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**Caught Up in an Avalanche: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis  
of the experience of home loss through eviction in Greater London**

**By Monique Rizzato Grangeiro**



Portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for Professional Doctorate in  
Counselling Psychology (DPsych)

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July 2019

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## **Acknowledgements**

To the participants, thank you for sharing your stories with me. With this work, I hope to honour each one of you.

To my supervisor, Dr Aylish O'Driscoll, thank you for your encouragement, your belief in my work and for your relentless support throughout this journey.

To my husband, thank you for your support and your patience. Your support kept me going when I did not think I could go on.

## **City University Declaration**

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## Preface

This portfolio provides an overview of some of the main elements of my journey towards becoming a Counselling Psychologist. Over the last 4 years, I have had the opportunity to work as a trainee in a number of different environments including the NHS and charities delivering services across the lifespan and to varying communities. Within this preface, I will explore how I wish to further my role as a Counselling Psychologist and what I feel I can do to support my clients inside and outside the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, these reflections will not distinguish between my role as a practitioner and a scientist but instead will reflect and examine the consolidation of these roles. I will start by presenting an overview of the sections of this portfolio. Following this, I will discuss the themes that have emerged linking the research and the case study together. Lastly, I will reflect on my role as a Trainee Counselling Psychologist on micro and macro levels.

- **Section A:** In this initial stage, I will present my thesis *Caught Up in An Avalanche*. This research examines the experience of home loss through eviction in the UK. I interviewed seven participants who generously shared their stories with me and allowed me to present my understanding of their stories to you. Therefore, in this interpretation I will make links of how the experience of an eviction may share similarities with a natural disaster.
- **Section B:** A publishable paper/journal article will be presented on the findings from the study. The intended journal for print will be 'Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice'
- **Section C:** I will present a case study that may serve to illustrate my clinical skills. Some of the themes that emerged in this case study share links with my research. My client who I saw during a clinical placement in the third sector was experiencing

feelings of sadness and hopelessness following a separation from her husband. She also presented with a difficulty in making her own decisions. This will be discussed further in the report.

### **Links between Case Study and Research**

This portfolio offers me the opportunity to continue to move away from considering myself as a researcher in one part of my life and a practitioner in another and to view my role more holistically. IPA as a research methodology ensures a continuity from practice to research in relation to engaging with individuals' unique lived experiences. Transference of theory to practice and vice versa is vital for Counselling Psychology. One of the reasons I chose to present the case below is that [REDACTED] experiences, while not specifically related to the same events as my research did touch upon similar themes. Trauma, powerlessness and shame have been some of the central themes uniting both the research and the case study. Empowering people at both an individual and societal level to find their own agency and to be more compassionate with themselves is a goal in both of these endeavours. Other themes linking the research and the case study emerged including uncertainty around living arrangements and the future more generally; for [REDACTED] as she was living in temporary housing due to domestic violence and for the participants as a result of the eviction. Expectations on being saved by others from our trauma are explored also. As in the cases of my participants, who were from a variety of backgrounds, when working with [REDACTED] I was often mindful of the impact of cultural influences on her belief system. Factors such as background, family structure, community response and history of oppression can determine how the individual views behaviours or beliefs as being acceptable within their culture. I tried to ensure that I maintain awareness of intersectionality to better understand [REDACTED] experiences and worldviews.

## **Reflections on being a Counselling Psychologist in society currently**

Wider questions are also brought to the fore throughout the portfolio which touches on the economic, political and cultural realities. I view my role as an evolving role that is not only defined by the professional development throughout this training but also my own personal journey. During the course of this training, I have become aware of the varying roles that I have navigated through. Prior to commencing my training, I had presupposed ideas about what a Counselling Psychologist does and does not do. While in the past I very much focused on the link between the role and the function, now I am more concerned about my sense of identity. Therefore, I have started distinguishing that what I am is not what I do. This realisation made me question how I had initially acquired my previously held way of thinking. I started to question whether my community and the society I lived in had an impact on this.

Within my role as a trainee Counselling Psychologist, I saw myself juggling and negotiating interests. While my initial idea was that I would work solely towards my client's best interest I started becoming aware that I was also working with multi-level interests. This made me develop a more critical stance which has allowed me to question pre-established ideas. One of them was that Counselling Psychologists were often focused on the individual's internal processes rather than social causes or influences. My interest in this research has allowed me to consolidate these roles harmoniously.

I also started to think what was it that I, as a woman of mixed race, working as a trainee Counselling Psychologist could focus on. I started to look at the world around me, the city that I was living in that is considered a city with high mobility. As part of my training, I was often working in deprived areas and started noticing how many issues and challenges my clients had to juggle. Despite having those issues, I noticed the narrative had become very much individualised. This has reminded me of the social issues I had seen growing up in Brazil. In

my experience with practice I have noticed some colleagues shy away from understanding and reflecting on social issues. This highlighted to me the need for us to understand better how certain issues impact on us and the society we live in.

The process of completing this portfolio has been extremely challenging but it has also been fascinating and rewarding to engage with my clients and participants. Having them share their lived experiences with me has provided me with insights in them as individuals but also the societal realities that influence their lived experiences. I am eternally grateful to them for the progress they have helped stimulate in me.

## **SECTION A – THE RESEARCH**

**Caught Up in an Avalanche: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the  
experience of home loss through eviction in Greater London**

## **Abstract**

The objective of this study was to explore the meaning and experiences of home loss through eviction. An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology were adopted as the study was focused on understanding the meaning and experiences of participants towards home loss through eviction. In accordance with the ideographic focus of IPA, my sample was relatively small with seven participants. In order to keep my sample fairly homogenous I focused on participants who had lost their homes due to eviction (defined broadly as any forced relocation/displacement from a property) within the last 18 months. The method of data collection used was one-to-one semi-structured interviews that lasted between 47 to 120 minutes. An interview schedule was constructed to facilitate the interview as a discussion of relevant topics in an open and sensitive manner. The multi-layered nature of home was confirmed by this study. Home provides safety and a space to be oneself and family relationships are fundamentally linked to the home. Conceptual evidence from the participant's accounts emerged that links the eviction experience generally and specific elements to trauma. The consequences of eviction are linked to the previously raised suggestion that loss of a home results in grief. Evidence of impacts to the self were explored evidencing a sense of shame. The individuals in this study may have benefited from psychological interventions in relation to a number of the mental health consequences noted in their experiences. In addition, it is argued that Counselling Psychologists should move towards the role of scientist-practitioner-advocates so that they can influence policy and society in relation to this issue. Future research should look to understand the eviction experience from multiple viewpoints and consider the effectiveness of psychological interventions for people that are in the process of an eviction or that have experienced an eviction in the past.

# Introduction

## Chapter Overview

This chapter is intended to provide an introduction to the study and relevant literature. As will be seen there has been a dearth of psychological research in relation to eviction in the UK. The literature review that follows was conducted using relevant keywords (e.g. eviction, home loss, repossession, forced movements) but as this is an understudied subject I followed multiple paths of research in related areas to obtain a thorough appreciation of this phenomenon. While other literature reviews may be directed by a reasonably linear path of historic research that provides a clear context, I instead was required to look at multiple differing viewpoints on related topics to provide a starting point for my research. Instead of a path I see this literature review as a tree with multiple branches many of which are underdeveloped but each of which provides an insight into the nature of the tree itself.

As part of the introduction, I highlight the links between Counselling Psychology and social justice which I feel this research strengthens. Background is provided on the context of housing and eviction in the UK and the Greater London area including specifics on market structure and data on the number of evictions that have occurred over the last decade. The definition of eviction that is pertinent to this research and the reason for same is also discussed. Next the structural factors which have led to the numbers of evictions in the UK and the personal factors that may lead a particular individual to eviction are discussed. In addition, studies on the relationship of mental health to housing in general and eviction specifically are discussed. In order to provide an appropriate theoretical context, I will provide an overview of the main theories that provide understanding of the meaning of home and how the loss of a home might be experienced. Lastly, I reflect on what has led me to

choose this topic on a personal and professional level, the rationale for the study and the value of a Counselling Psychology perspective on this experience.

### **Counselling Psychology and Social Justice**

As an individual and as a trainee Counselling Psychologist I feel drawn to the topic of eviction partly due to an attraction to work relating to social justice and social advocacy. This influenced my pursuit of the research questions raised in this study and indeed also impacts my view of the literature that relates to eviction. Lewis (2010) defines the objectives of social justice as involving “the fair and equitable distribution of rights, opportunities, and resources between individuals and between groups of individuals within a given society, and the establishment of relations within the society such that all individuals are treated with an equal degree of respect and dignity” (p146). This definition strikes me as particularly in keeping with the objectives of Counselling Psychology. Indeed, Rafalin (2010) reminds us that Counselling Psychology “places a commitment to understanding social context and socio-political processes at the heart of its mission” (p49). It is therefore key for us as Counselling Psychologists to meet the challenges of ongoing social and political tensions and changes. In the UK and other countries there is an increasing drive to understand the impacts of wider social and economic changes that have resulted from the financial crisis and the subsequent cuts to public spending. In 2015 Psychologists for Social Change, a network of UK based psychologists who seek to share psychological knowledge relevant to current public policy debates, launched a briefing paper on the psychological impacts of austerity. They argue that through their work psychologists are in a position to witness the psychological impacts that social and economic changes have on people (McGrath, Griffin & Mundy, 2015). This view has also been taken up by the British Psychological Society with the founding of the Community Psychology section which

focuses on the real world mental health impacts of economic and political decisions (BPS 2018a). James Lichtenburg (2017) in his presidential address to the Society of Counselling Psychology (a division of the American Psychological Association) stated:

*And although other divisions—indeed the APA organization as a whole—are also sensitive and attentive to social justice issues, as a Society we unabashedly claim as a core value a focus on social justice and advocacy for just causes that promote welfare. And further, we argue this as a defining characteristic of our profession and one that differentiates us from other specialties in applied psychology (p. 119).*

While it was the macroeconomic situation and the related impact on repossession and eviction numbers that initially drew my attention to home loss as a subject for further examination, I have upon further research and reflection come to see that this only represents part of a larger issue of forced home loss. Therefore, my focus will not only be on evictions related to financial circumstances as this would exclude individuals who might have been evicted due to other circumstances worthy of exploration.

### **Context and Background**

In several countries, the Financial Crisis of 2007-2009 had as one of its defining features an increase in home loss through repossession. According to the Ministry of Justice (2018) in the UK the number of mortgage possession orders issued more than doubled from 2004 to 2009 (from less than 50,000 to over 130,000). Although by 2013 the number of mortgage repossessions had reduced to over 43,000, problems had exacerbated for those in rental accommodation (likely partially prompted by benefit cuts and other austerity measures introduced following the financial crisis) where in the same year county courts in England

and Wales issued almost 120,000 eviction orders on behalf of landlords. By 2017 this number had reduced to approximately 92,000 but there remains a large cohort of people that have experienced the loss of their home in recent years (Ministry of Justice, 2018). These orders were particularly concentrated within London where eight of ten highest county court rates of orders per 100,000 population are found; the highest being Greenwich, Barking & Dagenham and Brent (Ministry of Justice, 2018).

The rental market in the UK is mostly divided into private rental (leasing directly from the private owner of a property) and social rental (affordable housing assigned by local councils and managed by registered providers) (Boheim & Taylor, 2000; Shelter, 2018). While the number of people in social housing has remained relatively consistent since the turn of the century, the number of individuals in private rental has almost doubled from the early 2000s reaching over 12 million by 2013/2014 (MacInnes, Tinson, Hughes, Bow & Aldridge, 2015). Although social rental is broadly associated with lower socio-economic groups, Boheim and Taylor (2000) found that renters in the UK in both the private and social categories were significantly more likely to experience problems with housing payments when compared to mortgage holders. Since the financial crisis and the commencement of austerity measures by consecutive governments the situation in the UK has worsened for renters. Gerull's (2014) research has conducted a comparative analysis of eviction due to rent arrears in fourteen countries. While most of the countries demonstrated moderate rates of eviction, the UK stood out with a ratio of 1 eviction in every 89 households in comparison to 1 in 2500 households in France.

### **Definition of Eviction**

It should be noted that these statistics will likely provide an understated picture of eviction as many evictions will occur following receipt of notice (formal or informal) from

the landlord and before a court order is issued. As a consequence, for the purposes of this research as a definition of eviction I will use a widened version of the dictionary definition “The action of expelling someone from a property” (Oxford English Dictionary 2018) with the additional provisos that the expulsion is from a rental property and is directed by the landlord (either formally or informally). There is surprisingly little attention given to definitional questions within the eviction literature with most authors devoting little, if any, time to outlining the exact meaning of the word within their research. For example, Vasquez-Vera, Rodriguez-Sanz, Palencia and Borrell (2017) use the term ‘eviction’ to refer to expulsion as related to either mortgage or rental agreements (although recognising these as potentially different) while others such as Boheim and Taylor (2000) refer to evictions and repossessions/foreclosures separately. The definition I propose is in keeping with Desmond’s (2016) use of the term eviction but not as wide as his definition of involuntary displacement which also includes building condemnations and other building or area wide issues that result in multiple tenants losing their home. My definition also excludes evictions as a result of squatting (illegal settlement of an abandoned building) and mortgage repossessions/foreclosures, that is, the expulsion of individuals from properties that they own or partially own. As will be discussed, while evictions and mortgage repossessions are similar phenomena there is some evidence that the impacts of these two events differ. Use of this definition of eviction will aid in ensuring homogeneity in relation to the experience so that the sample is consistent with the research question

### **Structural and Personal Drivers**

Clarke, Hamilton, Jones and Muir (2017) identify welfare changes such as the benefit cap (limits to the total a person can receive in benefits including housing benefits), the so-

called 'Bedroom Tax' (punitive cuts to benefits where social tenants have unoccupied spare bedrooms) and the lowering of the Local Housing Allowance (the calculation used for benefits where rent is paid to a private landlord) as drivers for the numbers of evictions that have occurred over the last number of years. Added to this is the introduction of Universal Credit which is intended to provide recipients of multiple benefits with a single monthly payment. Payment of this, however, is subject to a six-week waiting period, administrative delays and sanctioning leading to rental arrears. In fact, almost three quarters of recipients of the Universal Credit were found to be in arrears (Birchall & Fletcher, 2017). Desmond (2016) examined the link between the decline of affordable housing and eviction in the US. Policy makers in the late 1930s in the US established that families should dedicate 30% of their income for housing, however, now the majority of low income families dedicate at least half of their income and a quarter pay over 70% for housing. This combined with the increase in the cost of utilities has made it very difficult for low income families to be able to afford the essentials to live. A similar situation exists in London where the average tenant spends 49% of their income on rent (BBC, 2017). More detailed UK focused research has shown that 40% of the poorest quintile spend more than a third of their income on housing (four times higher than the middle quintile). When this detail is examined through the lens of specific housing categories it is clear the greatest burden lies with renters; almost 60% of social renters and almost 80% of private renters in the poorest quintile spend at least a third of their income on rent. This burden on those in the lowest income has very clear dangers as evidenced by increasing numbers of people accepted as unintentionally homeless by local authorities. In 2014/2015, the most common reason (16,000 or 29% of the total) identified for onset of homelessness was the end of a shorthold tenancy (Macinnes et al., 2015).

While affordability and financial problems leading to rent arrears are important drivers of the number of people evicted from rented accommodation, this captures only part

of the problem. As Clarke et al. (2017) highlight, in the UK the term eviction represents a legal mechanism to remove a tenant from a property while “forced moves covers a vast grey area of behaviours that result in the tenant not having the option to remain in the property, but leaving rather than being formally evicted” (p. 9). For example, tenants may receive instructions from landlords verbally or may be locked out of the property by a changing of the locks. Furthermore, although the reasons for which someone can be evicted from a property are limited legally, a large portion of formal evictions in England are not related to rent arrears. Under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 landlords in England can initiate ‘no fault’ evictions which allows the eviction of the tenant without a specific reason. Research conducted through interviews with evictees has highlighted that landlords utilise this method to evict for a variety of reasons including accusations of anti-social behaviour, the approaching end of a lease, pre-empting of likely arrears, desire to raise rent, wanting to sell the property and in some cases (and despite being illegal) as revenge against the tenant for raising issues about the condition of the rental property (Clarke et al., 2017). Despite only having 21% of the private rental stock in England almost two-thirds of all Section 21 evictions occur in London. In fact, use of this method of eviction in London increased by 87% from 2003 to 2015 (Clarke et al., 2017).

As already discussed, structural issues are important determinants in relation to the experience of housing issues and eviction. In addition to this, researchers have also looked at eviction predictors at the level of the individual. Historically, research in this area focused more on homeowners and mortgage defaults, however, Boheim and Taylor (2000) provided one of the first reviews to include tenants by utilising data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Their findings indicate certain ‘income and expenditure factors’ and ‘personal factors’ relate to eviction. For example, previous financial problems were significantly correlated with housing problems indicating the difficulties in escaping issues

over time. They also found that negative financial surprises (i.e. an unexpected downturn in the household's financial situation) was a predictor of eviction. It should be noted that there have been changes in the housing market over the past two decades within the UK and in London specifically since this study was completed but affordability and 'income and expenditure factors' clearly remain important, if not more important, in relation to eviction outcomes. On the 'personal factors' side, the same research suggested that households that have experienced evictions tend to have a younger head of household and lower income. In addition, the numbers are higher where the head of the household is from an ethnic minority or has a lower education experience (Boheim & Taylor, 2000). The potential that impacts may differ by ethnicity has also been highlighted when examining who is more likely to be evicted in the US, Desmond (2016) noted a prevalence of low income black women. He also noticed that children are at a higher risk of being evicted in the US. In fact, families with children were three times more likely to receive an eviction judgement than other families. Areas with a higher population of children were also seen to display a higher number of evictions, despite the author controlling for a variety of factors such as poverty rate and racial composition (Desmond, 2016).

Understanding and distinguishing the processes and changes involved in the loss of a home can be complex as causes and consequences are usually interconnected. For example, losing a home can be the consequence of various life events such as a relationship breakdown, loss of a job, failed business venture or an illness in the family (Nettleton & Burrows, 2000). More detailed study of personal factors, pathways and the complex interaction of both that may lead to eviction is limited, however, some evidence emerges from studies related to homelessness where deeper examinations of these have occurred. Crane and Warnes (2000) in a combination ethnographical and longitudinal study reviewed the cases of 45 people made homeless in the UK following eviction and found that mental

health issues were among the preceding events. Such studies provide some indication of the causes of eviction but caution must be exercised in directly linking this to the current study. The Crane and Warnes (2000) study analyses the causes of homelessness and thus captures individuals who are the focus of the current study (some evictees will likely become homeless) but also a population that is distinct from the population I am examining (e.g. includes individuals who become homeless following discharge from prison or hospital). However, this study does provide areas of interest for further study as they have not yet been explored in the eviction literature specifically. In follow up studies, Warnes and Crane (2006) utilised face to face semi-structured interviews and expanded the number of participants. The authors found further evidence highlighting the events that preceded homelessness including relationship breakdown, alcohol abuse, mental health problems and loss of job. Interestingly they also concluded that a lack of resources, social support and coping skills are key factors in determining outcomes although it is not clear from the article whether this detail emerged from the participants' own accounts or that of their 'key-workers' (assigned by homeless hostel/project). Lack of clarity on this leaves a question mark in relation to the validity of the identification and measurement of these factors. In both the Crane and Warnes (2000) and the Warnes and Crane (2006) study the sample studied was restricted; in the former to single individuals and in the latter to individuals over 50 years old leaving a large population unstudied in this regard. Chamberlain and Johnson (2011) in an Australian based study utilised a broader population (10 percent of cases were families) constructed from case file evidence found a number of primary paths to homelessness that are 'housing crisis', family breakdown', 'substance abuse', 'mental health' and 'youth to adult'.

## **Housing and Mental Health**

### *General*

In trying to understand the experience of eviction from a Counselling Psychology perspective I feel it is important to have an understanding of the relationship between various aspects of housing and mental health. In a review of the literature on this topic Evans, Wells and Moch (2003) state that “despite the fact that people invest more financial, temporal, and psychological resources in their homes than in any other material entity, research on housing and mental health is remarkably underdeveloped” (p475). Diggle, Butler, Musgrove and Ward (2017) found through a more recent review that while research in the area has become more extensive there remain significant research gaps. One such gap is related to private rental and evictions, however, research in this area will likely increase in line with housing research from other disciplines. For example, the Harvard sociologist Matthew Desmond won the Pulitzer prize for his book “Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City” (Desmond 2016) and has established an ‘Eviction Lab’ providing US nationwide eviction data to researchers (Eviction Lab, 2018). The relationship between housing and mental health touches on a variety of aspects including housing quality, access to housing, accessing housing support, moving and losing a home, housing security and impacts on specific populations (e.g. children, the elderly) (Diggle et al., 2017). Through online surveys the UK charity Shelter (2017) identified that one in five English adults identified housing issues as having had an impact on their mental health in the last five years. Of these 30% advised that they had no issues with their mental health previous to experiencing housing problems. Evans et al. (2003) conducted a review on the housing and mental health literature. In this review, they considered the literature to generally focus on the following categories; type of housing, quality of housing and floor level. The authors suggested that a helpful way of

understanding the link between housing and mental health is to attend to the following psychosocial processes in relation to housing: identity (house as a symbol of self and potential stigmatisation based on residence), insecurity (poor quality housing results in hazards and dependence on support organisations), social support (impact of housing on available social contact and support), parenting (impact of housing quality on level of control by and self-esteem of parents) and control (protection offered by housing from negative social conditions). This review concludes that the literature supports the importance of housing for psychological health with this being particularly true when it comes to families with young children (Evans et al., 2003).

### *Mental Health and Repossession*

In a systematic review of the literature around debt and mental health, Fitch, Hamilton, Bassett and Davey (2011) examined over fifty research papers linked to debt and mental health and found only seven studies that focused exclusively on housing relating debt. A more repossession focused review by Vasquez-Vera et al. (2017) indicates that the rate of studies conducted on this topic since the start of the decade had increased with 26 studies now completed. The majority of these studies were quantitative in design and high-level. For example, a study by McLaughlin et al. (2013) involved the surveying of 1547 individuals in the Detroit area at two points in time (1 year apart). A number of participants reported having experienced a repossession during this period and responses to additional questions indicated increases in the symptoms of major depression and General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in this population following the repossession. However, only 25 respondents fell into this category raising potential issues around statistical power that are not addressed by the authors. Furthermore, approximately 500 participants who participated in the initial interview did not participate in the second interview (McLaughlin et al., 2013). Given that participants were contacted by telephone landline it is unclear how many other participants

lost their home to repossession but could not be reached to complete participation for this very reason. However, the authors did apply weighting to adjust for differences between the original sample and the follow-up sample. Another quantitative study examined longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey and found that having your property repossessed is associated with an increased risk of mental health issues (e.g. distress and anxiety) leading up to the actual repossession, immediately following it and at later observations (Pevalin, 2009). This pattern holds true even when socio-demographic variables with known comorbidity to mental illness are controlled.

Studies have also found specific links between the rate of home repossession following the financial crisis and suicide rates. Fowler, Gladden, Vagi, Barnes and Frazier (2015) examined sixteen states in the US and found that between 2005 and 2010 (a time in which there was an increase of 289% in foreclosures) over 900 deaths by suicide were found to be associated with repossessions or evictions. The researchers acknowledged the fact that suicide is often the combination/result of multiple risk factors and indeed in the majority of cases, when linked to a repossession or eviction, individuals displayed several risk factors (i.e. depressive mood, employment loss, use of alcohol) prior to their death. However, the research also found that in more than one in eight cases the loss of a home was the either the sole or one of only two risk factors. Findings also indicated that prevention might be possible during the process of foreclose as 79% of the suicides happened before the actual loss of the property (Fowler et al., 2015). It should be noted that the researchers used a central database that relied on police and coroner reports and it is possible that repossession was underreported in these original sources.

While these quantitative studies offer us some insight into the outcomes for people who have had a home repossessed, there is a scarcity of qualitative research in relation to this

subject. In fact, only one qualitative study has been completed on the impact of home repossession on mental health in the UK. Nettleton and Burrows (2000) conducted a qualitative research study in which they examined the experiences of thirty households who had suffered a repossession. In the study, members of the household describe the physical and emotional effects they experienced during and after the repossession. Most of the participants mentioned how stress caused them to feel as if they had a heavy weight on their shoulders or how their breathing felt short and how their immune system was slower making it more difficult to recover from diseases. The study also highlighted the risk of health-related behaviours following a repossession. Some participants reported returning to habits such as smoking after a long time, increasing their consumption of alcohol and most had engaged in comfort eating. It should be noted that Nettleton and Burrows' (2000) paper does not provide details of the questions used nor does it discuss researcher's own viewpoints (this is even more salient given the research was funded by a charity concerned with housing and other social issues). While discussing psychological impacts, the study was conducted within the discipline of social and housing policy meaning the complexities of these impacts and the processes that relate to them may not have been fully explored. A plurality of viewpoints from different social sciences is to be valued but the absence of a qualitative study from Counselling Psychology represents a gap.

### *Mental Health and Eviction*

While already low, studies on the link of mental health outcomes to repossession are in fact more numerous than those examining mental health and rental eviction. In fact, a dearth of academic research exists in this specific area. Considering the high rates of forced mobility that urban renters are often faced with, Desmond and Shollenberger (2015) highlight the need for research to look at the impact of evictions on individuals' lives. The authors state

that there is little knowledge in terms of the impacts that eviction and forced displacements have on mental health. In one of the only studies focused on rental eviction Rojas and Stenberg (2016) examined all the eviction orders provided by the Swedish Enforcement Authority for the period of 2009-2012 to investigate the relationship between rental eviction and suicide. The authors also had access to the individuals' socioeconomic status, demographic conditions and information regarding their mental health. With this information in hand they used a comparison group which represented a sample of the Swedish population. The authors highlight the power imbalance between landlords and evictees and evictees experiencing the loss of the home as the final "defeat" in the process. Therefore, this can aggravate the experience of the "loss". Furthermore, this combined with feelings of shame that may emerge from the experience may push individuals to feel that they are not able to tolerate the situation and this may result in a suicide act. The authors concluded that evictions can indeed have a detrimental impact on individuals' suicidality risk (Rojas and Stenberg, 2016). Although the researchers controlled for many variables (e.g. education, family constellation) given the research was based on eviction orders, many of which may not have been completed, there remains a question as to whether the population is representative of a distinct eviction population. It should further be noted that this research was carried out from the viewpoint of sociology and general social research. Their findings again highlight the insights that Counselling Psychology can offer through application of understanding the psychological processes, factors and thinking that can lead to suicide.

Desmond and Kimbro (2015) looked at outcomes and health effects of eviction for low-income urban mothers. In this study, longitudinal data from a multiple wave survey called the 'Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study' conducted across 20 US cities was examined. Results indicated that mothers who had experienced a recent eviction "experienced higher levels of material hardship and parenting stress and were more likely to

suffer from depression and to report their health and that of their children as being poor” (Desmond & Kimbro, 2015, p. 316). Furthermore, some outcomes including depression were found to be long-lasting (still being experienced at least two years later). Evidence suggested that this was more likely where the eviction occurred early in the life of the woman’s children (first three years). Pevalin’s (2009) study mentioned previously in relation to repossession and eviction offers some contrary evidence to this when examining a UK population. Their findings suggested that while there was a relationship between increased mental illness following a repossession this was not seen following an eviction. While controlling for certain demographic factors (social class, age, marital status and employment) other potentially important variables were not controlled for or examined separately; for example, location (affordability and potential outcomes of eviction may differ for urban vs rural), gender and number of children (both of which Desmond and Kimbro’s (2015) study suggest may be important). Zero peer-reviewed qualitative studies have been published on this topic from any social science viewpoint. However, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a social policy and research charity focused on UK poverty, has published a report featuring interviews with evictees (Clarke et al., 2017). Extracts from these interviews touch on the worsening of previously held physical health conditions and the emergence of new issues including suicidal ideation, depression and anxiety following eviction. To date there have been no studies whatsoever completed on the experience or impact of rental eviction within the area of Counselling Psychology. It is possible researchers may have felt that eviction is simply one aspect of wider issues (e.g. financial problems) experienced by individuals or an outcome caused by those issues but not something worthy of direct research.

### **The Meaning of Home**

With such a limited literature specifically related to mental health and eviction from a rented dwelling it is important for us to widen our view to other research that might provide

some insight in to the experiences of evictees. To my knowledge and based on searches there has been limited work completed on the meaning of home from a Counselling Psychology perspective. Where it does exist, this work has been related to voluntary migration and why people leave home to resettle elsewhere. The concept of a home can be difficult to define comprehensively; the word can be associated with birthplace, daily domestic life and childhood development. As Mallett (2004) states;

In this realm, at once personal and social, house and home are related but not conflated. The birth family house holds symbolic power as a formative dwelling place, a place of origin and return, a place from which to embark upon a journey. This house or dwelling accommodates home but home is not necessarily confined to this place. The boundaries of home seemingly extend beyond its walls to the neighbourhood, even the suburb, town or city. Home is place but it is also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings – a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived (p. 63)

Researchers within multiple disciplines including psychology, anthropology, history and sociology have studied the meaning of home heavily for the last forty years (Rakoff, 1977; Sixsmith, 1986; Despres, 1997; Somerville, 1997). In common use, it is clear the word home is linked to the spatial and physical location (i.e. houses, apartments etc.) in which we live. However, in a broader sense it is also used as an abstract concept with a wide set of associations (Moore, 2000). For example, for many of us our homes become linked to cherished memories, they act as one of the defining elements of our social structure and may even form part of our identity. The multiple layers of meaning associated with the concept is part of the reason it has proven difficult to define completely. Despres (1991) attempted to

provide a comprehensive categorisation of the meaning of home as described by occupants in psychology studies conducted between 1974 and 1989. She categorised these meanings as security and control, a reflection of one's ideas and values, acting upon and modifying one's dwelling, permanence and continuity, relationships with family and friends, a centre of activities, a refuge from the outside, an indicator of personal status, a material structure and a place to own. The author did warn, however, that these conceptions are borne of studies that tended to engage in both selective and interpretative biases. Selective bias because the studies focused on particular types of households (middle class nuclear families) and residences (owner occupied houses).

In addition to interview focused findings on the meanings people attach to home there have been a number of theoretical approaches developed to interpret these meanings. Despres (1991) attempts to provide an overview of these approaches as *territorial* interpretations, *psychological* interpretations, *socio-psychological* interpretations and *phenomenological/developmental* interpretations. Territorial interpretations use studies of animal behaviour as a basis for understanding human behaviour some researchers have linked the meaning of home to territoriality. For example, Sebba and Churchman (1986) looked at how residents of high-rise buildings to identify the areas they own and found that the degree of control the individual had over the area (in terms of freedom of behaviour, self-expression and feelings of security) reflected the degree to which they considered themselves owners. In contrast theories that are founded on a psychological interpretation posit that the home is seen as an extension of the self. Such interpretations include viewing the home as a Jungian archetype (Despres, 1991). A second example, links the home to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs with the home acting as the fulfilment of basic needs including physiological needs (food, rest, warmth), safety needs (security, safety) and even relationship needs (centre of family and visiting friends). In the socio-psychological interpretation the home plays a role

in self-identity; they act as repositories for belongings of the household members allowing for the embodiment of their personalities. Furthermore, it communicates to others details of the individual's social position (Despres 1991). Phenomenological and developmental interpretations view a dwelling as a neutral environment which undergoes a metamorphosis into a home through the experiences of its inhabitants (Despres 1991). For example, Horwitz and Tognoli (1982) completed interviews with men and women who live alone to understand how adult development relates to conceptions of home. They argue that a person can live in a dwelling for years without considering it a home (viewed as a transitional phase), that there is a distinct point that individuals identified the need for a home (e.g. dissatisfaction with living situation, loss of a relationship) and that there is then recognition of the dwelling as home which is built upon an understanding of the specific requirements the individual has for a home and their ability to manipulate the dwelling to fit those requirements. An existential perspective is provided by Hayes (2007) utilising Heidegger's concepts of becoming-at-home and Kierkegaard's concepts of the development of self through spheres of existence to suggest that the meaning of home may vary at different developmental stages. The meaning of home will be created and recreated with the core importance relating to the person becoming home to themselves. Research and theories on the meaning of home from environmental psychology and housing studies provide some additional understanding of how people relate to their homes and how they might experience losing them.

As mentioned previously Despres (1991) argues that most of these theories are impacted by interpretative bias by focusing solely on individual factors and ignoring the structural or societal aspects of housing that may impact meaning. While not exempt from such criticism one particular theoretical framework has allowed for the inclusion of individual and societal factors and has, perhaps as a result, come to dominate the literature related to the meaning of home; the theory of Place Attachment. Due to its dominance within

the literature, its integrated nature and because the theory emerged originally from (and continues to focus) work on forced relocation I feel this theory requires a more in-depth review. According to Manzo (2005) critical understanding of our relationships to places, particularly the home, has come from “place-based theories and research on sense of place, place attachment and place identity” (p. 67). Bowlby (1973) originally used attachment theory to explain how proximity to a caregiver provides a child with experiences that allow a fulfilment of physical and emotional needs and thus internalise positive views of others and the self. Through linking this to psychological research by Fried (1963 cited in Fried 2000) on the impact of forced relocations researchers have extended and reworked attachment theory to suggest that attachment bonds can be directed, not only towards people, but can also be linked to places. Specifically, this attachment relates to local relationships, with people maintaining closeness or clinging to the relationships and places they know in order to avoid threatening situations (Fried, 2000). Brown, Brown and Perkins (2004) argue that place attachment is a strength and provides positive effects such as resilience both for the individual and the community. Those with minimal place attachment on the other hand do not invest in sustained efforts such as community revitalisation. Furthermore, where people rate place attachment as lower versus their previous home they also report higher levels of stress and increased health problems (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). However, questions continue as to how place attachment is both defined and measured. One suggestion is that place attachment is made up of two components; place identity and place dependence. Place identity links to our self-identity which is constructed in relation to the groups we belong to, our motives and emotions and how we value each of these. Place dependency on the other hand, is related to how positively we view a place as providing for our needs and goals (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). This view of Place Attachment in essence combines some of the elements of territorial, psychological and socio-psychological theories on the meaning of

homes. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) questioned the specificity of place attachment, arguing that research so far has focused too much on neighbourhood specifically. The researchers used a questionnaire distributed to a quota sample in Tenerife, Spain to measure general, social and physical attachment to house, neighbourhood and city. They found that there was a U-shaped relationship between strength of attachment and place across spatial range; meaning participants felt most attached to their house, then to their city and finally to their neighbourhood. This relationship was replicated by Lewicka (2010) who included apartment as a sub-category as this is predominant form of housing in Poland where the study was carried out.

### **Loss of a Home**

Limited work has been completed to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the loss of a home. However, the theories of meaning just examined provide some links with the literature and a basis for understanding the potential impacts. The following section will provide an outline of this but will also draw on a broad range of empirical in the realm of home loss which may provide the basis for future theory.

### *Resources and Stress*

As previously mentioned the meaning of home has been examined through the work of Abraham Maslow (1943; 1970). Maslow (1970) states that when individuals have their basic needs met this allows them to strive towards self-actualisation. Rogers (1951) defined this actualising tendency as “the tendency of the organism to maintain itself – to assimilate food, to behave defensively in the face of threat, to achieve the goal of self-maintenance even when the usual pathway to that goal is blocked” (p. 488). This also links to the concept of place dependence under Place Attachment theory. The gratification of needs leads to positive outcomes while the frustration of certain needs can produce pathology (Maslow, 1970). The

question therefore arises as to what impact an interruption to the basic needs that housing provides might have on an individual. Although no studies using this theoretical framework have been identified that relate directly to eviction, Henwood, Derejko, Couture and Padgett (2015) conducted a mixed method study using Maslow's theory to examine the experiences of 63 individuals who had been homeless with mental illness when accessing mental health care. The authors concluded that there is "a complex relationship between basic needs, goal setting and the meaning of self-actualisation" (Henwood et al., 2015, p. 226). However, the authors confirm that when permanent housing was offered through a step-wise approach it allowed participants to think about the future steps/goals. While it allowed this thinking to occur, the authors also highlighted that individuals may experience difficulties in planning the next steps towards change when they are desperately trying to escape their current reality.

Hobfoll's (1989) conceptualisation of stress as a resource-oriented model draws on Maslow's theory and defines stress as "a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources" (p. 516). Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis and Jackson (2013) discuss the importance of resources and the impact that resource loss can have. Resources, in this sense, fall into two types; personal resources (resiliency built out of a sense of control) and social resources (intimate support). If for any reason these resources are lost then psychological wellbeing is damaged and stress, depressive mood and anger all increase. However, these are the same impacts that can result from material losses (i.e. the loss of a home) which in itself can result in a loss of personal control and support systems. This means that the individual is impacted from multiple directions by negative aspects that reinforce each other and therefore it is possible that the loss of the home can bring about further negative life events by creating a maladaptive spiral.

### *Role, Social Identity and Self-discrepancy Theories*

As discussed, the socio-psychological interpretation of the meaning of home indicates that the home plays a significant role in self-identity and it is therefore possible that processes relating to self-identity may be pertinent in the experience of home loss. Equally this can be linked the place identity element of Place Attachment. Role theory relates to the socially defined categories attributed to individuals which bring with them duties and expectations (Katz and Kahn 1978). Pickover and Slowik (2013) relate this to financial difficulties and housing as individuals enact roles as part of the housing process (e.g. tenant, landlord, owner). Expectations for each role are recognised as they are communicated by others so that they become an integrated set of beliefs. As part of a forced home loss process different roles will be enacted at different stages. This can impact how an individual sees themselves and others and can worsen the situation depending on the circumstances the individuals see themselves in. For example, when the individual cannot commit to payments they are not conforming to what others expect of them or what they expect of themselves and this is likely to evoke a sense of failure. There is also the possibility that the individual will view others involved in the process as not having fulfilled their role. For example, if they feel the landlord or courts have been unfair in their dealings with them and not upheld their end of the contract. This betrayal of institutional trust is likely magnified by the individual seeing friends, neighbours or relatives in similar circumstance. In the last number of years this sense of betrayal may also have been influenced by media attention to the ethics of mortgage lenders/landlords/housing associations in general. There are clear links between role theory and social identity theory which offers some further insight into how loss of a home might impact the self. While much of social identity theory focuses on group identity such as ethnicity and sexuality, Ethier and Deaux (1994) confirm that social relationships are as important as natural group memberships in creating social identities. Amiot and Jaspal

(2014) argue that identities can be threatened in several ways by external factors including as a result of life transitions and social changes; for example, when joining a new group an individual can be threatened by highlighted differences. As the person seeks to integrate multiple identities established following a significant change into their view of their self, there is the possibility that one of the identities is devalued by society and this may pose a threat to self-esteem. Ethier and Deaux (1994) argue that multiple events such as job loss, bereavement and conflict can create situations where identities are threatened.

Also potentially pertinent is self-discrepancy theory which seeks to provide a more systematic framework in relation to belief incompatibility (e.g. dissonance, imbalance, incongruity) (Higgins 1987). Higgins (1987) argues that there are three 'domains of the self'; the actual self which is the holistic set of attributes you/others believe you hold, an ideal self-encapsulating the attributes you/others would like you to hold (based on hopes and aspirations) and an ought self which represents the attributes you or others feel you should hold. Also, key to understanding self-discrepancy is the idea of 'standpoints on the self' which may relate to one's own personal point of view of the self or may relate to the point of view of some significant other (e.g. mother, spouse, friend). These domains combine to create six types of representations each of which may have their own varying self-discrepancies and related discomfort. Emotional outcomes following negative events will vary across these six types. For example, someone who experiences an event that prompts a discrepancy between their actual/own versus ideal/own representations will likely experience dejection-related emotions such as disappointment and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, discrepancies related to actual/own versus ideal/other while still relating to dejection-related emotions might prompt feelings such as shame or embarrassment.

### *Place Attachment and Grief*

Place attachment theory has been more directly linked to the examination of the loss of a home through the work of Anton and Lawrence (2014) who raise the question of whether attachment to the home only becomes apparent to people when they experience loss or difficulties. They assert that on a day to day basis we actually may give limited and infrequent conscious thought to the places we live in. In fact, we only start to maintain a sense of place when the place in question is threatened. Evidence supporting this came from surveys completed by 600 participants in Australia split into four groups depending on whether they lived in urban or rural areas and whether their areas were prone to bush fires. Results suggested that rural residents were generally more attached to their homes (potentially linked to community size) but that there was also an interaction between location of residence and fire proneness such that urban residents would report similar place attachment to their rural counterparts when their area was prone to bush fires. Fullilove (1996) has described how place attachment is impacted by displacement. Drawing on work that originally focused on larger scale displacements involving refugees and natural disaster survivors Fullilove (1996) seeks to understand the mental health impacts of forced movements from a home. The author argues that displacement ruptures the emotional connections to place and results in disorientation (the loss of familiar place leads to emotional impacts, confusion and sensory impacts such as numbness), nostalgia (the feeling of loss and fear of the impermanence of home) and alienation (becoming invisible and the collapse of self-pride). Fried (2000) agrees that being forcefully displaced by external factors is a very serious form of psychosocial disruption/discontinuity but goes beyond Fullilove's (1996) view to name the impact of displacement as grief. He argues that there is a developmental sequence of attachment from close family, to wider family/neighbours; a sense of spatial affiliations is built and upon this specific social structures and role based relationships. These

structures and roles interweave to the extent that a resistance emerges to inevitable changes and finalities. Thus, when the home or the link to the community is lost there is a sense of grief and mourning. As Fried (2000) states “the loss of social relationships which resulted from forced residential relocation was empirically the single most potent factor in explaining the widespread sense of loss” (p. 197). There is an intuitive link between attachment and grief in that Bowlby’s original interest in attachment was triggered by the impact of the loss of a mother on a child’s subsequent psychopathology and modern bereavement studies continue to focus on the grief as the product of broken attachment bonds (Shaver and Tancredy 2001).

### *Trauma*

While not directly linked within the literature to any of the theories around the meaning of home, at least one study on eviction/repossession has linked the experience to trauma. The definition of trauma has become a contentious issue; while the ‘Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V’ (American Psychiatric Association 2013) has restricted the definition to events that threatened death and threatened or actual serious injury or sexual violence other proposed definitions are wider. For example, Figley (1985) defines trauma as “an emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories of an extraordinary catastrophic experience which shattered the survivor’s sense of invulnerability to harm” (p. xviii). Robles-Ortega et al (2017) conducted a quantitative study to examine symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in individuals who had experienced a repossession in Spain (the authors refer to this as eviction). The authors found that out of the 205 participants of the research, 95.1% expressed feelings of helplessness, fear or horror as part of the event. This part of the population was then checked for PTSD symptoms and compared to a healthy group and a diagnosed PTSD group. The findings indicated that the repossessed population scored significantly higher against the healthy group on their total

scores and on re-experiencing and avoidance. Even more surprisingly they also scored significantly higher than the PTSD group on avoidance, activation and total score. This study was conducted from a psychological perspective; however, a number of methodological limitations have been identified. The scores for the PTSD group used for comparison were obtained from a group attending treatment for PTSD symptoms but no details on their circumstances or progress within therapy were identified or controlled for. Losing your home does not often come as an isolated loss as it also involves moving away from your neighbourhood/community (which at times can be the sole source of support). Lewinson, Thomas and White (2014) looked at the experiences of 21 homeless women in terms of both the preceding traumas (events that led to their homelessness) and post-homelessness experience (the manner in which the event made them more susceptible to other traumas such as sexual violence). They argue that we must pay attention to the multiple traumatic events that a vulnerable population may be exposed to. According to the authors, these traumatic events and experiences of nonviolent adversity can be job loss, home loss, loss of social support and many others. The authors use cumulative trauma theory, originally developed by Folette, Polusny, Bechtle and Naugle (1996) in relation to multiple instances of abuse, to explain the negative impact that the combination of these events can have.

### **Rationale for the Present Study**

As has been shown despite the high numbers of people in the UK impacted by rental eviction there has been limited research conducted on the experience of eviction across all of the social sciences. Within this limited literature, the voice of the evicted tenant is almost completely absent. With this study, I hope to contribute to a more holistic view of eviction and form the basis for future research that may remedy the lack of coherent understanding. There may be a variety of reasons for the dearth of research in this area. Within psychology a focus on psychopathology may lead psychologists to ignore problems such as eviction as they

relate to distress rather than any particular disorder. Specifically, in the case of Counselling Psychology it is possible that researchers have felt that eviction is beyond the boundaries of Counselling Psychology and, given the societal level implications, more suitable to study by Social Psychologists.

### **Reflexivity**

In this research, I will explore how individuals experience this event and how they make sense of being evicted from their homes. I feel a Counselling Psychology perspective on these experiences is particularly important as it allows for the interpretation of key aspects within a broad theoretical framework and the linking of these aspects to practice. By understanding the impacts of this prevalent experience, I as a Counselling Psychology trainee can shed a light on this experience and in this way give a voice to people who might not feel enabled to have a voice themselves. While working in public services such as the NHS it has become somewhat common for psychologists to encounter clients experiencing housing issues. Lack of stability or a safe home can make very difficult for clients to fully engage in the treatment and this may give rise to sense of helplessness shared among health professionals. While I speak from my own perspective and somewhat limited experience I can think of a handful of clients whom I saw over the last three years of training that were in this exact situation.

This left me wondering how to be a Counselling Psychologist nowadays while having to juggle a variety of interests at the same time. Initially I thought that my clients best interest was enough to guide me in the work, however, I now notice the interest of the service that I am in, of the country that I live in, of the governing bodies that I belong to and even global trends have an impact on myself, my client and the therapeutic work. Psychologists do not live in a vacuum and can be as subject to societal pressures as any other occupation. I as a

trainee Counselling Psychologist can help shed light on this experience and the impact it has on individuals. Therefore, my hope with this research is that we learn to understand the experience of eviction from a Counselling Psychologist perspective. The more we are able to understand the more meaningful treatments we will be able to offer.

I identified the need to explore the topic of eviction from a Counselling Psychology standpoint. Morrow (2007) argues that Counselling Psychologists are best suited to qualitative methods due to their skills and non-judgmental nature being congruent with the paradigms of qualitative research. The author also highlights the fact that many methods in qualitative research gather their data through interviews. Therefore, Counselling Psychologists are well placed to build trusting relationships with the participants which in turn allows them access to deeper layers of the participants' experiences. Taking all this in consideration, this current study will aim to explore the experience of losing a home and what meaning this loss has in individuals' lives from a Counselling Psychology perspective. My critical realist epistemological position allows me to examine this issue from the standpoint that accepts that the world is composed of real structures but that focuses on the individuals' perception and understanding of such structures (Fitzpatrick, 2005). In the same study, Williams (2003) explains how these structures are real in the social world and can impose themselves on individuals even if they are not aware of them. In my study, I will demonstrate my interest in that, however my aim is to allow my participants to take full front in their experiences. This is so I can examine how I make sense of them making sense of the experience of home loss through eviction. I recognise that there may be many similarities between people who lose homes that were rented and those who lose their homes that were owned. However, in order to keep the sample of participants reasonably homogenous (which in turn will allow analysis of psychological variability within the group) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), in this study I decided to focus on the lived experience of participants who

lose their rental homes. This decision also comes from the context of the city that I live in, that is, as I mentioned earlier the UK stands out with high numbers of evictions every year when compared to other countries, and London specifically is known as being a city in which people are often moving.

### **Chapter Summary**

This study is contextualised by a wider social justice movement within Counselling Psychology. The impacts of the Financial Crisis just over a decade ago and the resulting political and economic policies have led to a comparatively high number of evictions in the UK (versus other European countries) with Greater London particularly affected. Structural and legal factors help explain the worsening eviction numbers while previous research on personal factors indicate that ethnic minorities and individuals with children might be at particular risk for eviction. Beyond loss of a home as the consequence of financial difficulties, limited evidence exists in relation to personal pathways to eviction although the studies that do exist indicate that relationship/family breakdowns, substance abuse and mental health issues may be among the preceding events. A wider examination of the literature around housing and mental health has highlighted that while the salience of the relationship has been established there are significant research gaps; specifically, research into the links between evictions and mental health is particularly underexplored. A number of quantitative research studies on repossession from multiple social science viewpoints are present in the literature with evidence supporting the view that there is a correlation between increased repossessions and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and suicidality as well as physical and other emotional impacts. The literature on the impacts of eviction is smaller still with a handful of quantitative studies finding evidence to support a link to depression and suicidality but others finding no such link. An absence of qualitative studies in this area and a Counselling Psychology viewpoint are clear gaps in the literature.

Given these gaps, research on the meaning of home and the loss of a home offers another avenue to building an initial understanding the experience of evictees. There are multiple theoretical approaches used to interpret the meaning that individuals apply to their homes. Some of the most prominent are socio-psychological theories (homes relate to self-identity, acting as a repository that embodies the individual's personalities), psychological (the home fulfils basic physiological, safety and relationship needs) and Place Attachment (homes are linked to self-identity but also act to meet the needs of the individual). These theories also underpin some of our understanding of the experience of losing a home. For example, loss of a home has been associated with grief as an outcome of Place Attachment, specific emotional responses following a loss have been identified as in keeping with role theory, self-identity theory and self-discrepancy theory which relate to socio-psychological views of home and stress related to the interruption of basic needs links to psychological theories of home. Outside of these theoretical frameworks loss of a home has also been linked to trauma although the literature here is limited and the supporting study methodologically questionable. Having provided this context, I have explained the relevance of this study from a Counselling Psychology perspective and I have reflected on what has led me to choose this topic on a personal and professional level.

# **Methodology**

## **Overview**

This chapter provides an exploration of the methodological basis of the study and a detailed description of the research process. The chapter begins with an overview of my epistemological standpoint and what I as a Counselling Psychologist Trainee bring to this research. Following this, I will explain the steps and procedures I took in my attempt to answer my research question.

## **Research Question**

The research question is ‘How do individuals experience the loss of a home through eviction in Greater London’. This question will aim to provide insight into evictees’ experience of eviction and illuminate the impacts, both immediate and longer term, this experience has on the lives of these individuals.

## **Epistemology, method and methodology**

Mason (2002) explains how ‘Epistemology’ (‘theory of knowledge’) is a reflection of the researcher’s viewpoint on how knowledge can be known. That is, philosophical issues such as principles and rules allows the researcher to demonstrate what counts as evidence or knowledge of social things and therefore it explains how a social phenomenon can be known. Silverman (2013) highlights the importance in differentiating method and methodology. According to the author, method reflects the research techniques used in the study while methodology reflects the general approach used to examine the research topic. In this research, I will refer to my approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as a methodology and method refers to the research tools used, which in this case included semi-

structured interviews. According to Willig (2012), epistemological positions are constructed on a set of assumptions which are in turn based on philosophical reflections on what we can know and how we can know. Our particular position is dependent on how we answer the questions ‘What kind of knowledge do I aim to create?’, ‘What are the assumptions that I make about the (material, social, and psychological) world(s) that I study?’ and ‘How do I conceptualise the role of the researcher in the research process? What is the relationship between myself and the knowledge I aim to generate?’ (p. 10).

### *Epistemology – Rejection of the positivist position*

In this study, I have chosen to reject positivism as an epistemological position. Ponterotto (2005) highlights that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century positivism and post-positivism were the dominant research paradigms utilised within psychology and Counselling Psychology in particular. Positivism emerged from a philosophical view that knowledge is derived from facts which are gained through observation (Chalmers, 1999). Kirk and Miler (quoted in Willig 2013) highlight that positivism has as a basis the belief that “the external world itself determines absolutely the one and only correct view that can be taken of it independent of the process or circumstances of viewing” (p. 4). Post-positivism builds on positivism by moving from theory verification to theory falsification but maintains many of the same philosophical underpinnings (Ponterotto, 2005). I do not adhere to the view that there is a single truth to be observed and instead am interested in understanding the experiences of my participants and the meanings they attach to them. Within psychology the dominance of positivism and post-positivism has also supported the dominance of quantitative methods as a research method. As discussed in the Introduction, quantitative methods have been the primary source of information in the study of eviction in the social sciences. While recognising that a simple quantitative versus qualitative contrast can lead to a superficial view of both approaches I do

feel that knowledge in this area will gain from increased use of quality and systematic qualitative approaches. Psychologists within multiple specialisms including Counselling Psychology have in recent decades embraced qualitative methods as they offer a contextualised understanding that aligns well with psychology (Lyons and Coyle 2007)

### *Critical Realist Position*

Instead of positivism or post-positivism, in this research, I have adopted a critical realist position as I recognise the participants' experience of the phenomenon as their reality. The decision to use this standpoint comes from the desire to gain a better understanding of what the participant's reality is (i.e. what it is like for them to experience losing their homes through eviction) and from the acknowledgement that the data that I, the researcher, will generate might not reflect their exact reality (Willig, 2013). Critical realists that opt for qualitative research are interested in deep causal processes and the interaction of such causal mechanisms and real world contexts with one another. They argue that objects under investigation need to be understood first before we can understand the non-random way they interact with other objects. Critical realists divide reality into three different domains; empirical (directly observable), actual (events that have occurred including those that we do not know about) and real (the causal behaviours or causal mechanisms that bring about events) (Hood 2016). While researchers will often spend time exploring the first two of these domains they must also investigate the 'real' which by definition cannot be explored within closed experimental settings and instead requires examinations of real open systems (Roberts 2014).

The key question for a critical realist is what made something happen in this particular case (Roberts, 2014). They accept that identifying causal mechanisms is difficult

when looking at the social world due to the level of complexity of interactions but that social research can provide a level of explanation (Hood, 2016). As Willig (2012) states “a critical realist approach does not assume that the data directly reflect reality (like a mirror image); rather, the data need to be interpreted to provide access to the underlying structures that generate the manifestations that constitute the data” (p. 16). That view of the underlying structures comes from the researcher’s interpretation which will utilise external information and theories. Furthermore, it is also the role of the researcher to continue the search for knowledge in different contexts and to ensure responsible rationality (Roberts, 2014). My participants exist in a multi-dimensional world and the outcomes they experience in relation to eviction are dependent on context (both general and personal) and on mechanisms specific to the individual (e.g. emotional state, how they interpret events). As McEvoy and Richards (2003) state critical realists expect an interplay between structure and agency. Therefore, while the macro environment that the participants find themselves in (e.g. austerity, high rental costs) is important so too is recognition of the participant’s own agency and how they impact social structures.

### *Qualitative and Phenomenological Stance*

This research was conducted via a qualitative study conducted from a phenomenological perspective. Qualitative research allows us to approach the research problem from the viewpoint of those who have actually lived the experience (in this case the experience of eviction) (Willig, 2013). This is because qualitative research is concerned with both the what and the how of particular phenomena and uses questions that improve our ability to describe and understand. Phenomenologists, in particular, examine the lived experience and focus on how people develop and share meanings of events (Finlay, 2011).

Phenomenology as a method of inquiry is based on the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl who posited the importance of accurately knowing one's own experience of a particular phenomenon. He argued that a phenomenon can be experienced in different ways by different people depending on their emotions, views, desires and judgements. Husserl used the term intentionality to describe the link between an object and the process of consciousness that is focused on that object whether that be remembering, wanting or thinking about it (Smith et al. 2009). As Moustakas and Core (1994) put it "the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related" (p28). When a person reflects on any of this consciousness then they are being phenomenological. Phenomenological inquiry at its simplest is concerned with the experience as it exists in the consciousness of the individual (Smith et al. 2009). Husserl argued that it was possible to transcend our biases and beliefs about what we think we know and to describe phenomena (that which is experienced in consciousness) as they are experienced (Willig 2013). This can be achieved by utilising 'epoche' or the bracketing off of our everyday conceptions and judgements which allows us to revisit phenomena with fresh and naïve eyes. This concept of bracketing allows a more interpretative process as it brings to awareness the origin of potential interpretations that a researcher may have. Therefore, it is suggested that qualitative researchers maintain a reflexive journal throughout the process (Fischer, 2009)

With this in place the next step is to engage in a series of reductions each of which will offer a different way of viewing the phenomenon. For example, imaginative variation prompts one to imagine the different variants of the phenomenon to help identify the invariant properties it holds. Transcendental-phenomenological reduction involves looking at the elements that make up the experience within consciousness (Moustakas & Core, 1994; Smith et al. 2009). The ultimate aim is to obtain an eidetic reduction which provides the core

of the subjective experience and the essence of the phenomenon (Willig 2013). While Husserl's own work was light on examples of real world results and primarily concerned with self-examination he did provide a focus on the process of reflection that has become vital in the development of IPA.

Husserl's work has been taken further and made more practical by, among others, his student the philosopher Martin Heidegger. Heidegger highlighted the worldliness of human beings (we exist in a pre-existing world of language, culture, people etc. and cannot be detached from this) and added the concept of intersubjectivity which describes the shared and relational nature of our interaction with the world (Smith et al. 2009). Heidegger also introduced to phenomenology the concept of hermeneutics and in doing so recast "Husserl's phenomenology as a technique of interpretative description" (Sembera 2007 p26).

Hermeneutics as a word has its etymology in the Greek verb *hermeneuein* meaning to explain, translate and is essentially the theory of interpretation. Heidegger argued that engagement with the world is always through the lens of interpretation. Phenomenology for him should be concerned with examining something concealed as it emerges into the light. Those who analyse, however, bring with them fore-conceptions influenced by their own experiences, biases and assumptions. Phenomenological interpretation should seek to maintain awareness of these fore-conceptions making it a cyclical process. The idea of the hermeneutic circle is that there is always a dynamic interaction between elements and the whole. For example, there is an interaction between a word, a sentence and a full text such that the meaning of a word only crystallises in meaning when interpreted as part of the entire text. This concept is vital to the actual practice of phenomenological method (Smith et al. 2009).

Some may take the view that quantitative research of observable behaviour is the most scientific approach but phenomenological methods remain “scientific by virtue of being methodical, systematic, critical, general and potentially intersubjective” (Wertz 2005 p.170). Roberts (2014) argues that qualitative methods are more suited to real social life as it occurs in a complex and open environment. Finlay (2011) suggests that phenomenological research offers a bridge between research and practice in therapy by replicating the journey of evolution in understanding each other and spurring growth. Thus, this research will provide a new viewpoint and elucidate the experiences of those who have gone through an eviction and in doing so may also provide details that will improve the practice of Counselling Psychology in such cases.

#### *IPA as the chosen methodology*

Within the experiential concept of phenomenology, we find Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) a methodology that is interested in personal meaning and sense-making of participants who share an experience (Smith et al., 2009). When Smith (1996) introduced IPA he argued that this new qualitative methodology could serve as a mediator between discourse analysis and social cognition. IPA was initially primarily focused on providing an alternative for research in the area of health psychology by allowing for analysis of the experiences of smaller populations in greater detail. This was especially useful as it provided patients with a voice to express themselves and thus allowed them to provide researchers with an insider perspective of their experiences. Thus, IPA researchers attempt to gain access to participants accounts as closely as possible (Smith, 1996). This sense-making process is a central aspect in IPA and reflects its theoretical link to the cognitive paradigm (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Within health psychology, IPA has allowed researchers to better understand how patients interpreted bodily symptoms and how they

made sense of what they were going through (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Since its creation, IPA has been adopted across the specialisms of psychology including Counselling Psychology with a large number of dissertations and an increasing number of published articles (Smith & Osborn, 2008). However, Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) argue that many IPA studies produced within the area of health psychology demonstrated a lack of interpretative or conceptual depth. The author suggests that this is due to the fact that some researchers become overly cautious and/or too focused on first-order analysis, which results in a report of the data collected rather than an interpretative analysis. One of the main strengths of IPA is that it allows for deep and multifaceted interpretation and this is something I maintained a focus on.

Epistemologically, as well as being phenomenological, IPA is described as a hermeneutic approach and in common with other hermeneutic approaches it is individual-focused and concerned with how individual's make sense of their experiences in particular domains. Furthermore, it has been described by Smith (2011) as a double-hermeneutic approach "whereby the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (p.10). This highlights the importance that the researcher's role and their standpoint plays in the study. That is, in order to fully explore and understand the in-depth experience of the participant through their perspective we researchers need to avail of our own understanding. The author also claims IPA to have idiographic, inductive and interrogative features. IPA's idiographic feature allows a detailed analysis of individual cases to be completed before the start of a cross-case analysis. Inductive in the sense that IPA's techniques during data analysis provide enough flexibility to allow for topics or themes to emerge and interrogative as IPA's intention in research is to communicate directly with other research within psychology in an attempt to interrogate and illuminate

what has already been produced. Interestingly, Heidegger's own writings create a link between IPA's roots and the current study. In 'Building Dwelling Thinking' Heidegger (1971) explores the links between building and dwelling and highlights how humans build homes and bring things forth as part of our nature.

As mentioned previously quantitative research on this specific topic has been limited and therefore the use of a flexible methodology is key. Eatough and Smith (2017) outline the importance of openness and receptiveness in IPA; allowing unexpected and novel issues to be introduced by the participants themselves. They describe the IPA researcher as a traveller who enters the lifeworld of the participants and I believe there is great value in this given the topic represents somewhat uncharted territory. Furthermore, IPA allows for interpretation of social phenomena beyond even the awareness of the participants themselves; that is, hidden elements can be brought to light. There are two reasons why this is appealing. Firstly, eviction is currently a widespread issue that relates to many of the social concerns of the day (inequality, austerity etc.) and interpretation taking into account this context is required. Secondly, as a Counselling Psychology trainee I feel an affinity with an approach that allows for the interpretation of connections and contexts that might currently be outside the person's own awareness. Equally appealing is that IPA is not dismissive of increased connections with other qualitative approaches allowing the researcher to borrow from other approaches to aid interpretation while maintaining the central elements of IPA. As Smith et al (2009) state when discussing this; "we welcome these developments as working towards a more mature, synthesized, qualitative approach" (p. 204).

In keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of IPA this study will be phenomenological and focused on the participants' experience of eviction. Phenomenology

is a particularly apt method of inquiry as it explores the 'lifeworld' and dwelling (housing and home) represents a fundamental way of existing in the world (Manzo 2003). The approach taken in this study, in terms of research design and ultimately analysis, will also be one of interpretation. I will not seek just to describe; as Moran (2000) states "the phenomena of existence always require interpretation, and hermeneutics is the art of interpretation" (p.197). Heidegger argued against the idea that there could be a pre-suppositionless descriptive phenomenology and considered phenomenology to be an explicitly interpretative activity (Smith et al. 2009). As part of this interpretation, however, I will attempt to maintain awareness that as the interpreter of the data I bring with me my assumptions and experiences. This must be a circular process of awareness as it may be unclear in advance what my preconceptions are before I engage with the data and which of my specific preconceptions might arise. However, it is not possible to wholly disentangle my own preconceptions and history from the phenomenon being studied as my interpretation and the revelation of the phenomenon are interrelated (Finlay and Gough 2003). Furthermore, it is not possible to fully escape my preceding suppositions and understandings but I must attempt to be both aware of these and explicitly express them so that readers understand the context of my interpretation (this will be touched on later in 'The Process of Reflexivity'). As Fischer (2009) states in relation to bracketing "It is not possible to view without viewing from somewhere. We do our best to become aware of that somewhere is, questioning it, owning it or changing it, and including it in our reports" (p. 584). In addition, I will be mindful in both the methodology used and the analysis of accounts that IPA is also an idiographic approach. This means there is a focus on the particular, requiring in-depth analysis of the participants' accounts to try understand the phenomenon of eviction from their specific viewpoint (Smith et al. 2009). However, I will also be cognisant of the fact that "the particular and the general are not so distinct" (Smith et al. 2009 p. 31) and that cautious examination of convergences

and divergences across shared experiences is also part of IPA. Smith et al (2009) in their examples of IPA research and the areas that previous studies have focused on include ‘Life and transitions’ as a key category. The studies under this heading include an examination of ‘Migration and threat to identity’ and ‘Impact of homelessness on identity’; both relate to forced movements and changes in living circumstances providing further comfort that IPA is an appropriate methodology for the area of study. While my research question is wider than solely impacts to identity it is clear from the literature on the loss of a home that impacts to self-identity might arise in relation to the experience of eviction.

### *Criticism of IPA and other potential methodologies*

Since its initial use within health research IPA’s popularity has increased and also extended to other fields. Smith et al (2009) claim that this popularity is also due to the fact that IPA provides practical and easy to use guidelines in assisting students to conduct an IPA research. However, Giorgi (2010) has criticised Smith’s guidelines as they do not present students with fixed processual steps and order which the author argues disqualifies IPA from being a method. Smith (2004) had addressed this argument by explaining that the guidelines should only be seen as suggestions as instructions given in a “cookbook” format would conflict with the core of qualitative research. Larkin et al (2006) also suggests that IPA is better understood if seen as a stance or a perspective rather than a distinct method. According to the author, IPA’s flexibility and possibility of different routes in the analytic process implies that IPA’s described processes are not remarkable when compared to other qualitative methodologies. I consider the general guidelines on IPA to be accessible and this has also been one of the reasons why I chose this approach. Considering the nature of our phenomena (i.e. eviction) I also explored the use of other methodologies such as grounded theory for this research. However, grounded theory’s high level conceptual account and the

intent to generate a theoretical-level account of a specific phenomenon conflicted with my research questions. That is, while I wish to investigate and interpret the individual's experiences of losing their homes and how they make sense of their experience, grounded theory would be more interested in exploring factors, impacts and influences related to the phenomena of eviction. IPA on the other hand allows for more a more fine-grained analysis that allows for both divergence and convergence within analysis rather than driving solely towards a particular theoretical claim (Smith et al., 2009).

## **Research Design**

### *Semi-structured interviews*

The method of data collection used was one-to-one semi-structured interviews that lasted between 47 to 120 minutes. Interviews were carefully prepared for as IPA interviews are seen to provide us with understandings that are 'meaning-full' and the result of situated concerns of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). Mason (2002) suggests rigorous and detailed planning in order to facilitate the experience of a qualitative interview which has been described as a 'conversation with a purpose'. With this in mind I constructed an interview schedule to allow me to facilitate the interview as a discussion of relevant topics in an open and sensitive manner. One of the criticisms of IPA studies raised by Brocki and Weardon (2006) is that often researchers do not describe the interview schedule or provide any examples of the types of questions that will be utilised. My study avoided this potential pitfall and a list of prompt questions has been constructed and was included in this study (Appendix E). Prior to the interviews with participants, I conducted pilot interviews with colleagues in order to familiarise myself fully with the schedule (see below for further details), however, at the same time I also attempted to see the schedule as a guide only and use it in a flexible and natural manner (Mason, 2002). This flexibility allowed me to provide

some restraint against the risk of pushing my own assumptions on to the accounts of the participants and allowed for avenues of discussion to open up that had not been considered by me during the initial phases.

I believe that my skills (i.e. monitoring the participants' emotional state and assessing potential risk) and experience as a Counselling Psychologist trainee, in which I already facilitate 'conversations with a purpose' in the therapeutic environment, mesh well with the semi-structured nature of IPA interviews. Morrow (2007) suggests that Counselling Psychologists are best suited to qualitative methods due to their skills and non-judgmental nature being congruent with the paradigms of qualitative research. He claims that especially in relation to the interviews Counselling Psychologists are well placed to build trusting relationships with the participants which in turn allows them access to deeper layers of the participants' experiences. However, it is also important to note that as I proceeded with interviews I was mindful that in these circumstances their use is for the purposes of research rather than therapy. Each interview was digitally recorded at a public location pre-arranged with the participants. These varied from study rooms in libraries and community centres to cafes. In order to ensure privacy, I booked private study rooms and at a cafe I requested a private area.

### *Reflections on the Semi- Structured Interviews*

During the first interviews, I felt overwhelmed by the richness of detail of my participants' experiences, this left me feeling overloaded and lost - not knowing where to go next. Partially I expect this comes from the nerves of an unexperienced interviewer but reflecting on this further I wonder whether I shared some of the confusion that participants experienced themselves throughout the experience of eviction. As the interviews continued I

felt more confident in conducting the interviews, however, I found some of the interviews more difficult than others. For example, where participants provided short answers even where additional prompts were used or where participants drifted from the core experience of eviction. As a trainee Counselling Psychologist, I was also very mindful of the change of my role during the interview. That is, while I wanted to stay close to the role of the interviewer/researcher I also wanted to allow my skills as a trainee Psychologist to emerge without taking the front seat. Rather than separating both more sharply as perhaps I have done in the first interviews I learned to accept that I could not and would not split myself into two but instead look at it in a more holistic manner. This acceptance, I believe helped me connect with participants better and in return may have helped them feel able to connect with me too.

## **Ethics**

This research was granted ethical approval by the Psychology Department at City, University of London. This research follows the guidance of the British Psychological Society's 'Code of Ethics and Conduct' (BPS 2018) and the 'Code of Human Research Ethics' (BPS 2014). The BPS codes are based on four ethical principles; respect, competence, responsibility and integrity each of which relate to a number of standards. Consideration has been made in relation to these principles and standards across all stages of the research process.

### *Protection of Participants*

In order to guarantee protection of the participants the steps of research were reviewed carefully in order to ensure that any possible harm (physical and psychological) was considered and measures to prevent and/or remediate potential harm were put in place.

Considering eviction as an experience that was likely to have caused distress to some participants it was important to ensure that participants felt able and well to discuss the experience in detail. Therefore, a screening phone call was arranged and I assessed whether participants felt able to discuss the experience with me and inquired if they had any questions or concerns regarding their potential participation in the study. If at any point during the interviews participants disclosed that they were suffering from severe distress or if this had been noted by me I would use my skills as a trainee Counselling Psychologist to contain the participants and help them manage their distress. If the distress showed a cause for concern I would therefore suggest for interviews to be resumed. However, this measure was not necessary during any of the interviews. After every interview, participants were given a list of support services (Appendix D). This list contained support services such as general mental health service providers such as the NHS and Mind and also more specific support services for support with financial issues.

### *Consent*

Participants were given the required time at the start of the meeting to read and sign the consent forms. (Appendix B) They were given two copies to sign, I kept one and gave them a copy to keep.

### *Deception*

I did not withhold any information that participants might have found distressing. From the first point of contact I was open and explained to participants what the research was about and what their participation involved. All participants contacted me initially by emails or through an online research portal I created for this study. Following their initial contact, I

sent them an information sheet (Appendix C) containing all the information about the study and ask them to read them and if interested in taking part they could send me their phone number and a suitable time for me to arrange an initial phone call.

### *Debriefing*

At the end of each interview, I ensured to allow time for the participants to clarify any questions that they may have had about the study. A debrief sheet (Appendix D) containing a list of service providers was given to every participant and I encouraged them to contact them should they find necessary.

### *Confidentiality*

To preserve participants' confidentiality and to respect their right to anonymity I allocated pseudonyms for each participant and stored all transcriptions using solely their pseudonym. As this research has a relatively small sample size the link between their real names and their pseudonym was only known by me. During the interviews, some participants named locations, their family members and other persons; I have ensured to remove their names from transcripts and quoted extracts. Recordings and transcripts have been kept securely on a password protected computer and will be destroyed in keeping with best practice.

### *Withdrawal from research*

Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study up until the analysis stage (January of 2017) without giving a reason and without being penalised in any way.

## **Pilot**

Pilot interviews were conducted with colleagues that had not experienced an eviction with the aims of allowing me to familiarise myself with the schedule, receiving feedback of how my questions and the way I asked them might come across to participants and of developing my skills as a qualitative researcher interviewer. As this was an artificial process in which the participants created a story for the exercise, consent forms did not apply.

## **Data Collection**

### *Sample Size*

In accordance with the ideographic focus of IPA, my sample was relatively small with seven participants. In order to keep my sample fairly homogenous I focused on participants who had lost their homes due to eviction (defined broadly as any forced relocation/displacement from a property initiated by the owner) within the last 18 months in the Greater London area.

### *Recruitment*

Recruitment was conducted to gain access to participants who have experienced this phenomenon. Smith et al (2009) argue that in IPA, we should aim to gather participants who are able to “represent” a perspective of the phenomena we aim to study rather than gathering participants that aim to represent a population. Therefore, I attempted to recruit participants directly from charities and specialised organisations in the area of housing and renting (e.g. Tenants Voice UK). While none of these organisations felt comfortable reaching out to specific service users they did assist in advertising to the target group. All participants were therefore recruited through public advertisements in both physical locations (libraries,

community centres, housing protests etc.) and in online community forums (both general and specific to organisations). This strategy allowed me ensure direct access to a wide population of the general public and allowed participants to self-identify for potential inclusion in the research. Once participants read the advertisements and contacted me via email demonstrating an interest in taking part, I followed up with a generic email thanking them for their interest and sent them an information sheet (Appendix C). This sheet contained information about the study; what was expected of the participants and also information regarding confidentiality and ethics. Once they confirmed that they had read the information sheet the next step was to arrange a screening phone call with them. A number of potential participants did not provide the required response to confirm their agreement. Two respondents completed the screening calls and provided a completed agreement but cancelled last minute on arranged interview meetings on two separate dates. I agreed in follow-up conversations with these respondents that as a result of this difficulty in completing the interviews that they would not be included as participants. Ultimately, therefore, no actual selection was made as the seven participants included were those that were available to complete the required interviews. As this research was advertised in London and it required participants to attend an interview with in the city of London, all the participants recruited came from and lost their homes in the Greater London area.

### *Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria*

In order to ensure that experiences can be communicated and understood fully all participants spoke English. Participants were adults (i.e. over 18 years old) of varied age and gender who reside in the UK and who have experienced a loss of their homes through eviction (defined broadly as any forced/unwanted relocation/displacement from a property) within the last 18 months. Participants were not excluded on the basis of nationality,

ethnicity or current location in the UK (although given interviews took place in London all participants were located in commutable distance). Any possible participants who advised that they were experiencing serious mental health issues or were sleeping rough during the recruitment phase were to be excluded. This was decided as participants who may have been sleeping rough at the time may have found the topic very distressing. It is important that my intent was for my research to be as inclusive as it could be, and as recommended by the BPS, (BPS, 2018) but some considerations were necessary in order to preserve potential participants from harm. However, no participants in this condition contacted me. Furthermore, possible participants who advised that the loss of their home was due to serious criminal activity were also to be excluded. Ultimately there were no exclusions in this study on the basis of these criteria.

#### *Participants (Introducing one by one and demographics)*

As a Counselling Psychologist trainee and as a phenomenological researcher felt-sense is very important to me. Therefore, when introducing my participants to the reader, rather than providing you with only demographics, I would like to share with you what it was like for me when I met my participants. This way I hope that their voices can reach you like they have reached me. Once you know about them it may help you not only to understand what was like for them to experience the eviction but also “feel” what it was like.

Amanda: A white British single mother of two children. Amanda had lived in a privately rented flat. She had been living there for four years and her rent had been increased during this time. Amanda told me that she had fled domestic violence in her past relationship.

Amanda had cancelled the first time we were supposed to meet. She told me that her daughter was ill and therefore she could not meet with me on the day we had arranged. On the phone I

could sense the tone of disappointment in her voice while also noticing a sense of chaos when she told me how her day had turned out to be with her baby not having slept through the night and her daughter feeling ill. Following that, we arranged to meet again. When I met Amanda she came with her baby. Amanda was open and I could sense an eagerness to tell me her story. During the interview I noticed her multi-tasking skills as a mother attending to the child whilst also concentrating on the interview.

Sofia: Sofia was a young adult, British and of mixed race. Sofia lived in a privately rented house with her father, mother and younger brother. The family had lived in council flats prior to moving to this house. They had lived in the house for a number of years when the eviction happened. When I met with Sofia she presented as slightly shy, however, when she started telling me about her experience I could sense a maturity about her that did not match her age. She presented in a calm manner and was well spoken. She spoke about her experience as a daughter who experienced an eviction and who saw her parents experience the eviction.

Reema: A British female of South Asian origin in her 30s. Reema had lived in a privately rented house with her siblings and parents for fifteen years when they were evicted. Her landlord attempted to increase the rent and her father discarded this increase. Following this, they received a notification telling them about the eviction. I also sense an urgency in how Reema shared her story with me. She spoke fast and at times she spoke as if she was hitting words out like the experience seemed to have hit her. Reema came to meet with me on her own but it felt as if she had her family with her, I could hear their voices and she ensured I listened to each of them.

Joseph: A white British male in his 40s. Joseph lived in a flat that belonged to his partner. His partner sadly died from an unexpected illness and Joseph was evicted from the property. He had been living there for a few years. Joseph reported the experience of eviction that happened during a very difficult time in his life. He came to the interview and after a few minutes speaking to him I felt as if I knew him before. His emotions were there to be seen. I could feel his pain at times and his light spirit at other times, I believed that he allowed me to feel what he was feeling at each moment and I thank him for that. Joseph often used of humour during the interview and used analogies to explain his points.

Clive: A white British male in his 50s. Clive lived in a flat on his own when he was evicted. Following the eviction, he moved to assisted accommodation. When I met with Clive at the University he spoke to me about a variety of things. His speech was fast and his thinking was even faster. He spoke with drive about his interests and his beliefs. Clive wanted to be listened to, Clive would not only tell me about the issues he experienced or that he could see existing but he would also tell me about potential solutions that he had thought of. Clive later on reported that he has a diagnosis of being on the ASD spectrum.

Abdul: A British male of South Asian origin in his 20s. Abdul rented in a room in a shared house. He moved to this room after the end of a relationship. With the end of the relationship, Abdul had also lost his job. Abdul had been living in his shared house for nine months when he was evicted. Following the eviction, he moved to another flat in a new area. Abdul presented in a quiet manner, he leaned back on the chair. He had his arms wrapped around his body for most of the interview, as if he was guarding himself the way he was guarding his body. His tone of voice was deep and his words were short and limited but there was a sense of deepness about him.

Solomon: A black British male in his 40s. Solomon lived in a flat with a friend when he was evicted. Following the eviction, Solomon became homeless for a few months. Solomon had a home at the time of the interview. Solomon's tone of voice was mellow and his speech was slow paced. I could sense a calmness about him. When hearing about his experience I was left feeling that he did not hold onto absolute truths. During times in the interview, as he was making sense of his experience, he asked me what my thoughts were. This indicated to me that this was how he navigated through life with a genuine interest coming from a sense of thoughtfulness.

### *Transcription*

Each interview was transcribed verbatim and in its entirety by me. Transcriptions included both the questions asked by me the researcher and the responses from participants. Following this process, I took steps to re-review for accuracy and to highlight any identifying information for removal from quoted extracts. Furthermore, I replaced any reference to the individual's own name with the anonymised names I had assigned that person. Where pauses, non-verbal actions or utterances felt important to meaning I have endeavoured to include these in the transcripts. As per Smith et al (2009) transcripts within IPA "do not require a record of the exact length of pauses, or of all non-verbal utterance as favoured by conversation analysis" (p74). I have not made an attempt to clean up the language used by participants where they may have made grammatical errors as I felt these were important to maintain a true representation of their voice.

I had investigated the use of transcription software and gone so far as to purchase a trial version of one highly rated piece of software. However, having tested with a

conversation recording (not involving participants) it appears currently available technology is limited in its ability to recognise different voices in an interview type recording and is more suited to transcribing voice notes from a single individual. I was reluctant to use a transcription service due to data protection issues and concerns around accuracy of the final transcript. I have now come to the conclusion that this may have been an overly risk adverse view. I have noted that many doctoral students use these services, that many reputable service providers are available who are well aware of data protection concerns and handle information appropriately and that appropriate review versus the recordings can provide a sufficient control against inaccuracies. In hindsight, the amount of time to complete transcription by oneself is inordinate and was time I could have perhaps used more efficiently in other areas of the research process.

### **Analysis of the data**

While no prescriptive rules are in place for IPA data analysis I followed best practice as recommended by Smith et al. (2009) who describe four stages of analysing a single interview (subsequent stages in analysis are related to comparison between cases). These are 'Reading and re-reading', 'Initial Noting', 'Developing Emergent themes', 'Searching for connections across emergent themes', 'Moving on to the next case' and 'Looking for patterns across cases'. 'Reading and re-reading' is broadly self-explanatory and involves becoming immersed in the data through repeated readings of the transcript. This provides a view of the overall interview structure allowing the researcher to appreciate the connections and contradictions between different sections of the interview. Furthermore, it brings a familiarisation with the flow, rhythm and tone of the interview. 'Initial noting' is the detailed examination and exploration of the content of the interview. The focus is on obtaining a

comprehensive and in-depth set of commentary that will form the basis of the next stages of analysis and continue the process of engaging with the data. While not exhaustive Smith et al. (2009) recommend three general categories of comments that should be utilised during the initial noting. These are descriptive (descriptions of the subject under discussion), linguistic (exploration of the specific language, words and idiosyncratic figures of speech used by the participant) and conceptual comments (interpretative comments that represent an early attempt to conceptualise interesting features of the account). Willig (2013) states that the initial notes constitute “the most open form of annotation; they are a way of documenting the ideas that come up for the researcher upon his or her initial encounter with the text” (p88).

Once the initial noting part of the process is complete the researcher has a larger set of data which can be used to develop emerging themes. ‘Developing emerging themes’ is the task of turning the notes into conceptual themes across the entirety of the interview (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009). At this point psychological terms can be used and the themes identified should link to the experiential nature of the participant’s account (Willig 2013). Here the hermeneutic cycle comes into play as the researcher attempts to interpret the parts in relation to the whole and the whole in relation to the parts. The final step in the examination of a single interview as described by Smith et al. (2009) is ‘Searching for connections across emergent themes’. This step involves organising and linking the emergent themes that have been identified. There are a number of ways in which these connections can be identified including shared meaning, oppositional relationships, links to key life events, frequency and negativity or positivity of the themes presentation. As clusters are formed they can be given specific labels to capture their nature and link related themes.

## Step 1 - Reading and re-reading

Throughout the transcription of the interviews I had become familiarized with the participants' voices and how they reported their experiences. As I carried the whole process from beginning to end this meant that a closeness was maintained between the transcribed text and the original recording/voice of the participant. I read through the completed transcript multiple times while recalling my initial observations and thoughts from the actual interview. I maintained an awareness of the actual tone and rhythm of the interview and tried to hear the participant's voice while reading. This allowed me to be connected to the content and the delivery of the messages. While I was very much determined to "bracket off" my assumptions, I reflected that what I was hearing and noticing was also being influenced by my own particular position. I resisted the urge to make any interpretation at this stage, I attempted to stay with the data as much as I could. This was difficult and at times connections would automatically form in my mind. I took an acceptance stance to this in which I accepted and understood the urge to make these connections but chose to not focus on them and instead attempted to bring my attention back to the data.

## Step 2 - Initial noting

The noting process (see Appendix F) involved working through a printed transcript of the interview, underlining comments/phrases that I felt were important and linking these to my own comments written in the margin. Some examples of the comments that I made included specific uses of language such as the word 'just' (i.e. "it's just okay, just normal, I'm just getting on with life"), which Reema used at the beginning of the interview, that brought up for me the question of her willingness to express her own emotions during the early questions. I also noted that on several occasions participants communicated the hurried and sudden nature of the eviction itself through phrases (i.e. "all of a sudden", "next minute",

‘it happened so fast’) and the tempo of the participants’ own speech. I commented on their own descriptions of the emotions that came with the experience of eviction including ‘torn us apart’, ‘we were shouting and screaming’, ‘cannot be anything worse than that’ and ‘all sad and negative, negative, nothing good about it’. Additionally, I aimed to interpret specific comments within the context of the experience described and the overall interviews. These comments and the dozens of others noted across the section of interview formed the basis of the identification of emergent themes.

### Step 3 - Developing Emergent themes

During this step (see Appendix G), I utilised the initial notes and attempted to capture coherent themes to reflect my understanding of my participants’ experience. Taking each discrete section of meaningful text I sought to attach phrases that captured the psychological essence of the text. Themes reflected the original words but also elements of my interpretation. While remaining focused on each individual section I was already starting to note a sense of connections across the emergent themes.

### Step 4 - Searching for connections across emergent themes

Following the development of the emergent themes I next sought to identify patterns and link themes to super-ordinate themes (see Appendices H to J). It became clear that several items clustered together naturally. I decided to create a spreadsheet in Excel in order to organise my themes. Once I found a connection between themes I colour coded them. Once I had determined the colours for each theme I clustered them together.

Step 5: Moving on to the next case.

Once I completed the table of emergent themes for each participant, I moved on to the next transcript. I was mindful of the importance of distancing myself from one case to the next. That is, I was aware of the risk of one analysis leaking onto the next one. While, this may be very difficult to avoid, I allowed time between cases to reduce the risk as much as I could. This resulted in participants having a unique table of themes that relates exclusively to them and their experience.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.

As expected, I had a vast amount of data left to analyse. I had seen suggestions from researchers including Smith et al (2009) that having themes all laid out on a flat space such as the floor. I attempted this but found it very difficult to keep track of it and felt that this layout was adding confusion for me. Therefore, I decided to add all my themes to an excel spreadsheet. Each column had the participants' pseudonym and their themes. This allowed me to look for patterns and as I found them I colour coded them. I created very descriptive keys that served to organise the themes. Once I had established keys for all of them, I reorganised them by colour. Once this was done, I had approximately eighteen different tones of colour and this may be confusing for others but to me it made sense. Following that, I could see what themes belonged under each other, their function and their frequency (see Appendix H to K). The processes that I was mindful of and that I was using the most in order to help this analysis were abstraction, contextualization, polarization and subsumption. In some cases, I used of a mix of these processes in order to arrive to the theme. For example, one of my keys related to participants reports of not feeling prepared for the eviction. In order to get to this I was mindful of the "context", that is how their narrative was being framed in

terms of cultural and temporal aspects such as participant's tempo in their speech. I also used subsumption as this emergent theme had become a subtheme.

Once my themes established themselves, I focused on examining how they related or interacted with each other. Smith et al. (2009) suggest analysts focus on building a graphic representation of the structure. I attempted to think of a variety of pie charts and geometrical figures to examine what felt right. Once I had my themes I started the quote selection process. Again, this was also a lengthy process due to the richness and the emotional content of my participants' accounts. Once I noticed that my preselection of quotes was big I wondered how I would choose one quote over the other. It felt as if I was denying my participants their voice if I did not include them as I was so focused on respecting their idiosyncrasies. Therefore, I decided to start the writing up and allowed the quotes to be selected naturally.

## **Reflexivity**

### *The Process of Reflexivity*

Mason (2002) defines reflexivity as “thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognising the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see.” (p. 5). With this in mind, throughout the completion of this research I kept a reflective diary, I engaged with supervision and ensured that I completed and kept notes. This allowed me to remain thoughtful and stay close to each stage of the process. Finlay (2012) recommends that the researcher uses the following five lenses to engage in reflexivity; strategic reflexivity, contextual discursive reflexivity, embodied reflexivity, relational reflexivity and ethical

reflexivity. I have been mindful of these lenses throughout this process and I will now explain how I used them.

- 1) Strategic Reflexivity: According to Finlay (2012) this refers to watching carefully aspects related to methodology and epistemology. From the beginning of this research I have reflected critically on my aims and the design for this research and how they were being guided by my research question. This involved constantly being mindful of my own role and how I could come across to participants.
- 2) Contextual Discursive Reflexivity: Finlay (2012) explains that this relates to sociocultural and situational aspects. The spoken language is very important here, as it is in IPA; understanding what was being said and how it was being said it is something that I reflected on deeply through listening and reading repeatedly the accounts of my participants.
- 3) Embodied Reflexivity: Finlay's (2012) use of Gendlin's concept of felt sense to describe how we can experience the interaction with participants in our bodies through nonverbal communication. In this research this meant that I made an effort to attend to my body and observe how it responded during the interviews with my participants. For example, throughout the participants' narration of facts related to the eviction I felt my chest full of air at times as if it had become overwhelming to even breath normally. Upon reflection, I noticed that I was empathising with how participants had experienced the eviction. This I believe allowed me to try put myself in their place which allowed me to come up with the visceral analogies used to contextualise their experiences.
- 4) Relational Reflexivity: Engaging with relational reflexivity is understanding what belongs to the participant and what belongs to me as the interviewer. Reflecting on the relationship is something that I have been accustomed to in my clinical

practice and this is something I also brought with me to my role as a qualitative researcher. This type of reflexivity allowed me to check what my assumptions were and being aware how my agenda was influencing how and when I was asking questions.

- 5) Ethical Reflexivity: Finlay (2012) suggests reflecting on power dynamics, ethical implications of each process and writing up the study with an ethical stance. This is something I aimed to reflect on and engage with throughout the process including reflecting on my decisions for recruitment and protection of participants.

### *Personal Reflexivity*

My interest in this area is both short and long term. That is, short term in the sense that I moved to London about four years ago and I was surprised to see the variety of television programs and stories in the media showing householders being evicted or having their properties repossessed. This stood out for me as it highlighted that this subject was of public interest. However, it also brought out for me long term feelings of when as a child I experienced having the home where I lived in with my parents repossessed. That experience does not bring as many bad memories as I imagine it would for other people because losing that property did not cause me or my family to become homeless as we had another property to move in to. However, I still experienced strong feelings towards the person who I deemed responsible for the loss. Furthermore, I could also observe how it affected my family and our relationships. As an adult living in Ireland I had the chance to experience the boom of the economy in which I saw how government policies and institutions facilitated the process of buying a property. I was also still there when the financial crisis hit its peak and watched people going through the repossession process and noticed how this had a negative impact on

their lives. This personal interest has motivated me to investigate through research how people experience the loss of their homes and how they live their lives following this event.

I find important to note that as a Brazilian person living in London my worldviews are influenced by the countries/communities that I lived in previously. Growing up in the fifth biggest Brazilian city I was often sensitive to the effects of inequality in society. That is, in my upbringing I had the opportunity to interact with people from extremes across the spectrum of inequality. This formed part of my sense of self, how I relate to others and how I understand the power of systems. Being aware of this, I was mindful to both understand and become aware of my assumptions and allow the data to answer my questions. This I did by maintaining a diary to keep track of any preconceptions I might hold about the topic and the individual participants. Within the analysis, I actively sought out elements of the participants' experiences that did not match my preconceived beliefs about what they might have gone through. I felt this approach would help me avoid seeking out patterns within the data that I expected to be there and pushing the findings into these arrangements. In addition, this research has helped me challenge some of the assumptions I had embedded in me. Coming from a developing country I had assumptions about the level of inequality in rich European countries including the UK not being as concerning as in my home country. However, as I met with each participant I remember experiencing that heavy feeling of helplessness that I had experienced in Brazil in relation to how society is functioning. It became apparent to me that, even in rich countries, there is a part of the population for whom the system does not work.

### *How my identity may have impacted the research*

Intersectionality and the understanding of its many axes may serve as a helpful tool to analyse and reflect on how my identity may have impacted this research. Being a woman of mixed race, an immigrant, a doctoral researcher and middle class may all have contributed to how participants viewed me and how they interacted with me. As an immigrant, I noticed that the participants ensured that they explained to me everything in detail and often referred to 'how things are here'. This I believe has aided the research as, in keeping with IPA, it allowed me to really connect with their experiences as a novice, as an immigrant arriving to a new country and learning everything with fresh new eyes. As a doctoral researcher, I am aware that the participants may have perceived me as holding more power than they had, this is especially pertinent in this case as they had to talk about a period of their lives in which they felt completely powerless. Dealing with power imbalances is something that I often reflect on in my clinical work. Generally, clients attend therapy during a difficult time in their lives when they feel vulnerable, therefore, I make the conscious effort to be seen as a person rather than sitting comfortably in the expert position. This is something I also attempted to do in this research but remain aware that a perceived power imbalance may have restricted how participants reported their stories and what they decided to share with me or not. Being a female researcher may also have had an impact on how participants may have shared their stories with me. For example, in some cultures males may not be accustomed to speaking so openly to a woman about their vulnerabilities as they may worry that they may be seen as weak. Coming from a middle-class background, despite not being from this country may have been detected or assumed by education level or by the way in which I express myself. The participants came from varying social classes in the past but I'm conscious that as some of the evictions emerged from financial difficulties that may have impacted their view of their own 'class status'. These shifts in financial situations that some of them experienced had

to be communicated to someone who is of middle class and this may have accentuated feelings of shame or inadequacy.

## **Validity**

It is key that any piece of qualitative research be conducted in a manner that ensures validity. Both Smith et al. (2009) and Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez (2011) recommend the frameworks presented by Yardley (2000) as one of most useful in evaluation and demonstrating the validity of qualitative research and IPA research in particular. As I have worked through the various phases of this research I have made every effort to align my work with the principles and guidelines set out in this framework.

Yardley (2000) presents four principles that should be used when assessing the validity and quality of qualitative research. The first principle is ‘Sensitivity to Context’; context here refers to context of theory, awareness of the related literature, the sociocultural setting that the research is being carried out in, the perspectives of the participants and the power dynamics involved in the process of investigation. I have attempted to meet the requirements of this principle in the ‘Introduction’ where both the specific eviction literature and a wider review of housing, mental health, the meaning of home and the loss of a home provides a solid context. In addition, a UK specific overview provided some insight into the sociocultural setting including the recent history of austerity politics. My own cultural background as well as the potential impact of that on participants is discussed below in the reflexivity sections. The second principle is ‘Commitment and rigour’; commitment is focused on thoroughness in ensuring that there is an in-depth engagement with the topic, the development of competence and skill in the chosen methods while rigour is about ensuring thorough data collection and deep analysis. In relation to this principle I have as part of the

research process sought to understand IPA and its philosophical underpinnings to ensure the methods used and the analysis are in alignment with IPAs core considerations of phenomenology, hermeneutics and an idiographic focus. The previous section on 'IPA as the chosen method' highlight this in detail. 'Transparency and coherence' is Yardley's (2000) third principle which relates to both clarity and power of the descriptions and arguments within the research which she states should be a construction/recreation of a version of reality. In addition, transparency is required in relation to the methods of data collection and analysis and reflexivity is necessary in relation to how the researchers own assumptions may have influenced the research. Both of these elements been addressed as part of the Methodology under the 'Data Collection' and 'Personal Reflexivity'. The final principle is 'Impact and importance' which essentially is a judgement of how useful the research is. That usefulness can be measured in relation to how the research improves understanding and has a social and political impact. Given this final principle requires a summary of the outcomes of the research process I will return to this as part of the 'Discussion' section.

## **Chapter Summary**

The research question for this study is 'How do individuals experience the loss of a home through eviction in Greater London'. In trying to answer this question I have adopted a critical realist epistemology meaning I accept that the participants' experience of the phenomenon is their reality, that my data will not directly reflect reality as it requires interpretation and that any interpretation will be impacted by my own experience. I have chosen IPA as the methodology for this qualitative study with the intention of helping bring the voice of evictees to the fore as this seems absent in existing research on eviction. I believe this methodology fits well with both my epistemological position (the double-hermeneutic approach of IPA is built on the idea that the researcher is trying to make sense of the

participant trying to make sense of the experience) and my research question (IPA is open and receptive to unexpected and novel issues which is important when researching an underdeveloped area of study). This study is intended to be phenomenological, an exploration of the lifeworld specifically in relation to the home, interpretative in that the experiences in my participants' accounts will be interpreted within the framework of the hermeneutic circle and idiographic in its focus on trying to understand the phenomenon from the participants view.

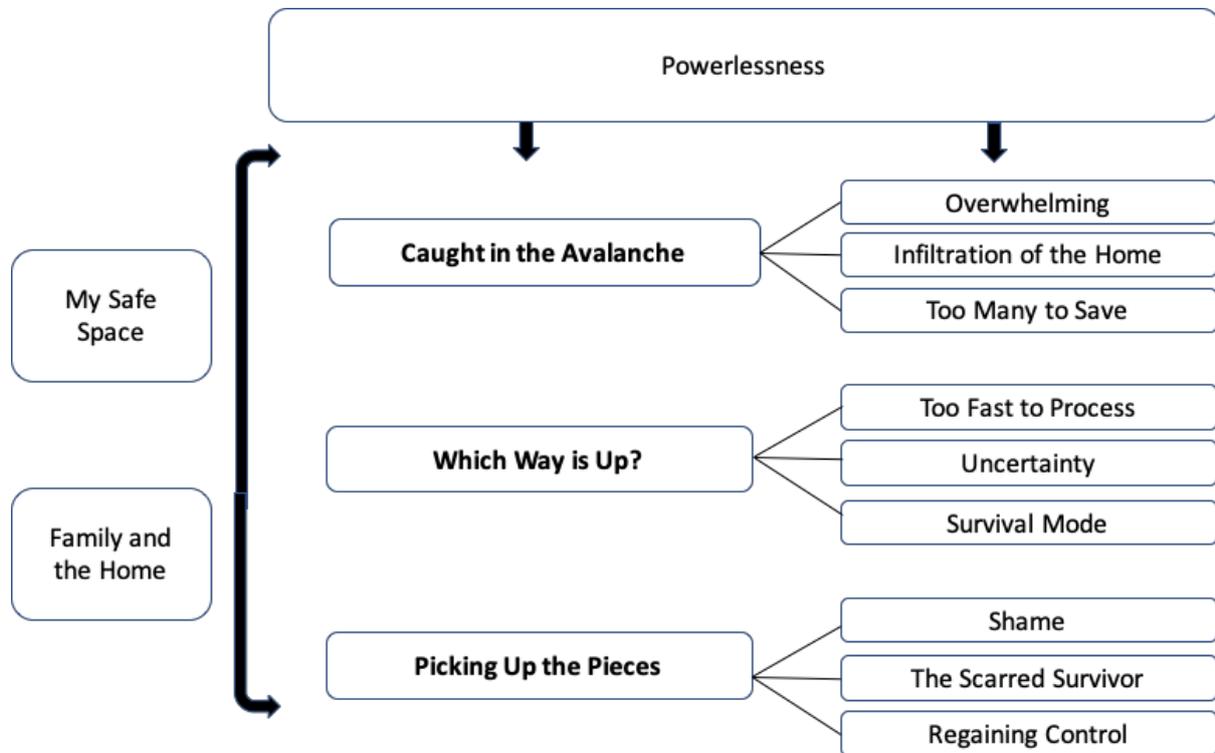
The research design for this study involves the use of semi-structured interviews; an interview schedule detailing the types of questions to be asked was constructed in advance but used in a flexible manner. Care was taken to ensure the research process met the standards of integrity expected by the university and the BPS including as related to consent, debriefing, deception, protection of participants and other key concerns. Seven adults of varying ages, backgrounds and ethnicities who had experienced eviction from a property that they did not own in the last 18 months participated in the study. These participants were recruited through physical and online advertisements with no potential participants excluded due to not meeting the criteria. That data was analysed in keeping with best practice recommended by Smith et al. (2009); a six-step process that is designed to reflect the hermeneutic circle and moves from reading and noting of each individual case to the development of emergent themes at that level and subsequently across the cases. Reflexivity forms part of these frameworks and I outlined this process before engaging in both a personal reflection to examine my own assumptions and a reflection on the potential assumptions and subsequent that the participants may make as a result of my identity. In order to improve the validity of this study I familiarised myself with one of the most regularly recommend frameworks and have evaluated this research against the principles.

## **Analysis**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the in-depth analysis of the accounts of my participants. Their experience of eviction in Greater London is explored and interpreted below via Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. My interpretation and analysis of these experiences has been organised into one overarching theme, two connecting themes and three super-ordinate themes each with their own sub-themes intended to capture the distinct features of these experiences (see Figure 1). This perhaps presents a less standard representation than seen in other IPA studies but I felt this structure was necessary, reflective of my interpretation of the experience and provided a narrative to communicate these complex experiences to readers. As will be seen among the super-ordinate and sub-themes one of central metaphors of the eviction experience I establish throughout the analysis is that of a natural disaster, specifically represented as an avalanche; an intense force that cannot be contained or avoided and which is destructive to the dwellings and individuals that it impacts.

Figure 1. Diagram of relationship between overarching, connecting, super-ordinate and subordinate themes



My intent in reporting the following findings is to honour my participants' accounts by staying close to the data while also acknowledging that this will be the result of my interpretation as a phenomenological researcher. Having said that, the amount of data produced does not allow for me to present all their personal experiences completely, therefore, after careful reflection themes were selected. This selection was based on themes that relate closely to the research question, the prevalence that they appeared in the interviews and how relevant to understanding the phenomenon of eviction they are.

## Overarching Theme

### *Powerlessness*

The overarching theme ‘Powerlessness’ relates to feelings that participants narrated throughout their accounts of their evictions where disempowerment was at the centre. Powerlessness is related to both the internal and the external. Externally there is an imbalance of power between the participants and the persons who have made the eviction decision, given legal force to it and participated in the eviction process itself. Internally, powerlessness represents the lack of agency the participants express having felt during the eviction and often in the periods before and after it. Most participants spoke about the feeling that there was nothing they could do to stop the eviction from happening once the process had commenced. In addition, their own agency is interrupted by the nature of the eviction event which has its own particular impacts. The below extracts highlight some distinct examples of where this powerlessness is directly discussed but this concept and its consequences are seen throughout the super-ordinate themes and their sub-themes.

In the following quote, Sofia talks about how she felt during the process of eviction. For her, the best efforts of her family to take care of the property and to pay rent in full, are ignored by the landlord who she views as just wanting them out.

*Like you start to realise, “We’re definitely going to lose our home and there’s not much we can do about it.” I started, obviously, to get worse with my health because everything just started to become more serious for us. (Sofia 1422-1428)*

She describes a dawning realisation about the certainty of the outcome and the lack of agency anyone in her family has to change this. A sense of shock is also detectable in her

delivery of the phrase “like you start to realise’. The enormity of this realisation and of her powerlessness has an almost immediate impact on her wellbeing. Her use of the word “obviously” indicates again the magnitude of the impact as she implies deteriorating health is an inevitable result of this difficult situation.

Amanda also talks about going through the eviction process as a family although in her case it is in the role of a parent:

*So I'd say pre eviction ehm helplessness, the ability to not feel in control of the situation and also as a single parent I'm always fire-fighting and ... you know I'm always in control very much so of children and our circumstance and I think that made me just feel completely out of control, it felt like it wasn't I co..couldn't do anything about it and also there was no instant resolve, the outcome was really unsettling, there was no resolve so there was no ... there was nothing on my side really to support me and I've had to go on medication to kind of cope with my anxiety and that's obviously not ideal (152-167 Amanda)*

She reflects on this as a person who is often in control of difficult situations with her children whereby she is always “fire-fighting”. This expression also implies her view of herself as a single parent having to take a reactive role and also as waiting for the next fire to happen in order to fight against it. This fire/situation, however, is not fixable and as a result she feels that a fundamental sense of control is stripped from her. Her view of herself as someone who is usually proficient in dealing with difficult situations is highlighted in how she defines powerlessness as “the ability to not feel in control”. Control is instead replaced with feelings of helplessness and Amanda stumbles when expressing that it feels like “it

wasn't I co...couldn't do anything about it". She also misuses the word 'resolve' as a noun (instead of resolution) further alluding to her own lack of agency and determination.

Amanda also reported how the overwhelming nature of the feelings of helplessness pushed her to a place that she had not been before her "most desperate" and that made her question her ability to manage the situation.

*well I've never felt helpless to that point where I felt I can't manage it anymore but it is like I wasn't far off just being at my absolutely most desperate. (1177-1180 Amanda)*

Amanda subsequently revealed that she has suffered from domestic violence in the past. An experience that we would assume might deny someone a sense of control yet Amanda refers to the feeling experienced during the eviction as being more difficult to deal with.

The feeling of powerlessness is also noted in Reema's following account:

*Yeah, that was the easy part but going there and not even listening to what we've got to, what was written on the letter that I've wrote. It was, he just saw the letter and he goes "Okay that's the second eviction, the second notice, sorry we can't accept your notice". I don't get it, I didn't get it and I'm like you just go on and listen you can't argue back with the judge and we just had to leave, it was horrible but it was just... (1211-1221 Reema)*

Here Reema discussed the fact that they had attended court for an appeal which she came to view as pointless as she felt she had no power within the situation. Her words both spoken and written are ignored “not even listening to what we’ve got to, what was written on the letter I’ve wrote” rendering her voiceless. Those with power have made decisions that will impact her life and of her family and there is nothing that they can do about it. She expresses disbelief that this can happen; a disbelief that seems to have stayed with her “I don’t get it, I didn’t get it”. Powerlessness leads to submission to the power of the forces aligned against them as she states “listen you can’t argue with the judge and we just had to leave, it was horrible but it was just...” her sentence fading off in resignation.

Abdul touches on a similar feeling in relation to his experience:

*Well like I said I managed to take out most of my stuff, I kind of knew what was going to happen anyway so by that point I knew that was no going back I couldn’t really say anything so I just had to just wait (267-272 Abdul)*

His acceptance of the situation is markedly less emotional than Reema’s and has a sense of accepted inevitability which runs throughout his account of the eviction. His living situation had been dictated by a recent break-up and job loss. As such it seems he already feels his living situation is transient and while equally powerless in preventing his eviction, this powerlessness does not result in any overt emotional impact.

Joseph speaks about his eviction in the context of the loss of his partner and child who had died in the preceding months.

*They said we really, we've got to start taking legal action I told them everything I showed them all the clinical negligence papers we were dealing with look at this trauma I've had I've had a friend of mine who is an advocate you know what I mean to come along and speak on my behalf and they were just very cold hearted. They just were like well you are really squatting you are not really there, your name is not on the lease we can actually foreclose any day (252-264 Joseph)*

Joseph's eviction was a consequence of the loss of his partner and their unborn child. This tragedy is met by coldness when he tries to seek a solution to rent arrears with the building society who provided the mortgage to his partner. Not only is he dealing with grief but it now seems he will be disenfranchised from the home he shared with her. His presence there is deemed to be almost squatting by those with power and as a result he has to deal with another loss. 'you are not really there' implies he has no value or power as an individual to the extent that others do not even acknowledge his existence. the impact on Joseph's self-worth is clear. Without his partner he already feels less of a person and this is reinforced by his lack of agency in relation to the home they shared together.

Clive focuses on the fact that according to him rules were being broken. Clive expects that procedures are followed properly and supported by what he calls "real evidence".

*My argument was the procedures weren't followed properly. Nor was any real evidence, other than a text on a phone, shown. The problem is this person, this judge, has the power in their hands to decree your future. That's what it comes down to. (79-85 Clive)*

Unhappy with the way he has been treated by various organisations including the housing association that pursued his eviction he ultimately feels cheated by an unjust process. Power lies with others, especially the judge. He suggests power sufficient to impact his entire future is wielded with little thought; meaning that the judge has power over his life and his future. This removes from Clive all the power that he may have had as a tenant. It is this fact and the apparent injustice of it that seems to affect Clive most. Power is not a consequence of evidence or facts it is instead a consequence of your position. As with some of the other participants Clive also feels his efforts go unrecognised.

Solomon also touches on the lack of power within court:

*we didn't get good advice from anywhere we did talk to basics citizen advice person but they went just looked at it briefly and just said there was not much they could do for us, we were doing what we could do and then yeah then basically went and sat in it's like in a little room, sitting it wasn't actually in the big court we were sitting like in a little room, and the judgy person (laughs) and yeah basically they just said no it's too late you've had your chance it was oh that was the worst bit there that day (37-50 Solomon)*

He describes seeking advice and trying to take actions to resolve the situation. There is a disconnectedness as his description of these efforts almost fades away and he seems to find himself sitting in a court. No mention is made of an opportunity to speak or to present evidence in his favour instead he is told it is too late to do anything and the decision of the judge arrives. This he describes as the worst bit of the entire eviction experience. Solomon's use of "judgy person" indicates his feeling that the person in question is not quite a real

judge. This sense is expanded when he talks about the location being a little room rather than a big court. The emphasis on these elements may imply how irrelevant the case may have been to those with power. Solomon was expecting a big court and enough time and attention to be given to him yet the case was looked at only briefly as if a decision had been made before he went in.

### **Connecting Themes**

- My Safe Space
- Family and the Home

Two of the connecting themes identified ‘My Safe Space’ and ‘Family and the Home’ relate to all super-ordinate themes, sitting outside of them but providing a connecting link to the meaning of home and the other various aspects of the participant’s experience. They are connecting themes that provide context, were present in all of the participants’ accounts and aid in understanding both the similarities and the differences in some accounts. While important in this regard they do not describe the eviction experience itself.

#### *My Safe Space*

My research question relates to how individuals experience losing the place they called home. In order to explore this, it is first important to understand the meaning participants attached to the home and how they believe a home should be. ‘My safe space’ captures the participants’ views on the meaning of home and how home often comes back to ownership of a space where one can feel safe both physically and emotionally. This connecting theme sits outside of the super-ordinate themes as the conceptualisation of what a home is touches on all aspects of their experience. In their accounts the evictees describe areas protected from the outside world where they can be safe and also be themselves. In

some cases, ownership of the space it seems is also a function of time spent and invested in the property.

When Abdul is asked what words come to mind when he thinks of home he says the following:

*Abdul: Relaxing, kinda like my space, ahh I don't know, just like a bubble, when I'm at home I'm happy*

*Interviewer: So you think of relaxing?*

*Abdul: Yeah it's like my home is like my space that I don't want anyone else to be in (720-728 Abdul)*

Home for him is somewhere relaxing but he also implies that ownership of a space is the most important factor, using words such as “my space” and “a bubble”. These words capture the protective factors of a home; providing a protective barrier where one is allowed to be themselves and is safe from the outside world and other people. Abdul elaborates on this further by stating that home is somewhere he is allowed to refuse people's entrance. For Abdul, it may be that the somewhat insecure living conditions he found himself in previously (following a relationship break-up and the loss of his job) amplified his feelings in this regard. In his account of those living conditions he referenced the importance of a new door that he had bought for his room and how important this was for him in a shared property situation.

For Amanda home meant a comfortable place where you share special moments with the family.

*Ehm.. love, peace, tranquility ehm ... I think of the food, think of like being at the sofa warm, blankets, family and like valuable time which is really precious in life, one to one time and just a place we can feel relaxed and comfortable (698-703 Amanda)*

While being more subtle than Abdul it is clear that Amanda's conception also links to the idea of an owned space and a space separated from the outside world. Amanda also links home to the importance of family relationships and to the quality of time spent with her family. Her safe space requires those important to her be part of it, linking to shared experiences around food and shared space, but the sense of a safe bubble and a barrier to the external world remains.

Sofia's account also links to family and comfort:

*Homely. When I think of home, I think of my family. I think of happiness, warmth and comfort. Ehm I think of individualism because, in my room, I have that ehm private space to be my individual self. Yeah, I think that's it. When I think of home, that's what I think. Those are the first words that come into my mind. (868-876 Sofia)*

Comfort and family are important for her but much of her focus is on the fact that it is a private space linked to individualism where she is allowed to be her "individual self". As a young adult there is value to her in having a space that provides her with the psychological safety to be herself. Part of her experience of eviction involved her losing her own room and having to share a room with some younger cousins. It is clear in the remainder of her account that this was one of the most disruptive aspects of the eviction for her as it felt like a regression and a loss.

Sofia also reports a switch from a council flat to a private flat and from sharing the bedroom with the brother to having her own bedroom.

*I do remember that when we moved in, I think there was a lot of happiness and whatever. Because before, we were living in a council flat. Just with the council flat, I didn't feel like it was really home, but I know when I moved into this property that I felt like, "This is my house." It just felt like there was a lot of happiness and emotion because it felt like, "Yes, we're finally moving into a house that we can call our own." It felt better. (1151-1163 Sofia)*

For Sofia, living in a council flat meant that she could not feel it belonged to her. Once they move in to the new flat she reports feeling like they have achieved something and that now as a family they could call the flat their own. Despite ownership not being official (it was still rented) there is a sense that the feeling of ownership rather than actual ownership that is the important part. Potentially part of this is also due to the property being a house, more generally thought of as a family home, rather than a flat.

The sense of ownership did not go away after Reema and her family were evicted from their home. Here she reports the longing that her family experiences when they see their old home not being kept to their standards.

*we have been passing my dad was saying my god the grass because we are very clean people and the grass my parents love gardening and the grass because the front grass*

*no one has even looked at it and just looks so horrible when you pass that so you know there are going to be memories (474-481 Reema)*

Space is linked to time, in Reema's case as an investment made by her and her family. The time and work they invested in this home has been lost. I get the sense that she feels that not only have her family lost something, she implies they only have memories now, but the house itself has lost from not being filled and cared for also.

In contrast to some of the other participants Clive did not form and feel a sense of ownership of the space in his accommodation.

*I had gone through a period where I had disengaged. The problem is I wasn't fully aware that I was doing this. So I was leading a style within the flat where it was like nomadic. I was living there but I wasn't. I was sleeping there, and I was going out, and I was sleeping there, and I was going out. It's almost like where I am now. That hasn't changed, because that's a trait of me. (1468-1478 Clive)*

He explains this lack of connection by saying that "being nomadic" is a trait of his. For him, his flat is simply a place to sleep rather than a safe space and he focuses more on being outside and this interaction continues with his current accommodation. Just before this segment Clive describes not having ever established himself completely in the flat in which he was living, potentially due to the mental health issues he was experiencing at the time. Clive speaks about a strategy of avoidance which indicates that he is often escaping a negative stimulus. He highlights that this relates to him as a trait. The use of the word trait implies that it is something that has not changed and it may never change.

### *Family and the home*

The second connecting theme across super-ordinate themes relates to the connections with family that, for some participants, becomes intrinsically linked to the home. With this link also comes the responsibility to maintain the family unit and provide security for them. This sub-theme does not relate to each participant but does relate to those participants who have seemingly been impacted most by the eviction.

Reema speaks about the importance of family:

*we have always been family orientated and obviously because this country is like you have to adapt to every one's culture now, is not like the English culture, the Asian culture everyone lives together we all get married, okay fair enough in the Asian culture the girls would get married and live separately but with the boys we would all live together, families unite (234-245 Reema)*

The role of culture is key for Reema in describing family and home life. She sees combined family living as a requisite due to her Asian background and as distinguishing from English culture. Living together is symbolic of a united family and to do otherwise is seen as adapting to the native culture where, she implies, family separation (at least inter-generationally) is the norm.

Amanda also talks about family and the drive to provide security for her children:

*I think I just felt quite confident, it was about 6 properties I'd had since I had my daughter I thought this was going to be a secure home for us, you know like longer term (638-642 Amanda)*

Amanda speaks about seeing the property as a “secure home” for her family after having moved regularly. Just prior to this extract she had discussed the importance of replicating her upbringing for her own children going so far as to find a similar style home in the same area. Here I can sense the weight of expectation on her to provide for her children and the loss of the hope that they had finally found somewhere to live long term.

Sofia notes this from the other side as a child:

*Because obviously, if it was just the two of them, they'd probably have felt less worried, but the fact that you'd got kids to worry about and you didn't want to bring them up homeless or whatever, it just probably made them more stressed and anxious as to what was happening next. (Sofia 1332-1340)*

It is clear to her that the need to provide protection and security for their family has had an additional impact on her parents. Elsewhere she outlines how her mother and father seek to protect the children from the emotional impacts that they are experiencing themselves.

The drive for the family's security emerges slightly differently in Joseph's case:

*In a way having my rational moment I would think this place ahh I'm sure [partner's name]'s family will sort something but I must keep a roof over my surviving.. in fact if anything I became very protective of my surviving children even though they were teenagers perfectly capable of standing on their two feet you know but that was my sort of, look after who you've got left nuance you know yeah so yeah that's obviously added to the mix. That was a lot on my plate wasn't it? (whispery voice) (Joseph 378-390)*

Joseph's impending eviction becomes less of a concern for him, as his role as a protective parent who must provide security for his children overrides this concern. He does not consider the consequences for himself and even when evicted does not seem to carry the same post-eviction emotional impacts from the event as many of the others do. Perhaps part of this is because the link between this property and providing security no longer exists; it exists only for his other children who he endeavours to keep safe elsewhere.

### **Caught in the avalanche**

*Do you know when you are going down a cliff or an avalanche and you are reaching out for stuff it's just hard, you know what I mean (636- 639 Joseph)*

The first super-ordinate theme is 'Caught in the avalanche' which captures the experience of the eviction and the days, months and weeks leading up to it. The participants discuss the feelings, emotions and thoughts that they most connect with this period. This theme utilises the metaphor of an avalanche which is intended to capture the impact of the eviction process as described - widespread, swift, intense

and even violent. The theme is sub-divided into three subordinate themes:

Overwhelming, Infiltration of the Home and Too Many to Save.

### *Overwhelming*

Several of the participants describe how the eviction process came to be an overwhelming event touching on other aspects of their lives. Eviction overshadowed all other significant events and for some participants came to dominate their thoughts and emotions during that period. Emotionally and mentally the stress related to the eviction becomes overwhelming. The nature of the emotion experienced is so powerful that one is unable to contain it and it overflows.

Sofia describes the impact on her emotional state:

*I felt very depressed, and that did lead to my mental state getting a bit worse, where I just felt overwhelmed with like sad emotions. I didn't feel like myself. I didn't feel like doing anything enjoyable because that would just be on my mind, I think. (167-173 Sofia)*

The emotional impact of the eviction becomes overwhelming for Sofia leading not only to sadness but to avoidance of situations that might bring enjoyment. She feels detached from herself and detached from the world around her. Later she describes the eviction as pervading other areas in her life such as her education.

*It made it hard for me to concentrate because I couldn't really get myself in a mindset where I could just focus on my exams. I'd be thinking about, "I'm going to be kicked out of my house soon." It was really upsetting and emotional. Because during that*

*time, as a kid, you shouldn't be taking on this much pressure. In my head, I was thinking about, "Oh, I'm going to be kicked out of my house soon," and all of this. It was really hard for me to just focus my thoughts on just my exams. (Sofia 690-702)*

Here we also see a pattern of rumination in which Sofia is constantly dwelling on the eviction and not having much capacity for anything else. Sofia also reported this internal conflict in which there is a battle between what she believes; that in her position of "a kid" she should not have to deal with pressure versus the reality of the experience. There is an obvious crossover here with "Family and the Home" as her expectations are that responsibility sits with the parents and should not sit with the child.

Clive reports how stressful the eviction felt and how, as it approached, he also avoided leaving the house and stopped doing things he did in the past such as tidying the flat. Clive like Sofia reported that the intensity of the feelings led to a deterioration of his mental health.

*Stressful. If I wasn't more stressed then I became like a cat on a hot tin roof. I wouldn't leave the flat. The flat had become quite messy and untidy. I would say that my condition almost bordered on paranoia. (165-170 Clive)*

In his case, Clive describes himself in this context as "a cat on a hot tin roof" which vividly evokes the stress and anxiety he was experiencing; a situation that it is unbearable. His admission that the "flat had become quite messy and untidy" indicates he may be finding it difficult to care for himself and his living conditions. Elsewhere he describes himself as

transient in relation to his flat but now he feels trapped there. Later he makes a more generalised statement that expands on the mental health impact of eviction

*The problem with anyone that's been evicted, they will go through mental stress, and that mental stress may manifest itself in different ways. They could become suicidal. They will certainly become mentally ill. (598-603 Clive)*

Clive details the impacts of eviction in a manner that externalises them from himself but is revealing of how overwhelmed he became during the experience. He explains that mental stress is an inevitable outcome of the eviction. He further describes how the stress experienced will manifest itself potentially with suicidal feelings and more definitively as “certainly” resulting in mental illness.

Amanda's account highlights how the stress of eviction impacted what would have otherwise been a happy time for her. Her eviction occurred soon after she gave birth to her son:

*When I was in the hospital giving birth she was contacting me all the time to say unfortunately I'm gonna have to issue this next stage bla bla it really did take its toll I think now I fallen into post-natal depression because of the stress. (117-122 Amanda)*

For Amanda the experience of giving birth (she uses the active verb) is blemished by the constant contact from her landlord reminding her that the pre-eviction process is underway. Her frustration and weariness is clear as she uses the term “bla bla” when recounting the landlord's repeated communications. It is clear that she is exasperated that not even through the act of giving birth is she allowed to escape the issues with her landlord.

Other participants did not report feeling overwhelmed and I feel it is important to explore these opposing experiences. For example, Abdul states the following in relation to his experience:

*Ah it was stressful yeah because I was going for job change and stuff so I was trying to budget my money but apart from that it wasn't I try not to think about it because otherwise I don't I don't like to play on things but the only the only thing that stressed me out was losing my furniture stuff that was in because it was still pretty new furniture but that was the only trouble. (85-94 Abdul)*

There are two elements of this description that provide further insight into why Abdul may not have felt this way. Firstly, as previously mentioned Abdul had recently experienced a job loss and relationship breakup. Maintaining this particular home did not seem to be a focus and his aim was to establish a home elsewhere. In fact the only part of the eviction experience which he found stressful was the loss of furniture as these were the parts owned by him.

Secondly, Abdul states that his strategy to deal with this issue was to not think about it as he doesn't "like to play on things". This suggests a coping strategy of avoidance that may have prevented him from sharing any feelings of being overwhelmed. This also seems to be the case with other participants, although their avoidance was based on minimising the potential eviction; for example, Reema was convinced that her family could not be lawfully evicted. For Reema and Solomon the emotional impact seems to have been delayed until the eviction event itself which will be discussed further later in the analysis. Joseph on the other

hand had already suffered a major trauma with the loss of his partner and child and, therefore, framed his subsequent eviction as unimportant.

### *Infiltration of the home*

In ‘infiltration of the home’ the day of the eviction has arrived and the participants recall the experience of leaving their home. This section focuses on the participants’ reports of how they were treated by others and how they felt. Although this subtheme links to only a few of the participants it nonetheless feels worthy of exploration. As noted earlier the focal point of emotional impact was experienced by some in the period leading up to eviction. For the participants in this subtheme much of the impact they felt was experienced during the eviction itself as while others were either not present or handed over keys quietly this subgroup were forcibly removed from their homes by bailiffs and police.

Sofia describes below how she felt when the bailiffs arrived at her home.

*Yes, and were just knocking and trying to tell us, “You have to come out now.” I remember I was very hysterical because ehm if you hear that loud knocking on the door and someone telling you, “Get out of your home,” it’s kind of upsetting. (487-493 Sofia)*

Almost immediately she seems to feel the need to try and justify this reaction, perhaps fearing I will not accept the force of the emotion she experienced. By strengthening the description of the forcefulness of the knocking and more importantly by translating the message she was receiving from “you have to come out now” to “get out of your home” she

communicates the sense that something important is being violently taken from her and her family. Soon after she expands on this:

*Anger and upset, because it felt the way they were knocking, it sounded like the police were at the door. It was quite aggressive. It was kind of sad because they were trying to move us out of our home and we didn't even do anything wrong. (500-506 Sofia)*

Sofia highlights the aggressiveness of the bailiffs; when she states that “it sounded like the police” she conveys the feeling that her family were being treated like criminals. The feelings of anger and sadness are a response to feeling that the treatment was unfair as she reiterates that her family had not done anything wrong. The contradiction for her is that it is the bailiffs who have come to take something that is not theirs but it is her family who are treated like criminals

Solomon also speaks about the treatment on the day of the eviction:

*It was a bit, it was a bit surreal thinking about it just don't know you know. You just, you kind of the night before, you didn't sleep because you waited for them to come in the morning and you know, someone is being BAM BAM on the door you know, bailiffs, police has come to get you know, you've got to leave the premises, yeah it was just they are very they rush you to get out they sort of don't wait for you, they are very pushy so you know yeah. It's not a nice experience at all I wouldn't wish it on anybody (365-378 Solomon)*

Solomon reports that he could not sleep the night before the eviction communicating the foreboding feeling he has as he knows what will be coming in the morning. He replicates the sound he heard that morning with the violent “BAM BAM” that disturbs the stillness and which signifies that the bailiffs and the police have arrived. By saying “police has come to get you” Solomon makes himself rather than the property the target and also implies the feeling of being criminalised. He proceeds to describe the bailiffs and police as “pushy” and rushing him to remove him from the property. Solomon concludes on the traumatic nature of the event by saying that he does not wish such an experience on anybody implying that it may be one of the worse things that individuals have to experience in life.

Reema reported that her expectations of the eviction did not reflect the reality of what happened during the eviction itself:

*we were like we'll call the police you can't come in that's law that's what we read so ehm there was negotiation going on..we started not opening the door open the door our things are even here so next minute the police came in the police came this was after an hour after the bailiffs police came in police came in you all have to go open the door we were shouting and screaming and next minute we heard the tap? in the door, and my sister and my brother we started recording and we were like shouting you can't open the door what are you doing you can't open the door obviously we still have got the recording they let themselves in and they were like you have to get out no we can't we will have to let you get out and we all started crying where were we supposed to go (115-135 Reema)*

She explains that the information she had had access to stated that the police or bailiffs could not come into her house. Believing this the family felt entitled to resist what they viewed as an unlawful invasion. This is highlighted by the fact that they record the eviction as a way of gathering evidence to show that what the police and bailiffs were doing was wrong. This unexpectedness makes the event more shocking for Reema and her family. She later expands on the emotional toll:

*obviously we had no choice so dragged whatever we could we still have lots of things in the house so we ...went to the council had no choice but it was horrible the whole negotiation crying tears I would say it was the worst part in my life what we experienced (145-151 Reema)*

Reema describes the process as a negotiation, again this raises the implication of being treated as a criminal in your own home. She describes as “horrible” and captures the emotional experience in segment fragment “crying tears”. The words seem slightly disconnected and almost feel like a visual flashback bringing her back to that point in time.

There is some value in examining a divergent experience; in contrast to invasive methods used by bailiffs and police in the previous cases Joseph describes his experience of handing over ownership of his home in a pre-arranged manner:

*the day itself was just one of a great big breakfast. You know I washed and brushed up and shining, I've got myself sorted suited and booted for the formal handing over of the keys haha. I actually remember making a joke to the guy there's some kind of ceremony of something a formal handing over? Is there loads of paperwork and stuff?*

*He said no that's it really Mr. [surname]. I will send everything to your forwarding address and it was just a really bizarre day haha (Joseph 417-429).*

While the other handovers are seizures and almost violent Joseph's experience is of a "formal handing over of the keys" which included him enquiring about the potential for a "ceremony". Implying that perhaps Joseph needed the day of the eviction to have a proper ending for this particular chapter of his life. His words evoked for me the feeling of funeral; a ceremonial act where one dresses properly to say your goodbyes. His use of humour feels disconnected and may serve to mask painful feelings associated with this particular loss.

#### *Too Many to save*

This sub-theme explores the participants' view that there are "too many to save". Continuing the metaphor of a natural disaster this sub-theme highlights participants' views of government/state structures as stretched by demand. By noting the current housing situation in the country, the participants make sense of their experiences by becoming aware that they are one of many and that as such they may not get the help they need. This lowers their expectations for external help and there seem to be a number of responses when the realisation that help is not coming hits. Hope is replaced by resentment, the feeling that you have been let down by those that should be rescuing you as well as understanding that there are those who may need help first and if you do not fall into a certain group you may be left behind.

Clive touches on the numbers of people going through eviction early in his account

*It's literally like a conveyor belt. There are people queuing up to go in to have their case heard and a decision made. (76-79 Clive)*

He depicts the court system as like a “conveyor belt”, an automated process capturing numerous people. This captures a sense that there is a lack of humanity in decisions and the process itself. Later he vividly captures his realisation that he is but one of many and that the system is struggling. Having had his own eviction confirmed he notes the following when leaving the court:

*You know what shook me? When I came out of there it was dawning on me, and for some reason I went and looked at all the cases and all the judges hearing it. It was like housing association, council against this. I thought, “My God.” I counted. I'm lucky. I was only a single person. I thought to myself, “God, what would happen if I had a family, if I had a wife and two kids/three kids?” (2160-2170 Clive)*

Clive is “shook” by his realisation that so many of the cases before the court are related to housing. His shock at this is palpable as he exclaims “My God” while counting the number of cases. This brings about a reorientation of his view from being an exception targeted individually to seeing himself as a part of a group. This also makes him consider the plight of others and what might be the worst-case scenario for someone. Despite the difficulties he has experienced he comes to count himself as lucky as it could be even worse if he had the added concern of impacts on family members.

Several of the participants looked to understand the quality of the help they received as being a consequence of the demands made on the system. Sofia discusses the sense that councils are overstretched

*I know, sometimes, when it comes to council places, because they're so highly in demand, you've got loads of people who want somewhere to live. Sometimes, it can be hard to accommodate enough people to live somewhere like that in a stable environment like a flat or a house (1695-1703 Sofia)*

Sofia captures the sense of crisis in relation to housing in its simplest terms as “you’ve got loads of people who want somewhere to live”. With so many seeking to fulfil their basic needs of shelter, however, Sofia feels that other considerations including “a stable environment” become more difficult to provide. It is notable that she touches on this given the importance she and others place on having a safe space. It is clear to her that this will not be made available to everyone and there is a sense of loss in this realisation.

Reema also touches on the level of demand:

*No because you know [borough name] is such a congestion they're literally literally all...they are so packed that they cannot cater, they've got nothing left and I don't know what, they are sending people everywhere, it's horrible, but it's all gimmicks where you hear organisations helping. Nothing, no one supports you, especially the council, you would think you know their residents. Now it's horrible now. (646-656 Reema)*

She clearly depicts the demands on the system with her use of language “literally, literally all...they are so packed that they cannot cater, they’ve got nothing left” capturing the sense of a container full to almost breaking point. She is exasperated by the lack of support from the council. Reema alludes to a sense of betrayal as the public are sold an image of helpfulness that is not met in reality. I sense that her concern that the council are sending people everywhere links back to her own need to keep family unity. Having been separated from her wider family her fear is that overcapacity will send her even further away from them.

Amanda highlights her view that the level of demand can be used to relinquish responsibility

*there was such a high demand for housing and there isn't a lot of you know I think that in a way the system is like that because if there's any way that they can duck out responsibility for you they will, so if there's any loophole which kind states so for example oh like why didn't you get help earlier with your finances why didn't you ... I don't know, anything to release responsibility for housing me and that makes you feel even like I mean it made me feel like I'm a criminal or something because having to justify innocence and the fact that I wasn't innoc.. kind of wasn't my fault. (749-764 Amanda)*

Her account stresses her view that bureaucratic processes can be used against the individuals they are supposed to assist. She feels that the council will “duck out”, use a “loophole” and seek to almost criminalise people who have been evicted to the extent that she needs “to justify innocence”. This attribution of wrongdoing is all the more unjust for Amanda as the same bureaucracy had forced her stay in the previous property until court

bailiffs had been ordered to complete the eviction (otherwise she would be classed as intentionally homeless). Here we can see Amanda's wish for help but instead of help she was faced with a blaming attitude. This made her feel attacked and as such she had to defend herself, however while she says that "it wasn't her fault, she also implied that she "wasn't innoc". This indicates that Amanda's self-worth has been put to test and is not able to put herself in any side of the extremes (guilty or innocent).

Solomon questions whether the quality of the response of the system, to people experiencing difficulties such as eviction, was just based on luck.

*I think its luck sometimes I think is luck because you can go somewhere like even to this like place like citizens advice and you go there and you can get somebody that is really good and will give you the right information but then you can go there with a difference of 5 mins later even and you will see a different person and they won't give you the right they won't give you all the information that you need I think it's very kind of hit and miss sometimes you know it's a bit I don't know I don't know I don't think they work these sort of places work very well sometimes you know it's down to the particular person (261-276 Solomon)*

Here Solomon has painted a picture of government responses as "hit and miss"; haphazard and inconsistent. He suggests that real help is available once you have the right information but your access to that information is moderated by the effectiveness of the person you happen to interact with. An overburdened system leads to people receiving vastly different levels of service with the consequences being that some will fall through the cracks.

Abdul is of the opinion that a large percentage of the population will not be assisted by the system.

*I tried the council that was for people with like vulnerable issues as such they wouldn't be too bothered of letting people sleep on the streets but if it was someone with a mental issue if I just turned up and said I've got no home, I'm homeless tonight they wouldn't care (638-648 Abdul)*

His opinion is that only those designated as vulnerable will be provided with help regardless of the likely outcome; the system doesn't care if he specifically became homeless. As a person who is not considered vulnerable, Abdul feels that he is invisible to the system and that he is not entitled to get support. This evokes again the sense of a natural disaster where women, children and the vulnerable might be helped first. Although Abdul accepts this in practice I sense an anger that he should be left behind.

Solomon speaks about important information not being easily accessible to him during the eviction process:

*I don't know the info..information is out there for people it's very hard I mean after that I found out more things that maybe could have done to should have earlier that might have helped but we didn't know that as well my friend who I was co-tenant with, with her with the mental health issues the fact that she had to be evicted and then only afterwards had to be rehoused in a sense if she knew that she could still be at the same property so she has lost that property and her home there you know*

*because of something that she didn't, a little thing she didn't know which is wrong I think so (378-393 Solomon)*

Again there is a sense of a machine working with people as simply cogs in it. Decisions are made without reference to the individual and as a result Solomon and his co-tenant are evicted despite, at least one of them, being vulnerable. He refers to the unknown information as a “little thing” alluding to the insignificance of the information, the idea of it being a simple detail overlooked by the machine.

### **Which Way is Up?**

*I used to just walk, just up in the morning and just walk around I wasn't actually doing anything really for a couple of days I suppose yeah maybe in a bit of a daze just yeah not knowing what to do, like things going through my mind what to do (612-621 Solomon)*

The third super-ordinate theme “Which way is up” examines the disorientation that accompanies the eviction and eviction process. This theme takes the metaphor of an avalanche further and links to those buried by the avalanche struggling to orient themselves. Time is experienced differently and makes it difficult for the evictees to make sense of the process as it occurs. Decision making is vital but the circumstances and speed at which things have changed make it difficult to choose the correct course.

### *Too fast to process*

Participants discussed their attempts to make sense of the eviction in the limited time they were given. The amount of time given to participants prior to eviction varied, some had months while others only had a few days, however, the view that emerges from their accounts is that regardless of the actual amount of time given the participants there was always a sense that this time was not sufficient to process what was happening to them. There is a sense of shock and a feeling that the impending consequences the eviction will have on their life cannot adequately be prepared for.

Solomon captures the consequence of having limited time succinctly:

*Something like that, I don't know, it was very short, even days maybe it was even just a matter of few days that we had, that was horrible (354-357 Solomon)*

Solomon appears unclear on the actual length of notice he was given, settling on a period of a few days. I wonder whether this is accurate or whether it is his experience of time that has changed due to the emotions of the eviction process. He is, however, clear about the emotional experience of the time as 'horrible'.

Abdul, as he does elsewhere, shares his experience quite matter-of-factly:

*it happened so fast, it happened so quick, so I just I just moved out and rented another room. (161-163 Abdul)*

Abdul captures the speed of the eviction but unlike most of the others this seems of little consequence to him. He experiences a problem with this accommodation and simply replaces one room with another. Perhaps Abdul's way of dealing with loss is by focusing on the next step.

Reema explains that the speed of the process did not allow her family to prepare for the eviction. As a result, the eviction had a multi-level impact on herself and her family's lives.

*Emotionally, socially everything torn us apart, what else do you want when you are apart from your family especially when you wasn't prepared.. it happened so fast.. like within months we weren't given the time (214-219 Reema)*

Reema's eviction period was over a number of months and although this is longer than some of the others described it is likely her experience of swiftness is mediated by two factors. Firstly, the family had lived in the house for fifteen years and as such felt particularly connected to the property. This may have influenced her perception of the length of the eviction. Secondly, for a time after receiving the eviction notice Reema and her family became convinced that they could not be evicted. When the eviction actually happened it therefore came as a shock and as it was unexpected the eviction felt sudden. She mentions both the impacts and the lack of preparedness stressing "especially when you wasn't prepared". The experience of time seems therefore to be a consequence of preparedness.

Solomon discussed the feelings of being evicted with little notice:

*Oh just like numb you don't know what to feel I think at first you don't know what to feel it's kinda of just it's a bit like someone knocking you out when you are just doing...you just don't know what to do you are just lost, it's very hard, very difficult.*  
(60-66 Solomon)

Without much time to prepare and make sense of the eviction process, Solomon reflects how numb and lost he feels when the eviction leads to him becoming homeless. To him the eviction felt like “someone knocking you out”, an unexpected violence that leads to him feeling as if he has been knocked down, feeling disoriented and lost. He evokes the idea that he did not have the opportunity to react or defend himself. As with victims of random violence the experience of time is altered and the person is left in a state of shock.

Sofia speaks about the initial feelings that emerged from the quickness of the eviction:

*Also, I kind of I think, initially, it was shock because you were just so surprised that you were having to leave a place that you'd called home for how many years. As well, it was anger at the landlord that they were causing us to actually leave our home.*  
(1487-1494 Sofia)

For Sofia she is able to note progression from the initial feelings of shock turning into anger towards the person she perceived to be the cause of the eviction. The shock can be a numbing feeling that paralyzes you, after the shock had passed it opened space to anger. I

also sense a link to the stages of grieving. As with Reema the speed at which the eviction occurred is linked back to the time spent living in the house and considering it a home.

### *Uncertainty*

The next subtheme 'Uncertainty' focuses on the emotions and foreboding feeling that emerge for participants when they look to the future. This links somewhat to 'too fast to process' but concentrates more on their concerns and fears for their lives post-eviction and the reasons they find it difficult to plan for the future. Often, participants spoke about not knowing what was going to happen or not knowing where they would live. They had to live with uncertainty and as we know for humans this is a difficult state to find oneself in.

Amanda speaks about how she found managing uncertainty.

*because since April I had all this uncertainty and I had no security and that has been really difficult to me as a parent, not to know the outcome of our lives is going to be, where are we going to be, where are we going to end up, how am I going to provide for my children and I feel I feel guilty, I feel like it's my fault. (507-515 Amanda)*

As Amanda explains she had to stay with the uncertainty for a long time and she reflects on the impact that not knowing had on her. Amanda attaches the meaning that as a parent she should provide for her children and know what the outcome will be. Therefore, this leaves her feeling guilty and worsening her mental health. The repeated questions she asks in this segment seem to mirror the frenzied thought process and worry that she experienced at the time. I can almost feel her mind racing around the multiple important questions as she seeks the answers.

Amanda continues to reflect on the impact that the uncertainty has had but in the following focuses on the impact on her daughter again highlighting the link to ‘Family and the Home’:

*she has been very aware of it and has been increasingly getting kind of anxious and not knowing the outcome of where we were going to live so she had to tell all her friends well we are moving but we don't know where we are moving ehm and what happened (225-231 Amanda)*

She notes that her daughter is becoming anxious and she attributes this to the fact that her daughter could not tell her friends where she was going next. Amanda spoke previously about suffering from anxiety and now she sees that her daughter is suffering too. Her choice of words “increasingly getting kind of anxious” indicates a gradual process that she has noticed building up. It may also indicate Amanda’s hesitance to accept that as a parent she was not able to protect her daughter from this emotional state that she knows very well.

Joseph reports how other factors prevented him from preparing for the eviction:

*so I lost my job, I lost my partner and I just didn't really care about money Monique. I suppose I thought to myself ehheh (breaths out heavily) you know I will just live in day by day I didn't care. (200-205 Joseph)*

Joseph had already lost two of the most important people in his life and therefore the potential loss of material things feels unimportant to him. His lack of preparedness comes not from crippling anxiety and fear but from hopelessness. When Joseph breathes out heavily it

seems like he is releasing some of the pressure that he felt inside. Life had become so difficult for him that his strategy to cope with all that is happening to him is to live in the present and only deal with things as they arrive. He seems to have reached his emotional capacity and can no longer focus on the future and what might occur there.

Solomon talks about the hope of getting money in the last minute as a way of escaping the eviction and preventing homelessness.

*hoping you are going to get the money and you are not going to lose your home and be homeless just not knowing where you are going to live, it's not nice it's a horrible feeling (22-26 Solomon)*

He touches on the continuing hope of trying to get sufficient money to pay rent while dealing with the uncertainty and high stakes if one fails to do so. He describes this plainly as “it’s not nice” and as he thinks further proceeds to say it is actually a “horrible feeling”. Solomon minimizes his experience and this is noted in how he starts by using words that are more subtle but as he speaks the emotion that is carried with the memory of the experience hits him hard.

Sofia also speaks about the threat of becoming homeless.

*I knew we wouldn't be homeless, but, obviously, there are points where you think it may come to that stage if someone is causing you to get out and you don't have a place to go to next. It was really hard to think that that could be the next step. (151-158 Sofia)*

Not knowing what was going to happen and not having a place to go next meant that while she did not believe she would become homeless she could not feel this was a certainty. Sofia's sentence "someone is causing you" implies that for her uncertainty has become embodied by the landlord who is for her is an unpredictable and volatile force whose intentions cannot be understood. This uncertainty is evoking difficult feelings in Sofia and therefore even thinking about it was "really hard". This meant that despite having a strong belief that the worst case scenario would not happen, the threat of homelessness is always present.

Clive unlike the others had experienced loss of a home and even homelessness previously:

*Almost I felt relief, but I also felt concern, because I had been on the streets before when I was much younger, and I actually thought, "There's a high possibility I could end up on the streets." (1498-1502 Clive)*

I feel that Clive was trying to rationalise the situation he found himself in. The eviction had brought a lot of distress to him related to how he was managing living on his own as well as trying to source money to stop the eviction, therefore, there was the uncertainty that needed to be managed. In a way knowing the outcome despite not being what he expected actually provides a sense of relief. However, this sense of relief was accompanied by the fear of repeated homelessness.

### *Survival Mode*

For many of the participants the situations they found themselves in forced them to make decisions they might not otherwise have made. Entering ‘survival mode’ means that decisions are made with a focus only on survival. This meant that they may have had to refocus their goals and prioritise their immediate needs. At times, this involved them acting ‘out of character’ rather than being guided by their belief system.

In the following excerpt, Amanda explains that she made the decision to not pass over the money from her housing benefit to her landlord.

*When she served me the notice I just stopped paying rent, stopped paying rent completely but I was still receiving housing benefit, yeah I just thought well I’m gonna need some money to move forward and actually I’m gonna go either way.  
(599-605 Amanda)*

This was Amanda’s strategy at the time to prepare for the future and from her description the decision stems from her acceptance that nothing she did at this point would stop her having to leave her home. Instead she must focus on the future and how this money can benefit her after the eviction.

Abdul also explains his decision of not paying rent at the time:

*I carried on with my days, I was looking for work, at the time I had just started a new job I was still clearing debts that’s why rent wasn’t even a priority cause I was still*

*clearing debts, so I don't know because I didn't really have the help I took a risk but it did pay off. (402-408 Abdul)*

In this segment, he speaks about looking for work and he goes from there to “had started a job” implying the speed in how his situation is changing. Days become about carrying on and focusing on the future. He decides to prioritise clearing his debts instead of continuing to pay rent. The lack of help from the council and others means that Abdul feels that he has to take a “risk” in not paying rent. Much like the survivor of a disaster choices need to be made on what to sacrifice and what to save.

This element of risk is also noted in Clive’s account of his experience.

*I also went to what I call underground moneylenders, like Turkish moneylenders, that charge a high percentage of what you borrow from them. They will borrow you, because they know that they're going to get ten times the money or they're going to come looking for you. I didn't have a choice. They put me under tremendous pressure (298-307 Clive).*

Here Clive explains that due to the “tremendous pressure” that he was under he felt that he had to put himself at risk by borrowing money from moneylenders. He feels he is left with no other choice despite knowing that this will result in interest that is so large that it will be unpayable and also that he might be at risk of violence. A perceived lack of choice pushes Clive into a situation that he would not experience otherwise. In survival mode the individual needs to take risks that they would not take in a normal situation.

## **Picking up the pieces**

*I think I just never thought at 36 I would be in this situation so I've got lots of regret and I suppose the way that my family feel now as well it's like I've chosen this life of poverty for myself which is really tough because no one chooses this life of poverty (978-984 Amanda)*

'Picking up the pieces' is the final super-ordinate theme and is intended to capture how participants seek to move on with their lives. Having survived the eviction they discuss how they seek to understand the impacts that the experience has had on them and how they are moving on and trying to pick up the pieces that they are left with, in most cases through regaining the control they lacked during the eviction.

### *Shame*

This sub-theme relates to the participants' experience of feelings of shame related to the eviction. This feeling was so powerful that some of the evictees felt that they could not share the experience with others even those close to them. The meaning that they associated with the feeling is particularly significant with some participants reporting that they feared being seen as a failure or worthy of pity. As a way of avoiding this potential response from others the participants adopted strategies that helped to protect them from this outcome.

In Solomon's case he realises that asking for help from his sister could have stopped the eviction

*sort of pride of whatever it is got the better of me should've.. should've.. should've, well wouldn't have had such a bad experience who knows I might have not gotten evicted and my sister, sure my sister could have loaned me the money but then again it was meant to be it was meant to be for whatever reasons (760 -767 Solomon).*

By the repetition of the word “should’ve” I can sense Solomon’s internal struggle with the decision he finally made. Despite this dissonance he believes that he needed to experience the eviction as part of some destiny.

Despite trying to link the outcome to destiny even now he continues to find the idea of asking for help difficult:

*going to my sister and ask for help that just even now for me to do that just the thought of doing that is like a no no although I know it's a so it's kind of a silly thing I don't know I don't know (782 -286 Solomon).*

Just the thought of asking for help crossing his mind leads to a strong reaction; to do so is a “no no” implying that he does not even allow himself to consider this route. This alludes to a conflict between his thoughts and the emotion associated with the thought. The feeling of shame seemed so strong that for Solomon it would be more difficult to tolerate this feeling than living with the consequences of not getting help.

In order to understand this further, I explore with Solomon the meaning associated with this and he expands on this by saying:

*Ehm I suppose ... I suppose the thought of telling her that I suppose because the fact that I'm not doing well in life it is it's all pride really isn't it's all pride I suppose not wanting yeah your sister your brother whoever to know that you are not doing as well as they are doing (791-798 Solomon).*

Solomon attributes his decisions to pride again but here there is a clearer insight that what he is referring to is shame driven pride. Solomon compares himself to his siblings and comes to the conclusion that he is “not doing well in life” meaning that the eviction and other outcomes make him feel as if he has failed in life. The source of his shame is comparative success but his comparisons are not only restricted to a sibling but also generally to “whoever”. This implies that the pressure to appear successful is societal rather than just familial.

Sofia speak about not wanting others to know about her experience during the eviction.

*I didn't want them to know in case they would kind of view me differently. Because I think with that type of thing, I don't really like to receive pity as much. I thought as soon as I told them, they'd just look at me differently and feel sorry for me all the time, but I didn't want that (741- 748 Sofia).*

Shame threatens self-image as Sofia worries that eviction would change her as person and that others would start to perceive her as someone else. Pity is something to be avoided as this will only lead to being viewed as inferior. This may reflect Sofia's attempts to not be seen by others how she may feel with herself. As a young woman she is seeking independence and sharing her experience may challenge this with others feeling sorry for her.

Reema speaks about not having told her extended family about the eviction.

*I mean in terms of relatives we didn't tell anyone it was just literally in our family. Slowly, slowly we've told our immediate family what had happ...well not what had happened but that we're all living separate know and just made some, my mum, my mum dealt with that side but ehm... (626 -634 Reema).*

Self-image is protected by revealing the events gradually. Even then only part of the story can be shared as Reema corrects herself and says that they were only able to tell the family the part about living separately rather than telling them about the eviction itself. The sensitivity of revealing this detail to others is made clear by the fact that she suggests that this task had to be handled by her mother.

Joseph speaks about going to the graveyard after he handed over the keys of his and his partner's home.

*I remember speaking to [partner's name] and saying I know you are probably ashamed of me but I'm getting it now... Sorry I just need a second. (He moves cup from the plate and makes noise) (443-447 Joseph).*

When speaking to his partner who has passed away Joseph experiences the intense feeling of shame as he feels that his partner would be “ashamed” of him for having lost their home. This feeling is so powerful that Joseph asks me for a second as he re-experiences the emotion from this moment.

### *The scarred survivor*

Throughout the interviews the participants reported how they had to navigate a sequence of difficult situations during the eviction process. This sub-theme explores the idea of the participants as being survivors of those experiences, and although they survived, the eviction has left them with “scars”. Scars, however, are not only reminders of the pain experienced they are reminders of their ability to survive. Negative impacts to the self and to the evictee’s self-identity are explored but also explored is the resiliency borne of this experience

Amanda captures this dual nature of being a survivor in that something may be gained but much is lost.

*I'd say the only positive really are it's obviously made me a lot stronger but not by choice and I just got there minus all of these like I've got no self-esteem and no self-confidence and that's important (778-782 Amanda)*

She highlights that the scars that resulted from the eviction are both related to her self-image; that is, it had a negative impact on her self-esteem and confidence levels. However, it is clear that in a way she views herself as being more resilient as a consequence of the difficult experience she has been able to survive. Later she discusses how interactions with the council have made her feel.

*Amanda: I just think the whole thing I feel like almost it was a catapult with events but ultimately being made homeless had made me feel more helpless. And also degraded us a woman, I feel like I failed in life.*

*Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about this sense of failure?*

*Amanda: Ehm I think it's largely to do with control as well like ... it's almost not my fault but I feel like it is my fault, the way that the council interrogated me over information plus the doctor, the doctor that is linked to the council then deemed me even despite my depression and anxiety and all of these disorders and stress deemed me able to cope under the circumstances*

For Amanda especially this feeling of degradation links back to her previously held view of herself as always being in control. Other sections of her account indicate that she views herself as someone who does what is right. To not have had her mental health diagnosis acknowledged by the council and having to undergo further verification meant that she felt the process of eviction has “degraded” her as a woman. Degraded as she had to be interrogated over very personal issues, degraded as her word no longer counts. Her entire self-worth is called into question the stress of the event leaves her feeling helpless, guilty and even more vulnerable than she was at the beginning of the process.

Amanda speaks further about the eviction changing her as a person but this time capturing a change in what she values in life:

*Life changing really it's kind of changed me as a person because I am so much more grateful for things I think my sense of home now is my sense of creating a home which is relaxed I want to concentrate on being a mom again, concentrate on dinners and not spending all my time stressing lying awake at night (909-916 Amanda)*

Amanda associates this change with the feeling of gratitude that she is now able to provide for the basic physiological needs of her children (i.e. food, security). She seeks to re-establish both place attachment by 'creating a home' and her role as a mother. There is a sense of trying to deal with the discrepancy between how she views her performance as a mother versus how she ought to have been (based on her own childhood experience).

Like Amanda, Sofia also reported the impact of the eviction on her mental health.

*I think it's just the change in my health. I just feel, sometimes, that it did spark a depression in me. Where the... I feel very unhappy most times, like the feeling where you don't have anything to look forward to. I feel it did stem from the whole eviction process before. After that, I think it's just thinking, "What's going to happen to you next?" It's just kind of losing hope in happiness. After we found a new house, everything did get a bit better, but I still do have that feeling and am just feeling sad, sometimes, a lot. (1044-1058 Sofia)*

Here I sense the impact of what is an unresolved trauma for Sofia that results in a change to her entire view of life. She has come to expect that in the long term life will present more difficulties and that happiness will be out of her grasp.

Later however she explains that thinking about the process also reinforces the idea of having “overcome” the situation

*I think, sometimes, even though it's kind of hard and upsetting to go back into that space, it does kind of make it, in a way, feel better knowing that I overcame that, my family overcame that and that we're in place where we're better and we're happier.*

*(1735-1742 Sofia)*

Overcoming the experience seems to provide her with a feeling of pride in her family. Sofia distinguishes the fact that she overcame the situation and her family did too, implying that it was a process that had to be managed both as an individual and as a family unit.

In the following extract Reema reports that the experience of eviction still impacts her emotionally because of how it impacted her family unit:

*I'm okay but for my parents and then thinking about my parents feeling like that hurts me do you understand that? I can cope but for my parents it's hard the way they see things and I think I guess that I guess that yeah.. do you understand? that hurts me the most as well, (373-380 Reema)*

Later she discusses this further:

*Ehm obviously like I've said I've always been a very strong person but it did hurt me and it still hurts me just only because of my parents but I'm a stronger person I can deal with things and it's nearly gonna be a year in April so....look where we are now,*

*I'm here, I'm still living, I'm still eating, I've got my children, I've got my family it's just that we're not together and it's hard and you know but apart from that it's you know you just get on like I said. (1099-1110 Reema)*

Her concern and hurt is reserved for her parents and the impact the eviction has had on their lives. Within the account she links her view of the importance of family due to her South Asian background. She minimises the impact to herself describing herself as a “very strong person” and I wonder if viewing herself this way influences how willing she is to accept and admit the impact that the eviction has had on her. Her coping strategy is to focus on the positives and Reema’s list of positives highlights again the link to survival as she stresses the primary needs of being alive, having food and having her family. It seems her family are counterintuitively both the source of her pain and the source of her strength

Solomon speaks about the meaning he attaches to the experience

*it was not a nice experience, to be homeless and even that I mean I know I suppose even with what I went I was lucky, seeing other people out there now you know you see people they are living they are living out on the street they haven't got a roof at all over their heads (858-864 Solomon)*

Despite having been homeless himself he is thankful for the places he was able to find to sleep while homeless and for the fact that he now has somewhere safe to live. Solomon displays compassion towards people around him and considers himself “lucky”. This compassion towards other people may not be directed in the same intensity towards himself.

He also sees his experience as somewhat inevitable:

*then again it was meant to be it was meant to be for whatever reasons that was the way that it was suppose to be I do believe that in life as well and I believe in sort of destiny and things happen for a reason so yeah who knows how certain things help people help somebody else to not get into a bad situation. (766-774 Solomon)*

He associates the experience of the eviction with “destiny” with his spiritual beliefs reinforcing the idea that he had to experience the eviction in order to now be where he is. That is, Solomon accepts what happened to him so that now he is able to support other people with housing issues or it may be that Solomon feels that he deserved this experience as punishment for something.

Abdul reports that that the eviction has helped him learn what was important for him as a way of refocusing his priorities.

*Yeah no I think it's it's gonna just..ahhh.. don't know what the word is...it just kind made me it made me realise what is important, what qualities you've got to take, these kind of things, but apart from there it just I wasn't too fazed to be honest it's not really being it's not being I've gone through worse situations than this so I think this is nothing. (595-604 Abdul)*

Abdul also attempts to make sense of his experience of eviction by comparing to other difficult situations in his life. When he does that, he realises that compared to what he had to deal with in the past the eviction becomes something small or as he says: “nothing”. I

wonder if there is an element of denial in this and whether Abdul is using this as a defence mechanism.

Joseph describes his experience as a natural end to one part of his life and the commencement of another:

*Relief, because it's it's another chapter in the book. The way I look at life there's always chapters in the book isn't it and that was the closing of a bad chapter. That's one way to describe it, I got through it haven't enjoyed it but you know. I was trying to be positive, I was thinking I'm alive I am well, I am relatively healthy, I've got a little job. Have I got major debts? Well no, I mean obviously the eviction you know but have I got major debts? No. Ehm I've blown the relationship with [partner's name]'s family because they will think of me what they think of me I wish I had handled that better. I wish I had reached out to them earlier but they were dealing with their loss, I was dealing with my loss and we just didn't meet in the middle. (326-344 Joseph)*

He feels relief that this period of his life has ended and that he gets to move on. He indicates that he has compartmentalised this experience as separate and closed from his current life. As with other participants he focuses on the positive aspects of his current life in that he has his health and security. Joseph also expresses regret in relation to the choices he made in the past but places these choices in the context of the grief he was experiencing. He and his partner's family grieved their losses separately and it is clear that he was very much alone during this period of his life.

## *Regaining Control*

With some time having passed since their eviction experiences the participants discuss the varied ways in which they have attempted to regain control within their lives. The feeling of total powerlessness is lifted as they seek to re-establish agency over their future.

Amanda who seemed to feel the greatest loss of control describes her actions in this regard:

*So I often lie awake just kind of compressing all the day activities, mainly trying to figure out a plan, what I do is I write myself lists, action plans and ehm I think that's really important to kind of remain for me to kind of regain control, that makes sense? and get back to the person I used to be because before I was worrying before I worried about homelessness. (927-936 Amanda)*

She describes almost obsessive behaviour with her need to control the day's activities seemingly impacting her sleep. Relaxation cannot be found until lists and actions plans are built to organise and direct her life. Amanda finds in this relief from worry and the path back to her original self; the in control mother who could take care of her kids through all turbulent periods.

Solomon sees the path to control as simply a choice:

*I suppose it's just deciding you want better than that in life isn't it I suppose that's it even with those people even now I suppose they have given up you know they think they are happy with what the maybe with how they are or they haven't got anymore*

*fighting in them maybe there could be lots of different reasons I suppose but I think most of it it's about wanting to change not wanting to be, not wanting to be in that condition. (951-962 Solomon)*

He views his own experience of homelessness as ending when he made a choice that he wanted a better life. As a consequence, he views others, who find themselves in that situation, as having given up and lost the ability to fight back. He implies that life changing choices and the ability to regain control of your future come from strength and resilience.

Reema seeks control by focusing on specific future goals:

*even now we're saving and we are hoping that's what I'm saying, we can buy a house but obviously that's my husband's house do you know what I mean, I'm gonna be moving there but not my parents, so and we're hopefully getting one soon so fingers crossed so but with my parents my brother will have to do it and they will have to save so they are working hard (1368-1377 Reema)*

Having discussed the practical lessons she expresses having learned from her experience around money and saving it is perhaps unsurprising that her drive to regain control relates to this. Where previously she felt that ownership of a space related to the time lived there she now feels that ownership is only related to acquiring through purchase. Reema also sheds light into the impact of culture and belief system, how the men are responsible for buying a house for the family. While Reema's speech refers to hope that this will happen it also demonstrates a sense of urgency and pressure when she says that her brothers "will have

to” save. Therefore, the attempt to regain control is accompanied by the fear that the situation is not resolved.

Sofia talks about finally being able to talk to a friend about the eviction.

*I think it was kind of a relief. You know when you bottle up your feelings for so long? Just being able to release it felt a bit better. To kind of because I think when you're telling someone, you're hearing out loud, "Wow, I actually went through that. I went through such a hard experience." Because when you bottle it up, hide it up and just let it out, it's just a bit easier. (765-775 Sofia)*

Earlier in the interview she had discussed deciding not to share what was happening with her friends as she needed to compartmentalise the eviction from her ongoing exams. Now with the experience in the past she is able to take back control by releasing her bottled up feelings and sharing with confidants. This provides her with a cathartic release and perspective on the realness of the experience which she captures in the words “Wow, I actually went through that”. These words come with the surprising realisation that she was able to cope with all that had happened. Looking back means that she is able to look at the full picture, this made it concrete.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reported the findings of my analysis. This analysis led to one overarching theme (‘Powerlessness’), two connecting themes (‘Safe Space’ and ‘Family and the Home’), three super-ordinate themes (‘Caught in the Avalanche’, ‘Which Way is Up’ and

‘Picking Up the Pieces’). Each super-ordinate theme contained three sub-themes. Combined these themes captured the experience of losing a home through eviction for my participants.

## **Discussion**

### **Chapter Overview**

The final chapter, the discussion, commences with a restatement of the research aims and a short summary of findings. This is followed by a deeper review of the findings as they relate to the context of the current literature; both in terms of research specific to eviction and wider psychology studies and theories that may connect to the experience. I will then reflect on and critique the study including a consideration of its strengths and limitations in terms of design and analysis. In addition, I will review the implications of this study for future research, clinical practice and for society in general. I will finish by explaining what this study contributes to the field of Counselling Psychology.

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study was to provide an insight into the lived experience of people who have lost a home through eviction. The intention was to utilise a Counselling Psychology perspective to increase understanding of what is a complex experience.

### **Discussion of analysis in context**

The following discussion will focus on understanding the overarching, connecting and super-ordinate themes identified through analysis in the context of the current literature. However, as mentioned in the introduction, despite the large numbers of individuals evicted

each year in the UK, there has been a dearth of research in terms of the lived experiences of these people from all branches of the social sciences including Counselling Psychology. Thus, there is no single study that I can point to for direct and straightforward comparison of findings. What the literature does provide is an insight into various meanings that home has for people and the impacts losing a home through forced displacement may have. Part of my focus will, therefore, be to attempt to take the multiple strands of research and to combine this with the analysis to provide a coherent and holistic interpretation. In addition, while much of what was explored with the participants fits with this literature in an intuitive sense there are also many elements that emerged from the interviews which provide novel and unanticipated findings. Smith et al. (2009) argue that this is in the nature of IPA and therefore the discussion of findings should be open to links that have not been previously made. Therefore, this section will also bring in new literatures and studies; the intention here is not to provide exhaustive references to each link identified but instead to identify links that may be resonant with the rich accounts of their experience provided by the participants.

### *Overarching Theme - Powerlessness*

The powerlessness aspect of my findings is in keeping with the findings of Rojas and Stenberg (2016) who conceptualised the eviction process as a conflict between landlord and tenant that ends with a final expression of the asymmetric power relation between the two; the eviction itself. This, however, captures only part of the disempowerment that evicted tenants might experience. In fact, a power imbalance is sustained across interactions with others during the eviction process. I was struck by how participants' dealings with the courts, the police, the council and financial institutions all added to their feeling of powerlessness. This powerlessness was highlighted in several ways; firstly, in that the participants had a lack of agency and control over their home and over key aspects of their future, secondly that they

were rendered voiceless in their appeals and thirdly that they come to view themselves as helpless making submission to those who wield power and the eviction itself almost inevitable.

*Connecting Themes: 'My Safe Space' and 'Family and the Home'*

In the introduction, I discussed the multiple views within the literature on the meaning of home and the fact that concept of home has been difficult to define as it can be both subjective and multi-layered. The multi-layered nature of home was confirmed by this study but participants tended to coalesce around two aspects of home. The first of these aspects is that home provides safety and a space to be oneself and the second is that family relationships especially where important to the individual's identity are fundamentally linked to the home. At a high level this sits comfortably with the theory that place attachment is made up of two components (Anton and Lawrence, 2014); one related to fulfilling needs (place dependency) and the other linked to emotions, group membership and self-identity (place identity). My findings suggest that these components are not distinct and that there is a crossover and interaction between the two. In terms of home as a safe space, Abdul referred to home in general and his room in particular as "my bubble". This links directly to the territorial view of home, that was discussed in the introduction, which states that home obtains its meaning from ownership and control of an area. Interestingly, despite not reporting any significant attachment to the dwelling he lost, Abdul's definition of home does not change from his ideal view of home versus this dwelling. That is, he focuses on the home as a protection from other individuals. This may be an indication that he has never felt an attachment to a home that went beyond meeting his physiological and safety needs. Within his account, he discussed having left a previous home due to the breakdown of a relationship and the loss of his job. While I had not probed further on his full home history this raises the

question of whether place attachment, like caregiver focused attachment, can be subject to insecure attachment patterns that might influence the view of home across the lifespan. For example, a lack of secure home during childhood influences what is viewed as the key needs that require fulfilment. Sofia's account of safety as specific to individualism is not unexpected and also links to a territorial view of home (freedom of behaviour and self-expression) (Sebba & Churchman, 1986). This aspect was particularly strong for Sofia; looked at through the prism of place attachment this raises the question of how place identity might change with development. As a teenager, she is establishing her own identity and therefore for her place identity is not established through links to the usual factors such as group membership but is linked at this stage to the freedom to develop her own identity.

A sense of ownership of space was also important for Reema and this remained with the participant even after she and the family had left the home. In her case, we can clearly see how the two components of place attachment cross-over and interact. Her sense of ownership is based on both place identity, specifically to group membership (her family remained a single unit within this home) and place dependency as the home provided the environment that allowed her to meet cultural expectations related to the family as the primary unit. Beyond this there is also a sense that her family had given time and effort to the home and that this investment was now lost for both them and the home suggesting a kind of symbiotic relationship. There is a sense of resentment that both the family and the home have suffered as a result of the eviction. As mentioned, the second aspect of the meaning of home identified relates to the importance of relationships especially where these are important to the individual's self-identity was seen in the cases of several of the other participants. For example, Amanda's understanding of home is established on the idea that in her role as a mother (a view of which is based on her own childhood) she must provide a safe and secure

environment for her children. Again, this highlights the interaction of place identity and place dependency in establishing attachment to a home. Sofia also recognises the importance of the parent-child role dynamic when looking at the impacts of the eviction on her parents. Within Joseph's account we see how the links based on place identity and place dependency can be severed and potentially transferred. Following the death of his partner and child Joseph comes to understand that while he has basic safety needs that the apartment provides for, he no longer feels an attachment to it. In fact, this seemingly results in a change in self-identity for him; he is no longer a partner and the father of a young child. As a result, he increasingly refocuses on the living arrangements of his two surviving teenage children who he does not live with. Clive's account links to place identity in a sense that I do not believe has been explored previously in the literature. He views himself as nomadic and, therefore, he cannot establish place attachment as his self-identity is built on an aspect that is contrary to this. In addition, he does not have any established relationships including family bonds that are linked to the home. Additionally, some of these cases highlight how some of the primary paths to homelessness such as vulnerability (Clive being on the ASD spectrum), substance abuse (Solomon) and family breakdown (Joseph) raised by Warnes and Crane (2006) might be partially explained by place attachment. If place identity can be weakened by specific events or vulnerabilities then this provides an insight into outcomes for individuals impacted by such events.

#### *Caught in the Avalanche - The eviction process as stress and trauma*

In 'Caught in the avalanche' and its sub-themes the participants discussed the process of eviction as it unfolds and the emotions and thoughts that accompanied it. The findings shed light on the experience and process of eviction itself in contrast with the majority of the literature which has generally focused on outcomes alone. As described by the participants

the process can entail overwhelming stress, potentially traumatic eviction events, feelings of being criminalised and a lack of help from external parties. The powerlessness of the evictees is clear in their interactions with landlords and the legal system used to enforce the eviction. As tenants, they may have felt they had rights both legally and earned through their investment in the property but as the process of eviction continues they experience a continued loss of power.

Participants spoke about the stress experienced during the eviction which in some cases seems to have been so overwhelming that it could not be compartmentalised. As a result, the stress overflowed and pervaded different aspects of their lives. This is not an unexpected finding on both an intuitive level and on the basis of related evidence. As mentioned in the introduction, Hobfoll (1989) drawing on Maslow conceptualised stress as related to threat of resources, actual loss of resources or failure to gain resources. Desmond and Kimbo (2015) state evictions are not single events and are actually a series of events (disputes with landlords, court appearances etc.) leading up to eviction that consume time and focus and lead to significant stress. Participants who shared their experience of home repossessions with Nettleton and Burrows (2000) mentioned stress as the primary emotional response to the loss of their home.

As in the case of Nettleton and Burrows (2000) my participants also went so far as to link their experience to health impacts. For example, Clive states that the stress associated with the eviction has led to a deterioration of his mental health (increasing paranoia). Sofia echoes this but in her case, discusses the overwhelming nature of the sad emotion that she experiences. She speaks about thoughts of the impending eviction as preventing her from doing anything enjoyable or being able to focus on her exams due to increased rumination

and feeling depressed. Paul Gilbert (2007) relates depression to “threat processing and the activation of protection strategies” (p47). One such strategy that may be activated is fight or flight, however, Gilbert (2007) argues that responses linked to this such as anger may be arrested by individuals as a consequence of their view of themselves or due to fear of the reactions of others to them expressing this anger (for the participants in this study a power imbalance may explain part of this reluctance). This can lead to rumination on a perceived injustice and a subsequent increase in feelings of powerlessness and a high and continued level of stress arousal. A number of the participants such as Reema, Clive and Solomon discuss their experiences in court and the imbalance of power that they felt there; Solomon’s account of this implies a sense of being undervalued and humiliated by this. Kendler et al (2003) define humiliation as “feeling devalued in relation to others or to a core sense of self, usually with an element of rejection or a sense of role failure” (p791). The author also found that when threatening life events, especially those related to losses, involve aspects of humiliation there is a higher risk of onset of depression. Amanda finds her lack of control over the situation to be one of the most difficult aspects of her experience. Gilbert (2007) also views threats as being major regulators of mood with the threat of losing control a primary example. Lack of control over important factors can lead to frustration, acute stress and chronic stress. Amanda describes herself as being close to her most desperate as a result of her feelings of helplessness and this is compounded by her inability to escape the stress she is under. Given her history of domestic abuse there is clearly a risk of chronic stress impacts from multiple negative life events. In fact, given previous experiences of job loss, drug abuse and mental health issues this is potentially true for several of the participants.

Overwhelming and stressful events are also associated with trauma. In the introduction, we touched on the contentious nature of the definition of trauma and variance in

definitions often around what qualifies as a traumatic event. The American Psychiatric Association's (2013) DSM-V definition requires physical threat and excludes a variety of other events. Dalenberg, Straus and Carlson (2017) argue that this definition is a consequence of an attempt to generate an accurate diagnosis of PTSD and that "a more general definition of trauma, uncoupled from the diagnosis of PTSD, therefore would be preferable" (p22). Authors within the American Psychological Association's 'APA handbook of trauma psychology' argue that a more useful definition should be centred around the concepts of high-magnitude stressors (HMS) (specific events that have been confirmed as having a positive statistical relationship to symptoms in a large percentage of individuals) or potential traumatic stressors (PTS). Identification of a stressor as potentially traumatic should rely on whether the event led to a disruption in the individual's foundational beliefs (in relation to the self and the world in general) and whether the event is established as a turning point or change of direction in the individual's life that marks a before and after in their life (Dalenberg et al., 2017). Certainly, there are quotes within the participants' accounts that indicate eviction may be a potential traumatic stressor. Amanda captures both a change to self and a turning point in her comment that the eviction was "life changing really, it's changed me as a person" (909-912 Amanda) while Sofia clearly sees the eviction as a turning point following which she has lost 'hope in happiness'. Robles-Ortega et al. (2017) presents the only study specifically looking at home eviction and trauma. They found that individuals who had experienced an eviction had higher levels of PTSD symptomology. Research on larger scale forced relocations as a result of land seizure, conflict or natural disasters provide some additional insights. While there is an obvious difference in the objective severity of these events versus an eviction I would argue that conceptually the sequence of events of a traumatic eviction incident followed by a forced relocation offers a reasonable reference point to examine these experiences. Uscher-Pines (2009) looked at the

experiences of relocated versus non-relocated disaster survivors across 40 studies. Overall survivors examined by these studies were likely to have some shared challenges related to loss of control, loss/grief and loss of trust in institutions. However, in many of the studies those victims who were relocated had the additional challenges of loss of social networks, change in living conditions and impacts to identity that can compound the impact of the initial event in terms of health outcomes. In addition to the general trauma of the eviction experienced by most participants several participants such as Sofia, Solomon and Reema describe this experience of eviction by bailiffs (with assistance from police in some cases) as loud, intimidating and almost violent referring to the heavy knocks on the doors, the shouting of threats and the sense of violation caused. This may be worthy of examination as a specific traumatic event in its own right and this is an aspect of home eviction that I do not feel has been adequately explored directly as yet within the literature. There are some references to specific cases of evictees reacting to bailiff removal with suicide attempts (Hartman & Robinson, 2003). All three of the participants who experienced a bailiff enforced eviction implied that the event made them feel criminalised. This may be important in relation to the impact of traumatic events as this feeling of criminalisation could lead to humiliation. Lee, Scragg and Truner (2001) contend that humiliation is one of several emotional responses associated with trauma and that “the humiliated individual feels that they have been harmed unfairly and believe that others are to blame for damage to the self” (p455).

Several of the evictees’ accounts shed light on expectations that participants have in relation to external assistance from local and national government. None of the participants described being provided with sufficient assistance by government organisations that have a duty of care for them yet broadly across the accounts there was a tendency for the evictees to rationalise and excuse this. This was in most cases based on their understanding that there are

too many people like them in this situation and that there was therefore no way for the system to meet the demand. Additionally, participants such as Abdul felt that assistance would only be provided to those deemed specifically vulnerable. McGrath et al. (2015) in their review of the psychological impacts of austerity call out the dependence of austerity policies on distrust and blame. Only Amanda touches on this, however, when she states that the system might be set up this way in order to relinquish responsibility. She suggests that there is an intention to find loopholes to do so and that individuals are made to accept blame to the extent that they are almost criminalised for their misfortune. There is a very real danger that this culture of blame and lack of care can have amplifying impacts on individuals and the wider community. Research from sociology (Ross & Squires, 2011) suggests that community mistrust (interpreting the actions of others as unsupportive and dishonest) can be produced when individuals experiencing lack of control and feelings of powerlessness are confronted by place specific threats (i.e. high crime in disadvantaged areas). This sets off a process that further amplifies their feelings of powerlessness (Ross & Squires, 2011). The consequences of this are clear; individuals living in disadvantaged areas have an increased risk of eviction (as a result of financial problems, mental health issues etc.). If these individuals go through the process of eviction they may experience feelings of powerlessness and lack of control which will be reinforced by the threats they face as a consequence of living in a (potentially different) disadvantaged area creating a feedback loop that is harmful to individuals, communities and wider society.

#### *Which way is Up? – The eviction impact as grief*

In ‘Which way is up?’ and its sub-themes the participants discuss the immediate impacts of the eviction on themselves and their decisions. The participants describe the limited time to process the loss they have suffered, the uncertainty for the future they

experience and the risks and decisions they make as a result of the eviction. As with all of the super-ordinate themes, it is important to note the impact of powerlessness here. At this point in the eviction many of the evictees feel that their present and future choices have been limited by the decisions of others. The loss of agency not only in their current circumstances but potentially over their future disorients them, leaves them feeling anxious and in some cases hopeless. What power and agency remains in their hands is dedicated to simply surviving the experience and taking the first steps to move on.

Fullilove (1996) discusses displacement from home following events such as natural disasters and the rupturing of place attachments as resulting in disorientation, nostalgia and alienation. Although the author does not make the link there is a clear sense of grief in these outcomes. This concept has also been picked up on by Fried (2000) who suggests that forced relocations result in a widespread sense of loss. Conceptualising the outcomes of the participants in this study as grief provides some insight into the outcomes they experience. For example, participants discussed the limited time they felt they had to make sense of the eviction process while they were going through it. Some describe there being a period of only days from the eviction decision/notification to the actual eviction. While there is no independent way to verify how long this period actually was for the participants and while eviction process length likely varies widely across eviction scenarios, it is interesting to note that according to government statistics the average time for evictions that go through the from eviction claim to actual eviction was almost 46 weeks (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Despite this most of the participants in this study described the process as being extremely fast impacting their ability to process the event completely. Although there are a number of possible explanations for this it is possible that their perception of time was influenced by their emotional state. Studies have shown that memory of time can be distorted in the case of

emotional events; in some cases (where attention is diverted) this leads to a shortening effect (Droit-Volet & Meck 2007). Some of the participants such as Solomon and Sofia describe the shock and numbness that accompanies the eviction. As Worden (2008) outlines shock and disbelief are often experienced in the immediate aftermath of a loss. Examining grief from a phenomenological perspective Fuchs (2018) discusses disturbances in temporality and states “in shock and numbness, the subject is stunned and paralysed, reduced to his bare existence, unable to react or take distance from the situation” (p45). There is some evidence that resilience may be impacted by the unexpectedness of negative life events. Boelen, Keijsers and van den Hout (2012) found that Prolonged Grief Disorder, Depression and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder symptom measures following a loss through bereavement were all higher for individuals where the loss was unexpected.

Uncertainty about the future was also prevalent among the participants with the evictees describing the fears and concerns they had in relation to their post-eviction lives. Amanda in particular is impacted by the uncertainty and lack of security that the eviction creates in her life due to her concerns about the impact on her children. This is in keeping with previous research; the families interviewed by Nettleton and Burrows (2000) in relation to repossession described anxiety in relation to their futures and specifically in terms of where they may end up living or where their children may attend school. A number of the participants in the current study felt a very real fear in relation to the possibility of homelessness. As well as linking to an interruption in the individual’s perception of their own agency this uncertainty can also be linked to grief and its impacts on the experience of time; as Fuchs (2018) states following a bereavement the future is no longer viewed as full of positive possibilities and no plans can be made.

Participants also entered a phase which I have named ‘Survival Mode’ in which the focus of their day to day lives are focused primarily on surviving following their loss. The decisions seem to be guided by emotions rather than by a rational mind. Fielden (2003) utilised a phenomenological approach in developing a model featuring four modes of grief. One of these modes is also referred to as ‘Survival Mode’ in which individuals are simply surviving day to day through the emotional chaos of their grief. As they fear for the future they also become stuck in the present. Malone, Pomeroy and Jones (2011) looked at the impact of natural disasters through the framework of ‘Disoriented Grief’. Established from the phenomenological analysis of the accounts of survivors of Hurricane Katrina and the loss they have experienced. Included in these accounts were descriptions of experiences of feeling paralysed by the impact of the disaster and the sense of only living in a survival mode where basic needs became the sole focus.

#### *Picking Up the Pieces – Post-Eviction and the self*

In ‘Picking up the pieces’ and its subthemes the participants discussed their experience post-eviction and the impacts to the self. A number of participants describe shame as well as scars as a result of stress, trauma and grief. In attempting to deal with these impacts they have developed coping strategies concentrated on regaining control. It is here that we see the evictees attempting to overcome the experiences of powerlessness and to take back agency over their future.

Shame is an emotion that seemed to be present in a number of the participants’ accounts. As Gilbert (2007) states “shame is about self and self-identity. Shame is not so much the distance from the ideal self or falling short of standards but closeness to the undesired self” (p124). In general, this manifested in the inability of the evictees to share

their experience of eviction with others even close friends. According to Lee and James (2012) the fear of criticism or rejection feeds feelings of shame. The author argues that this fear of judgement may stop individuals from talking about their difficulties and as a result not get the support needed. For example, Solomon was not able to ask his sister for help despite knowing that she would help him and that her assistance might prevent him becoming homeless. Not sharing was a protection strategy that attempted to protect his self-identity. This was so strong that thought of having her seeing him as inferior or as having failed was more difficult to manage than the reality of sleeping rough. Part of shame is imagining what is in the minds of others about oneself; interestingly Joseph's feeling of shame relate to how his deceased partner might see him following the loss of their home. Under 'self-discrepancy theory' Higgins (1987) would characterise this as being a result of the threat of actual/own versus ideal/other discrepancy; that is the individual views themselves as not meeting the expectations of important others leading to shame and embarrassment. Lee and James (2012) explain that there is an evolutionary basis to this thinking, we human beings see rejection from a group as a social threat that represent high psychological and physical risks. Shame, however, can play a key role in several mental health problems including depression, anxiety and personality disorders (Gilbert 2007).

The experience of eviction has been a traumatic loss event for some of the participants exposing them to a variety of negative stimuli over a period of time. Although they have survived their experience there is a strong sense that they are survivors with a variety of scars. Sofia, for example, describes herself as being impacted by a sense of hopelessness for the future which she describes as 'losing hope in happiness'. The uncertainty for the future that was experienced during the eviction has become a dread of the future and what might occur there. This is specifically worrying considering that Sofia is in

the beginning of her adult life and as such it may have a negative impact in her entire life. Reema's account of the eviction touches on aspects of grief; she has lost the family focused life that she valued considerably. Some of the participants describe a two-sided experience; one-side features the negative reactions such as shame, depression, hopelessness and loss of self-esteem and self-confidence while the other side relates to focusing on the positive aspects of their struggle through and ultimately past the trauma. Harvey, Barnett and Overstreet (2004) argue that there are outcomes of loss and trauma that do not contribute further to the cycle of loss. For some, this will exhibit as simply the ability to move on having suffered the trauma. Joseph talked about being able to start a new chapter in his life following both the eviction and the bereavements he experienced. Others describe themselves as having drawn strength from the experience and being proud in themselves and their families for having overcome the traumatic experience. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) discuss the importance of the concept of growth through suffering to the Abrahamic religions and to Western societies (regardless of individual religiosity). The authors developed the concept of posttraumatic growth to describe the "experience of individuals whose development, at least in some areas, has surpassed what was present before the struggle with crises occurred" (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004 p. 4). Posttraumatic growth does not rely on the resilience or specific coping strategies but relies instead on the person struggling with the trauma. With posttraumatic growth, there is an increased appreciation and gratitude for smaller things in life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). This was very clearly highlighted in the participant's accounts with Amanda describing the experience as life changing with this change being partially measured in here gratitude for small things. Solomon despite being made homeless following the eviction sees himself as lucky and is grateful for his current life in comparison to others who remain on the streets.

In addition to seeing themselves as strengthened by their experience the participants also discussed how they have sought to regain control within their lives. Powerlessness, lack of control and uncertainty were some of the hallmarks of their eviction experience. The manner in which the evictees seek to re-establish agency varies across participants. For example, Amanda describes how she is constantly writing lists and coming up with action plans in relation to events in her life. For her regaining a sense of control means having plans and tackling manageable problems. She also seeks to reconnect with herself and view herself as she had previously; this involves resynchronising her actual/self with her ought/self by ‘concentrating on being a mom’. As Higgins (1987) states it logically follows that one of the ways of dealing with self-discrepancy is to attempt to alter the client’s actual/own self-concept. Reema looks to re-establish control by taking practical steps to ensure her housing needs are met in the future and focuses on saving money to buy a house. Her experience of eviction has led her to believe that the only way of safeguarding her family is through ownership. Sofia as the youngest participant has not yet reached a stage of her life where she is focusing on such practicalities. Instead for her control is re-established through the healing that comes from sharing her experiences. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) link the traumatic growth process to relying on social systems and “the empathetic acceptance of disclosures about the traumatic event” (p12).

### *Summary of Core Findings*

The findings of this study fit well within the varied literatures on mental health following eviction, the meaning of home and the loss of home. It is my view that this study provides a more in-depth and complex examination of the experience of eviction than has previously been presented. Powerlessness is a theme that permeates the experience of eviction as described by my participants. From the preceding events to the eviction and legal

process to their attempts to direct their own future, the participants highlighted the central role that powerlessness takes in terms of multiple aspects; their lack of agency in relation to their continued dwelling in the home, the power that others hold over and impose upon them and how each of these contrasts with their own feelings of helplessness. Consistent with previous literature on the meaning of home (including the components of place attachment) the participants accounts illustrated the importance of home as both a protective safe space and as a focus for family relationships which are in turn important to the individual's self-identity (e.g. mother, daughter). While the intention of this study is not to make attempts to measure variables the possibility that both the strength of these factors and ruptures of them by specific events may be important in determining how the evictees experienced the eviction was raised. Generally, the process of eviction itself is experienced by the evictees as stressful with some of their accounts indicating this led to mental and physical health issues. For a portion of the participants especially those who were physically evicted by bailiffs the process may also be experienced as traumatic with elements of criminalisation and humiliation. Their descriptions of assistance from government organisations indicate that it was insufficient but that the evictees understood this as a consequence of demand on a strained system. This could be interpreted as the internalisation of a blame culture that communicates to individuals that they are not deserving of help. Powerlessness is again seen as important in the immediate impacts that the evictees describe which include lack of agency over their lives. In addition, the outcomes can be interpreted as relating to loss and grief with evictees describing a period of disorientation and a change in the perception of time, uncertainty over their future and whether positive possibilities exist for them and instead become focused on meeting basic needs. Their experiences post-eviction indicate that they have had difficulty in sharing their experiences with others as a consequence of shame. Linking back to the political, societal and cultural forces that excuse government failures to

assist while directing blame entirely at the evictees with the corresponding internalised reaction being shame. In order to protect their self-identity, for a long period of time many of the evictees choose not to share their experience even with close friends or family members. While some of the evictees describe feeling longer term negative outcomes such as loss of hope and reduced self-confidence they also draw meaning from the experience in terms of what might be posttraumatic growth. This is displayed in changes in appreciation and gratitude for the positives in their lives now. The evictees also described their attempts to regain control over their current and future lives through both resynchronising of their self-identity and focusing on practical actions.

### **Reflections on Quality of this Study**

As discussed in the Methodology section Yardley (2000) proposes four principles to both drive and measure the quality and validity of qualitative research. ‘Sensitivity to context’ relates to how a qualitative study demonstrates awareness of context within relevant literature and theory, the data itself and the sociocultural setting. This study emerged from the identification of a gap in the literature and while maintaining an appreciation of the literature that exists has sought to add a novel viewpoint to aid understanding. A dearth of research in the area provided the opportunity to widen my view of the context and the draw upon research from wider housing literature. Equally I have endeavoured to remain sensitive to the data itself; for example, the metaphor of the eviction as being similar to a disaster came directly from my examination of the participant’s accounts. Only after this conceptualisation had started to form did I make further links with the literature on forced movements following disasters.

The second principle that Yardley (2000) sets out is ‘commitment and rigour’; this relates to in-depth engagement, methodological competence, thorough data collection and the

breadth of analysis. The methodology section provides a full and transparent overview of how this was achieved but I will explore some additional potential limitations here. One limitation of the present study is that I am a novice IPA researcher; part of my development while completing this research has been to learn to conduct meaningful interviews that stay close to the related to the topic. While I can see that the interviews have produced rich data they also generated a large amount of data that was not always closely related to the experience of the eviction itself. This may relate to my skill in bringing participants back to the topic where necessary. While recognising that eviction often touches on and interrelates with other areas of people's lives I feel further experience will help me establish a balance in relation to this. Smith (2011) discusses the concept of 'gems' in relation to IPA as remarks or extracts within the data that illuminate our understanding the person's experience. These occur in three types; shining (conveys clearly), suggestive (meaning is less manifest) and secret (more elusive). There are undoubtedly examples of each of these within the data that I have failed to elucidate. As with all researchers it is likely that I have been more easily drawn to the shining gems among the data perhaps at the expense of the secret gems. This may have impacted how particular accounts have been drawn to the forefront of the analysis while others have seemed less rich. It is an easier task to rely on the data from participants who are more expressive, curious and naturally eloquent. Again, I feel further experience will aid me in taking my analysis to a deeper place across the range of data in order to illuminate understanding as much as possible.

Due to the high numbers of individuals who experience an eviction in the Greater London area, I initially expected that I would have a bigger sample of participants. While I received a significant amount of comments and interest from individuals interested in the study, only seven participants agreed to take part. Therefore, due to time constraints my

sample size is relatively small. Having said that, Smith et al. (2009) argues that smaller samples will allow for a more in-depth interpretation of the data. In relation to recruitment my strategy involved open calls for participants from the general public allowing participants to self-identify with the study. If participants had all been recruited through a specific organisation or if I had contacted a pool of participants I may have had a more homogeneous group of participants. Smith et al. (2009) recommends that a fairly homogeneous sample be obtained for IPA research. My strategy has not allowed for a huge amount of control over this (although gatekeeper organisations were sought) and this resulted in more varied group of participants. However, appropriate homogeneity varies from study to study and I believe that the participants remain homogenous in terms of representing the perspective of people who have been evicted. In fact, I feel the varied demographics of participants and root causes of eviction allow for a richer examination of the experience at an individual level. This does make for a more demanding analysis for a novice IPA researcher and I am aware that the balance between individual and sample level detail may have been misjudged in parts of the study. In addition to this my recruitment strategy may have been restrictive in some ways in that while real-world advertisements were posted (organisations, noticeboards etc.) all of the participants who actually contacted me came via the online advertisements. Therefore, older participants and certain groups may not be represented as all participants are at least partially computer literate. Furthermore, the advertisement advised that interviews were to be conducted in London and travel costs would be provided. This may have meant that participants with limited mobility may have decided to not contact me.

This research looked at the experience of eviction that happened within the last eighteen months. This is a reasonably lengthy period of time and may have meant that some participants who experienced the eviction more recently could have remembered the facts

and the emotions associated to the experience more intensely, while those who were evicted at the more distant range may have forgotten aspects of the eviction. Another limitation of this study relates to the lack of control over the current housing situation of participants. For example, factors associated with the eviction may still be ongoing such as the lack of stability/permanent housing while for others they had permanent housing. This may have provided a less homogenous sample than initially intended. This may have been prevented by narrowing the research question further.

Yardley (2000) identifies ‘transparency and coherence’ as the third of four principles related to good qualitative research. Coherence comes through the construction of a version of reality (me making meaning of the participants making meaning of their experience) and the appropriateness of the methods of investigation and the philosophical perspective adopted to the research question. While some of these questions have been addressed in the introduction and the methodology sections I will make some further observations here. Having completed the study I feel that IPA remains an appropriate fit for the research question focused as it was on examining the perceptions and views of individuals who have been evicted. While I found some of the primary philosophical phenomenology literature to be hard to navigate there feels like a good fit between Heidegger’s (1971) concepts on buildings and dwellings and the phenomenon being examined here. The transparency element of this principle is also clear from the thoroughness of the methodology and analysis sections and through ongoing reflexivity throughout the write-up.

Yardley’s (2000) final principle is of impact and importance; qualitative research must also be judged on its usefulness and potential impact for the community that the findings relate to. Part of this will be examined as part of a wider review of practical

implications but I will say the following here. What this research offers is access to the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced home loss through eviction in the UK. Previously, we have discussed how Counselling Psychologists are well suited to qualitative research. Having analysed the rich data that my interviews elicited, I feel that a real strength of this study was my ability to bring my core skills (e.g. listening, empathy) to the interviews and this way facilitate conversations with a purpose (Mason 2002). I believe that my commitment to reflexivity throughout this research also represents a strength of this study. Another strength of this study relates to my ability to examine the interconnections between individual and societal issues from a Counselling Psychology perspective. By exploring topics such as the meaning of home, personal and structural drivers and the context I generated a more holistic view of the phenomenon of eviction. This will hopefully help illuminate and encourage further research in the field of Counselling Psychology.

### **Future Research**

As previously noted the intention of this study was not to provide findings that can be generalised but to highlight theoretical transferability. However, this study has provided a valuable insight into the experience of eviction in the Greater London area that provides a multitude of potential links that could be explored by other researchers. Further studies might concentrate on how eviction is experienced by specific sub-groups of the population. One of the richest and most powerful accounts within this study came from the experience of a single-mother touching on how the eviction and her role as mother going through that process impacted her sense of self. Equally worthy of further examination would be the examination of the experience of eviction for individuals from differing cultural backgrounds in which the meaning of home may vary. As was seen in Reema's account her view of the home as linked to communal family living clearly impacted her experience. It may also be

valuable for future research to look at the experience of eviction from the perspective of professionals working in housing organisations, councils, courts of law and landlords. This could allow for a deeper examination of the experience from those working within the systems involved in the eviction from another perspective. Further research on the experience of bailiff raids both specific to eviction and more generally to debt collection would provide an interesting and distinct view (based on current searches no literature exists on this topic). Equally this could be expanded beyond evictions to look at invasive raids conducted by law enforcement or immigration enforcement officials and the experience for those caught up in these raids. The findings of this study can also aid in prompting and redirecting quantitative research. While quantitative methods are comparatively more prominent in the literature this current research may aid in redirecting that research and honing in on specific elements. For example, measures of shame and hopelessness could be deployed to gain further evidence for its salience in this process. While previous links between trauma symptoms and eviction have received conceptual support from our findings I have highlighted that clarification on definition within further studies is necessary.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings have provided further understanding of the experience of eviction and this may also enable better practice when working with individuals who have experienced or are currently going through an eviction process. They also have potential implications in relation to social policies.

#### *Implications for Counselling Psychology Practice*

Due to the wide nature of the potential pathways to eviction Counselling Psychologists may find themselves limited in their ability to assist in preventing evictions

occurring at the individual level. Counselling Psychologists should, however, be mindful of the vulnerability to eviction of individuals who have experienced bereavements, relationship breakdowns, substance abuse and general mental health issues. As we have seen from the literature there is a potential for the combination of material losses and psychological vulnerabilities to interact to create a maladaptive spiral (Hobfoll, 1989). In this realm, there may be value in the promotion of systemic thinking that will help establish collaborative treatment goals that factor in individual, interpersonal and systemic factors. The individuals in this study may have benefited from psychological interventions in relation to a number of the mental health consequences noted in their experiences. Future research should consider the effectiveness of psychological interventions for people that are in the process of an eviction or that have experienced an eviction in the past. Implications for practice related to the specifics of the core findings are discussed below.

The theme powerlessness has emerged as a central overarching theme in the experience of eviction for participants. At the individual and the societal level the most obvious response to powerlessness is a drive to empower. As Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) put it “the process of empowerment takes place in a context where power is unequally distributed and where structures exist to perpetuate the advantage of some over others” (p. 647). As such, empowerment seeks to move beyond focusing only on the individual’s feelings about their capabilities and their cognition of powerlessness. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) argue that there are three key elements of empowerment that form part of an iterative process that takes into account social context; defining personally meaningful power-oriented goals, the carrying out of actions toward achieving those goals and reflection on the impact of these actions in relation to the set goals. Goal setting in this context is in keeping with humanistic approaches in promoting the authentic-self (i.e. goals are consistent with their own values) but goals also need to be focused on power (i.e. aim to increase influence

between oneself and others or oneself and systems). The role of Counselling Psychologists within this process should include facilitation of empowerment, helping the person identify potential hurdles and general support (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). Goodman et al. (2004) promote the idea of shared power that seems particularly important in the context of eviction, whereby Counselling Psychologists can act as collaborators with communities that are marginalised. Here the aim is to amplify the power of individuals to build their own sense of efficacy.

I have also noted the impact of stress and the more traumatic aspects of this event on the evictees. Gilbert (2007) views both stress and trauma as being related to threat reactions and our threat system. In the case of stress, it is the threat of losing control which can be brought on by stressful events such as the loss of resources. Trauma, on the other hand, is the result of extreme stressors or an event that is traumatic. Such events and stressors are stored as both emotional memories and event memories which can conflict to create trauma related symptoms. Gilbert (2010) within the framework of Compassion Focused Therapy recommends processes that soothe and settle threat systems such as mindfulness as well as encouraging self-compassion. Specific care should be taken where families with children have been impacted by the eviction. Moore and Ramirez (2016) examined the association between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which include living in poverty, physical, psychological abuse and other types of trauma and adolescence development. The results shed a light into the impact of cumulative trauma; that is the more ACEs adolescents are exposed to they tend to experience lower levels of well-being. Moore and Ramirez (2015) highlighted potential protective factors such as attending a safe school, living in a safe neighbourhood, parents' involvement or support from a person outside the family such as a mentor or teacher. The authors found that having protective factors can help alleviate the

negative impact of ACEs which can translate into overall child well-being. Counselling Psychologist should, therefore, work with a systemic approach that encourages maintenance of these protective factors.

In some cases, the participants reported symptoms of grief as a result of the loss they have experienced and, therefore, there may be value in Counselling Psychologists tuning their work with clients to reflect this. Although grief therapy is generally utilised in cases of bereavement it utilises therapeutic methods that can be applied elsewhere. For example, Worden (2018) describes the principles of grief counselling which include helping the individual actualise the loss, helping them identify the emotions they are experiencing (anger, guilt, helplessness, sadness etc.), facilitating decision making following the loss, helping them find meaning in the loss, facilitating remembering/emotional relocation and providing time to grieve

Hearing the accounts of my participants I was also struck by the blame contained within them. Individuals being blamed by the system through inquisitive questioning, individuals blaming others (e.g. landlords) and lastly individuals blaming themselves. On an individual level, I believe that helping individuals develop a more compassionate stance towards themselves may serve to reduce this blaming culture. Therefore, working towards helping clients develop a compassionate mind may address feelings of shame and the perceived social threats apart from the actual threat of the eviction. Shame is a consequence of blame and was also present in the evictees' accounts and may be an area that requires specific attention. While not all evictions in my study related to financial difficulties a portion did. Matthew (2010) argue that shame related to poverty can be detrimental to human beings and suggests that people can experience shame due to lack of resources which then leads to withdrawal/social exclusion. His study looked at the experiences of 179 farmers

across nine states India. The author found that 162 out of the 179 had the financial crisis in common, farmers were not able to repay loans and due to this the prospect of social gatherings such as festivals added to their distress. The farmers experienced feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, inferiority, weakness among others. In order to manage the feeling of shame they displayed three coping styles problem-oriented, self-oriented and others' perception oriented. The problem-oriented style similarly to my findings in this research focused on attending the current basic needs. In their case, it focused on attempts to alleviate poverty by looking for other sources of financial resources.

The experience of feeling of shame may have prevented participants from accessing support systems that were accessible to them such as friends, relatives and organisations. Accessing help when going through an eviction is of utmost importance as it may help disconfirm participants' views of themselves and negative self-worth. In addition, charitable organisations can also support in practical ways by finding alternative accommodation and with financial support for food and storage of belongings. This practical support can help people and prevent them from putting themselves in dangerous situations e.g. Clive reported looking for underground money lenders, Solomon slept rough at bin sheds in his friends' buildings. Shame at a societal level is communicated in both implicit and obvious ways. For example, when governments present and or reinforce a narrative that individuals that access social policies such as housing benefits are doing so for not wanting to work and collaborate with society. This creates a split between "us versus them", us being the group that works and produce and them being people associated with wrongdoing, fraud or laziness. When evictees see themselves as belonging to the latter group this brings them to feel inadequate within themselves. Therefore, they may associate looking for help as being weak and unworthy of such support. This narrative has been so ingrained in today's society and continues to be reinforced that we require a whole reframing in how we view the role of society itself. This

can be done by having discussions, by producing research and by challenging with evidence when politicians and lawmakers take this stance. For example, we have seen examples of when society has continuously over time reframed concepts (i.e. mental illness, race, homosexuality) in order to become more compassionate and fair. Counselling Psychologists have a responsibility to advocate to assist in this reframing and to ensure we reach out to the eviction population to make them aware of available support inclusive of therapy. The following section discusses this in more detail.

### *Implications for Community and Society*

On a societal level, efforts must be made to attempt to reframe the somewhat common view that individuals that are experiencing social issues are solely in this position due to their own wrongdoing. Instead, recognise that there are many factors individual and societal (i.e. austerity measures) that may be pushing individuals towards these situations. Further discussions regarding the importance of housing, loss of housing, housing policies, and more generally the impact of austerity measures on individuals and their well-being may also help us evaluate what is really important for us as a society in this regard. This way, public policies can be adjusted accordingly in order to attend to our current physical and psychological needs. As Goodman et al. (2004) argue Counselling Psychologists must move “beyond counselling and psychotherapy to advocacy and intervention at the community and policy levels” (p. 794). A number of authors including Toporek et al. (2006) and Dominguez and Yeh (2018) have suggested frameworks with this aim in mind. The latter of these social justice frameworks is specific to disaster relief and many of the key focus areas seem pertinent to the participants in this study.

Both frameworks identify the involvement of the community as one of their primary focuses. In Dominguez and Yeh's (2018) view there should be an emphasis on creating shared goals and ensuring trust exists through communication. This process should include cultural sensitivity, an understanding of previous attempts to identify solutions and an appreciation of the community's expertise in relation to the issue they are facing (Toporek et al. 2006). For individuals who have experienced eviction this may be even more important to prevent further promotion of stigmatising views of the population. As Cosgrove (2006) reveals when looking at previous interventions related to homelessness there can be a danger that work will create further stigma and reinforce the idea that individual 'dysfunction' is the primary cause of some social issues. The current study aimed to provide an insight into the lived experience of people who have gone through an eviction and it would be an error to take it as a jump off point for actions that then ignore those experiences in favour of stigmas and stereotype based assumptions. Dominguez and Yeh (2018) argue that real collaboration should be take into account community strengths which may be grounded in cultural beliefs and traditions. The evictees in my study came from varied cultural backgrounds but lived in the same city and it is likely that successful community intervention in relation to eviction would need to appreciate both diverse needs and shared solutions.

Toporek et al (2006) also cite interdisciplinary collaboration as "critical to increase the likelihood of identifying and employing multidimensional approaches to a range of complex social justice issues" (p. 3). As the literature examined in the Introduction shows researchers across a considerable range of disciplines including sociology, public health, law and political science have sought to understand eviction as an issue. This approach should also be translated into practice. Toporek et al. (2006) explains that when disciplines work separately there is a risk of repetition and less effective interventions. Counselling

Psychologists can offer a key viewpoint in relation to social issues but when dealing with complex issues that are maintained by complex systems it is important to utilise the expertise of varied disciplines to identify solutions for them. As discussed in the Introduction, sociologist Matthew Desmond has created an Eviction Lab that seeks to map eviction more accurately within the United States (Eviction Lab, 2018). The broad goal of that work is to allow professionals from any discipline and impacted communities to develop programs to combat eviction and its impacts. More extensive information outside of government data (that shows only part of the story) is important as a starting point for multidisciplinary work to identify where and to whom eviction is happening. Working with social workers, health professionals, lawyers as well as other types of psychologists, Counselling Psychologists can seek to develop alliances to reduce the impacts of eviction. For example, in the case of eviction, in addition to direct work in supporting impacted tenants, multi-disciplinary teams could work with local councils, bailiffs and legal systems to raise awareness of the potential impacts of eviction. Dominguez and Yeh (2018) argue that interventions should be holistic so that they take into account the complexity of individuals who have been impacted in complex ways; psychologically, financially, legally and in terms of their relationships. Ultimately working with a diverse and complex population on diverse and complex impacts requires a diverse and complex team of what Fassinger and Gallor (2006) have called scientist-practitioner-advocates.

### *Contributions of this study to the literature*

One of the main goals of an IPA study is theoretical transferability therefore I hope this study from a Counselling Psychology standpoint can be combined with studies from other disciplines across social, health and legal studies to provide a more holistic view of the issue of eviction in London, the UK and beyond. I believe this is novel piece of research

within the discipline and that it provides a more in-depth examination of the experience of eviction than previously seen. The insights obtained provide both a continuity from varied literatures and a stepping stone to multiple directions of further research on this important topic. This study sits well the ongoing drive within Counselling Psychology to align both research and practice with social justice issues and to understand the social contexts that impact our clients. I hope that the issues raised by my participant's accounts, my interpretation of them and the questions raised by that interpretation will spark further awareness and new questions from researchers, practitioners and advocates. As discussed, with austerity measures and housing issues ongoing, a multidisciplinary approach is needed.

### **Final Reflections**

I have found that understanding more about the experience of eviction has changed me in many ways. Personally, I have come to appreciate my home more. I see myself valuing the moments I spend at home with my loved ones more and, I have also learned to value the physical place also. This to me came as a surprise as I live in rental accommodation and did not experience a place attachment with my current flat in the past. While the attachment increased, I also experience now a sense of threat more present than I have previously. One of the reasons for this, I believe, may relate to having heard stories about the unexpectedness of the eviction in some cases. This combined with an alarming number of evictions happening in London creates a sense of unease in me. As a way of alleviating this feeling of helplessness, I convince myself that I must attempt to buy a home in the near future. I am aware that this is very similar to how my participant "Reema" is coping with the post-eviction; herself and the family are saving to buy a home as they believe that this will safeguard them for the future. Noticing individuals like me and like Reema looking for

ownership as a form of security I reflect about the society that we live in and whether we are made to believe that we must own our homes in order to feel safe.

Professionally, this research has also changed me. Throughout my training as a Counselling Psychologist trainee I have worked in the NHS and for charities. Often, I was based at deprived areas and working with a population of low socio-economic status. In these settings, housing issues are somewhat common. It was not unusual for me to have a client ask me or my colleagues for letters to support their housing applications. The more letters I wrote the more I felt that something needed to be done to support these individuals in a more meaningful way. I reflect about the system that requires evidence from others including health professionals about the person's situation. While I understand that as Counselling Psychologists we can use our voice and speak on behalf of our clients when necessary, I also see a drawback to this. This is, I wonder if this may serve to diminish their voice and contribute to them feeling undervalued. However, I also understand the practicalities involved and the need for monitoring. Therefore, further discussions may be helpful to understand the stance we Counselling Psychologists and health professionals can take in supporting individuals who may be experiencing social issues and I hope some of the collaboration with communities in this research may come to fruition.

## **Conclusion**

This study has highlighted a number of findings that shed new light on the experience of eviction and add weight to findings made elsewhere in the literature. Analysis of the participants' accounts have highlighted the varying meanings that individuals attach to the concept of home, in particular, place attachment. Participants displayed varying levels of attachment to their dwellings, with some developing little (viewing themselves as having a

transitory relationship with it) and others having previous attachments disrupted by preceding events (e.g. bereavement). The impact of the eviction process was found to resemble a disaster-type event that left many of the participants feeling powerless in relation to their circumstances. This aspect seemed to be present in all elements of the eviction experience for this population. High levels of stress were also associated with the eviction process with many describing feeling overwhelmed and unable to escape the burden of the upcoming event or their own thoughts in relation to it. Conceptual evidence from the participant's accounts emerged that links the eviction experience generally and specific elements of it to trauma. The consequences of eviction are linked to the previously raised suggestion from Fried (2000) that loss of a home results in grief with evidence of related shock, uncertainty and entering a survival mode. Evidence of impacts to the self were explored evidencing a sense of shame related to the eviction; participants found their experiences difficult to share with other people potentially due to a discrepancy between how they see themselves versus the ideals of others. Despite the psychological scars that they carry, the participants also see themselves as having experienced a strengthening as a result of their experience. To help them overcome the powerlessness they experienced in relation to their eviction they also seek to increase their feelings of control and mastery over their day to day lives. Although admittedly outside of the direct uttered reflections of most of the participants the study also touched on the societal level context that may seek to blame and relinquish responsibility for individuals put in a vulnerable position through eviction.

It would be tempting at this point to present a fully connected and generalised view of my findings or to create a single model of the eviction process, related psychological outcomes and their sources. However, Smith et al. (2009) reminds us that with IPA the ultimate goal is not generalisability and that the findings should instead be thought of as

providing theoretical transferability. To the best of my knowledge this is the first qualitative study on the lived experience of eviction in the UK. Furthermore, there has been a general lack of direct research into the subject of eviction more generally. As a result, I have been required to widen the potential literature to research related to similar experiences (e.g. repossession, forced displacement through disasters) and broader theoretical frameworks that have been touched on in the literature but never fully explored. This is fully in keeping with the concept of theoretical transferability as I, first as the reader, evaluated and explored transferability of evidence and subsequently as researcher seek to highlight potential transferability for readers of this study. In addition to highlighting potential avenues for further research I have also sought to highlight the impacts observed within this population and the potential implications they may have for Counselling Psychology practice. Beyond this the research also provides additional understanding of the experience of eviction in London that may aid in advocacy for positive changes in policies that impact this population. It is my hope that the Counselling Psychology community will recognise this need and work to reduce the impacts of eviction on our clients and society at large

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Recruitment Poster



#### PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON

#### The Experience of Home Loss Through Eviction in the UK

Have you lost the place you  
called home?

Have you been evicted  
from your home?



Would you like the opportunity to talk about your experience?

In order to participate, you will need to attend 1 interview and answer questions on your experience of losing your home through eviction. All interviews are confidential and your participation will be anonymous. Your participation would involve only 1 session of approximately 60-90 minutes. We will cover travel expenses up to £20.

For more information about this study, or to take part,  
please contact Monique Rizzato at:

Email: [REDACTED]

or phone [REDACTED]

Supervisor [REDACTED], Psychology Department

Email: [REDACTED]

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Committee, City University London. If you would like to complain about any aspect of the study, please contact the Secretary to the University's Senate Research Ethics Committee or [REDACTED] or via email [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Appendix B – Consent Form



Title of Study: **The Experience of Home Loss through Eviction in the UK: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**  
 Ethics approval code:

Please initial box

1.	<p>I agree to take part in the above City University London research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records.</p> <p>I understand this will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being interviewed by the researcher</li> <li>• allowing the interview to be recorded with the use of an audio recording device.</li> </ul>	
2.	<p>This information will be held and processed for the following purpose(s):</p> <p>I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.</p> <p>and</p> <p>I consent to the use of sections of the audio recordings in publications.</p>	
3.	<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw up to when data analysis (i.e. 10th of June 2017) begins without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.</p>	
4.	<p>I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.</p>	
5.	<p>I agree to take part in the above study.</p>	

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

## Appendix C – Information Sheet



Title of study: The Experience of Home Loss through Eviction in the UK: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

*This current study will aim to explore the experience of losing a home and what meaning this loss has in individuals' lives. The study is part of a 3 year professional doctorate course in Counselling Psychology.*

Why have I been invited?

*Because you are 18 years old or over and have lost the property you called home. The study will look at the experiences of 6-8 participants.*

Do I have to take part?

*Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw up to the data analysis stage begins (i.e end of January 2017) of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.*

What will happen if I take part?

- You will need to attend a single interview. We ask you to dedicate between 60-90 minutes. Prior to the interview I will arrange an initial phone call in which we will discuss whether this study is suitable for you and to make interview arrangements.*
- The research will take place in an agreed location. This location could be a private room at City University, at an organisation/charity or at spaces that are public locations such as a public library or community/day centre. I, the researcher will ensure that the location selected will allow for privacy and safety.*
- At the end of the interview I will give you a debrief form containing further information about the study and a list of organisations that offer support.*

Northampton Square

London

EC1V 0HB

Email: [REDACTED]

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City University London [**Counselling Psychology**] Research Ethics Committee,

Further information and contact details

**Researcher** Monique Rizzato on Email: [REDACTED]

or

**Supervisor Dr. Aylish O'Driscoll on Email:** [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

What do I have to do?

*You will need to attend an interview at an agreed time and location.*

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

*There are no specific risks. However, we are cognisant that when discussing their experience it is possible that some participants may become upset. At the end of the interview you will be given a debrief form that contains further information about the study and a list of organisations/charities that offer support.*

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

*There are no direct benefits. However some people find it helpful to talk about their experiences and by taking part in this study you will be contributing to knowledge in the area.*

What will happen when the research study stops?

*All raw data including recordings will be stored for 5 years in keeping with British Psychological Society recommendations. All interviews are confidential and your participation will be anonymous.*

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

*Only the researcher will have access to non-anonymised versions of the data. Transcribed sections of the interviews will be included in written submissions to the university after having been anonymised. Audio recordings will securely held on a password protected computer.*

What will happen to the results of the research study?

*We intend to publish the study in academic publications.*

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

*You can withdraw up to the data analysis stage begins (i.e end of January 2017) of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.*

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone [REDACTED]. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: The Experience of Home Loss through Repossession in the UK: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

You could also write to the Secretary at:

[REDACTED]  
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee  
Research Office, E214  
City University London

## Appendix D – Debriefing Form



### *The Experience of Home Loss through Eviction in the UK: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*

#### DEBRIEF INFORMATION

Thank you for taking part in this study. Now that it's finished we'd like to tell you a bit more about it.

*We acknowledge that losing a home might impact people differently therefore the goal was to assess how you experienced this loss. This current study will aim to explore the experience of losing a home through eviction and what meaning this loss has in individuals' lives. Furthermore, we are seeking to understand the impacts this experience has on mental health and subsequent life events. We used a semi-structured interview, which meant that even though we had prompt questions we wanted to ask you, we also wanted to keep the format of the interview flexible enough for you to share your own experience. Following the interview, the data gathered will be only handled and analysed by me the researcher. Please note that if you wish to withdraw from this study you may do so until data analysis starts (31st of August 2016). Please be assured that your personal details will be made anonymous in the final version of the study.*

We understand that talking about this experience might have been upsetting to you and might have brought up difficult memories and feelings. Therefore if you feel you need further support please contact any of the following organisations:

- NHS

*For urgent support please contact your local A&E. For support within the NHS please book an appointment with your local GP.*

- Shelter

Phone: Main Switchboard 0344 515 2000. Free Housing Advice Helpline 0808 800 4444. Email: [info@shelter.org.uk](mailto:info@shelter.org.uk), Website: <http://www.shelter.org.uk>

- Step Change Debt Charity

Debt advice for people in the UK. Tel: 0800 138 1111

- Samaritans

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org). Phone: 116 123 (UK)  
24 hour service 365 days a year

- Mind (National)

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.  
Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm) Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

- Counselling Directory

An online source of professional counsellors and psychotherapists.

Tel: 0844 8030 240

- BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)

BACP is a membership organisation that sets standards for therapeutic practice.

Their online directory can be used to locate a professional counsellor, who will usually charge for their services. Tel: 01455 883300 (to locate a professional counsellor)

We hope you found the study interesting and we thank you again for taking part and contributing to research in the area.

If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:

To contact me the researcher:

Email: [REDACTED]

To contact the supervisor of this study:

Aylish O'Driscoll on Email: [REDACTED]

## Appendix E – Interview Schedule

### **Areas of interest:**

Importance of making sense of what happened.

Meaning of home

Experience of neighbourhood/community before and after

Support system before, during and after the event

Prior events that might have had an impact on loss

Coping strategies before/during and after the event.

Life changes (physical, psychological) after loss

Sense of self before/during/after loss.

Exploration of feelings that emerged after the loss; shame, relief.

Exploring feelings towards householder i.e. spouse, parent etc.

Trust in financial institutions and government

### **Potential questions.**

Describe your eviction experience in as much detail as possible.

When you first moved into the property you were evicted from what did 'home' mean to you?

What does 'home' mean to you now?

How do you make sense of your experience?

What does it mean to have lost your home?

What feelings emerged after the eviction?

What was your experience with your neighbourhood where you lived?

What is your experience with your neighbourhood of where you live now?

How did you feel when you first found out about the possibility of losing the property?

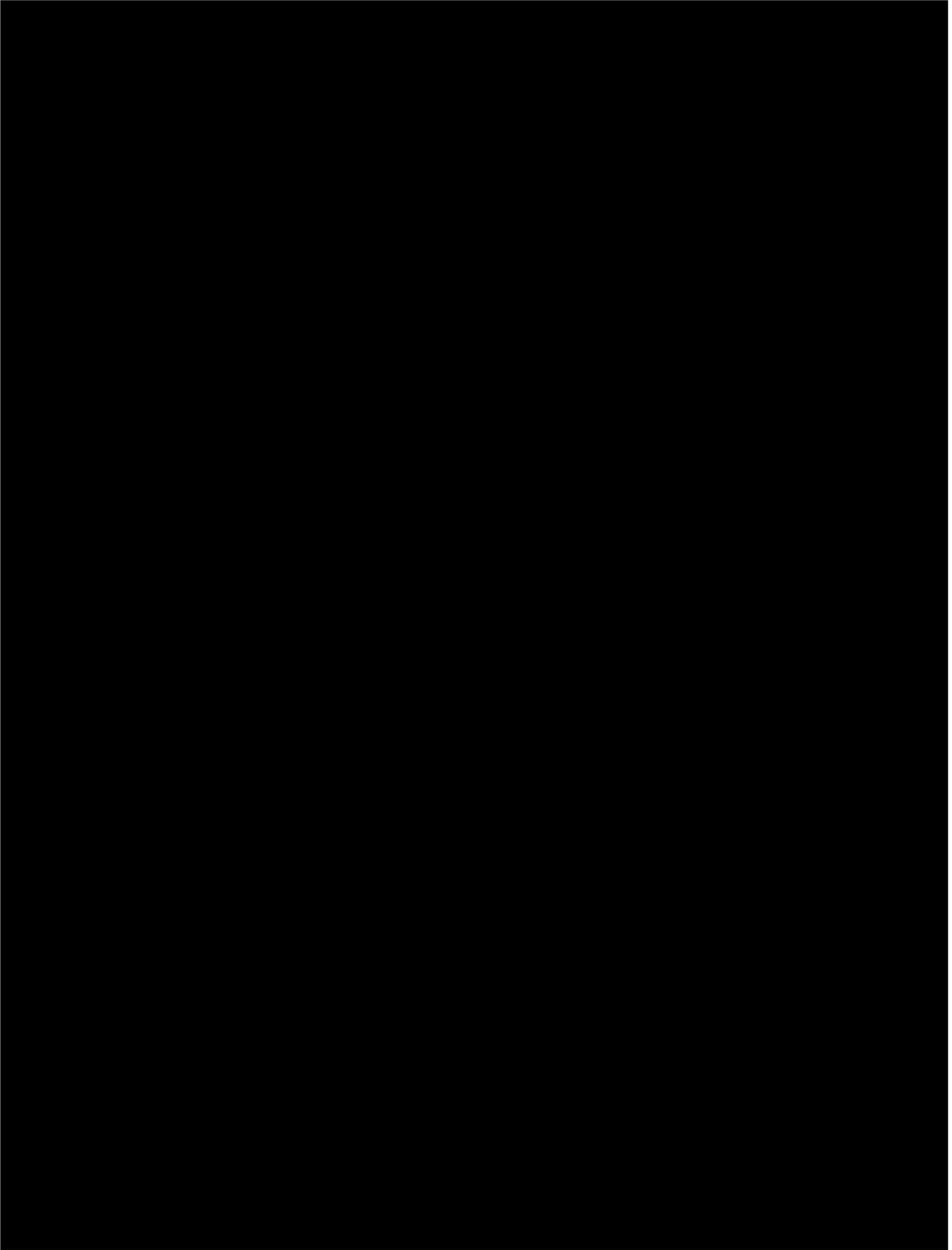
How supported did you feel during the process of eviction?

If supported, who supported you the most? (family, friends, organisations)

## Appendix F – Initial Noting

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>I: Thank you xxx for coming and for sharing your experience with me. Can you please describe your eviction experience in as much detail as possible please?</p> <p>R: Ehm... basically ahh... I felt behind on the rent ahh.. I tried to make arrangement and .. just he just wasn't interested really so after because I lost my job so I was looking for a new job I still had like bills and stuff to pay. I told the landlord listen I said look I need a bit of time but he.. wasn't interested ehm then said to me: you've broken the terms of tenancy and said nah and yeah so it just was a bit of trouble for couple of weeks I tried to leave.. yeah..</p> <p>I: And when did that happen?</p> <p>R: Just before the summer, so yeah..</p> <p>I: Okay okay and how long were you living in the property for?</p> <p>R: Nine, ten months because I just moved in to the area where I was living so, so everything was new to me so I didn't really know anything...</p> <p>I: Hum..So everything was quite new?</p> <p>R: (clears throat) Yeah it's just one of them things that happen I guess</p> <p>I: Sure, sure and what was it like when you first moved in to that place? so when you first moved in?</p> <p>R: It was alright, it was good it was exciting, it was something new but the novelty ran off pretty soon because I was in a shared house other tenants were just... causing trouble and stuff.</p> <p>I: Right hum so you were sharing the house?</p> <p>R: Yeah</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>

## Appendix G – Emergent Themes



## Appendix H – Searching for Connections

Dual issues	Making arrangements	Confusion in recalling days
Others working against me	One person battle	Powerlessness
Questionable legality	Minimising experiences	Vulnerability
I am just another item	Newness of experience	Being alone
Others have the power	Expectation vs reality	Work instability
Wanted me out	Living with strangers	Protecting ego
Struggling with what's going on	Reclusive behaviour	Between a rock and a hard place
Collusion	Stress but expectation of overall impact did not materialise	Lack of option
Cat on a hot tin roof	Not too fussed about leaving	Viewings as another stressor
Things happening behind my back	Convergence of life events (job change & budgeting)	Impacting sleep
Kept in the dark	Avoidance of ruminating on memory as a means of coping	Triggering depression
Tried to show me as a malingerer	Loss where ownership/investment	Justifying seeking support
Invasion of privacy	Tight deadline and lack of time	Degradation of self
Taking risks	Minimizing stress of experience through avoidance (repetition in relation to trying)	Helplessness
Under tremendous pressure	Threatening ultimatum	Role of protector
Less rights	Not being listened to	Lack of resolution
Overwhelmed by choices	Self valued less than money	Medication to cope
Home choice was random	Loss of job as preceding event	Humiliation
Home was a safety net	Effort not recognised	Jumping through hoops
Seeking allies	Shock of speed	Difficulty discussing
Sharpening their axe	Didn't feel like a home	Exhaustion
They should be helping you	Not bothered due to conditions	Snowball effect on finances
Compartmentalising life	Attempts to create a home	Lack of knowledge
Ambivalent acceptance	Creating a safe space	Family vulnerability
Processes needed	Feelings of disgust	Child's relationships
Confusion of bureaucracy	Spartan environment. Living as a prisoner	Trying to protect child
Stress of eviction creates mental illness	Survival mode	Loss for child
Your liberty is stripped from you	Unwise decisions related to money	Impact to view of societal position
Forced into a new living situation	Not able to see the bigger picture	Worse because family
No choices	Need to create own space	Relocation and support
Put in the wrong place	Not the life I wanted	Daughter's concerns
Keeping myself to myself	Can only lose what you own	Expectations vs reality
My strength saved me	Something left that was not overcome	Distance from real home
System exposed me	No going back so have to move forward	Reality hitting
Avoiding interactions	Feeling like treated unprofessionally	Will make best of situation
Lack of security	Not worthy of people's time	Outrage at situation
History of drug use	Panicked by time	Emotional process and feeling trapped
Have to lie to get somewhere to live	Relief when possessions protected	Things should work better
Conflicts with neighbours	Lack of relationship continues with eviction day	Seeking additional help
Not mixing with neighbours	Struggle to humanise others as a result of being dehumanised	Still things don't work and impact on health
Running a business from home	Keeping self to self	Guilt that daughter put in this situation
Loss of dogs	Secret rite of passage	Discomfort and lack of security
Mixed feelings on losing home	Using experiences as lessons learned	Inversion of priorities. Clouded decision making
Struggled to settle in	Compartmentalising as a separate life	Shared experience with another mother
Being nomadic	Acceptance of inevitability	Kindness of strangers

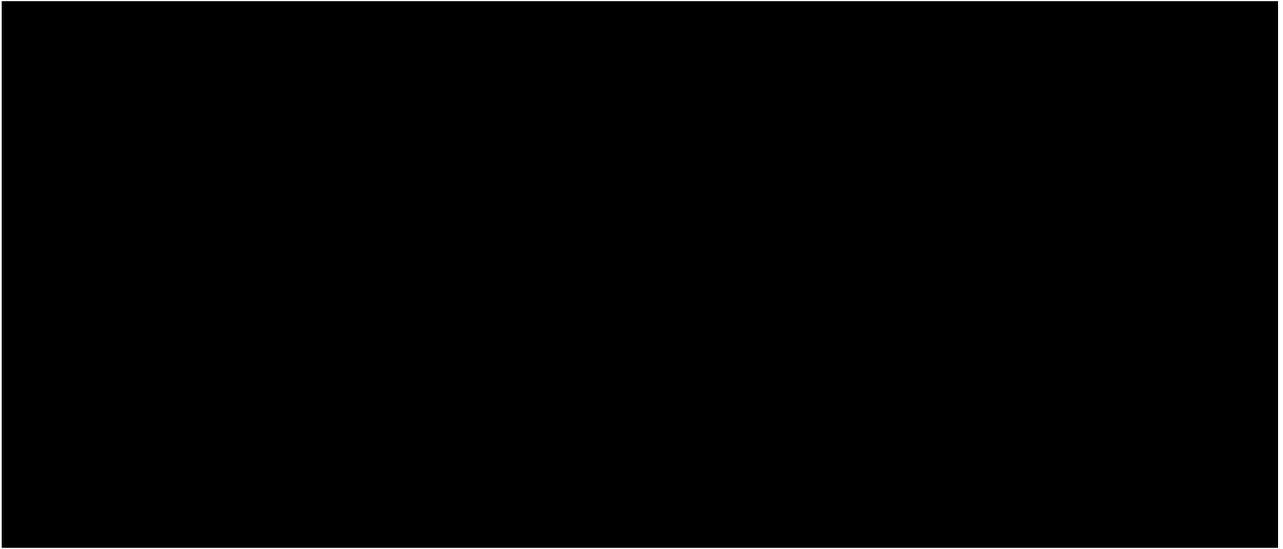
## Appendix I – Grouping of Themes

Struggling with what's going on	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Nothing to hold on to	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Reaching the bottom	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Leaving is overbearing	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
No room for other things	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Too much for a kid	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Too much for me	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Barely holding on	Struggle	Effects/ Impacts of eviction	Not prepared for the what is to come
Too much to sort out		experience of eviction	Too fast to process
Ominous presence		experience of eviction	Powerless and overwhelmed
Lack of time to make sense		experience of eviction	Too fast to process
On your feet all day		experience of eviction	Under siege in your home
Things have gotten that bad		experience of eviction	
Unjust eviction		experience of eviction	Emergency response and the system letting you down
Worse place than where you started		experience of eviction	My safe space
Convergence of life events (job change & budgeting)	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
Forced into situation by one critical incident	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
Loss of job as preceding event	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
Pre-existing stressors	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
Work instability	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
Family financial hardship	Knock On	Factors pre-eviction	
New landlord, new relationship	Landlord	Factors pre-eviction	
Living with strangers		Factors pre-eviction	
Friend to confide in	Relationships	Factors that helped	
Kindness of others	Relationships	Factors that helped	
Comfort of neighbours	Relationships	Factors that helped	
Rebuilding connections	Relationships	Factors that helped	Regaining control
Release of sharing	Relationships	Factors that helped	Regaining control
Unexpected kindness of others	Relationships	Factors that helped	Regaining control
Fear of pity from sharing		Fear of pity	
Not wanting to be seen as different		Fear of pity	
Don't want them to feel sorry for me		Fear of pity	
Don't want to hear reprimandations		Fear of pity	
Outrage at situation	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	
Anger caused by betrayal	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	
Within their rights but angry	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	
Directing anger	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	
Anger overwhelming parents	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	
Anger at powerlessness (conflicts with what he wants to believe)	Anger	Feelings After Eviction	

## Appendix J – Participant Table of Themes

Themes	Line Number	Keywords
Confusion in recalling days	20-21	“Date for me leaving was June, sorry was April”
Powerlessness	30	“there wasn’t really much I could do”
Vulnerability	34	“we were kind of vulnerable as a family”
Being alone	35-36	“first of all me being alone with the children”
Work instability	37-39	“my employment is quite sporadic”
Protecting ego	49-50	“I never went to council accommodation before”
Between a rock and a hard place	60-62	“but I was told that if I left at any point before I would have been classed as intentional homeless”
Lack of option	65-67	“the council say you don’t have an option, you have to stay in the property”
Viewings as another stressor	79-81	“preparing it for the like viewing ready and I found that really stressful”
Impacting sleep	84-85	“I couldn’t sleep at night so I laid in bed a lot of time”
Triggering depression	89-91	“I was naturally quite concerned I was going to enter that prenatal depression”
Justifying seeking support	94-97	“I went to social services and said, I’d like to make a self-referral because I don’t know we’ve never been known them”

## Appendix K – Table of Themes



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**Section B: publishable article.....189-218**

**Section C: case study.....219-251**