwood, 1955, p. 22).

Such a definition raises more questions than it answers.

- What does the expression, “a bad effect upon others” mean in practice?
- Does a perceived need for extra help often say more about the skills, tolerance levels and resources of those with whom the child is in conflict rather than the child's own mental health?
- Couldn't one argue that the above definition might apply to anyone whose behaviour is seen to be problematic by an authority figure? Witness past governmental descriptions of Mandela, Havel and Walesa. Soviet dissidents, particularly, have often been incarcerated

in psychiatric institutions, their challenge to the State construed as being indicative of their maladjustment.

Galloway and Goodwin (1987), describe maladjustment as a 'ragbag term' which can describe any behaviour which professionals find disturbing. Chazan, Moore, Williams and Wright (1974) voice the widely shared perception that:

“..the term ‘maladjustment’ has little psychological significance”(p.222)

and argue that rather than being a clinical diagnosis, the label has been primarily used for administrative purposes, that is, to enable the child to receive special educational provision.

Supporting this contention from his own professional experience, this writer can recall multi-professional case conferences where the application of the label ‘maladjusted’ was withheld until after the participants had decided whether placement in a school for maladjusted children was desirable. Here, the application of the label followed placement decisions rather than the more logical reverse. In such cases, quasi-scientific diagnoses were offered primarily for administrative convenience.

Research in the field of juvenile justice (Krisberg and Schwartz, 1983) has demonstrated that incarceration rates in American States are more closely correlated with the number of beds available than with arrest rates. Similarly, it is ‘accepted wisdom’ in the field of special education that new special schools and units will rapidly be filled whomsoever they cater for. It is not surprising, therefore, that research has suggested that the numbers of ‘maladjusted children’ tended to vary between local authorities as a function of special school provision. The Warnock Report (D.E.S. 1978), for example, reported that in one London borough, in January 1977, ten times as many children were ascertained as maladjusted as in another:

“Some of the variations between authorities may reflect variations in local policy and the strength of assessment services, but they also suggest a

relationship between the rate of ascertainment and the availability of special provision”( D.E.S., 1978, p.38).

The increase in the number of schools for the maladjusted since the implementation of the 1944 Education Act is phenomenal. In 1950 there were 587 pupils in English and Welsh schools for the maladjusted; by 1979 there were 22,402. The Warnock Report, supposedly an integrationist measure, made little difference and the proportion of secondary school pupils placed in schools for the maladjusted actually increased by 10% between 1978 and 1982 (Swann, 1985). The great majority of the children were (and are) boys.

Despite the Warnock Committee's endorsement of the continued value of the term 'maladjusted', the term has largely disappeared from formal educational parlance (although it is still frequently used by teachers and social workers in informal discussions) having been replaced by the terms 'children with emotional and behavioural difficulties' and/or 'disruptive pupils' These descriptors ostensibly describe two different populations.

#### **b) The child with emotional and behavioural difficulties**

In its rejection of categories of handicap the Warnock Report stated:

“It is ... impossible to establish precise criteria for defining what constitutes handicap. Yet the idea is deeply engrained in educational thinking that there are two types of children, the handicapped and the non-handicapped. Traditionally, the former have generally been thought to require special education, and the latter ordinary education. But the complexities of individual needs are far greater than this dichotomy implies” (D.E.S., 1978, p.37).

Warnock recommended that the statutory categories of handicap should be abolished and replaced by the concept of 'special educational needs'. Subsequent to the implementation of the 1981 Education Act in April 1983, children whose behavioural difficulties were such that they were seen to require 'special educational provision' were now described as 'children with emotional and behavioural difficulties'. Unlike 'maladjustment', however, certain forms of provision for children with the emotional and behavioural difficulties label (such as additional staffing) could be made available in mainstream schools.

In the opinion of this writer the term 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' is preferable to maladjustment for it suggests a dimensional rather than a categorical view of behaviour difficulties with no arbitrary distinction between the 'normal' and 'abnormal'. Furthermore, it addresses the overt problems which concern others and is less suggestive of a 'within-child' pathology. The development of the concept has been, to some extent, obfuscated by the 'identification' of another group of children with problem behaviours - the disruptives. With the fallacious logic borne out of administrative pragmatism these children are not formally recognised as having 'emotional and behavioural difficulties'.

### **c) The disruptive child**

"Most pupils believe that they and their teachers have different interests. In their view, it is his business to exact of them hard service, theirs to escape from it. It is his privilege to make laws; theirs to evade them. He is benefited by their industry, they by their indolence; he is honoured by their obedience, they by their independence. From the infant school to the professional seminary this moral warfare exists" (English Journal of Education, 1858, p. 373. Cited in Furlong, 1985)

Historical accounts of childhood misbehaviour at home and school (e.g. Furlong, 1985; Pearson, 1983) remind us that deviant behaviour is no recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, during the 1960s and 1970s public concern regarding misbehaviour in school grew to an extent that something of a moral panic (Cohen, 1973) about the disruptive pupil resulted.

It is easy to forget that the notion of the disruptive pupil first gained widespread popular usage during the 1970s. Colby and Harper (1985) liken the use of the term to that of the "ploughman's lunch" with its suggestion of history and tradition yet which, in actuality, is a modern notion, far from having been verified or validated over time. As with other diagnostic terms, widespread conceptual confusion abounds although this has not stopped the disruptive pupil (and the 'disruptive industry' of units, specialist teachers and publications) from proliferating.

For many practitioners, disruptive pupils, unlike their maladjusted counterparts, were perceived to have relatively satisfactory emotional and social histories. The fundamental difficulty was in their rejection of the school's mores and values which often clashed with their working-class, adolescent subculture. For some writers, such rejection is hardly surprising:

“If a group of psychologists, expert in attitude formation, were invited to devise a situation and create a series of experiences specifically to provoke young people into disruptive, hostile or aggressive behaviour, they could well come up with something uncomfortably close to what is experienced by large numbers of pupils in many British secondary schools” (McGuinness and Craggs, 1986, p.13).

In his ‘search for the disruptive pupil’ Turkington (1986) carried out an exhaustive analysis of contemporary publications in the mainstream national and local press, educational publications and teacher union and L.E.A. documents. He argues that the advent of the disruptive pupil followed a widespread increase in concern about school discipline. This phenomenon was fuelled by a number of political, institutional and legislative changes during the early 1970s - the raising of the school leaving age, the shift towards comprehensive schooling, the implementation of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act, which resulted in less institutionalisation of ‘difficult’ children, and the attack on educational standards outlined in both the Black Papers and the 1976 Callaghan ‘Great Debate’ speech. Turkington details how the terminology slowly changed during the early 1970s from ‘the ROSLA pupil’, to children who were ‘reluctant’ and ‘unruly’ or ‘school toughs’ and increasingly, ‘the disruptives’ For the teaching profession:

“This was a rhetoric with a number of distinct advantages” (Turkington, 1986, p. 72).

1. Disruption was a comparatively new term which could be used to describe what was seen to be a new problem - children who were indisciplined and violent in school. At the same time ‘disruptives’ could be differentiated from juvenile offenders (delinquents) and those who were perceived to have some form of mental disorder (emotionally disturbed).

2. As a new term, its causal roots could be explained in ways which did not result in teachers



being perceived as culpable. Contemporary union publications cited as explanatory factors: societal change, materialism, the break-up of the family, peer factors as well as a range of individual pathological factors. Where school factors were considered, emphasis was placed upon the need for increased resources and alternative provision.

3. Turkington points out that a third advantage of the term to teachers was its 'openness'. Because it was contextually defined and operationalised, the teachers:

"...could relate their own experiences and perceptions of problem behaviour to it. Consequently, the term could mean 'all things to all people' and frequently did so" (p.73).

The subjective nature of such a labelling process has rendered discussion or study of the 'disruptive pupil' a complex and, at times, fruitless endeavour:

"The definitions (of the disruptive pupil) adopted for surveys and in published reports were invariably so broad as to allow the inclusion of almost any incident of misbehaviour. The guiding criterion was the interpretation of the incident rather than the incident itself. This problem was frequently commented on and inevitably implied that pupils defined as 'disruptive' by one teacher or one school would not be defined in this way by other teachers in the same school or by other schools" (Turkington, 1986, p.103).

The widespread adoption of the term 'disruptive' had major implications for provision and resulted in the proliferation of off-site and on-site disruptive units. Since 1977, it has been estimated that the number of such units has quadrupled (Graham, 1988). There were many supposed advantages to such placements; they tended to be cheaper, more flexible in their admission and discharge procedures and, in principle, children could return to their schools when their behaviour was improved. In practice, such return is a rarity (Elton Report, 1989).

Given the above, it is somewhat ironic that during the 1980s increasing emphasis was placed upon skilled classroom management and teacher-pupil interaction as the central and most effective means of preventing and reducing classroom disruption (e.g. Chisholm, Kearney, Knight, Little, Morris and Tweddle, 1984; Robertson, 1981). This emphasis was reflected in the Elton Report on 'Discipline in Schools' (D.E.S., 1989) which rejected the suggestion

that bad behaviour in school was wholly the fault of pupils:

“No pupil is an island. Every incident has a range of immediate and longer term causes. Events in the classroom are influenced by a complex mixture of expectations, attitudes, regulations, policies and laws which are shaped by forces at work in the classroom, the school, the local community and society as a whole. The most central of these influences is the relationship between teacher and pupils” (Elton Report, p. 64).

### **Maladjusted, emotionally and behaviourally disordered or disruptive?**

Galloway and Goodwin (1987) argue that there have never been acceptable criteria for differentiating between maladjusted and disruptive pupils. The problem behaviours of both groups as listed in research reports have often been similar and children labelled disruptive could as easily have been termed maladjusted if that had proven administratively convenient. To some extent, the terms maladjusted and emotionally disturbed are rather broader as they may also include ‘neurotic’ children who may be socially withdrawn, unduly anxious and/or phobic.

In respect of aggressive, disruptive, acting-out children, however, the choice of label will often reflect placement requirements and existing resources rather than any particular feature of the children’s behaviour:

*“Local education authority administrators and educational psychologists can still get themselves into some curious muddles over this spurious distinction between maladjusted and disruptive children. Recommendations have to be couched in language appropriate to the desired destination. If, for example, a place is to be sought in a unit for disruptive pupils, the child must not be called maladjusted, since this may imply that a recognised special school or class is needed... Conversely, if a child is called disruptive in a teacher’s or educational psychologist’s report, placement in a special school may be difficult to arrange”* (Galloway and Goodwin, 1987, p.32).

Existing legislation continues to differentiate between children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (formerly, the ‘maladjusted’) and those who are labelled ‘disruptive’. If it is felt that a child has emotional and behavioural difficulties which may require special educational provision, the Local Education Authority is required to initiate full multi-

disciplinary assessment under Section 5 of the 1981 Education Act. Where the assessment confirms that the child has such needs a Statement of Special Educational Needs will be drawn up providing the child with access to a range of special provision. In contrast, where the child is held to be disruptive, s/he may be removed from mainstream classes to an on-site or off-site unit. There is no requirement for a full investigation of the child's/school's difficulties, neither is there any statutory protection under the 1981 Education Act which did not consider 'disruptiveness' as grounds for formal assessment:

"The effect of the 1981 Act was to enshrine in law a spurious distinction that had developed previously on an ad hoc basis" (Galloway and Goodwin, 1987, p.33).

The Elton Report on Discipline in Schools (1989) maintained the existing differentiation between the disruptive and the disturbed child. Unfortunately, the Committee's attempt to explain the difference is not particularly illuminating:

"We recognise that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between 'ordinary' bad behaviour and disturbed behaviour, but the distinction has to be made. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties tend to present behaviour problems earlier in their school careers than other 'difficult' pupils, and to behave in a disturbed and disturbing way regardless of which class or teacher they are with. The problems they present also tend to be more severe. Judgements must be made by teachers, educational psychologists and other professionals in individual cases" (p.150).

There are, however, the following flaws in this argument:

1. Special educational provision for children with behavioural difficulties does not require a quasi-medical diagnosis (e.g. disturbed, maladjusted). It follows from a formal assessment of the child's special educational needs under Section 5 of the 1981 Education Act where professional advice has indicated that the child's needs cannot be catered for in his present school. It is necessary, therefore, not only to consider 'within child' factors but also the influence upon the child of the educational context. The influence of schools as institutions upon children's behaviour is now widely recognised (e.g. Power et al., 1967; Rutter, et al., 1979; Mortimore et al., 1988). When a child's needs are assessed it is important to consider the extent and nature of the resources available to the school. One with generous staffing,

for example, may be able to meet a child's needs in a way that another school cannot and this factor is likely to influence decisions significantly as to whether a child is perceived as having emotional and behavioural difficulties which require special educational provision.

In this writer's own experience it has been salutary to observe the dramatic improvement in many children's behaviour following placement in special schools. In such cases it is not merely the child but also the setting which has changed. If the child's behaviour in this new setting is no longer unduly problematic does this mean that the original diagnosis was incorrect or, alternatively, that the child was disturbed and is so no longer? If the latter question is answered in the affirmative, how can one explain the common claim made by teachers and psychologists that this improvement in behaviour does not necessarily imply that a return to mainstream school would be successful?

2. Despite the demands of many teachers there is little specialist provision for disruptive primary aged children. Children within this age range can usually only receive special educational provision upon completion of an assessment under the 1981 Education Act. The attachment to the child of the label disruptive, therefore, which leads to, or results from, placement in a disruptive unit is, for administrative reasons, rare in young children. It may be for this reason that children who attend special schools are described by Elton as having presented behaviour problems earlier in their school careers.

3. Individual judgements not only reflect a nosology which is subjective and lacking in any consensus but also one which is often heavily influenced by pragmatic considerations. Labelling the child disruptive may enable a school to transfer a child to an off-site unit in a matter of days whereas to describe the child as disturbed may invoke a complex assessment procedure which is likely to involve retaining the child in school for many months with an uncertain outcome.

This writer has suggested earlier that such terms as emotionally disturbed, maladjusted, and disruptive have little clinical utility and are unscientific means of differentiating between

children. It is argued that a more useful conceptualisation is one which focuses upon differences in observed behaviour rather than categories of child.

- **behavioural/empirical classification**

An alternative approach to medical or quasi-medical classification is that which focuses upon quantitative behavioural dimensions. This involves a search for clusters of highly intercorrelated behaviours which appear to represent a dimension or syndrome. Empirical modes of classification are fully discussed by Achenbach and Edelbrock (1978) and Quay (1979).

Achenbach and Edelbrock (1978) outline a variety of sources of problem behaviours from which correlational analyses have resulted in the empirical derivation of syndromes. The most common sources are case studies (e.g. Hewitt and Jenkins, 1946), teacher reports (e.g. Edelbrock and Achenbach, 1984) and parental reports (e.g. Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1981).

Achenbach and Edelbrock (1978) argue that despite the wide variety of approaches, two broad-band syndromes are consistently derived. These they label 'undercontrolled' (e.g. aggressive, externalising, acting out, conduct disorder) and 'overcontrolled' (e.g. inhibited, internalising, shy-anxious, personality disorder). These terms are broadly similar to Stott's (1971) under-reactive and over-reactive clusters of behaviour which were derived from the Bristol Social Adjustment Guides.

Quay (1979) reported results from a number of studies employing the Behavior Problem Checklist (Quay and Peterson, 1975) with children attending mainstream schools, special classes for the behaviourally disordered, child guidance clinics and those labelled as juvenile delinquents. Using factor analysis, Quay found four clusters of behaviours which accounted for nearly all the variance. These he labelled conduct disorder, personality disorder, inadequacy-immaturity and socialised delinquency.

In setting out to examine the interrelationships between three teacher checklists of deviant behaviour, Von Isser, Quay and Love (1980) noted in their survey of research findings that four independent dimensions emerged relatively consistently:

1. Conduct disorder
2. Anxiety withdrawal
3. Immaturity
4. Socialised aggression

Conduct disorder involves such characteristics as verbal and physical aggression, disruptiveness, and defiance of authority. Von Isser et al. note that such behaviours will be particularly at variance with the expectations of social institutions such as schools.

Anxiety withdrawal is in some ways antithetical to conduct disorders as it refers to social withdrawal, depression, incapacitating shyness, sensitivity and anxiety and other such behaviours which represent a retreat from the environment rather than hostility towards it.

Von Isser et al. describe immaturity as characterising a preoccupation, short attention span, daydreaming, passivity, sluggishness and those behaviours which appear not to be in accord with developmental expectations. Although this cluster of features is recognisable in certain children, this writer finds the suggestion that such behaviours are indicative of developmental delay rather inappropriate. Indeed, such elements are common features of adolescence (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1984). In the opinion of this writer, a more apposite descriptor would be self-preoccupation.

Socialised aggression refers to those activities which occur within group situations such as delinquency, cooperative stealing and truancy. Such behaviours can be perceived as:

“... manifestations of participation in a delinquent subculture” (Von Isser et al., 1980, p. 273).

Von Isser et al.'s study employed a young, nondelinquent sample and, for this reason, socialised delinquency items were not scored. Their findings suggested the presence of the remaining three independent dimensions (cited above) which have been found in a number of studies (e.g. Pimm, Quay and Werry, 1967; Quay, Morse and Cutler, 1966. Quay and Quay, 1965).

Other researchers have found more than four dimensions. Using the Behavior Problem Checklist with 782 'behaviourally disordered' children and young people aged 6-18, Epstein, Kauffman and Cullinan (1985), discovered five clusters which they labelled, aggression-disruption, social incompetence, social maladjustment, attention deficit and anxiety-inferiority.

### **Advantages and weaknesses of the empirical approach**

As Quay and Werry (1986) observe, the statistical approach overcomes two basic weaknesses of the clinical approach. Firstly, empirical evidence is obtained which demonstrates that the dimension exists as a set of observable behaviours. Secondly, because the measures are of observed behaviour it is possible that greater reliability will result although this presupposes that labellers can agree on what to call the observed behaviour.

It is important to recognise that what emerges from statistical approaches are clusters of characteristics not types of individuals. Multivariate techniques produce dimensions upon which all children can be located and an individual's behaviour cannot be neatly packaged into one cluster. Quay and Werry (1986) note that this point has been put forward by some as a weakness although, in the opinion of this writer, the negation of typologies inherent in the statistical approach is one of its most important contributions.

A more meaningful criticism of the statistical approach is that which is common to all factor analytic studies, that is, one only gets out of the analysis what is put into it. If certain

behaviours are not included for study they, or a subsuming dimension, cannot emerge from the analysis. Furthermore, subjectivity is not eliminated but merely postponed until the factors have to be named.

The question of the generalisability of obtained dimensions has been raised by some writers. Smith, Wood and Grimes (1988) argue that empirically based models can be criticised for deriving circular arguments. Behaviours of labelled children are measured and these measurements are used to define the next behaviourally disordered population.

There is a danger that empirical approaches may lead to analyses which focus exclusively upon the child's behaviour and neglect the influence of ecological variables. It has already been pointed out that it is often convenient for adults to locate the source of the problem within the child:

**“The ultimate criterion for the definition is the judgement of adults in authority roles, teachers and mental health professionals. The focus of that judgement is the child” (Smith et al., 1988, p.127).**

Behavioural classification says nothing about aetiology, neither should it be a means of affirming the child's guilt. To describe the child's behaviour in this fashion does not locate the source of the problem within the child, neither does it validate the adult's perception that the behaviour is maladaptive. It does, however, provide a means of examining those aspects of the child's behaviour which may be problematic for others.

Achenbach and McConaughy (1987) have written a detailed text which sets out practical applications of the empirical model for clinicians/researchers. The assessment procedure includes teacher and parent checklist ratings, a parent interview, physical assessment, standardised intellectual and attainment assessment, direct observations of behaviour and a clinical interview with the child. Such detailed procedures have much to commend them yet despite the authors' assertion that:

**“Empirically based assessment taps the ways in which children are seen by various informants. It does not presuppose particular theoretical explanations**



for **why** maladaptive behaviour occurs, but adheres to psychometric principles for obtaining data from multiple informants seeing children under different conditions” (Achenbach and McConaughy, 1987, p.158; emphasis as in original)

there is still a danger that this approach can erroneously lead to an undue focus upon within-child variables with a concomitant neglect of situational factors. The reader may note that the potential for such misunderstanding is equally present in the procedures employed in the present study.

### **Is there such a thing as a behaviourally disordered population?**

In the light of the preceding examination of clinical and statistical approaches, this writer would argue that there is no clinically discrete, behaviourally disordered/emotionally disturbed population. This position will be placed in the context of current educational philosophy, legislation and practice.

The use of the term ‘behaviour disorder’ in preference to ‘emotional disturbance’ reflects a shift from a medical to an educational model which has as its focus observed behaviour and the many variables which may influence this:

“This label reflects more than just a semantic change - it recognises the fact that the major reason these children are referred and placed is primarily related to their disturbing overt **behaviors** rather than their disturbed emotions” (Gresham, 1984, p.1; emphasis as in original).

In addition, it is less suggestive of dichotomous normal/abnormal categories. This writer can recall his surprise when transferring from a post teaching ‘emotionally disturbed’ children in a secure accommodation setting to a mainstream secondary school. Many behaviours which he had originally attributed to the former population’s ‘severe emotional disturbance’ were also frequently witnessed in the ‘normal’ population. The differences were more of degree than kind (Kauffman, 1985) and were most apparent in their frequency and intensity yet there were few behaviours, which were particular to either setting.

Furthermore, most children show some signs of 'disturbed' behaviour (e.g. tearfulness, fearfulness, destructiveness) at some point as they grow up and the research evidence suggests that the majority are considered by their teachers to exhibit problem behaviour at some stage in their school career (Campbell, 1983; Thomas, Chess and Birch, 1968).

In an attempt to help teachers determine whether or not a child is emotionally disturbed, Gropper, Kress, Hughes and Pekich (1968) provide multiple criteria which enable the teacher to determine whether specific behaviour is normal, a problem which can be dealt with in the classroom, or one which is of a severity warranting referral to outside agencies. Criteria include such issues as the frequency, intensity and duration of the behaviour, whether the behaviour is specific to one situation or observed in a variety of contexts, how quickly the issue is forgotten by the child concerned, and how the other children respond to the problem behaviour(s) (see Table A-1, overleaf).

Such a framework can be helpful in enabling teachers to identify and examine their students' behaviours more closely; the essential first steps in addressing problematic behaviour. The authors make the mistaken assumption, however, that 'problems' exist independently of a teacher's perceptions:

"A teacher will not attempt to manage problem behaviours that he does not recognise as being problem behaviours" (p. 479).

Although behaviour can be described in objective terms it does not remove an element of subjective perception and interpretation. Karl Popper argues that observation processes are necessarily selective and cannot take place in a theoretical vacuum:

"...observations, and even more so observation statements, and statements of experimental results, are always **interpretations** of the facts observed; ...they are **interpretations in the light of theories**. (Popper, 1961, p. 107, emphases as in original.)

Given the above, it is hardly surprising that it is immensely difficult to gain agreement upon the seriousness or otherwise of any action. What constitutes a problem can rarely be defined by others in a way which is totally satisfactory to all the participants. Although serious

Table A-1 Criteria for classifying problem behaviour (from Gropper et al., 1968)

Description of criteria	Normal	Problem	Referable
<b>INTENSITY</b> <i>How disruptive of the child's other activities is the problem behaviour?</i>	<b>NON-DISRUPTIVE</b> Behaviour does not interfere with the child's other activities	<b>DISRUPTIVE</b> Behaviour interferes with the child's other activities	<b>EXTREMELY DISRUPTIVE</b> Behaviour completely disrupts child's other activities
<b>APPROPRIATENESS</b> <i>Is the behaviour a reasonable response to the situation?</i>	<b>REASONABLE</b> Response is acceptable or expected for the situation	<b>INAPPROPRIATE</b> Response is undesirable for the situation	<b>EXCESSIVE</b> Response is out of proportion to the situation
<b>DURATION</b> <i>How long does the behaviour episode last?</i>	<b>SHORT-LIVED</b> Episode lasts only a short time .... short time within a class period	<b>MODERATELY LONG</b> Episode extends over a longer period .... some carryover from one class to the next	<b>LONG-LASTING</b> Episodes are long-lasting .... for a greater part of a day
<b>FREQUENCY</b> <i>How often does the behaviour occur?</i>	<b>INFREQUENT</b> Behaviour is usually not repeated .... rarely repeated in a day .... rarely repeated on other days	<b>FREQUENT</b> Behaviour is repeated .... may be repeated several times a day .... may be repeated on several days	<b>HABITUAL</b> Behaviour happens all the time .... repeated often during the day .... repeated on many days
<b>SPECIFICITY/ GENERALITY</b> <i>In how many types of situations does the behaviour occur?</i>	<b>OCCURS IN SPECIFIC SITUATION</b> Behaviour occurs in specific type of situation	<b>OCCURS IN SEVERAL SITUATIONS</b> Behaviour occurs in more than one type of situation	<b>OCCURS IN MANY SITUATIONS</b> Behaviour occurs in many types of situations
<b>MANAGEABILITY</b> <i>How easily does the behaviour respond to management efforts?</i>	<b>EASILY MANAGED</b> Responds readily to management efforts	<b>DIFFICULT TO MANAGE</b> Inconsistent or slow response to management efforts	<b>CANNOT BE MANAGED</b> Does not respond to management efforts
<b>ASSESSIBILITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES</b> <i>How easily can the circumstances that produced the behaviour be identified?</i>	<b>EASILY ASSESSED</b> Easy to identify situation or condition producing behaviour	<b>DIFFICULT TO ASSESS</b> Situation or condition producing behaviour difficult to identify	<b>CANNOT BE ASSESSED</b> Cannot identify situation or condition producing behaviour
<b>COMPARISON WITH MATURITY LEVEL OF THE CLASS</b> <i>How close to the norm of the class is the problem behaviour?</i>	<b>NO DEVIATION FROM LEVEL OF CLASS</b> Behaviour is par for the group	<b>BELOW LEVEL OF CLASS</b> Behaviour is below the group level	<b>CONSIDERABLY BELOW LEVEL OF CLASS</b> Behaviour is considerably below the group level
<b>NUMBER OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS EXHIBITED</b>	Rarely more than one	Usually more than one	Usually many and varied
<b>ACCEPTANCE BY PEERS</b> <i>Does the child have difficulty being accepted by peers?</i>	<b>ACCEPTED</b> Is accepted by peers	<b>HAS DIFFICULTY GETTING ALONG</b> May have difficulty with particular individuals	<b>NOT ACCEPTED</b> Unaccepted by group
<b>RECOVERY TIME</b> <i>How quickly is the situation leading to the episode forgotten?</i>	<b>RAPID</b> Gets over episode quickly	<b>SLOW</b> Gets over episodes more slowly	<b>DELAYED</b> Does not get over episode
<b>CONTAGION</b> <i>a) Does the behaviour disrupt the activities of others? b) Do others copy the problem behaviour?</i>	<b>LITTLE OR NO EFFECT UPON OTHERS</b> Behaviour does not disturb or does not serve as a model for others	<b>CONSIDERABLE EFFECT UPON OTHERS</b> Behaviour disturbs immediate neighbours or neighbours copy behaviour	<b>EXCESSIVE EFFECT ON OTHERS</b> Behaviour disturbs whole class or whole class copies behaviour
<b>DEGREE OF CONTACT WITH REALITY</b> <i>Does the behaviour represent a loss of contact with reality?</i>	<b>NO CONFUSION BETWEEN REAL/UNREAL</b>	<b>SOME CONFUSION BETWEEN REAL/UNREAL</b>	<b>CONFUSES REAL/UNREAL</b>
<b>RESPONSE TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES</b> <i>How readily does the child respond when learning opportunities are provided?</i>	<b>RESPONDS POSITIVELY TO ENRICHMENT / REMEDIAL WORK</b>	<b>RESPONDS SLOWLY OR WEAKLY TO ENRICHMENT / REMEDIAL WORK</b>	<b>DOES NOT RESPOND TO ENRICHMENT / REMEDIAL WORK</b>

physical assault would be seen as problem behaviour by most teachers, there are many behaviours which would be acceptable to some teachers (e.g. calling out in class, frequently leaving one's seat) yet totally unacceptable and potentially problematic to others.

Although such criteria can be used to help teachers decide whether a child's behaviour represents a problem for them, it is questionable whether one can then go on to conclude that the child is disturbed. Offering an opposing viewpoint, Gropper et al. suggest that behaviours which are located at the 'problem' level of Table A-1:

“..are the marks of a child who is maladjusted” (p.480).

Presumably, where many behaviours are at the referable level one might conclude that the child is 'highly maladjusted'!

When the categories are examined as diagnostic indicators, the fallacy of this approach becomes apparent. This point will be illustrated using an example from the checklist. The criterion 'contagion' is assessed as 'does not disturb others' (normal level); 'disturbs immediate neighbours' (problem level); 'disturbs whole class' (referable level). Many factors may explain differential peer response, most of which are unlikely to be 'within child' variables but, instead, products of the teaching and learning environment which will vary significantly from teacher to teacher.

The more recent education literature has tended to deemphasise within-child variables and recognises that 'problem behaviours' are often responses to an inappropriate classroom or whole-school environment (see Elliott and Morris, 1991, for discussion). It is now widely accepted that the matching of task to child, the physical setting of the classroom and the teacher's pedagogic and interpersonal skills, together with the influence of the school's ethos (Rutter et al., 1979), will all significantly affect children's behaviour.

To challenge the use of such frameworks for diagnosing disturbance is not to suggest that they are inappropriate means of examining behaviour; indeed, Gropper et al.'s materials

were designed primarily to enable teachers to develop their classroom management skills. Such an approach, rather than helping the teacher to determine whether the child is disturbed (and passed on to others for treatment) can offer a framework for consideration of those aspects of the child's behaviour which are held to be problematic; when and how these behaviours occur, and what their effect is upon others. Accumulated information can then enable the teacher, perhaps in consultation with others (Hanko, 1985), to consider how the child might be helped to change their behaviour in ways perceived as positive.

Rigorous analysis of problem behaviour, therefore, can be valuable in enabling professionals to determine appropriate responses. To go beyond the description of behaviour to the application of a diagnostic label is unnecessary and potentially misleading.

This chapter has consistently argued that:

- clinical labels such as disturbed, maladjusted and behaviourally disordered are unclear and impossible to define
- such diagnoses tend to result in problems being seen as solely within the child thereby neglecting ecological influences (Apter, 1982, Rhodes, 1967). The child becomes the focus of intervention not the system in which the child is located:

“There has been a tendency to take pupils the regular teacher cannot handle and find something wrong with them so that they can be given a disability label” (Dunn, 1973, p.5).

Labels derived from education settings tend to be based upon accounts offered by teachers who, themselves, are key participants in the interaction. Much ethnographic work, has demonstrated that an alternative interpretation of child 'misbehaviour' is that of young people legitimately protesting against, or attempting to cope with, an unappealing, unstimulating and unrewarding classroom experience (cf. Holt, 1965; Hargreaves, 1967, 1982; Willis, 1977; Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978). Often misbehaviour and its effect upon the teacher is an effective means of livening up an experience of tedium (cf. Furlong, 1985,

p. 204-5). This point is nicely illustrated by two adolescent informers in one ethnographic study:

Fay: "Mr. Potts, he was ever such a laugh: but when he got into a temper he used to really shout and nobody took any notice."

Rosie: "Yes, his face used to go beetroot. He stood on the table in one lesson and went like this, 'grrr!' We just laughed. He looked so stupid"  
(Marsh et al., 1978, p.44).

Such quotations remind us that one person's 'maladaptive' behaviour may be quite understandable and adaptive from the viewpoint of another.

The employment of categories to label problem children results in a tendency to legitimise official accounts which reflect a particular ideology or perspective. Despite the wealth of publications which have challenged this positivist view, it is one which remains deeply engrained within the teaching profession. Of course, it should not be overlooked that classification is an important means of exercising power (see Cohen, 1985, chapter 5, for an enlightening discussion of this point).

Current educational and psychological perspectives, while still tending to accept the perspectives of the powerful, are now less accepting of categorical analyses:

"While it is conventional to analyse behaviour ratings using a categorical model in which children are classified as 'disturbed' or 'non-disturbed', it is our view that this method misrepresents behaviour symptom data. It is very unlikely that the child population falls neatly into the groups of disturbed and non-disturbed children - it is far more reasonable to assume that there is a continuum of behaviour symptoms which ranges from children who are highly well-adjusted to those who are highly maladjusted" (Fergusson and Horwood, 1989, p.375)

Furthermore, children may continually shift along behavioural continua as they confront problems in school, at home and in the wider community as they grow to adulthood.

The abolition of categories of handicap and the notion of a special educational needs continuum following the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act has assisted a shift from categorical to continuous analyses of behaviour. Instead of attempting to ascertain

whether the child who presents problem behaviour is maladjusted, disturbed or normal, current practice requires professionals to examine the child's behaviour in context, determine his or her needs and, if necessary, provide special educational provision. Such provision may take a variety of different forms, for example:

- regular support and monitoring in school with assistance from visiting outside agencies
- additional teacher or nursery nurse support
- transfer to day or residential special school

(For a detailed review of the nature and efficacy of such provision, see Topping, 1983).

The 1981 Education Act requires the Local Education Authority to assess formally a child's special educational needs if it is of the opinion that s/he has, or probably has:

"..special educational needs which call for the authority to determine the special educational provision that should be made for him" (1981 Education Act, 5.1a).

A formal assessment is not necessary if the child's needs can be catered for from within the mainstream school's resources. Thus, the loss of a member of staff who fails to be replaced may result in a situation which necessitates a formal assessment and, possibly, the transfer of the child to another setting. The child may not have changed but the capacity of the school to meet his/her needs would have. (N.b. at the time of writing the first draft of this appendix, the author is awaiting the outcome of a request for a support teacher to work with a junior aged child whose behaviour is presenting considerable difficulties for his teachers. Should such support not be provided the writer will be obliged to argue that a prima facie case for formal assessment exists.)

The 1981 Act procedures, therefore, do not require the child to be 'diagnosed' in quasi-medical fashion but, instead, due emphasis is placed upon full examination of the child's needs and under which circumstances these can be met. There is, therefore, clear recognition of the fact that the child's needs are contextually defined. For this reason it is rather

unfortunate that where a child's needs are such that s/he requires special educational provision, the resultant L.E.A. Statement of Special Educational Needs, has a built-in tendency to focus on the deficiencies of the child rather than the system within which s/he operates (Powell and Booker, 1987; Galloway and Goodwin, 1987).

Another source of confusion is the term 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' which is often used as a synonym for maladjusted. Reference is now made to 'E.B.D. schools' and 'E.B.D. children', acronyms which can serve to categorise in a fashion wholly inappropriate to the Warnock philosophy. Statements of Special Educational Needs may state that children who require special educational provision because of their behaviour have 'emotional and behavioural difficulties', yet this is in no way to suggest that such children fit a category or are qualitatively different from their peers. It is recognised that labels, whether formal or informal, cannot be wholly avoided, yet the limitation of any pejorative connotation which could accrue from these would appear to be a laudable aim.

The answer to the question, 'Is there such a thing as a disturbed population?' is, in the opinion of this writer, a negative one. Formerly, it was possible to offer a tautologous definition of maladjusted children as 'children who attend schools for the maladjusted' yet this circular, administrative definition is no longer appropriate given the notion of a continuum of special educational needs.

It has been argued in this chapter that children whose behaviour challenges adults should not be described by single, discrete, syndromic categories. Instead, it would be more accurate to argue that each child tends to display a relatively high or low incidence and severity of each of a range of behaviours (aggressive, disruptive, withdrawn etc.). Of course, such estimates would be subject to change over time for behaviour is dynamic, interactive and heavily influenced by situational variables.

It may seem rather paradoxical, therefore, that the focus of this study is a group of children who are described as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. It has been suggested



that all children's behaviour is problematic at times. How, therefore, can such a group be selected? Furthermore, does the selection of such a group imply, implicitly or explicitly, that it is in some way different from the wider child population?

**If the notion of a disturbed population is rejected, who are the subjects of this study?**

This thesis represents an attempt to examine locus of control beliefs in children whose behaviour is perceived to be a problem to others: parents, teachers, social workers etc. For a variety of reasons, legislative, administrative, and professional, the majority of children whose behaviour is seen to be particularly troubled or troublesome (Hoghugh, 1978) are referred to L.E.A. psychological services. Thus, to select for study those who have been referred to a psychological service is to obtain a population on the basis of an **administrative** rather than a **diagnostic** procedure. The children have one common uniting feature; their behaviour is seen by powerful adults to be a cause of considerable concern. Acceptance of a referral by the psychological service (and the inclusion of each child in this study) makes no assumptions about the child's emotional state, mental health or general psychological wellbeing.

The methodology of the study is heavily influenced by the empirical/behavioural approach discussed above. It includes an attempt to examine the perceived severity of the children's behaviour on each of nine behavioural dimensions (see chapter 3 for discussion).

It is recognised that there will be an element of overlap in these dimensions which have been selected on the basis of the writer's clinical experience (both of what may be important behaviours and in recognition of the key criterion of availability), rather than by a statistical analysis of teacher or parent checklists. Such data are immensely difficult to obtain: uniform checklists are rarely used and it would be impossible to arrange such an assessment for all the subjects in this study. More importantly, it is this writer's opinion that the dimensions typically identified are over-inclusive. This is particularly true with regard to 'conduct disorder' where aggregate totals are likely to conceal potentially important within-

dimension differences. Von Isser et al., (1980) point out that conduct disordered behaviour will be particularly problematic in school settings and this category figures prominently in the present study.

Resulting from their studies, Achenbach and McConaughy (1987) report the following statistically derived dimensions for teacher reports of 'externalising' (i.e. acting-out) behaviours:

Girls and Boys (aged 6-11) .... i) inattentive ii) nervous iii) aggressive

Girls (aged 12-16) .... i) inattentive ii) unpopular iii) delinquent iv) aggressive

Boys (aged 12-16) .... i) inattentive ii) aggressive

These dimensions subsume a vast range of specific behaviours which, although statistically related, may, in certain cases, be more appropriately considered as separate behavioural 'dimensions' worthy of independent consideration. This is the position held for the present study.

In order to differentiate more fully between children's behaviour on the broad-band 'externalising' dimension, this author will rank each subject's behaviour on each of the following dimensions:

- disruptiveness in school
- refusal to respond to teacher direction
- refusal to respond to parental direction
- delinquency
- verbal aggression
- physical aggression
- vandalism
- truancy

It should be noted that one of these variables relates specifically to behaviour within the home setting.

The possible inclusion of hyperactivity as a separate dimension was rejected on the grounds that behaviours which are often labelled hyperactive are not substantially different from those which fit other descriptors. The term is particularly problematic as it is used to refer both to a behavioural dimension and to a diagnostic category (Goodman and Stevenson, 1989).

Hyperactivity (or hyperkinesis) can be found in DSM III-R and ICD 10 yet the terms are differentially employed and understood within and between professional groupings. Psychiatric diagnosis of hyperactivity, for example, is considerably more common in the U.S.A. than the U.K. (cf. Safer and Allen, 1976, Rutter, 1975).

The notion of the hyperactive child grew in popularity with teachers and parents in the 1980s partly triggered by research studies which suggested that food additives (Feingold, 1975; Taylor, 1980), prenatal alcohol exposure (Spohr and Steinhausen, 1987) and environmental influences such as lead poisoning (Baloh, Sturm, Green and Gleser, 1975) could have a bearing upon the arousal and activity levels of children. *Irrespective of aetiology, however, it is rare that the behaviour of such children in school is substantially different from others who are described as disruptive, conduct disordered or aggressive (Sandberg, Wieselberg and Shaffer, 1980). Clearly, the child who is highly active will also be likely to disrupt classroom settings:*

“As has been the case with other studies (Conners, 1969; Paulsen, 1977) the independence of hyperactivity from conduct problem is questionable.... as a practical matter it will be difficult to find children who are hyperactive but do not manifest the characteristics of conduct disorder. As Langhorne, Paternite, and Bechtoldt (1976) have suggested, there is a serious question as to whether an independent syndrome of hyperkinesis actually exists” (Von Isser et al., 1980, p. 276).

Because they tend to be less of a threat to others, significantly fewer children who are

withdrawn, anxious, depressed and/or socially isolated (i.e. manifesting **internalising** behaviours) are brought to the attention of educational psychology services. Although teachers may believe that such children are experiencing difficulties, the pressure upon schools to prioritise referrals tends to result in what many psychologists consider to be a disproportionate weighting of referrals in favour of acting-out, overtly challenging children, the great majority of which are boys. For this reason, surveys of whole class groupings using teacher rating scales are likely to reflect a greater proportion of internalising problem behaviours than would be obtained from an analysis of children referred to educational psychology services. Because of the low incidence of referrals of this nature it was decided that all internalising behaviours should be located within one descriptor, inward behavior.

The subjects in this study are drawn from a wide range of settings within one local authority. Although each will have been assessed by an educational psychologist, not all were clients of this writer although it was his task to rank the nine behaviours in the light of his study of casefile notes. The reliance upon case notes for some subjects necessitated the use of behaviours where specificity was not so great that it became impossible to make a meaningful judgement. *At the same time, the study attempts to identify behaviours which enable sufficient differentiation between subjects.*

The reader will note that the chosen methodology is greatly influenced by the work of Achenbach, Quay and their colleagues. Emphasis is placed upon observable behaviour rather than hypothesised clinical syndromes and a dimensional rather than a categorical approach to problem behaviour is adopted. The study departs from empirical approaches by employing the writer's own judgement as to which behaviours would be most meaningful and, importantly, accessible for the study of locus of control beliefs, rather than deriving behavioural dimensions from statistical analyses of case notes or checklists.

It is important to note that the behaviours examined in this study are not intended to represent a universal or fully inclusive classification system. Rather, they have been selected in the

light of a particular set of needs and practical constraints. The study can only draw upon those behaviours whose salience is such that appropriate data can be obtained from interviews and case notes.

## **Appendix 3      How the variables were scored**

### **a) the coding system**

1. Identification number
2. Sex
  - Boy = 0
  - Girl = 1
3. Age (09-16)
4. Age at initial referral (03-16)
5. Family structure:
  - Both parents = 1
  - Single mother = 2
  - Single father = 3
  - Natural mother and stepfather = 4
  - Natural father and stepmother = 5
  - Other = 6
6. Number of siblings (0-9)
7. Family position (0-9) (e.g. 2 = 2nd child in family)
8. Parental employment:
  - Both parents unemployed = 1
  - Mother employed only = 2
  - Father employed only = 3
  - Both parents employed = 4
9. In care of the local authority at the time of assessment:
  - Not in care = 0
  - Assessment Centre = 1
  - Community Home = 2
  - Other placement (e.g. fostering) = 3
10. Full I.Q. (e.g. 097)
11. Verbal I.Q. (e.g. 104)
12. Visual (or performance) I.Q. (e.g. 112)

13. School at time of assessment

Mainstream primary = 1

Mainstream secondary = 2

Primary E.B.D. = 3

Secondary E.B.D. = 4

Primary M.L.D. (moderate learning difficulties) = 5

Secondary M.L.D. = 6

Other special school = 7

Disruptive unit = 8

Community home with education on the premises = 9

(As there were no cases in category 7, this was not included in subsequent analyses)

14. Behaviour ratings (0-3) (for each of the below)

Disruptive

Negativism to teachers

Delinquent

Physically aggressive

Verbally aggressive

Destroys/damages property

Truancy

Inward behaviours

Negativism to parents

15. C.N.S.I.E. responses (internal = 0; external = 1) (for each of the 40 items)

16. Academic achievement rating:

Above average = 0

Average = 1

Below average = 2

17. Scale administered by:

J.E. (author) = 1

Another educational psychologist = 2

Teacher = 3

**b) how the above categories were interpreted**

1) Child's identification number for the data file.

2) Sex

3) Age (at the time of CNSIE administration)

4) Age when first referred to E.P.S. (where children were aged two years or less, these were located within the three year category)

(It is possible that a small minority of the children were known to other psychological services prior to moving to Sunderland and that this information was not contained in the relevant case file. However, where formal special education procedures were undertaken (either under the 1981 Act or the former Special Education procedures, such information is made routinely available to the child's new Local Education Authority.)

5) Family structure

*Both parents....* refers to a situation where both biological parents reside permanently with the child. This includes those situations where a father works away from home but returns to the family for weekends/leave or is imprisoned.

*Single mother....* refers to a situation where the child lives with mother who is unmarried, widowed, divorced, separated or living with a cohabitee.

*Single father....* refers to a situation where the child lives with father who is widowed, divorced, separated or living with a cohabitee

*Natural mother and stepfather....* refers to a situation where these reside permanently with the child

*Natural father and stepmother....* refers to a situation where these reside permanently with the child

Where a child is in the residential care of the local authority, the data are based upon the household of the adult(s) who exercise parental rights.

6) Number of siblings.... refers to natural and step brothers/sisters but excludes step brothers/sisters residing elsewhere. (e.g. it would not include a situation where father had moved out of the home and had further children to another woman)

7) Family position.... refers to the birth order position of the subject (e.g. if the subject were the third born of four children, the entry would be '3')



## 8) Parental employment

(For the purposes of this study, a parent was considered to be employed if he/she had regular employment on either a part-time or full-time basis. Where the parent earned income by undertaking tasks on an ad hoc basis (e.g. fixing neighbours' cars, selling scrap, yet remains on supplementary/unemployment benefit) he/she was considered to be unemployed. Many of the adults in this study supplemented their state unemployment benefit by undertaking brief, temporary tasks. This writer has found that many of the parents with whom he works will disclose to him their involvement in illegal activities of this nature, yet, in case files, such data are very incomplete and could not be used in the present analysis.)

*Both parents (or single parent) unemployed....* refers to a situation where irrespective of whether there are one or two parents living with the child there is no parental employment. This category also includes those situations where one parent in employment has permanently left the home and where the remaining parent (and new spouse, applicable) is/are unemployed.

*Mother employed only....* refers to a situation where the mother/stepmother is the only parent in the home who is currently employed.

*Father employed only....* refers to a situation where the father/stepfather is the only parent in the home who is currently employed.

*Both parents employed....* refers to a situation where any combination of natural and step-parents who reside with the child are both currently employed

It is important to note that, unlike official statistics, the data do not necessarily reflect registered unemployment. Unregistered unemployment is estimated to be considerable, particularly in the case of married women who, in periods of high unemployment, have been shown to be less likely to register for employment if they have no confidence that work can be found for them (McNabb, 1977).

## 9. In the care of the local authority's Social Services Department

## 10. Full I.Q. (either Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (Revised) or the British

Ability Scales)

(n.b. The Wechsler Scales (1974) consist of twelve subscales, ten of which are used to yield a full I.Q. Five of these subscales yield a verbal I.Q., the other five, a performance (or visual/nonverbal) I.Q. All three I.Q.s are deviation I.Q.s which are obtained by comparing the subjects' scores with those gained by a representative sample of their age group. Each of the three types of I.Q. has a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

The WISC(R) is generally viewed as an extremely well-standardised test with excellent reliability and adequate validity (Sattler, 1982).

The British Ability Scales (Elliott, Murray and Pearson, 1983) consist of 23 scales which may be used independently or in any combination to measure a range of cognitive functions. Despite a disinclination on the part of the authors to consider the Scales as simplistic measures of I.Q. (Elliott, 1986), pressure by consumers resulted in a decision by their authors to specify those scales which could be used to generate verbal, performance and full I.Q. scores. Both the W.I.S.C.(R) and the B.A.S. have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

It is recognised that the use of two different I.Q. measures weakens the design of the present study. This researcher has been unable to locate any major British studies which have correlated scores on the two measures. It should be noted, however, that in consideration of I.Q. scores, there is no evidence to suggest that clinicians treat the two measures as different.

11. Verbal I.Q. (relevant subscales of B.A.S. or W.I.S.C. (R))

12. Performance I.Q. (relevant subscales of B.A.S. or W.I.S.C. (R))

13. School at time of assessment.... refers to the type of school attended at the time of CNSIE administration.

## 16. Academic ability

(This category refers to actual attainments, not to those of which the child might be capable if he/she were to make greater efforts. Unlike I.Q., this cannot be considered to be a measure of potential)

*Above average....* refers to a situation in which the child is considered by the school/ educational psychologist to be academically superior to the majority of peers. The child may be in the top stream/sets in school. Older children in the sample are expected, on the basis of present performance, to achieve high passes in public examinations. Children in primary settings will score significantly above average in assessments of language/mathematics.

*Average....* refers to a situation where the child is not considered to be either above or below average.

*Below average....* refers to a situation where the child is considered by the school/ educational psychologist to require (even if he/she doesn't receive) additional assistance to meet his/her special educational needs. Primary school children falling into this category are likely to have age equivalents for reading (occasionally for mathematics) at least two years below chronological age. Secondary aged children will receive/require support from special needs teachers (or would do, if they were being educated in a mainstream secondary school), or will be located in special classes on the basis of their learning difficulties, or have a reading age equivalent of less than nine years and six months.

## 17) Scale administered by...

- this researcher (J.E.)
- another Sunderland educational psychologist
- a teacher

## **c) original variables which were subsequently discounted**

### 1. Social class

The most widely used measure of social class is that of the Registrar-General (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1980) which is based upon an individual's occupation

and current employment status.

Marsh (1986) highlights the difficulty of classification by occupation in a society where there are high levels of unemployment. The suggestion that an individual's last occupation is used as the basis for assignment is made untenable in a situation where an increasing number of young adults have never gained paid employment. In the present study both parents were unemployed in 71% of the households.

Alternative measures of social class have been proposed; level of educational attainment, (Llewellyn, 1981), housing tenure (see discussion in Fox and Goldblatt, 1982), car ownership (collected on the Census), geographical location of residence (Reid, 1977) and composite indices (e.g Osborn and Morris, 1979).

Marsh (1986) discusses the strengths and weaknesses of these measures and suggests that a range of data is collected and the interaction between them studied.

In a study which draws retrospectively upon demographic data which have already been collected by a wide range of professionals, it is impossible to gather these systematically or gain access to detailed information concerning parental education, material possessions and possible past employment. It is possible, however, to discover in the majority of cases whether either or both parents is currently employed and, for this reason, it was decided that this variable, rather than the level of occupational classification, would be employed in the analysis.

Although this study does not attempt to obtain quantitative data for the purpose of deriving an indicator of social class, the case files studied reflect the consistent finding that the great majority of children who are perceived to have behavioural difficulties are from households of low socio-economic status (Tomlinson, 1982). In a study of four schools for maladjusted children, for example, Ford, Mongon and Whelan (1982) note:

“The most striking feature about the social class distribution within the four

schools was its absence. There was, effectively, little or no distribution in the sense that the overwhelming majority of the pupils came from the categories IV and V 'semi-skilled and 'unskilled'. There were only seven identifiable cases of non-manual work and some of these require the benefit of doubt... In these areas at least middle- and upper-class children do not become maladjusted" (p.136).

## 2. Transfer to residential care or E.B.D. special school

It was considered that data concerning the placement of children following assessment might prove valuable. As the study progressed, however, it became clear that the majority of children did not transfer from the original setting. Where this did take place it was often difficult to obtain reliable data as to the nature of the transfer. In some situations, the official recommendation regarding placement was not put into practice (e.g. the child was removed from the voluntary care of the local authority prior to placement), in others, placement was influenced by resource issues (e.g. the child did not transfer to the 'ideal' placement because there were no vacancies) and often there were lengthy delays of several months before decisions were taken or carried out.

Because this variable did not appear relevant in the majority of cases and since in many cases it was difficult to ensure that the data were available and accurate, it was decided not to persevere with this category.

## **Appendix 4 Written instructions for colleagues administering the CNSIE\***

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your help; it is most appreciated.

I should be most grateful if you would read the questions on the scale aloud to the subject and encourage him/her to select a 'yes' or 'no' answer - even if the initial response is 'sometimes'.

Please enter the child's name and the date of the interview on the top of the questionnaire. I shall score the scale and feed back the results should you find this helpful.

May I stress the need for neutrality when you read the questions and record the answers. I hope to reduce the possibility of socially desirable answers to as great an extent as possible.

The scale's designer has recommended the following introduction:

"This is not a test. I am trying to find out how young people of your age think about certain things. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Some people will say 'yes' and some say 'no'. The important thing is to say how you think the question should be answered."

In order to achieve a relatively standardised approach, I should be grateful if you would use this wording.

Should you wish to discuss any aspects of this investigation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours,

(\* N.b. this written sheet was provided to all colleagues and its contents discussed at individual briefings prior to scale administration.)

## **Appendix 5 General format of letters sent to parents for permission to undertake the semi-structured interviews\***

Dear (parental name),

Mr. J. Elliott, who is / employed as an educational psychologist by Sunderland Education Authority / a Senior Lecturer in Education at Sunderland Polytechnic, is currently engaged in part-time postgraduate research at the University of Durham. As part of his studies, he hopes to undertake brief interviews with a number of children in a wide range of schools. The interviews will focus upon children's views of their behaviour and its effect upon others.

Mr. Elliott would welcome an opportunity to interview your son/daughter, (name of child), at this school as part of his research. If you would find it helpful, Mr. Elliott would be pleased to discuss the format of the interview with you. Given the confidential nature of academic research of this type, he has received my support and that of the school's Governing Body.

Should you have any questions about this proposal or if you are unwilling for Mr. Elliott to interview (child's name), I would be most grateful if you would contact me as soon as possible. Please also contact me if you would like to have an appointment with Mr. Elliott after (child's name) interview.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher, ..... School.

(\* In some cases, individual Headteachers chose to make minor amendments to this letter)

## **Appendix 6    Vignettes used for semi-structured interviews**

1. You go home one night with a torn coat and a black eye.

Sample questions:

What has happened?  
Who is responsible for this?  
Can you stop things like this happening to you in the future?  
If so, how?

2. You're walking along the road one evening after tea. All of a sudden, a police car pulls up, a copper jumps out and tells you to get in the back of the motor.

Sample questions:

Why have you been stopped?  
How would you respond to the policeman?  
Can you influence what happens next?

3. During a lesson in school the teacher shouts at you to get out of the classroom.

Sample questions:

Why have you been sent out?  
How would you feel about this?  
To what extent does the teacher's behaviour depend upon what you're doing?  
Can you influence the teacher's future behaviour towards you?

4. At breaktime in school the other kids won't talk / won't play football/pool/table-tennis with you.

Sample questions:

What's happened to make them avoid you?  
Does this happen to you sometimes?  
If children do ignore you, is it usually your fault? (Discuss response)  
Can you make the other kids be nice to you, if you want them to?

5. You're sent to your room by your parents and told not to come down for the rest of the evening.

Sample questions:

Why would this happen?  
Would this be because of something you'd done, or would it have little to do with you?  
How would you respond?  
Can you get your parents to be nice to you in such situations?



6. Someone is screaming furiously at you; they're really mad.

Sample questions:

Who is it?

Why are they so cross?

Is it because of something you've done, or would it have little to do with you?

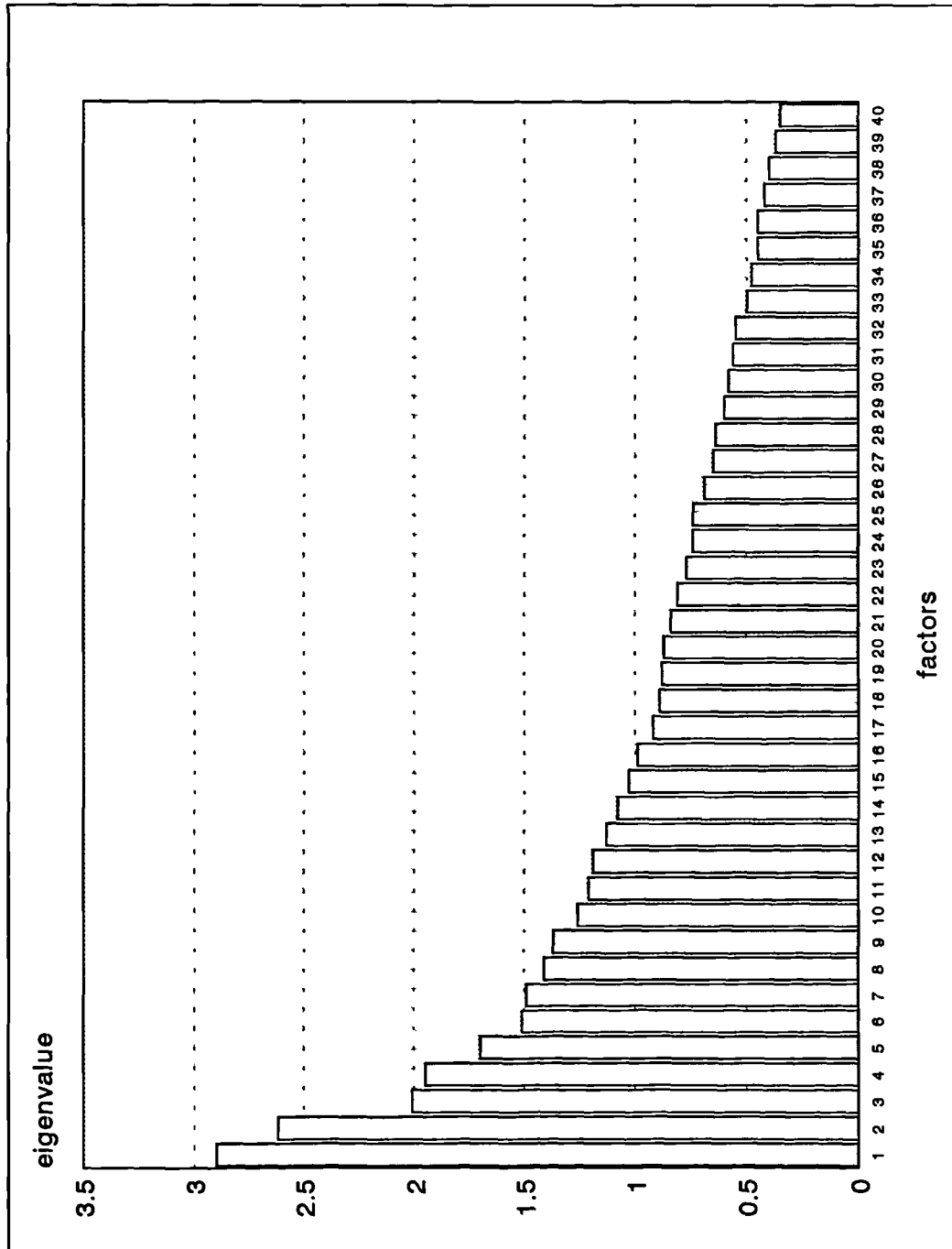
What can you do about this situation?

7. A general question in which the child is asked about significant events in his/her past and to consider his/her hopes and aspirations for the future. The child is then asked to indicate the extent to which s/he believes that the realisation of future desires are contingent upon his/her actions.

## Appendix 7a Table of eigenvalues

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.900	7.2	7.2
2	2.618	6.5	13.8
3	2.009	5.0	18.8
4	1.947	4.9	23.7
5	1.703	4.3	27.9
6	1.505	3.8	31.7
7	1.490	3.7	35.4
8	1.413	3.5	39.0
9	1.372	3.4	42.4
10	1.257	3.1	45.5
11	1.208	3.0	48.6
12	1.191	3.0	51.5
13	1.128	2.8	54.4
14	1.082	2.7	57.1
15	1.032	2.6	59.6
16	0.992	2.5	62.1
17	0.923	2.3	64.4
18	0.891	2.2	66.7
19	0.882	2.2	68.9
20	0.868	2.2	71.0
21	0.835	2.1	73.1
22	0.811	2.0	75.1
23	0.769	1.9	77.1
24	0.741	1.9	78.9
25	0.739	1.8	80.8
26	0.690	1.7	82.5
27	0.646	1.6	84.1
28	0.642	1.6	85.7
29	0.602	1.5	87.2
30	0.575	1.4	88.7
31	0.565	1.4	90.1
32	0.555	1.4	91.5
33	0.501	1.3	92.7
34	0.478	1.2	93.9
35	0.451	1.1	95.0
36	0.448	1.1	96.1
37	0.422	1.1	97.2
38	0.404	1.0	98.2
39	0.369	0.9	99.1
40	0.346	0.9	100.0

**Appendix 7b Scree plot of eigenvalues following principal components analysis of the CNSIE**



## **Appendix 8 Notes for those undertaking blind rating of interview transcripts**

This appendix contains a copy of:

- a) the researcher's letter to the raters, outlining the nature of the task
- b) the proforma on which ratings were entered
- c) the one side of A4 providing raters with a definition and description of the locus of control construct.

### **a) the researcher's letter to the raters**

Dear.....,

Thank you for agreeing to help me out. The following notes should represent a summary of our prior discussion.

You should find the following enclosed:

- a) a brief definition and description of the locus of control construct
- b) four interview transcripts
- c) a proforma upon which to record your responses

I should be immensely grateful if you would read the definition/description first. If at this point you require further clarification/elucidation, please contact me.

Please read the transcripts and, in each case, make a judgement as to the relative internality/externality of the child concerned. Please circle a value for each child on the appropriate five point scale. The numerical values are as follows:

- 1 = Highly internal
- 2 = Somewhat internal
- 3 = Neither internal nor external
- 4 = Somewhat external
- 5 = Highly external

I have included space for each subject should you wish to make any comments.

I appreciate that a child may offer rather different perspectives across the various areas explored. Please try to calculate a value based on the the overall picture presented.

Thank you for your help. Perhaps I can return the favour sometime?

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(Appendix 8 contd.)

**b) the proforma on which the ratings were entered**

Please **CIRCLE** the appropriate value on the five point scale for each of the four children whose transcripts are enclosed. Please enter any comments you would wish to make about the transcripts.

Case 1 Name.....

Highly internal    1    2    3    4    5    Highly external

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Case 2 Name.....

Highly internal    1    2    3    4    5    Highly external

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Case 3 Name.....

Highly internal    1    2    3    4    5    Highly external

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Case 4 Name.....

Highly internal    1    2    3    4    5    Highly external

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Appendix 8 contd.)

**c) the definition and description of locus of control which was provided to the raters**

Locus of control: a definition and description

The locus of control construct was developed by Julian Rotter whose classic definition is as follows:

"When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, we have labelled this a belief in **external** control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behaviour or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in **internal** control" (Rotter, 1966, p.1; emphasis as in original).

In assessing the level of internality/externality of a given individual, therefore, one needs to determine the extent to which that individual typically believes that future outcomes are contingent upon his/her actions.

As an illustration, consider the example of H.I.V./Aids. A highly internal individual, believing that outcomes tend to depend on his/her own actions, is more likely to consider that catching H.I.V./Aids depends largely upon his/her own behaviour. This individual might say, "I recognise that catching the Aids virus depends upon my own behaviour. In future, I shall make sure that I don't place myself at risk.

A highly external individual, on the other hand, who sees little relationship between his/her actions and subsequent outcomes, might say, "I'm not going to change my behaviour. If my number's up, I'm going to get Aids whatever I do. It's all a matter of luck in the end!"

Internality/externality does not refer to:

- how skilled or competent one considers oneself to be
- the extent to which an individual believes that s/he will be successful in a given activity
- how much freedom one has to behave in a desired fashion
- one's capacity to exercise self-control

Often, these different control-related beliefs are difficult to separate out and, when reading the transcripts, you may find ( as I have done) that it is very difficult to assess locus of control independently of these other constructs.

## **Appendix 9 Exploring one individual's responses in interview: the case of Shaun**

Chapter 6 has presented an account of the main types of response elicited by the interviews. A number of examples of differing replies were provided and, in the light of these, an attempt was made to examine the extent to which control-related judgements can be made in each of a number of important interpersonal spheres (with police, parents, peers, teachers etc.). These areas are, however, relatively specific and an individual's answers may vary greatly from one sphere to another. An important issue to explore, therefore, is the extent to which it is possible to make judgements about an individual based upon the totality of his or her responses to the vignettes. It is also valuable to consider the link between these specific areas and the individual's expectancies for the future in general. The difficulties of exploring this latter issue are discussed in chapter 6.

In order to examine the possible correspondence between issues, an illustrative analysis of the observations of one youngster, Shaun, a fifteen year old student attending a disruptive unit, was undertaken. Shaun's case was selected, not because his comments could be used to support a particular position but because he had spoken in rather more detail about his thoughts and feelings than most of the children. In addition, Shaun's was one of the relatively few cases where the transcript contained responses to the CNSIE in addition to the vignettes. It was considered, therefore, that Shaun's interview might provide particularly rich and detailed information which would facilitate exploration of his expectations and beliefs.

Shaun's case is not, therefore, presented as representative of the sample. Rather, it can be considered as a 'best case' scenario, illustrating the many conceptual difficulties which resulted from exploration of locus of control issues with one of the present sample's more communicative and reflective youngsters.

The process of reviewing Shaun's situation involved, firstly, the analysis of his interview transcript. Having analysed the vignettes and produced a commentary, the researcher

subsequently received permission from the Education Department to gain renewed access to the Educational Psychology Service case file. This access, which took place approximately eight months after the transcript analysis was first produced, enabled the researcher to draw sufficient information from the file to offer a brief picture of some significant events in Shaun's life. By no means is it suggested that the distillation of events from a case file held by one particular Service can offer an adequate overview of an individual's life. It may, however, indicate some experiences which may have an influence upon subsequent locus of control beliefs.

This appendix is ordered into three sections:

- i) Shaun's case file: a selection of observations and events from a child's life
- ii) An examination of, and observations upon, Shaun's interview transcript
- iii) A copy of the full interview transcript

**i. Shaun's case file: a selection of observations and events from a child's life.**

**18 months:** first referred to the Educational Psychology Service as it was considered that Shaun may have had a mild hearing impairment. It was noted that he had already been placed into Social Services care as his parents, who had parted acrimoniously, were not considered to be capable of providing sufficiently for his needs. Special education assessment procedures commenced.

**20 months:** discharged from residential nursery and placed in a short-term foster home. Hearing loss now appeared less problematic and Shaun was discharged from the hearing clinic. His lack of responsiveness was seen as related to apathy, slow development and catarrh. Concern expressed about his prominent ears. Medical officer writes in a formal report, "...mother comes from a very disturbed background. Shaun has had a most unstimulating environment and little opportunity for 1:1 relationships".



Long-term foster parents approved.

**2 years 6 months:** educational psychologist's report notes that Shaun seemed to be a normal, interested child. He would engage in appropriate play activities and it was considered that he didn't need special education. It was also noted that his foster parents were proving to be caring and supportive.

**5 years 8 months:** re-referred to Educational Psychology Service. School reported that Shaun had a short concentration span and an inability to retain concepts, skills, etc. He could only work in 1:1 situation, was easily disturbed and would disrupt others; he was always on the move. Shaun was concerned about being teased about his prominent ears. It was noted that he could be quite articulate and appeared to trust adults.

**5 years 11 months:** educational psychologist's report stated that Shaun was of average intellectual ability. He could recognise some words but his reading performance was variable. Shaun was perceived as:

“...a very alert and talkative pupil who tried on several occasions to divert attention from the task in hand, although he complied when his attention was directed back to the task.”

The educational psychologist recommended continued mainstream schooling.

Continuing difficulties at school were noted and he had been stealing from home. Shaun was overheard telling people that his natural mother had rejected him because he had had no hair when younger. As an infant, Shaun had been a 'failure to thrive' case and it was thought that he may have heard from his foster mother that he had no hair when fostered, and assumed that he had been rejected for this reason.

Social Services wanted foster parents to adopt Shaun although they had resisted this suggestion. Shaun was still bedwetting. At school, he was getting some remedial help

although his attainments were not far below his chronological age.

**8 years 4 months:** more problems noted in case file. At school, Shaun was spitting on the classroom floor and refusing to work. At home, there were increasing problems with foster parents and there was heavy social worker involvement. He was stealing frequently. Foster parents were arguing about management; his father was perceived as rather weak and he explained his inability to impose discipline by virtue of the fact that he, 'can't stand to see him (Shaun) crying'.

**8 years 8 months:** foster parents requested care placement for Shaun. They claimed that they couldn't cope any more on account of mother, "going through the change of life".

**8 years 9 months:** Shaun provided with new foster-parents. He was still stealing occasionally from home but fewer management problems noted.

**8 years 11 months:** foster parents argued that they couldn't cope with Shaun. He was admitted to a community home with education on the premises. Some diurnal enuresis, otherwise Stephen settled in to this new regime relatively well. He proved very energetic and took part in a number of activities such as cubs, sports etc. He was not really seen as part of the normal peer group, although because he was significantly younger than the majority of the children, a degree of tolerance was demonstrated by his peers. His relationships with two other, relatively young, boys were poor and he repeatedly claimed that he was being picked upon.

**9 years 0 months:** natural mother, in conversation with a social worker, expressed guilt and a desire to be reunited with her son. The social worker commented in her report that she felt that mum's, 'basic immaturity would prevent a successful rehabilitation'. She added that mum often confused truth with fiction. It was also noted that mum had been in a battered wives' hostel.

**9 years 2 months:** in a report, Shaun's social worker describes his natural father as a:

“...rather shallow, immature person who seems to merely accept different events in his life, e.g. the break up of his marriage, limited contact with sons, his new relationship with Mum.”

Shaun's parents had got back together but dad was continuing to drink and display aggression. The relationship broke up once again. Mum stated that Shaun was better off in care for the time being. Dad agreed that his son should remain in care but would like to see him soon. The social worker concluded her report by suggesting that the prospect of reconciliation was nil as she considered that Shaun's parents couldn't offer the stability and security he needed.

**9 years 2 months:** report for Social Services' review, provided by residential care officer noted that Shaun's relationships with staff and children had deteriorated:

“He has soaked up the negative attitudes and behaviour that surround him and our concern is that this will intensify and become an entrenched part of his personality if he is not provided soon with a more normal environment.”

Under a section of the report entitled, emotional development, it was stated that:

“Shaun is now beginning to express his unhappiness and insecurity. Having blocked out his feelings for months, following the breakdown of his placement with foster parents, he is now reduced to tears over nothing and pours out the unhappiness at his situation. Shaun is a confused little boy who is very slowly beginning to sort through the tangle of his many relationships via Life Story work. Shaun admitted, several weeks ago, that his one desire was to return to his foster parents. He was obviously confused about the breakdown of his placement and failed to understand why he couldn't return to them. Shaun and I have begun to work through this question and he has begun to accept that he will not return to his foster parents. However, in the absence of any other definite aim, Shaun has begun, recently, to fantasise about returning to live with his natural family.”

**9 years 4 months:** Shaun transferred to a small residential treatment unit. This involved a transfer to a new school.

Social Services' review meeting decided that it would be inappropriate to encourage the development of a close relationship between Shaun and his natural family given that the future did not appear to lie with them. It was decided that contact should be allowed until a placement was found, at which time consideration would be given to the termination of access. Access was denied to father.

**10 years 1 month:** fostered to Cleveland family. Transferred to a new school.

**10 years 6 months:** foster placement broke down. Returned to Sunderland for placement in a small treatment unit. Transferred to a new school.

**11 years 0 months:** transferred to a small unit which prepared children for long-term fostering and adoption. Commenced placement in a new school.

**11 years 1 month:** school sought assistance from educational psychologist because Shaun was presenting severe management problems. He was described as very disruptive and was undertaking very little work. His relationships with same-age peers was poor and it was noted that he tended to associate with younger children. The educational psychologist commented in case files that he had observed him one playtime and:

“..noted that he was mobbed by a group of much younger children who danced round him and hung on to his coat tails. I was informed that earlier in the morning the gang had thrown stones at houses and taunted an old man who was very eccentric and responsive to such abuse.

Shaun, without much prompting, launched into an account of his gang of which he was extremely proud. He saw himself as the 'General' and had strict rules for his subordinates who also had ranks and titles. I was aware that this game was of extreme significance and importance for Shaun and it would be very difficult to dislodge something which seemed to feed a need.”

Staff in the unit reported that Shaun got on well with adults in 1:1 situations but also noted poor peer relationships. Shaun was described as immature, engaging in thumb sucking, baby talk and needing close physical comfort. He never made reference to his parents/foster

parents unless these were raised first by staff. It was noted that at least on one occasion he stated that his social work case file contained lots of lies about him, adding that it probably said that he had killed his mother. Shaun was described as having an active and fertile imagination, often appearing to inhabit a fantasy world, sometimes, for example, seemingly finding it difficult to divorce cartoons from reality.

**11 years 6 months:** transferred to comprehensive school. Shaun settled in reasonably well apart from some wetting and one soiling incident. He was still sucking his thumb at home although not at school. He was described as more settled and relaxed.

**11 years 10 months:** provided with a hearing aid. Shaun expressed delight at it and was eager to show it off.

**11 years 11 months:** Social Services discovered that Shaun was making secret visits to his original foster parents. He indicated a wish to be fostered by them but this was ruled out because they were now too elderly and had health difficulties. Social Services agreed, however, to access.

**12 years 0 months:** it was noted that unfortunately, Shaun was no longer wearing his hearing aid. Concern was also expressed by Social Services that, in showing his Life Story book to schoolmates, Shaun was “on the scent of his father and brother who were recognised in photographs”. Secret meetings were subsequently organised with natural brother, Stuart, who was living with foster parents in a neighbouring estate, and natural father who was living with his newly married partner nearby. It was doubted whether dad was suitable for fostering either of the boys.

**12 years 1 month:** Social Services decided to refuse dad access to Shaun’s brother, Stuart, who was happily settled with foster parents. Such access, it was considered, could have destabilised the present situation. However, it was decided that dad’s life was now more stable and he was permitted fortnightly access to Shaun. Social Services had arranged for

an advertisement for foster parents for Shaun and were prepared to consider the suitability of his father at the same time.

**12 years 3 months:** interview with educational psychologist. Shaun appeared convinced that he would be returned to the custody of his 'long-lost' father. He could not understand why his father's claim was being considered alongside a general plea for foster parents. It was noted that there had been an increase in nocturnal enuresis and incidents of problem behaviour in school. He was still not wearing his hearing aid.

**12 years 8 months:** Social Services Review. The social worker's report stated that Shaun was becoming impatient and frustrated. He was resorting to his former sulky, defiant behaviour and had to be frequently restrained because of his temper and heightened agitation. Dad was described as being just like Shaun, equally immature and impatient. His new wife, however, was seen as a positive influence.

Shaun was still playing with younger children whom, it was considered, he could control and co-opt into fantasy games.

At this time, this researcher met Shaun for first time (in his role as educational psychologist). He recorded in the internal notes of Shaun's case file that he appeared to be very confident, somewhat overfamiliar, in the company of adults. His manner appeared reminiscent of those children who have had a lot of exposure to adults and who seek their company, rather than of peers with whom relationships may be poor.

**13 years 2 months:** moved into the home of natural father and stepmother. Transferred to a new school.

**13 years 4 months:** social worker reported that after a few difficulties of settling into his new home, Shaun appeared generally settled. His stepsister had recently given birth and there was some jealousy about who was receiving most attention. Shaun's behaviour at

school was perceived to be reasonable although there were some incidents of minor truancy. School noted that he appeared happier in the company of adults than children.

**14 years 2 months:** school contacted educational psychologist (no longer this researcher) expressing concern about Shaun's behaviour and poor relationships with peers. It had also been discovered that Shaun had been making hoax calls to police and ambulance services.

**14 years 4 months:** father knocked off his bicycle and killed by hit and run driver.

**14 years 6 months:** school reported that Shaun was becoming increasingly aggressive and disruptive in school. All attempts were made by school to avoid the use of formal exclusions.

**14 years 7 months:** interviewed by police in connection with a burglary. No further action taken.

**14 years 10 months:** slammed door, at school, on the hand of a lunchtime auxiliary assistant. He subsequently threatened to "put.. (Head of House).. on his back". Shaun's school reported to Social Services and the Educational Psychology Service a catalogue of other recent incidents such as his hurling a brick through a window, spitting, bullying, etc. Shaun received a fixed term exclusion. Social Services noted that his stepmother was concerned about Shaun's pronounced mood swings and unpredictably violent behaviour. His self esteem was described by his social worker as very low and it was noted that he had no schoolfriends. His casefile noted that his peers, "...are making disparaging remarks about him, which he is beginning to internalise."

Referred to Department of Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatry. (No information available in Shaun's E.P.S. case file concerning this agency's input or findings.)

**15 years 1 month:** transferred to the one of the L.E.A.'s disruptive units. The referral letter from school stated:

“Against a background of broken relationships, fostering, bereavement and inconsistent agency support, it is not surprising that his behaviour is introverted, extroverted, violent, aggressive, cooperative, uncooperative, deceitful, honest, manipulative, loving and uncaring - a totally unpredictable personality.”

**15 years 3 months:** research interview undertaken.

**15 years 7 months:** placement with stepmother broke down. Shaun was transferred to residential assessment centre.

The assessment centre report, completed six weeks later noted that:

“Shaun holds an idealised vision of the future including living with foster parents on a farm and working with animals. On discussion, however, he is able to recognise that such a future is unrealistic.”



## **ii) an examination of, and observations upon, Shaun's interview transcript**

The full text of the researcher's interview with Shaun is included as section iii.

### **Responses to the CNSIE**

(Most of the key issues explored, overlap those contained within the vignettes. For this reason, the two sources of information are dealt with together, below. It should be reiterated that the consideration of the CNSIE and the vignettes in the same interview was very rare as not only would this require the present researcher to undertake both activities, it would also usually be too demanding of the children's attention span, patience and tolerance.)

Shaun scored 15 on the CNSIE, a total placing him within the range, minus one standard deviation from the mean of the sample. His score, therefore, was not sufficiently extreme to lead to his inclusion in the blind ratings exercise.

Examination of his responses to the CNSIE demonstrated the problematic nature of the measure. In a number of cases, Shaun experienced considerable difficulty in choosing one of the two available options. At times, a half-hearted response, (e.g. 'sometimes') resulted the question being scored positively, even though a negative score might reflect the child's general perception more accurately. In such cases, isolated behaviours can take on undue significance. Many of the CNSIE items use expressions such as 'normally' or 'usually' to help overcome this difficulty, although the interpretation of such words may be particularly problematic when employed in paper and pencil self-report measures. The researcher was optimistic that such difficulties could be alleviated, to some extent, by the Scale's presentation in an interview format and the use of follow-up, exploratory/confirmatory questions (see chapter 4 for discussion).

Some questions were shown to be clearly misleading. In one, Shaun replied that he had had a good luck charm, a rabbit's foot, (therefore this was necessarily scored externally) but

followed up by saying that it had been useless and he had thrown it away. A much better question would have centred upon one's belief of the magical properties of such charms, a question which overlaps that relating to the four-leaf clover.

### The Vignettes

#### ● Peer conflict

When asked about how to deal with problematic interpersonal situations with peers, Shaun's responses typified those of the majority of the sample. Suggested strategies included, ignoring or walking away, seeking help from teachers, and engaging in physical aggression. Shaun's answers suggested that there was a point when the efficacy of avoidance behaviours was exhausted and the only means of resolving the situation was through violence. The following quotes illustrate this perception:

“...try and ignore it then when it gets too much I start lashing out something like that”

“ Just try and ignore it first, like, if it gets a bit too much I always end up turning round, hitting somebody, hitting someone.”

“ Just try and ignore them but after a while when you've been ignoring them it just gets like...people been telling me to ignore them 'cause it'll hurt them more, so I've been trying to dee that but just keep them garin' on and on and on until I end up hitting one of them”

“...say I try and dee something good, it just ends up like garin on and on like saying, “Oh, he couldn't dee something good if he tried” and all that and so I just end up turning round and hitting 'em.”

The same pattern is repeated at home with his (older) step-sister:

“Like, when she does start I always tack nee notice at first, then when she starts to fight, like, starts pushing us about and hitting us, I just end up... I just turn around and hit her back.

Despite his self-professed pugilistic skills gained at various martial arts classes:

“.... me moves, punches and kicks and all that have been getting faster and faster, so like I’ve got more speed than what I used to have, but like, but with us getting more speed me punches are starting to getting a bit softer. It’s like, I’ve never been, like, a really hard puncher but it hurts when I dee hit them”

..Shaun still seems rather ambivalent about the success of this strategy:

“...when I dee react they just dee it even more”

And, when the researcher asks:

“So some stopped did they after you smacked them a few times?”

Shaun replies:

“Eh.. they just kept on garin”

When asked, however, how he’d feel if he came off worst in the fight, Shaun responded:

S. I’d be pleased because it’d probablys.....probably’s stop then. That person would stop.

J. Yeah

S. Because he’d knows what he’d get if he kept on going’.

A third alternative, suggested by Shaun, that of approaching teachers, was not considered to be very helpful:

J. Was there any other way you could deal with this rather than hitting them?

S. Aye, tell the teacher but at, like, Parkdene (school), I told the teacher, told the teacher, one of the teachers about ten times that they were taking the mick out of me parents, like me family, and me, and that and..eh..they said they were going to dee something, like, but they didn't dee a thing, so it just got worse.

When asked whether he thought the teachers would have done more for other kids, he replied:

“Like, I don't know, really..... 'cos half the teachers are too soft to dee owt.....  
..'cause they're scared in case they get hit themselves”

As a result, Shaun:

“...started taking it me own hands”

Shaun stated that his skill at dealing with conflict situations was about average. When asked what those who were skilled at dealing such situations would do, he replied:

S. Probablys ignore them at first.

J. Em.....

S. Then if got out of hand they'd gan and tell the teacher and if the teacher didn't do nowt, probablys tack it in their own hands or....em...try and sort it out with that kid.

J. That's what you do, though, isn't it? So why is it that these people can manage it so well and you've done the same thing and it's not gone so well?

S. I don't know, I'm just no good

J. You're no good?

S. No

J. No good at what, though.....no good at ignoring, no good at telling the teacher?

S. No good at ignoring.

Initially, this appears to be an issue of personal competence. Shaun suggests that what differentiates him and peers who are more successful in dealing with peer hostility is his comparative lack of ability in ignoring taunts. To some extent, however, the question has been posed in a way which invites such a response. By asking what separates him from more skilled peers and remarking upon the fact that 'these people can manage it so well' the questioner greatly influences the elicitation of the competency construct. An external locus of control might be reflected by the perception that however one behaved, the end result, i.e. physical conflict, would not change. Clearly, this is consistent with Shaun's viewpoint. The only skill of which Shaun expresses confidence is that of fighting. When asked if he would be hit in return, he remarks:

"No, they always on their...em....backsides on the floor or somewhere like that"

In the context of issues regarding the avoidance of interpersonal conflict Stephen's perception of future success (self-efficacy) and his ability to control his temper (self-control) are both limited while the perceived relationship between his behaviour and subsequent outcomes (locus of control) suggests an external position. His personal competence is similarly perceived to be limited; he considers himself to be poor at avoiding conflict. If a fight results, however, his reported levels of self-efficacy and personal competence are high, given his apparently positive perception of his fighting skills.

- **police officers**

Shaun's response to being stopped by the police is conditioned by whether he is guilty or

not:

“...if I’ve done something wrong, I’ve got to tack it...if you’ve done something wrong”

In a situation where he was innocent of blame, Shaun recognised that behaviour perceived by the police as challenging could result in negative consequences:

“Like, like if you are nice and pleasant and all that, it wouldn’t, they wouldn’t give you so much hassle and that, where if you are like bad tempered and all that...lash out and that for no reason, you’re bound to get more”

Shaun noted, however, that, in practice, maintaining a positive manner was often difficult. Being grabbed by the police could lead him to become anxious and to present a sense of ‘edge’ (i.e. being abrasive in one’s manner and physically primed for potential violence). Such a posture is recognised as self-defeating but often unavoidable:

S. It’s better not to be edgy but you do get edgy - I don’t know how, it just comes on automatically....with this scare.

J. And do you know when you’re getting edgy...do you know that this may not be the best way of behaving?

S. Aye

J. You do?

S. Aye, 'cause you always get like a twitch in your body and all that

J. Yeah?

S. And your lip.

When asked whether he felt that he could influence outcomes, Shaun remarked that he could... sometimes.

Like most of the children interviewed, there was a strong belief that, regarding the scenario presented in this vignette, one's behaviour could significantly affect outcomes although invariably only to make matters worse rather than better. If one were guilty there was little that one could do; if one were innocent the appropriate strategy was to be pleasant and cooperative. Thus the context might directly affect the extent to which one could hold an internal perspective - if one were innocent, one's behaviour could have a greater impact upon outcomes.

A particular difficulty for Shaun, and for many others in this study is successfully controlling strong levels of affect which often result in behaviours which are known to be self-defeating.

#### ● Teachers

As with almost all the sample, Shaun stated that teacher admonishment would be likely to follow low-level disruption:

“Like, for talking, chewing, shouting across the other room and, em, just like other normal things like...em...doing something wrong”

The motive for such behaviour was often boredom and removal from the class was presented as a positive outcome. Appropriate behaviour could be exhibited at will and Stephen accepted responsibility for his actions and subsequent outcomes. On occasions, however, teachers, “...came in a foul mood” and this could lead to conflict:

“They (the teachers) used to....shouting at them (the children) and pushing them about and that, so a couple of times they'd done that to me so I...so I, just like, one teacher...em...he kept pushing us about 'cause he was in a bad mood, and I just shouted at him, just picked a chair up and flung it at him and he ended up in hospital with a bust-up leg.”

Shaun, like many of the children, differentiated between mainstream teachers and those in special educational settings.

“Like with there only being a small group here, like, get to talk with the teachers and, em, get your feelings a lot better sometimes when they start talking about, anyway, like, Parkdene teachers (mainstream secondary) just tack nee notice”

The suggestion here was that the disruptive unit teachers provided a supportive climate which enabled Shaun to deal with his problems in a more constructive and adaptive fashion. The implication is that, by providing the emotional and social climate, teachers share the responsibility for behavioural outcomes. This, of course, is a complex and sophisticated notion which the children were not capable of articulating in a clear and precise fashion. It is interesting to note from his casefile, that Shaun has experienced frequent changes of school and behavioural difficulties have been noted in each. Nevertheless, all his reported frustrations appear to centre on one particular school, Parkdene. This is a tendency often noted in children in special school settings. One explanation may be that if one admits that problems occur in a variety of settings, the only constant (i.e. the source of 'blame') is oneself.

#### ● **Peer acceptance and rejection**

Many of the children interviewed appeared to experience difficulty in examining their own interpersonal skills. This, of course, is not solely a feature of a juvenile or a special population.

Shaun's response to this vignette was to focus upon the negative effects of others who spread unpleasant stories about him. His responses suggested that this had been a salient experience for him in the past.



When asked how he would deal with this behaviour he replied:

“When they do stir and I find out.. and I find out..I always end up going round and asking what they were doing and if they just say, "I want to cause trouble ‘cause, em, ‘cause I’ve got no friends or nowt, and you...em...and people always tack the mick out of me" I just say, ‘Well, why don’t you just knock about with us, then?’”

Such a scene seems rather difficult to imagine. It may be that Shaun has a naively romantic view of such situations or is trying to present himself in a positive light. The latter seems unlikely as, shortly afterwards, when Shaun is asked what he has done, on occasions, to alienate other kids, he replies:

“Like..em.. when they’re getting on me nerves and that, and I hit them, they not want to know us after that”

When asked if he is the sort of person who can get other kids to like him fairly easily, he pauses before replying ‘sometimes’.

It is difficult to gain an understanding of Shaun’s expectancies in this area. As proved to be the case with many of the children, it was difficult to gain a picture of someone who identified himself as having greater or more limited success in peer relationships. Stephen’s response, when asked if he could talk his friends into doing a preferred activity, was typically impersonal:

“Like, it all depends, like, say there’s three people wants to do something and there’s two dinnit, them three can try and talk the other two into doing it”

The extracts from Shaun's casefile point to an individual who has been largely unable to establish or maintain sound peer relationships. He has tended, instead, to look to adults or younger children to provide him with positive relationships. One must question, therefore,

whether his responses reflect an inability on his part to perceive the dynamics of his true position or an unwillingness to report, his real perspective, to the researcher. Is it easier for Shaun to admit that he can sometimes behave inappropriately to others than reveal his enduring inability to sustain good peer relationships?

- **Family**

There seemed to little to be gained from this vignette. Shaun stated that he was sent to his room (his step-mother's 'favourite place' for him) for a variety of misbehaviours and he stays there until his step-mother allows him out. Although he sometimes feels bad about his situation, the punishment is not seen as particularly problematic as he has recourse to a radio and television. Sometimes, he is sent to his room for winding his step-mother up - behaviour over which he can exert some control:

“...sometimes if you, like, really want to, you can stop yourself from keeping going but if you want... trying see how far you can gan, just keep on going. That's all I used to do but now I can stop myself a bit”

Given Shaun's recent tragedy, the researcher felt obliged to deal with family issues with utmost care. For this reason, he chose not to explore family dynamics to any depth and only opened up discussion in those areas which Shaun appeared happy to discuss.

- **The past and the future**

When asked how much control he felt he had had in his life, Shaun replied that he'd had none. When asked about the future his response was equally negative:

S. Don't know really, 'cause the future's not here yet, so just got to wait till it's here  
J. But do you feel, like, you're going to have to take what comes, or do you think you can actually do something beforehand?

S. No, wait till it comes, then when it does come, you just learn to sort it out after that gradually

His hopes for the future were touchingly romantic:

“Work with animals and that, just gan away and gan on trips round the world and that, work with animals”

Asked if he thought this would happen he replied:

“Aye, if I really want it to happen it will....probablys.

Important factors include, working hard and planning. This suggests an internal perspective. When asked, however, what is the most important thing to make this work out, Shaun pauses for a long while before responding:

“Just hoping that it happens”

Such a response, in contrast to his earlier statement, is more indicative of an external perspective.

### **Shaun - a brief summary**

When the whole interview is examined, a picture emerges of a youngster who recognises that his behaviour can significantly affect outcomes (locus of control) in some, but not all spheres. His responses are neither indicative of an individual who adopts a generalised expectancy that reinforcement will result either from his own efforts nor of one who believes that his behaviour and subsequent reinforcements are unrelated. Unlike the classic case of Karl S., whose predicament sparked the development of the locus of control construct (see chapter 2), there is no clearcut solution in Shaun's case. One can offer a hesitant opinion

at different points in the interview transcript yet there is little consistency in his replies which appear to be greatly affected by contextual factors.

Other control-related issues are somewhat easier to examine. Shaun appears to perceive his ability to control his behaviour (self-control), for example, as limited; this being influenced to a significant degree by his mood state. The importance of mood upon behaviour and the extent to which it can explain hostile actions was very strong throughout the interview. Although it was suggested that moods were undesirable and did not exculpate the individual concerned, there was an implicit suggestion that negative moods rendered one less able to control one's behaviour. Such moods once entered into can be difficult to overcome:

S. "Sometimes if I dee get up in the morning, like, and if I'm in a bad mood I'm in a bad mood for the rest of the day"

A bad mood could explain unreasonable behaviour by, or towards, others. When asked whether he thought he provoked nastiness, Shaun replied:

S. Don't know, like, with me I used to get in....like somebody else used to get us in a bad mood and I used to take it out on somebody else.

J. Yeah

S. If they got in to me way

J. So when people have been nasty to you, do you feel that most of the time there's no good reason or most of the time there is a good reason?

S. Most of the time there's nee good reason because they've been in a bad mood with someone else

Shaun does not generally see himself as responsible for the hostility which is directed towards him. He does, however, suggest that he can sometimes be unfairly unpleasant to others and recognises that his actions may occasionally induce negative reactions.

Self-efficacy beliefs (i.e. the expectancy that one will be successful on a particular goal-directed activity) are also possible to assess although Shaun's expectations of success appear to vary from one vignette to another. It has been noted above that this can represent an oversimplistic treatment. For example, the first vignette indicates that he has little belief that he can successfully avoid conflict yet he appears assured that he is likely to emerge the victor.

Notions such as generalised locus of control and self-efficacy are predicated on a belief that the individual holds general perceptions about his or her likely impact upon the world. Although this may be valid, the accounts provided in this chapter, particularly the case of Shaun, do not support such a notion.

### iii) Transcript of interview with Shaun

(this does not include the first part of the interview where preliminary attempts to establish rapport and put Shaun at his ease are made)

Joe is the present author. All other names have been changed to preserve anonymity

Joe            So the first question is. Do you believe that most of your problems will solve themselves if you ignore them?

Shaunn       Aye

Joe            So you think it's better to ignore the problems and they will solve themselves?

Shaun        Sometimes

Joe            Fine. Do you think you can stop yourself from catching a cold?

Shaun        No

Joe            Okay. Do you think some kids are born lucky?

Shaun        All depends which way (pause)

Joe            What do you mean?

Shaun        Rich, poor, em (pause) really healthy

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        Bad health

Joe            So you get all these things. Do you think some kids are lucky and some kids are unlucky, or not?

Shaun        Yeah

Joe            O.K.. Does getting good marks in school when your in school here or when you were in your other schools was getting good marks important for you or not really?

Shaun        (interrupts) Yeah

Joe            It was

Shaun        Yeah

Joe            Are you often blamed for things that aren't your fault?

Shaun        Yeah (laughs)

Joe            (laughs) Yeah. Do you think if someone studies hard enough he can pass any subject at school?.....Do you think you'd pass anything if you studied hard enough?

Stephen      Uh huh (affirmation)

Joe            Okay. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard cause things don't turn out right anyway? Do you often feel, like, a lot of times it's not worth trying hard cause things aren't going to work or don't you feel like that?

Shaun Sometimes

Joe Yeah....(pause...Would you say most times you do?

Shaun Aye

Joe Yeah, okay. Do you feel that when things start off well in the morning it's going to be a good day no matter what you do... or not really?

Shaun Sometimes

Joe When like, say? -

Shaun Sometimes if I dee get up in the morning, like, and if I'm in a bad mood I'm in a bad mood for the rest of the day

Joe Right. So once you're in a bad mood, you're in a bad mood. What if things start off really good? Is it going to be good all day? You have moods do you sometimes?..... What makes you have a bad mood?

Shaun People..... are talking about us, like, behind me back..... like calling us when they're talking about me family like, telling horrible things about my family and that it just gets me in a bad mood

Joe Right and that starts off at the beginning of the day does it?

Shaun Yeah. Like... like if I can't keep... try and ignore it then when it gets too much I start lashing out something like that

Joe Yeah.....yeah

Shaun Me arms kind of go off in all different directions

Joe When does this sort of happen?

Shaun Like when just when people are talking about me family and that

Joe Yeah. Is it kids at school, is it, that do it?

Shaun Aye. Parkdene!

Joe Parkdene..... Yeah.

Shaun Not here (i.e. the disruptive unit)

Joe Not here

Shaun Just at Parkdene

Joe Do they know how you're going to react when your doing it?

Shaun Aye....so when I dee react they just dee it even more

Joe Yeah. So they just wind you up?

Shaun Aye

Joe And what do you try and do then?

Shaun Just try and ignore it first, like, if it gets a bit too much I always end up turning round, hitting somebody, hitting someone

Joe Hitting someone and then do they hit you back?

Shaun No they always on their.... em..backsides on the floor or somewhere like that

Joe Right

Shaun Or they run into the teachers or that....

Joe Was there any other way you could deal with this, rather than hitting them?

Shaun Aye, tell the teacher but at, like, Parkdene I told the teacher, told the teacher, one of the teachers about ten times that they were taking the mick out of me parents, like me family, and me, and that, and...eh..they said they were going to dee something, like, but they didn't dee a thing, so it just got worse

Joe Was it the same kids doing it all the time or was it different ones?

Shaun The same ones (pause)

Joe So you told the teacher and that didn't work.....

Shaun Yeah, like, I started taking it me own hands

Joe And did that work?

Shaun A bit

Joe So some stopped, did they, after you smacked them a few times?

Shaun Eh.... they just kept on garin

Joe Which were the ones that kept on going.... the hard ones was it?

Shaun The ones.... the good fighters and that

Joe Yeah

Shaun The ones, like.....like....em...like....like (inaudible)... fighting and that

Joe Sorry, who?

Shaun Like the ones who draw with us...same type of fighters

Joe Who give, yeah, about the same as you

Shaun Fighting

Joe Yeah

Shaun While others, like, the same as me, yet crapper

Joe Yeah. So if you were getting into a fight, then ,would you think before you got into a fight.... if the person who you were fighting, if they looked a bit hard, you might back off might you?

Shaun Aye, unless them like, like I was saying, like if I was going to get into a fight like I didn't want to fight but them kept insisting, like calling me family and that and I couldn't tack any more I just land them one.



Joe            However big they were.... even if they were like gorillas?

Shaun        Aye. I wasn't that bothered cause like when you're angry you can't be in nee pain till afterwards

Joe            Right, right.(pause) What else could you do besides telling teachers and getting into fights?

Shaun        Just try and ignore them but after a while when you've been ignoring them it just gets like.... people been telling me to ignore them cause it'll hurt them more, so I've been trying to dee that but just keep them garin on and on and on until I end up hitting one of them

Joe            Yeah.....(pause)..... And when you've hit one, do you feel better after that?

Shaun        A bit better

Joe            Even if you.....so if you do hit one and you get the worst of it, you'd still be pleased you'd had the fight or would you wished you hadn't had it then?

Shaun        I'd be pleased because it'd probablys.....probablys stop then. That person would stop.

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        Because he'd knows what he'd get if he kept on going

Joe            But what about if he gave you a good hiding?

Shaun        I'd try and hit him back

Joe            Yeah.....yeah. What about here then? Do you not get any stick here?

Stephen      Naa. It's a lot better than Parkdene

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        Like with there only being a small group here, like, get to talk with the teachers and, em, get your feelings a lot better sometimes when they start talking about, anyway, like, Parkdene teachers just tack nee notice

Joe            You used to get along with Mrs P. (Head of House) though didn't you quite well?

Shaun        Aye

Joe            Of course, she left didn't she?

Shaun        Then me moods start coming

Joe            Your moods came?

Shaun        I was all right before she left (pause) I did all right

Joe            Yeah. Do you sometimes have a mood before you.....before you got into school did you sometimes have a mood?

Shaun        It was like me sister.... normally puts me in a bad mood if she.....if she like.....

Joe            Your sister?

Shaun        Aye..... me stepsister, like on a morning if I dinnit dee something she always gans on and on until I get into a bad mood like. Me and my sister have been in a couple of fights

Joe Have you? And who gets the worst of that?

Shaun Both of us. Stepmarr's comes down and starts rattling us both about

Joe Really.....she a hard lass is she, this sister?

Shaun She's all right.....Like with her being eighteen, coming nineteen

Joe Oh, right....

Shaun Like being, like, big....

Joe Yeah

Shaun Broad and fat she's.... em

Joe Oh she's a bit tubby is she?

Shaun (laughs) Like, em, with her being big and that, she's like, she's not bigger than me now, I'm bigger than her now. Like, when she does start I always tack nee notice at first, then when she starts to fight, like, starts pushing us about and hitting us, I just end up... I just turn around and hit her back

Joe You're a bit quicker than she is?

Shaun It's like, like with me used to going, with us used to going to karate and then boxing and wrestling and all that, junior wrestling, boxing and karate

Joe You did?

Shaun Aye. I've been, like, me moves punches and kicks and all that have been getting faster and faster, so like I've got more speed than what I used to have, but like, but with us getting more speed me punches are starting to getting a bit softer. It's like, I've never been like a really hard puncher but it hurts when I dee hit them

Joe Right

Shaun But not git hard

Joe What about your stepmum when she comes down? Do you ever have a go at her or not?

Shaun Like.... she's hit us a couple of times and I've hit her back but I've always, like, said sorry at the end because it wasn't between us...because it hadn't been her fault, because it was our Susan's (sister) fault for starting it.

Joe Yeah

Shaun Em....like when I have, like when she has hit me and I've hit her back like, we've always, like, sat down and talked and all that, what it was over and that

Joe Em.....right.....we'll come back to that, if I could ask you some more questions about that later? .... Do you think that most of the time parents listen to what their kids have to say? Do parents listen to kids?

Shaun All depends really 'cause, like, some families dinnit care about the kids, whilst other families dee

Joe What's been your experience then with your family? Do you think you've been listened to much over the years?

Shaun A bit. But, like, most of the families, I've never stopped in one family longer than two year

Joe Right then, your feelings over that time.....?

Shaun There was only, like, one family I stopped with for eight....like, six years since two to eight something like that..

Joe Right. What do you think most parents do? Do you think most parents listen to what their kids say?

Shaun They, like, if they care enough. But other families just tack nee notice cause they're not exactly bothered

Joe Yeah.....What about the people that have looked after you? Do they listen to you much?

Shaun Aye

Joe Right.....Do you think wishing can make good things happen?

Shaun (pause) Naa

Joe You don't..... you don't believe in wishing. Have you ever tried wishing?

Shaun Aye, I've done it loads of time but its never made it come true. Except for one when I got back with me dad.

Joe That was-

Shaun (interrupts) That was it

Joe And do you think it was because you had actually wished, you know, do you think that made a difference or not?

Shaun Naa

Joe No

Shaun It was like 'cause we got to know each other by accident, anyway, through one or two, like me best friend

Joe Em.....How was that, then?

Shaun Like me dad, before I knew him, and me stepmarr and our Micky, like, had..had a friend called Jan, like a best friend's, mar was Jan, like,we would know each other since we were bairns, knock about, we'd been everywhere together, like....em.... like...em...me stepbrother like he would dee, belly dance type things and all that, like

Joe Belly dance

Shaun Aye, when you make your belly gan up and down and all that

Joe Oh right

Shaun Worm, and em, and me friend Benny gans, like, "I know somebody who...me mate can dee that".. like he gans... our John sat down and he gans, "Oh Jonesy (Shaun's surname)!"...and then he gans and me dad's suppose to have said "What was his name...Shaun Jones?" and Benny gans, "Aye" and me dad just starts, burst out crying

Joe So he didn't know where you lived then, did he not?

Shaun Like Benny did but me dad didn't

Joe Right. So then what happened? Did he come.....?

Shaun Benny come, come, like, to school one day and telled us, like, on, like, on the Saturday, on the Saturday we went up, he picked us up and took us to me dad's, but I like, telled the Home (Children's Home) I was going back to me aunty's

Joe Em..em.....

Shaun So the home wouldn't try and stop us

Joe They'd try to stop you?

Shaun They would of....

Joe Would they?.....

Shaun Then like, me social worker found out and we just, like, started, like, getting meetings together me and me dad used to get together, like

Joe So the social worker fixed them up?

Shaun Aye,

Joe Yeah

Shaun And it gradually got better, longer, more longer and that.... then we went to live with him (pause)

Joe Right..... let's carry on with this for a minute and come back to that part later. When you get punished does it usually seem as if it's for no good reason?

Shaun Sometimes for a reason, sometimes for nee reason

Joe Right. You wouldn't like to say which one is it more? Like most of these answers that you say sometimes to? Would you say that it's mainly more often for a good reason or more often for no good reason?

Shaun Em.....for a reason

Joe For a reason.

Shaun Yeah

Joe Most of the time do you find it hard to change your friends' minds?

Shaun (pause) Uh huh

Joe You do. You find it hard to change you mates' minds..... yeah. Are you a person, are you the sort of person who has loads of mates or do you find it hard to have mates?

Shaun I used to have loads of friends but with us going to Parkdene I have hardly's got any....

Joe So who do you knock around with now, anyone?

Shaun Naa I just keep to meself now

Joe Yeah

Shaun Like, like sometimes I go our me aunty's like, I've got some friends, ower Highbridge who I knock about with..

Joe Uh huh

Shaun Off years and years ago

Joe So if you wanted to make mates at Parkdene, how could you go about it? (long pause).....Is there anything you could do to get some friends or.....?

Shaun Start talking and that.....get to know them and that

Joe Would that be something you could do or would you find it hard?

Shaun I wouldn't, like, find it hard, but most times I could make friends with people, like, when I've helped them with something. Like, when I've been in a fight or something with loads of other lads, picking on like, three lads picking on one lad, I've always, I dinnit think it's fair. I've always ran over and helped that lad.

Joe Right

Shaun Like I started, then I started on about him

Joe Em.....So have you tried to make friends in Parkdene.... have you looked for some mates or...?

Shaun Aye, I had some friends, but, like, friends I did have always got us into trouble with the police.

Joe Who was that

Shaun Some lad called Gary Bassett

Joe Oh right..... yeah

Shaun Always got into trouble with the police with him, so I stopped knocking about with him

Joe Yeah. And how do you feel about the future then? Do you feel you're going to be able to get some mates? Or do you think it's not looking too good at the moment?

Shaun Em.... I've still got a couple of friends like that I talk to, during the day and on the night and that, then (pause) and just then, I just.... like just like talk to them, knock around the streets and that

Joe Yeah

Shaun And that's it

Joe Yeah, fine. What do you think helps a team to win more, cheering or luck? What do you think's more important to help a team to win?

Shaun Sharing

Joe Cheering, sorry, cheering you know, when you cheer, if a team's cheered on, or do you think being lucky is more or less important? Which do you think's more important?

Shaun Cheering

Joe Right. Do you feel it's nearly impossible to change your stepmum's mind about things? Could you change her mind or is it impossible?

Shaun (pause) Sometimes. Its hard to change her mind but sometimes you can if you're lucky.

Joe Yes. So it's not nearly impossible you don't think then? Em.... Do you think your stepmum should let you make most of your own decisions?

Shaun Aye. Sometimes she's does, sometimes she doesn't. Like when I dee make me own decisions, like, I think about it a bit and then I try and do it, but most of them always get us into trouble

Joe So if you had to say yes or no then, which one do you think mainly? You should or shouldn't? If I forced you into saying yes or no, which way would you go?

Shaun Dinnit know (pause)

Joe Do you think, do you think they should allow you or they shouldn't let you?

Shaun Aye they should let us

Joe They should let you.....okay. Say you do something wrong...when you've done something wrong, do you often feel there's not much you can do to make it right again afterwards? (long pause) If you do something wrong, can you make it right again afterwards or is there not much you can do about it?

Shaun Aye, you can, if you put your mind to it

Joe Right. How would you try to make things better?.....Say if you did something wrong, how would you try and make it right again?

Shaun By doing it again and doing it the right way

Joe Right. Do you think most kids are born good at sports?

Shaun Eh hem (affirmation)

Joe You do? Yeah.... Are other kids your age stronger than you?.....Most of them?...Are most kids your age stronger than you?

Shaun Some. Some are stronger, some are weaker, some are just the same

Joe Right. You'd say most are stronger or not most?

Shaun Naa, just the same

Joe Do you think one of the best ways to handle most of your problems is not to think about them?

Shaun (long pause) Uh huh

Joe Right. So you.....you know you've had a pretty tough time really haven't you, over the years? What do you do? Do you try and shut it out of your mind?

Shaun Some I've tried to shut out of my mind, but some just, you cannot

Joe Yeah

Shaun Well some just like keep on... sticking in your mind

Joe Em

Shaun Keep on thinking about it

Joe Over the years, you know, you've had a lot of setbacks haven't you? Do you feel there's much

you can do to make, to sort these things out, or do you feel that you've not got a lot of power in you life?

Shaun (shaking head) Like, some I really worry and so.... and you cannot really dee much about them and that, others are different so you can dee a little bit but you cannot, you cannot dee loads...dee a little bit

Joe Yeah... yeah. What about your future... do you feel you've got much control over what happens in the future or not?

Shaun A little bit

Joe Yeah, a little bit, yeah. So imagine points on a scale, say one is not much control, ten is you've got loads of control, right, where would you be? Think about all the things you want in your life?

Shaun About six

Joe Six... so you think you've probably got a fair old bit then?... Okay. Do you feel you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are? Do you have a lot of choice over who your mates are?

Shaun Like, me marr tries to give us a helping hand like she tells us not to pick friends who'll get you into trouble and that, where others, like, if they're good, them dinnit get you into trouble like... em...friendly, try and make friends with them but others...if they dee get into trouble with police and that, then I dinnit knock around with them

Joe Yeah

Shaun That's what me marr always tells us

Joe So if you want to make friends with people, do you find it easy to get friends and choose who you want or do you find it quite difficult then?

Shaun Halfy (sic) half, really

Joe Right... right. I'll pin you down here into saying which way.....I'm pinning you down okay into saying, yes you do have a lot of choice ,or no you don't think you got a lot of choice?

Shaun (long pause) I've got, like, a fair bit of choice

Joe So you think you have then..... Okay. If you found a four leaf clover do you think it would bring you good luck?

Shaun Naa, wouldn't have thought so

Joe Do you think if you do your homework, you get better marks at school?

Shaun Uh huh (affirmation)

Joe Yeah. You think marks and homework go together.....If some kid your age decides to hit you..... do you feel there's not much you can do to stop him? Is there much you can do to stop him or.....?

Shaun Catch his hand and ask him what it's over

Joe So you'd stop him physically would you?

Shaun Aye, and like, like if he tries to stop me from catching him, I'd like, I'd grab his hand and try to get him over on to the floor and ask him what it's over... what it's for and if there's nee

reasons I'd just leave him.....

Joe Right. Have you ever had a good luck charm?

Shaun (long pause) I used to have a lucky rabbit's foot and it brought us nee good luck, like, so I flung it

Joe Right

Shaun After a couple of year

Joe Do you think that whether or not people like you depends on how you act?

Shaun Uh huh

Joe You do.....

Shaun Aye

Joe (pause) Yeah.....Would your parents usually help you if you ask them to?

Shaun Uh huh.... like if I asked them nicely they would

Joe Right. Have you felt that when people were nasty to you it was usually for no good reason at all?.....People were nasty to you for no reason?

Shaun Aye, were in a nasty mood, aye, others usually in a good mood, then nasty to you, there's got to be something wrong

Joe Is it something to do with you, though?

Shaun Don't know, like, with me I used to get in... like, somebody else used to get us in a bad mood and I used to take it out on somebody else

Joe Yeah

Shaun If they got in to me way

Joe So when people have been nasty to you, do you feel that most of the time there's no good reason or most of the time there is a good reason?

Shaun Most of the time there's nee good reason because they've been in a bad mood with someone else

Joe Yeah..... Do you think you do anything that gets kids to be nasty to you?...Is it something about you that gets people nasty?

Shaun Aye, sometimes

Joe What do you do that makes people nasty, do you think?

Shaun (long pause) Em.....

Joe That's a hard question, I know

Shaun If somebody asks you to dee something and I dinnit want to dee it, that sometimes gets them, sometimes gets them to be nasty, where if you dee something and then they dinnit want you to dee it, it still gets them nasty (laughs)

Joe Right.....Most of the time do you feel you can change what might happen tomorrow by what



you do today? (pause) Do you understand the question?..... You know, can what you do today can change what happens tomorrow, or not? Or is from day to day separate?

Shaun Aye...aye, I think it could

Joe Can you think of an example at all?

Shaun If you see something really good sometime in your life.... it's bound to crop up again some other time in your life

Joe Right...okay. Do you think that when bad things are going to happen they're going to happen no matter what you try and do to stop them?

Shaun Uh huh, they do in everybody's life

Joe They do? You can't stop things, you can't stop some things?

Shaun You don't know when a certain thing's going to pop up in your life

Joe Yeah

Shaun So you cannot really stop them when it does; it just pops up any time

Joe Yeah..... okay. Do you think kids can get their own way if they just keep trying? If the kids keep on and on, do they get their own way in the end... get what they want?

Shaun Aye, it mostly works with lasses though

Joe With lasses?

Shaun Aye

Joe How's that?

Shaun Cause they're got the right mood to try... they've got the right mood, like, if them didn't get their own way they, like, git crying or something like that

Joe Yeah (laughs)

Shaun So, like, that person will feel sorry for them and they'll get their own way at the end.... where lads they cannot put on crying that well, like, the only way them get their own way,... is like if they see something good; that's the only way, where lasses....just comes natural

Joe (laughs) Yeah.....yeah. So...eh...so you think girls can get their own way more easily?

Shaun Aye

Joe What about kids in general, do you think most kids can get their own way?

Shaun (pause) Aye, if they try

Joe Okay. Do you find that most of the time it's useless trying to get your own way at home?

Shaun Aye

Joe Yeah

Shaun It's normally our.. em.. Larry who gets the most attention with being a bairn

Joe Who's Larry?

Shaun Me nephew

Joe How many kids have you got with your brothers and sisters then?

Shaun Our John, he's the oldest, out of me stepbrothers, and our Susan she's the second oldest, and our Philip....he's two year older than me, then me, and our Stuart, my real brother, he's younger than me, a year younger than me; then there's our Keith he's just two

Joe So you've got five brothers and sisters then, yeah? Five, all together with yourself.

Shaun (long pause while counts) Aye

Joe Right. It's a lot for your stepmum to look

Shaun There's seven in the family all together, like, with...

Joe There's five and you and your mum. Right....Do you think when good things happen they happen because of hard work? (pause) Do you think when good things happen to you, is it because you've, you know, you've worked hard at something?

Shaun If you want something to work, and you work hard for it, like, you work really hard for it, to get it to work aye, I reckon it in the end

Joe Okay. Do you feel that when someone your age wants to be your enemy, do you feel there's not much you can do to change matters?

Shaun Naa, not unless you talk to them, see what things see what (inaudible) things over

Joe Do you feel that's all you can do, or is there much you can do?

Shaun Its about all you can do

Joe Yeah. So generally speaking you can do much or you can't do much?

Shaun Naa you can't dee much

Joe Do you feel it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to?

Shaun (long pause) Naa...They normally have their own mind

Joe Do you usually feel that you don't have much to say about what you get to eat at home? .....Do you have much to say about what you get?

Shaun Oh aye

Joe You do have lots to say?

Shaun Well normally we all like something different

Joe Do you....oh a fussy family!

Shaun All like something

Joe Seven people, seven of you eat different stuff, eh.....Do you feel that if someone doesn't like you there's not much you can do about it? If someone takes a dislike to you....?

Shaun Naa

Joe Is there anything you can do about it or not much?

Stephen Well, not really

Joe Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school work, at school or here.....,do you ever feel its useless to try because other kids are cleverer than you? (pause)... Did you feel like that at Parkdene, perhaps other kids were cleverer than you, or did you not feel like that?

Shaun Like, there was loads of kids, like, brighter than me but you know I always, like, tried me best so I could keep up with them

Joe Right.....right. So you didn't feel it was useless to try, then?

Shaun Naa

Joe Are you the sort of person who thinks that planning ahead makes things turn out better? (pause) Do you believe in planning ahead or don't you think it makes a lot of difference?

Shaun Aye, like plan ahead just like what I would do when I'm older

Joe Right (pause) Most of the time do you feel that you have much say about what your family decides to do?

Shaun Naa

Joe You don't..... Do you think it's better to be clever or to be lucky? What would you want to be, clever or lucky?

Shaun Lucky

Joe Okay. Right that's those questions. I've got a few others....is that okay? Just another few minutes. Is that okay?

Shaun Aye

Joe This is slightly different. We've been over some of these in some of the discussion . The first question. If you go home...your coat's torn and your eye's all black, what do you think's the mostly likely thing to have happened?

Shaun Either had a fight and...em....or caught your coat on something, or walked into a wall

Joe Which is more likely do you reckon?

Shaun A fight

Joe And you said you'd had quite a few fights with kids at Parkdene, haven't you. What about in your home area, do you get into fights out in the streets?

Shaun Sometimes

Joe Yeah.....

Shaun I keep out of fights in the streets

Joe Do you. What happens.....can you remember what happens?

Shaun Like there was once, like, in Kings George's park when one of me friends was getting picked on by three Bluecroft lads and I, like, ran over and like, pushed....ran ower, like pushed me mate out of the way and like dove on one... dove on one of the lads, like started belting into him, like. The other two lads tried to drag us off but like with us used to going to karate I rolled over and kicked one of them in the face and just got up and punched the other one. Then they

all ran away and them never beat us. Started again a couple of weeks ago with me mate again but, like, I walked, like, I ran over to my mate and they just ran away

Joe (pause) What about fighting then, is it something... is it something you'd rather avoid or don't you mind?

Shaun Something I like to avoid

Joe You like to avoid

Shaun I don't really like fighting but, I don't like fighting but I just, like, I used to gan to karate so I'd learn to defend myself if a fight did come up

Joe But if you see people fighting you don't have to go in and start hitting people do you....or do you have to?

Shaun Naa....naa, not unless it's one of me best, like, one of me friends and he's really getting beat up and that

Joe Can you not just go up and say, "Come on, let's stop that you lot"?

Shaun Oh aye, I've tried it but, like, it's worked once that's it. All the rest have, they have always kept going or they've tried with me

Joe When you get into fights does it make you feel more powerful?

Shaun (long pause) Sometimes, it all, like, depends what kind of fight it is really

Joe Right..... you're walking along the road one evening after tea, right, and all of a sudden this police car pulls up behind you.... a copper gets out, "Oy you! Get in the car!" right, a bit edgy. Why might you have been stopped, do you think, by the law?

Shaun 'Cause either, like, someone's done something wrang and, like, they've had, like, same type of coat on, like, same type of hairstyle or something and then that, like, like, they've seen like, they'd probably be part of it and then, em, like the policeman comes along and sees you in the same type of coat and the same hairstyle but different coloured trousers and that on, like, he thinks it's probablly you and he gets hold of you and puts you in the car, so it's happened twice to me before.

Joe You've been stopped twice have you?

Shaun But, like, at the end at the end of the night I've always been let gan, like

Joe What are you like when...what were you like those times? Was it, "Get off me, copper!" or was it....?

Shaun Aye, "Get off us!" and, "I haven't done owt wrang I'm just walking home 'cause I've been to me aunty's" or something

Joe So you're a bit edgy are you with the law?

Shaun Naa

Joe When they stopped you?

Shaun For nee reason, but if I've done something wrong, I've got to tack it..if you've done something wrong

Joe So the way in which you respond to the police would depend on whether you were guilty or whether you were innocent, then?

Shaun 'Cause if I was innocent, I've always got, I've always got (inaudible) Say I'm innocent, like a copper comes behind you and pulls you for no reason, you always get an edge on you, you try and push them away or something, and tell, ask him what's wrong and that, well if you are guilty, you've always got, like, a guilty chip on your shoulder so, like, like, if the police do stop you and pull you over.... and ask you where you've been, what you've been doing and all that you, always bound to come out, you're always bound to slip.

Joe Right

Shaun Cause you're frightened in case you get caught, but if you haven't done owt you can't slip

Joe Right ...yeah..... yeah. And the way you respond to the copper, right, the way in which you handle this....would that affect the way the copper acts afterwards.... would it have an effect on them or not?

Shaun Aye

Joe What effect would it have?

Shaun Say, like, say he nicks you for nowt for no reason, just cause you've got the same type of coat on or something like that, or the same pair of trousers, he pulls you for no reason.... like he asks you all these questions and all that..... you're getting scared, and that, 'cause you dinnit know what's going to happen, like your parents'll probably kill you when they come and find you, like, even if you haven't done owt and like, like, say you're scared and you hit him, you'll get, you'll get done then anyway for assaulting a police officer so....

Joe Em

Shaun ...so you'll still get nicked

Joe What if you were all nice and pleasant?

Shaun It'd be all right he'd just take you down to the cop station and, em, he'd like, he'd put you in a cell and, like, if they catch the proper person and come in, and say sorry and all that, and then they'd let you gan

Joe You're saying, though, that if you're really nice and pleasant, you think they might, you might be more likely to get off.....are you.....or not?

Shaun Like...like, if you are nice and pleasant and all that, it wouldn't, they wouldn't give you so much hassle and that, where if you are like bad tempered and all that.. lash out and that for no reason you're bound to get more.

Joe You said before, that the way you always respond when you are innocent was to get all edgy?

Shaun Aye

Joe And now you're saying it's better not to be edgy so why -

Shaun (interrupts) It's better not to be edgy but you do get edgy - I don't know how, it just comes on automatically.... with this scare

Joe And do you know when you're getting edgy.... Do you think that this may not be the best way of behaving?

Shaun Aye

Joe You do?

Shaun Aye, 'cause you always get like a twitch in your body and all that

Joe Yeah

Shaun And your lip

Joe You find it hard..

Shaun (interrupts) You'll end up getting nicked, em, for assault or something like that

Joe Yeah.....So do you think when a copper comes up to you and you're in trouble... do you think you've got some power, some way of controlling what happens at the outcome

Shaun Oh aye.... sometimes

Joe So what you're saying is...the way you deal with it, is often the way to make things worse?

Shaun Uh huh

Joe You do..... yeah...yeah...right. Okay.... imagine you're in a lesson at school and the teacher shouts at you to get out of the classroom, right. Like at the last school you were at. Did you get kicked out often?

Shaun Aye (laughs)

Joe What did you get kicked out for?

Shaun Like, for talking, chewing, shouting across the other room and, em, just like other normal things like....em....doing something wrong

Joe Yeah

Shaun In the class

Joe Did you get kicked out more than most of the other kids?

Shaun No, just the same really

Joe About the same as the others.....

Shaun Everybody got kicked out of class one time in their life

Joe Yeah, and when you got kicked out, did you, when you were carrying on like that, were you wanting to be thrown out?

Shaun Sometimes, if the lesson was really boring like the work was.... I'd just carry on so I could get out of the class

Joe Yeah

Shaun ....and go for a little walk around the school

Joe You knew you were going to get kicked out, did you, if you carried on?

Shaun Yeah.

Joe And what about those times.....were there some times when you didn't want to get kicked out?

Shaun Aye, so I just kept, like, work to meself and that

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        Like behave

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        So I didn't get kicked out, like, if you carried on you would

Joe            And what about the teachers, what were they like? Was it their fault or was it your fault when you were in bother, when you behaved like that....who do you blame for that?

Shaun        Me

Joe            (pause). Looking back now, do you.....do you regret it or not?

Shaun        Some I do..... some I dinnit

Joe            Yeah..... yeah. Was it partly the teachers' fault, or was it all yours?

Shaun        Sometimes... like at Parkdene, most of the teachers, some of the teachers came in a foul mood so they used to take it out on the kids

Joe            Did they?.....

Shaun        They used to.... shouting at them and pushing them about and that, so a couple of times they'd done that to me so I.....so I, just like, one teacher..em..he kept pushing us about 'cause he was in a bad mood, and I just shouted at him, just picked a chair up and flung it at him and he ended up in hospital with a bust-up leg

Joe            Did he?

Shaun        (laughs) Aye

Joe            Let's try the next one. Say it's break time and the other kids won't play snooker with you or won't play football with you, or whatever, or you're at home and the kids won't have anything to do with you. Do you sometimes find there's times when, like, when no one wants to know you?

Shaun        Sometimes

Joe            Why would that have been, do you think?

Shaun        Either they've heard something that's wrong about you off somebody else, cause they've been trying to cause trouble

Joe            Can you give me an example of the sort of thing that ..?

Shaun        Like....like some kids like... some kids would be the best friends normally, go out all the time, and then there's another person who's jealous, who hasn't got any friends, comes along and starts causing trouble, like

Joe            What sort of things would they say?

Shaun        Saying, "If you knock about with him, he'll get you into trouble" and all that and....em... or, "I wouldn't play football with him cause he....cause he's a foul player" and all that

Joe            Em

Shaun        So they would end up not wanting to know you and that

Joe            Yeah yeah

Shaun        Through that sort of person

Joe            So if you found yourself... all the other kids weren't wanting to mix with you, do you think the most likely reason would be someone's been stirring so....?

Shaun        When they do stir and I find out....and I find out. I always end up going round and asking what they were doing and if they just say, "I want to cause trouble cause, em, cause I've got no friends or nowt, and you...em...and people always tack the mick out of me" I just say "Well, why don't you just knock about with us, then?"

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        And you have got some friends

Joe            Yeah.....yeah. What about...em... what about other times? Are there any times when kids won't have anything to do with you and it's been your fault?

Shaun        Oh aye, a couple of times

Joe            What sort of things have you done wrong then?

Shaun        Like...em...when they're getting on me nerves and that, and I hit them, they not want to know us after that

Joe            Yeah

Shaun        And...em...us start walking about, start walking about like, and you, like.... walk past and somebody's pushed you, and you've knocked them, and went flying into a wall or something like that and them come and push and punch you and, like, they don't want to know you after that.

Joe            Em.....yeah. Are you the sort of person...are you the sort of person who can get kids to like you fairly quickly, do you think, or do you feel you're not very good at that?

Shaun        (pause) Sometimes I am

Joe            When you came here, did you think,"All the kids are really going to like me" or did you think, "Oh goodness, I might not be very popular here" you know?

Shaun        When I first came here I didn't think I'd get along. I didn't know the kids that well, but it's different, so it's all right....I get along with them.

Joe            Supposing you wanted your mates....to do something..... could you talk them all into doing it or would you find that be difficult?

Shaun        Like, it all depends, like, say there's three people wants to do something and there's two dinnit, them three can try and talk the other two into doing it

Joe            Yeah..... Okay....Supposing....when you're in bother at home, does your step mum send you to your room?

Shaun        Uh huh

Joe            Em

Shaun        That's her favourite place

Joe            Pardon



Shaun That's her favourite place, my bedroom

Joe Her favourite place

Shaun Aye, if I'm doing something wrong it's always, "Shaun get to your room now!"

Joe And what do you do then?

Shaun I just gan up and watch me telly

Joe You've got a telly in your room have you?

Shaun I watch me telly and play me ghetto and that's it

Joe Your ghetto blaster ....yeah. If your mum sends you to your room, do you stay there?

Shaun Aye, till she says I can come out

Joe What sort of things do you get sent to your room for, then?

Shaun Getting in trouble with the police... getting..(pause)

Joe What you been done for... with the police for, then?

Shaun One time, I got done for attempted burglary

Joe Attempted burglary....you got caught breaking in did you?

Shaun An old man walked past and grassed us to the cops

Joe Where.. in Parkdene?

Shaun Aye, I was at Parkdene School but it was down...em....Scott Hall bank

Joe Oh right, and you got taken to Court for that, did you?

Shaun No, I just got cautioned

Joe Yeah. So have you had to go to Court at all yet or...?

Shaun No

Joe So you've just had cautions. So your mum sent you to your room; you were grounded then were you....how long for?

Shaun About a week

Joe Yeah.....yeah. What about in the house, do you get sent to your room for doing things that are wrong in the house?

Shaun Eh..... fighting, letting me mouth gan

Joe Yeah

Shaun And just, like, doing something that she doesn't want us to do

Joe And when you get sent to your room do you feel bad about it?

Shaun (nods)

Joe            You do?

Shaun        Sometimes

Joe            Is there something you can do about that? When you get into that kind of bother, do you do it without thinking or do you realise what's happening? Like, when you are working your mum up, right, do you know how it's going to work work out?

Shaun        I know how it's going to work out in the end

Joe            You can feel it building up do you?..... Is there any way you can stop it from happening while this is going on? Can you sort of, like, stop this from happening?

Shaun        Oh aye, sometimes if you, like, really want to, you can stop yourself from keeping going but if you want....trying see how far you can gan, just keep on going. That's all I used to do but know I can stop myself a bit

Joe            So you feel you are able to actually stop yourself from ending up in your room if you want to then, you think?

Shaun        Aye

Joe            Yeah..... Okay, last one of these ones. Someone's screaming really furiously at you, they're really mad, like their veins are coming out of their neck, throbbing here (points to jugular) and their face is red, right, who comes to mind?..... Who do you think.....who is the person who's most likely to be like that with you..... really mad and cross and screaming at you?

Shaun        Probably someone's I'm having a pint with.

Joe            Is there a face that comes to you or not?

Shaun        Aye

Joe            Who's that?

Shaun        Just.....em.....this lad.....em....it's complicated.. forget his name now

Joe            Right

Shaun        He lives at Parkdene; I know that

Joe            And it was a lad up there and you got really.....

Shaun        Thomas Harris, Neil Foxton.....face always comes up and I was punching into the wall at a picture

Joe            Really

Shaun        (inaudible)

Joe            Pardon

Shaun        Like a picture always comes into me mind and I just have to punch into a wall

Joe            You don't like him?

Shaun        Naa

Joe            Yeah.....yeah.

Shaun Neil Foxton, I've already had a fight with. Thomas Harris, I haven't yet. Probablys kill him anyway

Joe They give you a hard time do they at school? Yeah. (pause) Is there anything you could do to make things work with them? Say the situation could be changed?.. Is there anything you can do?.....Or don't you think there's anything?

Shaun Not really..... Like always ends up, say I try and do something good, it just ends up like garin on and on, like saying, "Oh, he couldn't dee something good if he tried" and all that, and so I just end up turning round and hitting 'em.

Joe Why do you think they've got it in for you then?

Shaun I don't know

Joe Any ideas at all?

Shaun Naa, they just like getting people into trouble.... they always do it

Joe Has it got anything to do with you at all as a person....or your personality or.....?

Shaun They just try and get everybody into trouble

Joe Em.....

Shaun Like, say if them do something, they blame it on to somebody else so that person'll get into trouble and them'll just get left off the hook

Joe And are some people better at dealing with that than others? Are some people good at dealing with all the hassle?

Shaun Sometimes

Joe And what about you.....are you good at dealing with it or bad? Or average?

Shaun Average

Joe Average. What do the good ones, the ones that deal with it well, what would they do?

Shaun Probablys ignore them at first

Joe Em.....

Shaun Then if got out of hand they'd gan and tell the teacher and if the teacher didn't do nowt, probably's tack it in their own hands or...em....try and sort it out with that kid

Joe That's what you do, though, isn't it. So why is it that these people can manage it so well and you've done the same thing and it's not gone so well?

Shaun I don't know. I'm just no good

Joe You're no good?

Shaun No

Joe No good at what, though... no good at ignoring, no good at telling the teacher.....?

Shaun No good at ignoring. I tell the teachers but the teachers dinnit do nowt

Joe Do you think the teachers will do more for other kids?

Shaun Like, I don't know, really

Joe Yeah

Shaun 'Cause half the teachers are too soft to do owt

Joe Em.....

Shaun Cause they're scared in case they get hit themselves

Joe Em..... (pause)....Right this one's a hard question, this is the last one. If you were to look at your life, right, in terms of what's happened in your life, how much control do you think you've had over over what's happened to you?

Shaun None

Joe None at all?

Shaun Naa

Joe What about the future? How much control do you think you've got over your future?

Shaun Don't know really, cause the future's not here yet, so just got to wait till it's here

Joe But do you feel, like, you're going to have to take what comes, or do you think you can actually do something beforehand?

Shaun No, wait till it comes, then when it does come, you just learn to sort it out after that gradually

Joe Looking back, is there any way you can think of where you actually have had control? (pause) Or do you feel that you've been powerless?

Shaun Powerless really, cause everything I've done, like, and been, like, me foster parents and that, social workers have always sorted it out and I've never...I get a choice in where I want to gan but I never get that thing.

Joe You never get....?

Shaun The thing I choose

Joe You never get what you want?

Shaun Naa

Joe You get asked to choose and then you don't get it?

Shaun Like, when I was younger, before I lived with me dad and stepmam, used to always ask me social worker how I'd get into foster parents who, you know, like, lived on a farm, like, worked and lived on a farm for a living, with liking animals and that

Joe Yeah.....and it never came about. (pause) How do you feel about your future 'cause you've had someone doing all these things for you, you're now coming up to sixteen aren't you?

Shaun In a couple of weeks

Joe How do you feel about that? Do you feel that you're going to have to be responsible for your own life? How do you feel about that?

Shaun I feel responsible for it....it's frightening a bit 'cause you don't know what to do... all that much yet.

Joe Have you got any plans for your future? What would you want to happen?

Shaun Work with animals and that, just go away and go on trips round the world and that, work with animals

Joe And do you think that's going to happen?

Shaun Aye, if I really want it to happen it will.... probablys

Joe Is that wishing? We talked about wishing before didn't we; if you really wished hard. What sort of things do you need, do you think? Is it a question about working hard or is it a question -

Shaun (interrupts) Working hard, really

Joe Em.....

Shaun Cause you've got to work up to it

Joe How are you going to go about that.... do you know?

Shaun Like planning all the places where your going to go, planning what's it going to cost, planning...em...what your going to do and that, while you're there, so you've really... got to work hard until it happens...

Joe How important is luck in all this do you think? (pause) Does luck come into it, or does luck not really have anything to do with it?

Shaun A bit

Joe A bit... you need a bit of luck you feel?

Shaun Aye

Joe What's the most important thing do you think to make all this work out for you?

Shaun (very long pause) Just hoping that it happens

Joe Just hoping that it happens....yeah. Right Shaun, thanks, I really enjoyed that talk. It was nice.

*END OF INTERVIEW*

aye	yes
bairn	young child
bug (ing)	annoy (ing)
calling us	teasing/taunting me
comp	comprehensive school
couldn't give a shit	couldn't care less
crapper	worse
dee	do
dinnit	don't
dunno	don't know
edge	a cool, slightly threatening manner
flit	escape
gan (s)	go (goes)
garing/ganna	going
get wrong	admonished
ghetto	ghettoblaster radio
git	very
grounded	kept in the house
mack	make
marr	mother
naa	no
nee	no
nicks (ed)	arrests (ted)
nowt	nothing
nutters	idiots
ower	over/too
owt	anything
peed	drunk
pulls	arrests
rattled	upset
sick	fed up
spacker head	spastic head - a term of abuse
stepmarr	stepmother
stir	cause trouble
tack	take
us	us/me

## Appendix I I Children's Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (CNSIE).

(The external response is indicated after each question in uppercase. Underlined words are substitutions for the Scale's original American terms. These are asterisked)

1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you ignore (\*don't fool with) them? (YES)
2. Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold? (NO)
3. Are some kids just born lucky? (YES)
4. Most of the time do you feel that getting good marks (\*grades) in school means a great deal to you? (NO)
5. Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault? (YES)
6. Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough, he or she can pass any subject? (NO)
7. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway? (YES)
8. Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning that it's going to be a good day no matter what you do? (YES)
9. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say? (NO)
10. Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen? (YES)
11. When you get punished does it usually seem it's for no good reason at all? (YES)
12. Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's (mind) opinion? (YES)
13. Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win? (NO)
14. Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parents' mind about anything? (YES)
15. Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions? (NO)
16. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right? (YES)
17. Do you believe that most kids are just born good at sports? (YES)
18. Are most of the other kids your age stronger than you? (YES)
19. Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them? (YES)
20. Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are? (NO)
21. If you find a four-leaf clover, do you believe that it might bring you good luck? (YES)
22. Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of marks (\*grades) you get? (NO)
23. Do you feel that when a kid your age decides to hit you, there's little you can do to stop him or her? (YES)
24. Have you ever had a good luck charm? (YES)
25. Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you act?(NO)
26. Will your parents usually help you if you ask them to? ('to' is an addition for an English sample)) (NO)
27. Have you felt that when people were nasty (\*mean) to you it was usually for no reason at all? (YES)

28. Most of the time do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today? (NO)
29. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them? (YES)
30. Do you think that kids can get their own way if they just keep trying? (NO)
31. Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home? (YES)
32. Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work? (NO)
33. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters? (YES)
34. Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to? (NO)
35. Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home? (YES)
36. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it? (YES)
37. Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are cleverer (\*plain smarter) than you are? (YES)
38. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better? (NO)
39. Most of the time do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do? (YES)
40. Do you think it's better to be clever (\*smart) than to be lucky? (NO)

