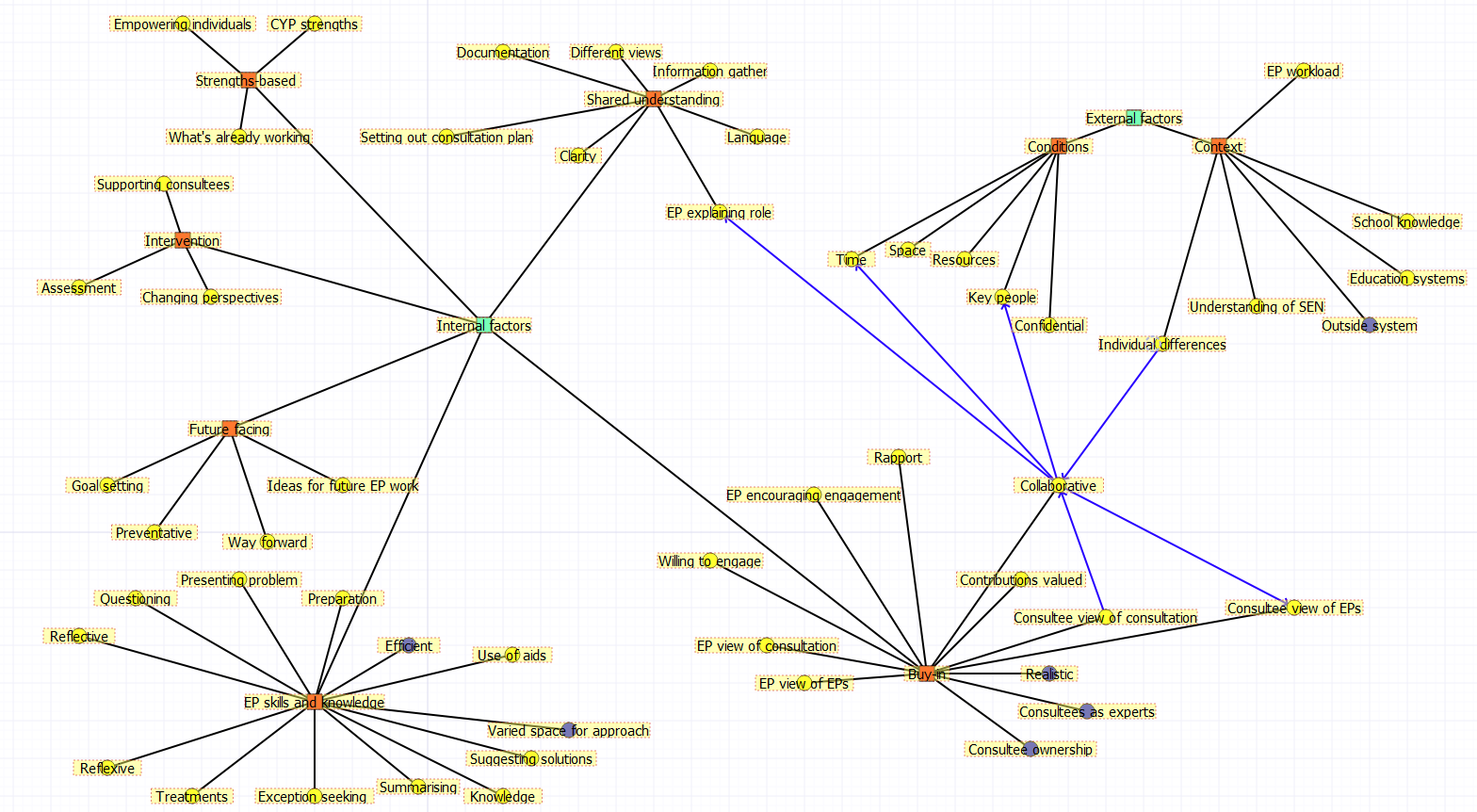
# 3 Results

NEED INTRODUCTION TO SECTION



Thematic map

## 3.1 Interviews

30 EPs of varying roles and locations were interviewed. Participant’s roles included TEPs, maingrade EPs, specialist EPs, senior EPs, and Principal EPs. The participants worked in locations such as London, Yorkshire, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland. Thematic analysis identified 32 inductive codes, as well as the 15 deductive codes previously set, relating to what features EPs believed were effective for consultation. 6 codes were identified for what made said features effective (see Appendix XXX for the definitions of the inductive codes, Appendix XXX for the definitions of the codes relating to what makes the features effective and Appendix XXX for the breakdown of the number of interviews which each code was identified in and the total number of codes for each feature). These were combined to create 8 themes: Buy-in, Conditions, Context, Strengths-based, Shared understanding, Intervention, Future facing, and EP skills and knowledge. These could then be combined to create two super themes: Internal factors (features relating to things happening with a consultation) and External factors (features relating to things happening around a consultation).

### 3.1.1 Buy-in

This theme related to the importance of EPs creating a bond with those involved, including the consultee(s) and other school staff members not directly involved in the consultation, and using this relationship to facilitate change.

#### 3.1.1.1 Collaborative

One of the fundamental and most oft cited features for creating buy-in was making consultation collaborative. Within the consultation, this was achieved through a variety of factors. One of the key ones was making sure there was equal participation, such that everyone had a voice and different perspectives were heard: *“effective consultation shouldn’t being a meeting where one person dominates, whether that may be a psychologist or anyone else”* (Interview 11) and *“it’s like we’re all involved, we’re all at the same level, we just come at it from a different perspective”* (Interview 7).

As a result of there being equal participation, there is a greater chance that everyone involved has the same understanding of the situation and the CYP: *“to bring everyone together, and to co-create and co-construct a shared narrative”* (Interview 11). Misunderstandings can be cleared up (Interview 5) and these help everyone feel involved in the process and ensure that the consultation is collaborative. The creation of a shared narrative can also include the the creation of a shared agenda. This helps guide the consultation so it is more effective as it is meeting the needs of those involved and everyone agrees to it: *“I think a really fundamentally important part of that consultation is ensuring that we do have that shared agenda; we know why we’re there together and we all agree what we’re doing there together”* (Interview 24) and *“to arrive at a joint action plan, joint for the school and the parents, school are always involved as well, so it’s more collaborative”* (Interview 10).

This shared agenda can be established by identifying what everyone is hoping to get from the consultation:

*…it would always start with a question about what are your best hopes from our meeting together? What are your best hopes from our work together? Because if we don’t start with that question, erm, then we don’t know where we’re trying to get to. (Interview 27)*

By working collaboratively with those involved, EPs can facilitate collaboration between the home and school. This can potentially support both by helping maintain morale and creating a sense of shared responsibility:

*…there is something that goes on often, not always, in the room when you’ve got the family, and school together, the, you do you do bring that sense of, ‘We are working on this together; you are not alone school in this, you are not alone parents in this, we are doing this together.’ (Interview 5)*

#### 3.1.1.2 Contributions valued

A related code, and one which can facilitate a collaborative consultation, is the idea that everyone who is present in the consultation should feel able to contribute. Not only this, but they need to believe that what they say will be taken on board:

*…where I would like to think that their views, their knowledge, their understanding is just as valid as mine… we are equal participants in this. (Interview 13)*

*…equal participation, you know, as far as possible, or that everybody participates and that everybody feels valued, everybody feels that what they had to say is useful. (Interview 20)*

This can help give power to those who may not typically have it in the school environment, thus helping create a more level playing field and therefore a more collaborative consultation: *“schools are by nature very hierarchical. So if you’ve got a TA they’re often not seen as the same as… a SENCO or a head teacher’s views but in that situation they are.”* (Interview 1)

#### 3.1.1.3 Encouraging engagement

Removing power dynamics within a consultation was seen by many participants as an important part of the EPs role within consultation. This formed part of the code ‘EP encouraging engagement.’ The EP must try and create a space so no consultee feels intimidated and in which all relevant people can contribute, even if they cannot physically be present:

*…the psychologist trying to level power dynamics is a really key, a really key part of any consultation and that erm that’s in relation to ourselves, as a professional with a doctorate normally, but also in relation to the family and the teacher, or the family and the school. (Interview 2)*

*…balance of people’s voices in the rooms. So, erm, making time for those that might not be able to be present in the meeting to hear their views and voices. (Interview 27)*

This code related to any effort by the EP to attempt to include the voices of the relevant parties. One of the ways that this is through *“active listening”* (Interview 1). A key idea related to the EP facilitating others to participate:

*I’m there to help facilitate the group in thinking about ways forward. (Interview 15)*

*…giving a space where people can listen to other people’s perspectives, then you take away the bulk of what it is that you’re, erm, using to try and make a difference. (Interview 21)*

Not only does the EP need to facilitate others, but also challenge potentially harmful narratives and navigate difficult situations:

*Being careful and being prepared to challenge. (Interview 25)*

*…sometimes a kind of mediation role because… we work in complex and messy situations. And it’s not always that people are going to agree, or even really want to hear what they have to say. So there’s that kind of control in the, the floor that happens in a consultation, which doesn’t happen in other types of conversation. (Interview 3)*

Being able to read body language was identified by a few EPs as being important for facilitating engagement:

*you try to do an online meeting, you lose the gesticulations, you lose… being able to point at things or being able to… look at their faces better and realise, ‘Oh, they’re not understanding, I need to change the way I’m explaining it’ or something. I think you lose so much because it’s that non-verbal feedback that you get, that allows you to know where you are at with the relationship, to know the way you can develop within that consultation. (Interview 24)*

However, this was not universal. A few EPs found that using technologically-mediated (tech) consultations did not lead to a decrease in quality of the relationship. One EP experienced her consultees asking for telephone consultations and that these were effective (Interview 16).

#### 3.1.1.4 Rapport

The difference between in-person and tech consultations relates to another core feature, which is the development of a rapport with those involved in consultations. Within the consultation, an EP must quickly develop a rapport so that the consultees feel comfortable talking about potentially difficult topics:

*…trust and credibility and shared mutual respect, I think are at the core of any consultation. You know, they value what I offer because I’m in touch and the fact they get on well with me, that almost therapeutic relationship. (Interview 7)*

*…built up that trust and sense of safety, that it’s okay to express their worries, that you can get quite a lot of information. (Interview 10)*

The EP needs to not only develop a rapport with those involved, but encourage relationships between consultees: *“building attuned interactions in a meeting with parents, with teachers, and then hopefully between them as well. It just kind of gets everyone on the same page, hopefully gets everyone pointing in the right direction”* (Interview 30). This is especially important when relationships between the home and school have broken down: *"sometimes you have a breakdown between parents and the school… you can be a person in between, and try and get that working through that… which is… a key feature of consultation. (Interview 4)*

Several EPs talked about the importance of having a good relationship with the school. A good relationship between the school (generally understood to mean at least the SECNCos and potentially Senior Leadership Team) helps consultation to be more effective: *"If it’s going to be successful model in a school, I think the need is… time for the EP to build a relationship with the school is important.* (Interview 23). The reason the relationship is crucial for improving consultation is that when the EP has developed a good relationship with the school and they are mutually supporting one another, it is easier to create an environment which fosters collaboration:

*…when you know the school especially, and they’re supporting you in supporting the parents and the staff to do that, then you see it a lot more". (Interview 1)*

*…schools are often hesitant to adopt consultation as the main method of EP work: some of the SEN schools that I work with have a very rigid way of seeing the EP role and what we do, and they’re, they’re view is, more often than not, my role as an EP is to go in, do an assessment, write a report, and that’s it. Er, so in those instances, I find it much harder to sell consultation as a, as a model. (Interview 11)*

However, several EPs spoke of using their relationship with the school to change how they approach EP work and what the EP can do in the school:

*…once you build a relationship with schools, and you’ve been working in it, you can shift things, you can move things around, to, you know, working with a bit more control, getting them to see how, you know, it can be more effective, working with consultation, not doing just lots of assessments. (Interview 4)*

*That’s how you change it. I think that the relationship is super important. (Interview 23)*

#### 3.1.1.5 EP view of consultation and Consultee view of consultation

An important feature of consultation that relates to rapport is the understanding that the consultees, EP, and school as a whole have towards consultation. How the EP and consultees view consultation can have a large impact on a consultation and its efficacy. A belief shared by many interviewees was that *“both parties, kind of, know how consultation works”* (Interview 24) and this *“might depend on people’s constructs of what consultation is”* (Interview 29). Interviewees had an overwhelmingly positive view of consultation, highlighting its versatility and alignment with their values:

*…consultation, I think, is a, is a framework with the complexity that matches the complexity of the concerns that are being raised. Erm, we’re looking at concerns at an individual and a group and a systemic level. (Interview 21)*

*I don’t think you can be inclusive without using a consultative model. (Interview 25)*

Though many interviewees identified the value of consultation and the importance of clearly understanding it and what it involves, many also pointed out that there is a large heterogeneity of practice among EPs: *“I think that concept of what a consultation is will vary from one EP to another”* (Interview 24). There are also EPs who do not value it and prefer a more traditional style of assessing CYP and then writing a report. As one interviewee said: *“I know there’s a lot of EPs out there that continue to work in that way and I think, I think that’s one of the barriers to shifting more to a consultation framework”* (Interview 17). One interviewee, who had recently attended a course on consultation provided by their EPS, stated:

*I’m not sure a lot of EPs really understand what it is. Being able to communicate that… even on that consultation course that I mentioned I went on, I was really surprised that people, people very open and very honest, and they said, ‘We’ve been saying we’ve been using consultation, but we actually have not. We’ve realised now that we haven’t really been using consultation.’ (Interview 22)*

This makes it difficult for consultees to gain a clear understanding of what consultation is and has led a few EPs to call for clearer communication and *“being better at communicating… what it is and what it can do”* (Interview 22). One of the reasons it is important consultees understand what consultation means is so they can see the value in it. Many interviewees described how some of the schools they work in do not appreciate it fully:

*…if I could click my fingers and change something on a systemic level, it would be the attitude toward consultation because I I really view them as an investment. If you invest in a consultation, you’re going to get better work and and outcomes. Whereas, sometimes they can be viewed as an expensive hurdle you have to get over to get a standardised score. (Interview 2)*

*I think there are some schools that, erm, have a negative view of consultation. Because of that. It’s, it’s more complex procedure I think, people realise. (Interview 10)*

*I think we need to educate our schools more about ‘This is what the process is,’ because we say in sales blurb ‘We do a consultation’ and, erm, and then the schools are still stuck in that, kind of, old way of thinking. (Interview 28)*

A recurring comment centred around the differences between primary and secondary schools, with primaries typically being more willing to engage with them:

*…most primary SENCOs are very open to whatever I suggest. And they’re quite open to different ways of working, as long as they have a report to use as evidence, er, for EP involvement, so it has that element of of a tick box. But most primary schools are very open to different ways of looking, I would say, but secondaries definitely aren’t. (Interview 18)*

#### 3.1.1.6 EP view of EPs and Consultee view of EPs

Another relevant strand to the different perceptions of consultations is how the consultees view EPs and their role. Several interviewees talked about how they were viewed as gatekeepers to resources or as someone who would fix the situation independently of any work by the consultees:

*…the associations that staff or parents can have of us as being, kind of, the deciders of resources. So we will go in and we will say, and we will think we are there to support to think about what we can do for this child, and they will think we are coming in to say ‘Yes you can have any EHCP’ or ‘Yes you can have extra money.’ (Interview 1)*

*…if school are new to that way of working and they are used to having an EP come in and, sort of, tell them what to do. I do notice that sometimes there’s a bit of confusion, er, especially from some teachers who are, ‘Why are you asking me, aren’t you supposed to tell me what I need to do?’ (Interview 11)*

The consultee view of EPs also affected how receptive a school is to consultation because *“it very much comes down to the school’s view of my role”* (Interview 14). Several EPs talked about wanting to change the views of the consultees in the consultation. \*\*\*

How the consultees view the EP can be changed in the consultation itself: *“You’re modelling how psychologists think… they might think a psychologist is on a pedestal or whatever, but you’re modelling that psychologists are like everybody else”* (Interview 7). To help level this power dynamic, EPs often try to present themselves as not having a privileged position, as some interviewees talked about *“not putting themselves in an expert position”* (Interview 27). This is because *“It’s the process of discussion itself, erm, that leads to, kind of, outcomes, rather than taking on an expert model.”* (Interview 14). However, a few EPs pushed back against the framing of the EPs non-expert stance as it can be counter-productive: *“I think, erm, sometimes EPs can go too far the other way in not being the expert… it’s a little bit disingenuous, because sometimes we’ve got a lot of good ideas to offer”* (Interview 27). How strongly they take on the role of the expert was independent of the importance of most EPs placed on being empathetic and supportive:

*…you’re in the situation as a human being, but also trying to be a psychologist as well, and they’re quite difficult to do at the same time. (Interview 14)*

*I think you need to be an ally, and a guide, but not be, ‘I know what you should do and you should do this.’ (Interview 23)*

#### 3.1.1.7 Willing to engage

A feature that almost two thirds of the interviewees identified was the willingness of the consultees to engage in the consultation process:

*…the effectiveness is because of engagement, critical thinking process thinking, and then plan your own action plans, which you’re also engaged in. (Interview 5)*

*…at the same time, to know that the reason that everyone is around the table for this consultation is to try and shift that thinking in some way. And usually, you know, just by nature of showing up everybody does want that, even if they don’t necessarily believe it to be possible, which is why I think those features of consultation are effective. (Interview 3)*

*…just general engagement from either the parents or school, and the willingness to, to change; the willingness to change their practice. (Interview 5)*

#### 3.1.1.8 Consultee ownership

Several interviewees talked about how these features are effective because they help create a sense of consultee ownership of the situation. By being collaborativeThe consultees are more likely to buy into the process of consultation and are therefore more likely to feel they can be an active agent in supporting the CYP:

*…when people are active participants in a process, any process, they would be more likely to follow through with what has been agreed in terms of, whether that would be actions, whether that would be a specific approach that needs to be put in place. (Interview 11)*

*…they retain some sense of ownership and some, er, sense of responsibility for putting in place what comes next. (Interview 20)*

*…the point of that conversation is to leave something behind for the people who actually have power to do things and if you don’t have their buy-in, then it’s totally pointless. I’m struggling to think of a method, outside of consultation, where you could get that buy in and that information share and get to any kind of meaningful endpoint. (Interview 3)*

#### 3.1.1.9 Realistic

Another commonly discussed mechanism for effective consultations was the increased chance of realistic recommendations and outcomes being established. If the ideas generated are more co-constructed and built on shared knowledge, they are more likely to be feasible:

*…it also allows for reality, so if you’ve, you know, hopefully you’re not getting ideas or strategies that are completely unworkable. So it should be based within the practice of the class teacher. So it isn’t, you know, somebody coming in and going, ‘Well, you need to do this three times a day with, you know, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah.’ (Interview 21)*

*…the feedback we get from parents that things are very grounded in reality, that the ideas that we’re talking about makes sense because they come from a position of understanding and making sense of whatever is being brought into the room and, sort of, helping to manage some of the complexity. (Interview 27)*

#### 3.1.1.10 Consultees as experts

The final code from this theme relates to treating the consultees as experts of their own area:

*I try to make it collaborative because erm, my stance is that we all bring our own expertise; they’re experts as parents, they’re experts on their child. Erm and as teachers, they’re experts on, you know, teaching that child and teaching in general. (Interview 8)*

*I think they’re effective because, we’re capitalising on that idea that people are experts in their own lives. (Interview 22)*

### 3.1.2 EP skills and knowledge

The other most common theme related to the psychological knowledge and skills EPs need to use when engaging in consultation.

#### 3.1.2.1 Knowledge

The most common code across all themes was in relation to the models of consultation and general psychological knowledge that the interviewees believed EPs needed to have to facilitate an effective consultation. The *“use of theory and reference to the evidence base”* (Interview 2) was identified as an important effective feature of consultation. Commonly discussed models and frameworks included being solution-focused (Interview 1), person-centred (Interview 16), trauma and attachment informed (Interview 13), and using Wagner’s model of consultation (Interview 17) and the COMOIRA model (Interview 25). Other specific psychological areas included using principles from Narrative Therapy (Interview 17), an ecosystemic model (Interview 2), social constructivism (Interview 6), as well as psychologies such as positive psychology (Interview 9). Some interviewees saw their role as *“sharing… and disseminating psychological theory”* (Interview 18) and that consultation “helped [them] really use psychology with [their] schools” (Interview 11).

The use of a model was often spoken positively as *“[giving] the consultation a structure”* (Interview 11) and for one interviewee they were the most important part:

*…for me, the models of psychology are the number one priority, they have to be systemic and interactionist so that all behaviour is seen as a function of the person and the situation. So that if a concern is being described, we want to be looking at finding out about what was happening at the time or when it was happening. (Interview 27)*

#### 3.1.2.2 Presenting problem

Many EPs mentioned specific features within different models. One such feature was exploring the presenting problem from the problem-analysis framework ([Monsen et al. 1998](#ref-monsenAccountableModelPractice1998)):

*…getting an idea of what their main concerns are because when it feels very big, it’s really the problem feels very big, the issue with the child is very messy. There’s a lot going on, it can be hard to know where to start. So focusing them down is something that I do where I’m like ‘What’s your main concern?’ (Interview 8)*

This code also involved *“further clarification around the difficulties”* (Interview 11) and a discussion of “What are the conditions around it” (Interview 12).

#### 3.1.2.3 Treatments

Another code relating to the problem-analysis framework was the discussion of treatments for the CYP. This involved *“planning recommendations”* (Interview 2) and using the consultation *“as a space where we can really drill down into exactly what you mean when you say ‘A social skills group’”* (Interview 2) as you can decide what the intervention is specifically for.

#### 3.1.2.4 Suggesting solutions

Another frequently mentioned model was the Solution-focused model ([Murphy 1997](#X90b0fdadd0da33b2579b8c33715b2cf05fc6f8b)). A key part of this model is suggesting solutions and several interviewees brought this idea up. These are typically recommendations *“to be done at home and at school”* (Interview 12) Several EPs stated they were happy to make recommendations but simultaneously did not want to dominate the consultation (Interview 11). The importance of taking on board what the consultees said was also voiced by a few interviewee so that the EP does not make recommendations that have already been tried (Interview 13).

#### 3.1.2.5 Exception seeking

Another code relating to the Solution-focused model was the discussion of times when the main difficulty is reduced or absent:

*…building all those principles of, yes, psychology that we’re trained with, and we’re taught to use: exception seeking (Interview 24)*

*…finding out about other contexts when it was similar and other contexts when it was different, so that you’re able to hypothesise about what’s happening (Interview 27)*

#### 3.1.2.6 Reflective

A feature mentioned by almost all participants centred around the importance of being reflective. This included the use of *“reflective listening”* (Interview 1) and *“[checking] back in with people… working with them just to understand, have they progressed on that journey”* (Interview 16). Many interviewees brought up the importance of checking with the consultees *“whether we did what we wanted to do, and if not, what still needs to be done?”* (Interview 21).

The importance of being reflective was not limited to within the consultation; the structure of consultation itself should also incorporate reflection:

*…it might be nice within models that we have with schools, if there’s a definite agreement that there is follow up or a review, if it’s not by me, if it’s by someone in the school, because that, that, kind of, ensures that what’s discussed in the consultation is actually, you know, implemented and monitored. (Interview 14)*

*I also like to have a consultation as a feedback meeting at the end to… revisit what we’ve discussed in the first session, and obviously, by that time, I’ll have gathered information from other sources to use that other information to further inform what is going to be done about the situation and to answer their referral question. (Interview 9)*

This reflective structure extends to the gaining of feedback from consultees. The importance of feedback was mentioned by several interviewees, for example: *“we have to treat it as a cyclical process which has to be reviewed and evaluated so that we can use that feedback to improve practices”* (Interview 1). Learning from peers through observation and critical reflection with colleagues was also highlighted:

*I would hope that I’m a reflective practitioner and also, erm, having other people observe consultation, is really helpful in terms of trying to figure out, sometimes, what’s going on, what made a difference. (Interview 21)*

*…peer supervision is really helpful in terms of, er, helping your practice because obviously, you’ve got all that shared, sort of, ideas and knowledge and bouncing off each other in the team. (Interview 9)*

#### 3.1.2.7 Questioning

The use of question was discussed by more than half the interviewees, using questions like *“‘I wonder what would happen if?’ ‘What do you think might happen if?’”* (Interview 25) to explore possibilities and develop understanding. More banausic questions are asked to explore a situation to gain a fuller understanding (Interview 5) as well as exploring the context (Interview 27). However, as the consultation progresses, questions can be used to get the consultees to think about what change would look like for the CYP and how they could go about achieving it (Interview 8). Not only is the content of the questioning important, but the manner in which they are asked is a key factor *“how EPs are asking those questions, and the types of questions they’re asking and, erm, the timing of those questions”* (Interview 15).

#### 3.1.2.8 Use of aids

A third of interviewees discussed types of supports that they use in their consultations. Tools based on person-centred psychology, such as Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATHs) and Making Action Plans (MAPs), was brought up by Interviewees 16 and 17. The use of metaphors was endorsed as means to safely explore difficult topics (Interview 12), as well as *“the Japanese problem-solving fish” and “blob trees”* (Interview 10).

#### 3.1.2.9 Preparation

A number of interviewees highlighted the importance of being prepared for a consultation, where the *“psychologist pools all that information, formulates the hypothesis, types down what questions they want to ask”* (Interview 20). This increases the chance of the consultation being effective:

*I think doing really thoughtful preparation is essential to to effective consultation, and I think sometimes there just isn’t time for that but but really spending some time to think about, you know, what, what do we know? What what do I, what am I hoping to get out of this?" (Interview 13)*

This preparation, of *“being in the right headspace yourself”* (Interview 13) extends to the consultees as them not being prepared can hamper the efficacy of a consultation:

*I think for a lot of the time, what limits my consultations is, they’re just, sort of, caug- maybe a teacher is, sort of, caught on the cuff, they weren’t really expecting me to meet them there, erm, but there they are. So they haven’t really had time to, sort of, gather their thoughts beforehand. (Interview 20)*

#### 3.1.2.10 Reflexive

Another important feature of an effective consultation was the EP being reflexive. This involves critically analysing, in the moment, *“‘How’s my body language affecting the person that I’m speaking with?’ ‘How did that question go down?’ ‘Was it understood?’ Am I helping this person?’”* (Interview 10). This process involves being *“flexible and responsive”* (Interview 21) and *“adaptable”* (Interview 30) which can be inhibited by the use of a consultation script (Interview 30). One interviewee discussed the importance of:

*…being aware of what’s going on in the discussion and what the function of the discussion might be for the consultee at any one time. For example, if the adult is clearly struggling with the child, they might be looking for empathy… and understanding, so very much giving that but recognising that that in itself won’t necessarily move things on. So trying to be aware… of what the function of their use of language is at the time and what they’re trying to elicit from me. (Interview 14)*

Another interviewee discussed the importance of being sensitive to *“anything that might be… difficult for potentially parents to talk about”* (Interview 15). This process of being reflexive also helps prevent the EP *“[imposing] my construct on the situation”* (Interview 25).

#### 3.1.2.11 Summarising

Several EPs mentioned that summarising or paraphrasing (Interview 19) what has been said in a consultation is an important feature of consultation. This includes *“re-speaking back to people what they’ve told you”* (Interview 17) and *“[giving] a summary of what I think I’ve heard from the different people”* (Interview 5).

#### 3.1.2.12 Efficient

The most frequently cited reason for consultation being effective was that it is an efficient way of practising. This includes the simple fact that *“more children get to have EP input”* (Interview 11) because it is possible to *“talk about multiple students and put multiple things in place as a result of that [consultation]”* (Interview 15). It is a tool to *“gather information from different sources quickly”* (Interview 2) which helps *“generate, hopefully accurate as possible, hypotheses”* (Interview 30). Consultation also can *“effect change at a higher level and a greater level”* (Interview 12) and there can be a *“ripple effect… across policy level or across class or a group or even a whole school”* (Interview 16). This means that "sometimes you might only need one or *two consultation sessions to make some good change"* (Interview 17).

#### 3.1.2.13 Varied space for approach

Another key mechanism through which consultation is effective is its versatility. *“Consultation is flexible”* (Interview 21) and a *“process that evolves all the time”* (Interview 24). They allow for the use of *“different strategies, different components”* (Interview 10) to meet the needs of the consultees. Because consultation can be flexible, it can adapt to a situation and therefore have a greater chance of a positive impact:

*I think the logistics of a consultation can remain the same, but the impact of a consultation can really vary. And… I don’t know how many other tools we have available that that’s the case for. So, if I think about the logistics for doing the BAS, or the logistics for doing a CBT session, I think that you very quickly become constrained by the way they were set up, whereas, the logistics for a consultation, getting some people in a room for a certain amount of time, allows for a flexibility. So… sometimes halfway through a consultation, you’ll discover a piece of information that is crucial and up until now completely unknown, and you can change tack. (Interview 2)*

### 3.1.3 Shared understanding

This theme centres around the importance and ways in which EPs create a common understanding of the situation between themselves and consultees.

#### 3.1.3.1 Different views

Almost every interviewee brought up the importance of gaining the views of different people and *“gaining multiple perspectives”* (Interview 21). This includes *“the voice of the child, voice of the family, voice of the teacher”* (Interview 17). It is particularly important to bring the voice of the CYP: *“being quite child centred… bringing the pupil voice into that discussion… [as] it’s often not appropriate to have the student in the room, especially if they’re younger”* (Interview 15). A few interviewees talked about the importance of gaining the views and including those with power in the system:

*I think in some ways, as well, in consultation, making sure trying to involve, at some stage or at some level, people within a school or organisation who hold power. So that might be a head or a deputy head. Just because they have a lot of power within that system, to reframe. (Interview 17)*

*…we are trying to become more active within the local authority as well. And I think that’s very important. Because otherwise if you work as an EP service in isolation, without connects- strong connections with the senior leadership team within the local authority, and with the senior leadership team within the schools, nobody’s gonna listen. (Interview 23)*

Consultation also allows for the *“understanding [of] different worlds views, different cultural… constructs”* (Interview 17) and one interviewee stated *“when people start to tell stories of things, it gives you some quite good insights into how they think and where… they’re stuck in their thinking”* (Interview 12). By gaining different views from consultees, the EP is better placed to make informed hypotheses (Interview 20). When there is a disagreement between home and school, consultation is an effective vehicle to *“bring that… discrepancy into the room and discuss it and see if we can come up with it with a kind of compromise or a way forward that… meets the needs of both parties, and particularly for the student as well”* (Interview 15).

#### 3.1.3.2 Information gather

A related code was the EP gathering information not directly related to the main concern: *“I find a lot out about the child, their background, and erm about the parents or family and what’s going went around them”* (Interview 8). This included *“[gathering] information from across the four areas of SEND”* (Interview 2). This helps *“inform [their] assessment”* (Interview 9). However, a number of interviewees made the point that consultation is much more than simply gathering information: *“the word ‘consultation’ might sometimes be interchangeably used with, actually, what’s really an information gathering process”* (Interview 24).

#### 3.1.3.3 Clarity

Over half the interviewees talked about the importance of gaining clarity in a variety of ways. This included for *“what the process might look like”* (Interview 20) as well as *“clarifying what people are saying, what the parent is saying, what the SENCO is saying, what the class teacher is saying”* (Interview 4). This done in the service of *“understanding the situation better and exploring and understanding it better”* (Interview 5). This allows for the EP to draw these strands together and *“come to some kind of conceptualisation towards the end”* (Interview 5).

#### 3.1.3.4 Setting out consultation plan

The establishing, by the EP, of the general structure for the consultation was cited by more than half the interviewees as an important feature of consultation. This was often done by exploring with all those involved *“what we’re hoping to get from the meeting, from the consultation”* (Interview 24) because this *“gives it a clear direction… [a] frame, [a] boundary”* (Interview 14). It also helps *“[manages] everyone’s expectations”* (Interview 14) and allows those involved to know if they have achieved what they wanted to achieve within the consultation (Interview 13).

#### 3.1.3.5 Language

Several interviewees brought up the importance of the language used within a consultation. This had two main strands: potential language difficulties due to English as a second language and the use of jargon by the professional. One of the barriers to effective consultation is *“lack of English language, from parents. It’s not always possible to have a translator… and even if you do… there are barriers… it’s difficult going through a third person. You have no idea… how accurately they’re translating”* (Interview 5). The other facet related to the technical language that is pervades psychology and how this is understood by the consultees:

*It takes a much higher level of skill to have a meaningful consultation with somebody who does not have… the privilege of having… lots of education, and… [a] big vocabulary and high level of verbal skill, than it does… for us to sit around in a team surrounded by people who are educated to doctorate level… But when you really need to try and get meaningful information in a respectful way from from somebody who finds language very hard, that’s… a whole… nother level of professional skill. (Interview 3)*

#### 3.1.3.6 Documentation

Documentation refers to the making of notes and summarising the contents of the consultation. One EP stated it was *“[their] least favourite part of the job… But unfortunately, it’s really important, because I think you’ve got an opportunity to write down and, kind of, what they call a narrative, like rescue the words”* (Interview 17). Another expressed more uniformly negative views towards documentation: *“what… will make consultations: not having to flippin’ write them up afterwards, we’d get twice as many done… I don’t understand why I’m writing about, the magic happens in the room”* (Interview 22). However, others were more positive: *“I think the written record is helpful of a consultation”* (Interview 5) as it gives another opportunity to give advice at a later date (Interview 30).

#### 3.1.3.7 EP explaining role

A small number of interviewees stated that making sure the consultees understand what their role is within the consultation is important: *“try and clarify what my role is and what it isn’t”* (Interview 14). This included *“[explaining] [their] involvement”* (Interview 14) and, to help this process, one interviewee talked about *“[doing] role of the EP insets, which we would offer every year, that talks about consultation and the model of psychology and what’s going to happen in the meeting”* (Interview 27).

### 3.1.4 Intervention

Another theme which arose was the value of consultation as an intervention in and of itself. This was done through three mechanisms: providing a space for the EP to change consultees perceptions; emotionally supporting consultees, and consultation being part of the assessment process.

#### 3.1.4.1 Changing perspectives

One of the main ways in which interviewees talked about changing perspectives was around *“extending the thought processes of the people involved”* (Interview 10). A common idea among the interviewees was that the consultation *“facilitates that process of developing new meaning and new knowledge around a young person, or whatever the issue might be… reframing the way that people see it, which I think is a key element of change within consultation”* (Interview 17). The EP should also help others *“not [think] about a problem within a child, but [think] about a young person and how they interact with the environment that they are in”* (Interview 13). This change can also happen at a policy level, as one interviewee stated that consultation was the best vehicle to help schools become more inclusive (Interview 23). Consultation can also be used to help realign people’s priorities and view towards those involved. Because of the highly pressurised nature of the systems we work in, *“family, and school can quite often fall out of sync and having a conversation together reminds everyone, they’re on the same team”* (Interview 2).

This perspective change was not limited to the consultees views towards the CYP or situation; it extended to their views of consultation itself. One interviewee talked about how for *“[their] schools, once they were introduced to [consultation], and once they tried it, they really liked it”* and they could appreciate that *“consultation is a good model”* (Interview 11)

#### 3.1.4.2 Supporting consultees

Another point many EPs made was that consultations can often be used to help emotionally contain and provide support for the consultees: *…there is also something about consultation with schools that I find that can be emotionally containing for staff who perhaps are highly distressed (Interview 13)*. These *“therapeutic benefits”* (Interview 2) in a *“therapeutic style of meeting”* (Interview 22) often come through high levels of *“acceptance and empathy”* (Interview 13) because often consultees want to *“communicate with someone… how challenging it is for them”* (Interview 17). However, this was an area in which a few EPs judged that tech consultations were less effective as *“not being able to be physically there, as the sounding board, as their containing person… I couldn’t be that… in a virtual environment”* (Interview 17)

#### 3.1.4.3 Assessment

A few interviewees saw the consultation as *“part of the assessment process”* (Interview 3) and as a *“powerful way to carry out assessment”* (Interview 19). This is because consultation can *“[lay] the foundation for an application for an EHCP assessment”* (Interview 2).

### 3.1.5 Strengths-based

Another emergent theme centred around the focus of consultation: it being strengths-based as it focuses on bringing out the skills of the consultees, highlighting what work is already having a positive impact for the cYP, and discussing the positive qualities of the CYP.

#### 3.1.5.1 Empowering individuals

One of the key features of an effective consultation is *“helping people to identify their own resources”* (Interview 10) and *“activate better existing skills and knowledge and competence”* (Interview 13)

#### 3.1.5.2 What’s already working

One aspect which was frequently discussed was the exploration of what was already working for the CYP. Interviewees talked about “[trying] to build more of a strengths-based and positive outlook, and look at what’s working well, to shift things on” (Interview 22) and “trying to find what has been tried, what has worked” (Interview 28).

#### 3.1.5.3 CYP strengths

The exploration of the strengths and positive qualities of the CYP was also mentioned by several interviewees, such as: “it’s exploring skills and competencies alongside the problem” (Interview 27). A common idea was the consultations help reinvigorate the consultees and using the skills they already have:

*“… building on what they potentially knew, but didn’t really know what to do with it and… empowering and recognising that they were potentially able to sort out themselves.” (Interview 19)*

*“… a decent consultation… can help them feel empowered and perhaps a little bit reinfused about what their role could be.” (Interview 13)*

A related idea was the empowering of those the consultees engage with, as a *“rising tide lifts all boats, in the sense that the person to whom I can give the consultation will very often generalise the advice from one case to another, from one session to another, from… one class to another”* (Interview 7)

### 3.1.6 Future facing

The final theme of the super code Internal factors focused on the idea of the consultation as helping to give a path forward for the consultees. This included the creation of goals for the CYP and the nature of consultation helping to prevent problems for other CYP in the future.

#### 3.1.6.1 Way forward

Over a third of the interviewees talked about how the nature of an effective consultation gives consultees a structure for how to move forward in supporting the CYP: *“it provides a mechanism to think about the future and to move forwards”* (Interview 15). Through consultation, the EP can *“elicit change or move people forward in a positive way”* (Interview 22) as well as identify the relevant support for the CYP (Interview 5). This is different from identifying specific goals for the CYP as consultations aren’t *“always about solution finding because ways forwards aren’t always solutions”* (Interview 3).

#### 3.1.6.2 Goal setting

For almost a third of interviewees, the identification of precise outcomes for the CYP to work towards is an important feature of consultation:

*“… for it to be consultation, I think there needs to be a clear, focus on finding, even if it’s not a solution, but on coming up with a plan and… having a clear goal in mind.” (Interview 11)*

*“… [a] key component is goal setting, actually, and thinking about futures, and what the next steps would be.” (Interview 17)*

However, one interviewee argued that not identifying clear goals does not *“necessarily make it an ineffective consultation”* (Interview 3).

#### 3.1.6.3 Preventative

Because of the emphasis on upskilling consultees within consultations, an EP using consultation can help prevent issues arising with other CYP within the school:

*“when you’re working with a teacher or with families or with different staff, actually the learning might be, the focus might be around a specific child, but actually that learning and that reframing can then be taken and be used preventatively with other young people or in the classroom” (Interview 17)*

By using consultations in different ways, such as regular features of school life, *“they would become more preventative”* (Interview 14).

#### 3.1.6.4 Ideas for future EP work

A few interviewees brought up the importance of using consultations to talk about and negotiate future EP involvement with the CYP (Interview 24). This might include an observation of the CYP in class (Interview 4).

### 3.1.7 Conditions

The first theme of the super code External factors related to the conditions of the consultations, including who was involved, how much time was set aside for the consultation, and the space in which it was held.

#### 3.1.7.1 Key people

Almost every interviewee cited having *“all the key stakeholders”* (Interview 11) involved in the consultation as a key aspect. Consultation was widely regarded as an *“indirect service method”* (Interview 17) so involved working with a range of people, including *“the SENCO, the class teacher, and both the mum and dad of that child”* (Interview 11). Many interviewees state that it was crucial to have *“the person that has most knowledge about the child”* (Interview 10) or the *“people who are most concerned”* (Interview 21). This included the person who *“has the most influence”* (Interview 14) as they will be the person who will implement the agreed interventions.

A number of interviewees highlighted the importance of bringing the voice of the CYP into the consultation, either by actively involving them in the consultation (Interview 21) or through those that know the CYP well (Interview 15).

Many interviewees identified difficulties with conducting consultations in secondary schools:

*…if you’ve got multiple people working with a young person, and actually the more people you have, the less anybody feels any responsibility for them… you’re trying to find that person who is most concerned and actually they don’t exist. (Interview 13)*

*…it’s very difficult to get parents, teachers, parents and teachers around the same table, at the same time. (Interview 18)*

#### 3.1.7.2 Time

Over two thirds of the interviewees brought up time as an important part of a consultation. This mainly took the form of interviewees stating that the biggest barrier to effective consultations was a lack of time within the consultation, for example: *“I don’t think you can have, say an, effective 20 minute consultation. It’s not a consultation”* (Interview 26). This is because you need time for those involved to move beyond the “black and white way of thinking” about labels (Interview 18).

A related issue centred around the amount of time bought in by schools. Because the majority of interviewees either worked for fully traded services or as private EPs, the schools they worked with only had a limited amount of contact time. This led to several interviewees discussing the difficulty of bringing about change with schools because of the time limits placed on them (Interview 12).

This was an area where tech consultations provided an advantage, as EPs can save time by not travelling between different schools (Interviews 13, 17, & 29).

#### 3.1.7.3 Resources

Resources was often cited important feature to consultations. This had several dimensions, including the ability of the consultees to enact change for the CYP due to resource constraints:

*The biggest barrier I come across is people saying, ‘Well, that’s lovely and I think we’ve come up with some fabulous ideas. However, I don’t think management will let me do that’ as some sort of variety of, variation on that theme. So top down squashing. Erm, and that is, you know, it’s budgetary, it’s time-bound, it’s people saying, ‘Well, we don’t have the physical resources to be able to do that.’ (Interview 16)*

*… we might have all the ideas in the world around how someone might be supported. And it doesn’t, I guess, affect the consultation in itself so much but it affects, it does affect the type of dialogue we might have around, schools and just the lack in, the workforce, the lack in staff, they’re lacking the resourcing to really support some of these young people in the way that we would like them to be. I think that shapes consultations. (Interview 17)*

Another dimension is the resources school have to allow staff the time off from lessons to fully engage with a consultation: *“schools thinking ‘We don’t have the time and the capacity to free up staff to come and, come and sit and have a consultation’”* (Interview 15).

A third dimension related to the resources available to the schools to buy in EP time:

*… I’ve certainly got schools that repeatedly say to me that they would love more EP time but they can’t afford it in a traded environment and lots of… competing things that they have to spend money on. (Interview 21)*

#### 3.1.7.4 Space

A number of interviewees identified the importance of creating a space for effective consultations to occur. This encompassed both the physical space of the location and the mental space to be able to deal with complex experiences:

*… sometimes people have asked to do consultations in rooms where there are other people and it’s just messy. (Interview 2)*

*I think the room that you meet in is quite important and the way that it’s set up… so… it doesn’t seem like an interview situation. (Interview 9)*

This aspect is particularly important for tech consultations as these almost always occur in the EP’s and consultee’s home:

*… it can be difficult for staff to really, and parents, to really engage with the process, if they’ve got children running around and things going on. So… doing it where they can’t have a separate space, emotionally as well as physically, can be tricky. (Interview 14)*

*… having to make sure that doors are secure, so children can’t run in at particular points. (Interview 24)*

#### 3.1.7.5 Confidential

Several interviewees brought up the importance of confidentiality for what was discussed in the consultation: *“we want to have a confidential place to reflect”* (Interview 22). This helps *“contribute towards building that kind of environment where people feel happy to share”* (Interview 15). The importance of confidentiality was made more important for many interviewees by the unexpected transition to tech consultations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with several identifying issues around security, for example: “the first step is finding an effective platform that’s got enough safety features for us to be able to… carry out a consultation” (Interview 10).

### 3.1.8 Context

The second code within the External factors super theme was related to the general context that consultations are conducted within.

#### 3.1.8.1 Education systems

EPs work within many systems. These can all impact on individual consultations and on how EPs work through consultation. For example, *“there are schools who don’t particularly value [consultation] and just want us to do assessments”* (Interview 5). As one interviewee stated, *“all the work of the EPs is determined by the context in which it’s set and by the organisational agendas in which it’s set”* (Interview 10). Several interviewees talked about the bureaucracy of the education system impacting on consultations and EP work as a whole:

*…[the] role of the EP is less problem solving, it’s more ticking a box, more bureaucratic exercise rather than a solving facilitation. (Interview 10)*

*…there is a bureaucracy around an education, health care plan, in terms of certain reports being written, certain hurdles being gone through and certain assessments taking place. And so… we’re not doing any thinking, we’re merely following a bureaucratic process. (Interview 6)*

Other wider systemic issues related to how society as a whole sees additional needs:

*…the medical model is so predominant… And I often find that those explanations for, learning and development and behaviours, can dominate conversations… ADHD, ASD… they are definitely a barrier to creating more effective, positive change. (Interview 17)*

*…there’s enormous pressure, ever increasing pressure on schools, to get results. And… [that’s] antithetical to consultation. (Interview 25)*

A number of EPs identified operating in traded services as a barrier to consultation:

*…I feel like it’s the situation in which we work, the whole traded model, which means that consultation is, an addition… we just have to do it to get the information. It’s not… valued as… a way of working in and of itself. (Interview 8)*

*…I find within a traded service, you’re quite constricted, in lots of ways about what the school expect in terms of the use of your time. (Interview 9)*

*…I feel like… particularly in the traded service model, that dynamic is really hard to manage. And… it’s been a real difficulty to introduce consultation as a working modelling in many of my schools. (Interview 11)*

Another issue that was identified was the views that school staff had towards change because of the people with more power in the system: *“SENCOs feeling unable to make change because of the head teacher”* (Interview 23).

#### 3.1.8.2 Individual differences

Almost five sixths of the interviewees brought up the characteristics of those involved in the consultation as an important feature of a consultation. The personalities, histories, and on the day mood of the consultees will likely impact on a consultation:

*… that’s going to play out in the room, in different ways, depending on the circumstances, the resilience of individuals, position, their own history, etc, etc. And will play out differently day to day, with the same people. (Interview 25)*

*… there are parents who just don’t like coming into school, are barred from school… have such a difficult relationship with school that is not possible. Physically can’t get there because of health issues or younger children. (Interview 5)*

*I think there’s always going to be a level of… personality involved, that with some people, it is easier to… get that… feeling of engagement higher than it is with others… I think there is some variability, just because of human nature and the different personalities of the people that you meet. (Interview 12)*

The personality of the EP was identified by a few interviewees as potentially impacting on a consultation, for example: *“I think the personality of the individual EP can have a big impact”* (Interview 24). EP confidence in their own skill and knowledge was also identified as an important feature (Interview 14).

This variability in the presentation of consultation was viewed as a potential negative for consultation; if a teacher or parent was told they had to attend a consultation they *“wouldn’t know what to expect because it would depend so much on the individual”* (Interview 11) because *“everybody has gone on their own and done totally different things”* (Interview 23).

#### 3.1.8.3 Understanding of SEN

A few interviewees stated that the way a school understands additional needs within an education context can have an impact on consultations. Some schools cleave to a more traditional ‘within-child’ understanding of additional needs, particularly secondary schools (Interview 14). As such, it is much harder to encourage these schools to adopt consultation as a way of working (Interview 11).

#### 3.1.8.4 EP workload

Almost a third of interviewees identified the amount of work EPs typically do as being a barrier to effective consultations. This was because the volume of work prohibits being able to fully engage with a case:

*… when you are on the day job, and you are 24-7 doing EP stuff, and you have… a stupid amount of cases and a stupid amount of schools and you cannot think… you are running on… empty (Interview 23)*

*… you’re so tired and stressed… you’re not really thinking as well… you can’t reflect on it and come up with different ideas and solutions because… you just have to get that written, get it sent off, and get on to the next thing. (Interview 9)*

One interviewee identified the positive benefit of moving to tech consultations because *“I have a lot more time in my day, which means that I actually have a lot more space to think about children and cases”* (Interview 18).

#### 3.1.8.5 School knowledge

A few interviewees stated that having *“in depth knowledge of schools and how they work”* (Interview 7), in particular secondary schools (Interview 22), helped their consultations be more effective. One interviewee explained that having good knowledge of the whole system differentiated EPs from clinical psychologists because EPs are “fluent… in that… understanding and situational context” (Interview 21).

#### 3.1.8.6 Outside system

Almost a third of interviewees stated that the EP working outside the school system helped their consultations be more effective:

*I think being an external person helps… you are able to ask some of the questions of parents that school can’t, you can also ask questions of school that parents [can’t] and take on that more challenging aspects. (Interview 5)*

*… we have to get meta to the situation and not get too bogged down and immersed in the nitty gritty. So keeping meta and keeping perspective on it, I think is a skill that EPs can bring, that really helps. And that’s the beauty of not working in the system, is the beauty of going in and out of schools. (Interview 27)*

POTENTIALLY USE ELSEWHERE The EP is gathering and summarising the ideas and saying, ‘Given what we’ve discussed, and the ideas we’ve heard so far, what is going to make most sense for this young person and what’s going to make most difference?’ And then it’s getting the ideas from the people. (Interview 27)

Collaboration was identified as a key factor not only because it increased the consultee’s willingness to engage but because it increased the chances of the recommendations being put in place:

I think if you have a really good consultation and you can actually problem solve together, and the people that you’re consulting with, actually come up with some of the ideas, then it’s much more likely for those interventions to happen. (Interview 20)

it underpins all of the work that we do with schools. So I would say every school visit, team meetings, organisational level consultations, we would be applying the same psychologies, the same frameworks. (Interview 27)

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## 3.2 Questionnaire

## Observations

No pair-wise simplifications could be made as there were no consultations which saw change which differed by only 1 feature.

# Discussion

Buy-in was facilitated by the EP not taking an expert stance and creating a collaborative and sharing environment for the consultees to explore their thoughts.

There was a large disparity between the number of inductive and deductive codes and the number of instances of each code, with the inductive codes being recorded more frequently than deductive codes. This suggests that the current literature does not accurately reflect how EPs are using consultation in practice.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

1. What is your role?
2. How do you define consultation? What does it mean to you?
3. What key words would you use?
4. How often have you engaged with consultation?
5. What history of consultation training do you have?
6. Does your current EPS value consultation/operate a consultation-based service?
7. Why do you use consultation?
8. What do you believe are the key features of a consultation? What needs to be present for it to be more than a conversation?
9. What features do you most frequently see (what is seen may be different what they believe is effective)?
10. What do you believe are the key features of an effective consultation (including examples)?
11. What makes them effective?
12. How could consultations be more effective?
13. What are the barriers to effective consultation?
14. If you could not use consultation, what work would you use instead?
15. What is the unique contribution of consultation?
16. What has changed with regards to your consultation work during lockdown?
17. How have you found this change?
18. Advantages/disadvantages?
19. Will you do anything differently after this is over?
20. Should the service/EPs as a whole do things differently?

## Appendix 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Definition |
| Info gather | Fact finding or discussion of non-key concern(s). |
| Suggesting solutions | The EP volunteering a solution to the presenting concern. |
| CYP strengths | Any discussion of the CYP’s positive qualities: attributes, personality, actions, etc. |
| Discussing what’s already working | Discussion (including evaluation) of any intervention/change which has improved the current situation for the CYP. |
| Everyone’s contributions valued | Consultees giving their view on something e.g. presenting hypotheses, suggesting solutions, or the EP explicitly acknowledging someone for their contribution. Not just the consultee(s) speaking/giving an answer to a factual question. |
| Understanding presenting problem | Discussion of any aspect of the main presenting concern(s) including scope, environmental factors, exceptions, etc. and why a problem may be present ([S. Sheridan, Richards, and Smoot 2000](#ref-sheridanSchoolConsultation2000)) |
| Summarising | The EP saying back what has previously been stated by consultees in the consultation (potentially building on it but not necessarily). |
| Planning/implementing treatments | Discussion and agreement between the consultant and consultee on any interventions that will be implemented to support the CYP ([S. Sheridan, Richards, and Smoot 2000](#ref-sheridanSchoolConsultation2000)). |
| EP using expert knowledge | EP discussing topics which they have knowledge of (from both professional experience and academic reading) within school psychology theory and practice. |
| EP explaining role | EP explicitly talking about the work of an EP and its purpose. |
| Setting out plan for consultation | Discussion of what will happen over the course of the consultation. |
| Ideas for future EP work | Discussion of potential work an EP can do in the future, such as consultation, assessment, observation, etc. |
| Empowering individuals | Any comments or questions which aim to increase the skills of the consultees (teachers, parents, SENCOs, etc.)/upskilling consultees so they can solve their problems ([Nolan and Moreland 2014](#X3cf033954122fdae817522787d9ffddf4f32839)). |
| School knowledge | Any comments or questions which increase understanding of how the school works. |

## Appendix 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Level | Feature |
| Solution-focused | Suggesting solutions; Highlighting the strengths of the CYP; Discussing what is already working; Exploring exceptions; Suggesting ideas for future EP work. |
| Problem analysis | Fully understanding the presenting problem; How to implement the interventions |
| Organisation and knowledge | Gathering information; Summarising; Using knowledge; Setting out a plan; Explaining what EPs do; School knowledge |
| Valuing everyone | Everyone contributing; empowering those involved |

## Appendix 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Code | Definition |
| Assessment | How consultation can be a form of assessment. |
| Changing perspectives | Any discussion of the EP changing the perspectives of consultees during consultation or the understanding of consultation by consultees. |
| Clarity | Gaining clarity regarding the issues through formulation etc. |
| Collaborative | Any discussion of a joint or collaborative aspect of consultation. |
| Confidential | Confidentiality and privacy |
| Consultee view of consultation | How the consultees view consultation and understand it, as well as discussion of increasing understanding through training. |
| Consultee views of EPs | How the consultee views the role of the EP, including as the expert. |
| Different views | Gaining the views of a variety of different people, including the young person, to explore narratives and triangulate evidence. |
| Documentation | Writing of notes or reports which detail what happened. |
| Education systems | How the school systems and bureaucratic processes of the British education system impact consultation. |
| EP encouraging engagement | The EP being engaged in the consultation through active listening to challenge narratives and facilitate discussion. |
| EP view of consultation | The EPs understanding of consultation. |
| EP view of EPs | The EPs understanding of their role, including as the expert. |
| EP workload | How the high workload EPs experience impacts consultation. |
| Goal setting | Explicit discussion of outcomes and goal setting. |
| Individual differences | How the personalities and histories of the consultees and consultors impacts consultation. |
| Key people | Having the people who are most concerned present. |
| Language | Using language that can be understood by all as well as issues regarding English as an Additional Language. |
| Preparation | Time for the consultees and consultors to prepare. |
| Preventative | How consultation can help prevent issues arising or exacerbating. |
| Questioning | Use of a wide range of questions within consultation for a multitude of purposes, including to explore and challenge. |
| Rapport | The importance of relationships with those involved and how it can be developed. |
| Reflective | Reflecting on an individual consultation, receiving feedback, or having a review consultation to explore how the situation has progressed. |
| Reflexive | In consultation checking, by the EP, of how they and others might be affected by the discussion as well as what they are saying and why. |
| Resources | How a lack of resources from the school can impact on consultation, including not giving teachers enough time for them. |
| Space | Having both the physical and mental space to engage with consultation. |
| Supporting consultees | EPs providing therapeutic support for consultees during a consultation. |
| Time | Having enough time within the consultation to maximise its use. |
| Understanding of SEN | How consultees and schools see special educational needs in children and how it impacts consultation. |
| Use of aids | Using aids such as Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope etc. |
| Way forward | General statements about how consultation can provide a way forward. |
| Willing to engage | Consultees being willing to engage with the process of consultation. |

## Appendix 5

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Code | Definition |
| Consultee ownership | Consultees having a sense of responsibility for what will happen next to support the CYP. |
| Consultees as experts | Viewing consultees as experts in the lives of the child or as teachers of the child who have valuable knowledge to share. |
| Efficient | Being able to impact at multiple levels, over time, and have wide ranging impacts. |
| Outside system | EPs being outside the school system giving them a meta perspective, a new way of seeing things, which allows them to challenge and explore. |
| Realistic | The recommendations made are realistic to the setting and capabilities of those involved, including regarding resources, and are time bound. |
| Varied space for approach | Consultation being a highly flexible vehicle to support CYP. |

## Appendix 6

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Code | File n | Total code n |
| Everyone’s contributions valued | 14 | 33 |
| CYP strengths | 7 | 9 |
| Empowering individuals | 19 | 68 |
| Exception seeking | 5 | 8 |
| EP explaining role | 5 | 5 |
| Ideas for future EP work | 4 | 4 |
| Information gathering | 18 | 48 |
| EP using expert knowledge | 30 | 223 |
| Understanding presenting problem | 16 | 35 |
| School knowledge | 3 | 4 |
| Setting out plan for consultation | 16 | 31 |
| Suggesting solutions | 11 | 14 |
| Summarising | 6 | 7 |
| Planning/ implementing treatments | 8 | 15 |
| Discussing what’s already working | 11 | 21 |
| Assessment | 5 | 14 |
| Changing perspectives | 25 | 118 |
| Clarity | 17 | 37 |
| Collaborative | 29 | 212 |
| Confidential | 10 | 13 |
| Consultee view of consultation | 28 | 155 |
| Consultee views of EPs | 26 | 84 |
| Different views | 27 | 150 |
| Documentation | 8 | 10 |
| Education systems | 27 | 134 |
| EP encouraging engagement | 29 | 119 |
| EP view of consultation | 22 | 77 |
| EP view of EPs | 14 | 28 |
| EP workload | 7 | 16 |
| Goal setting | 13 | 21 |
| Individual differences | 24 | 47 |
| Key people | 27 | 81 |
| Language | 8 | 13 |
| Preparation | 10 | 22 |
| Preventative | 5 | 5 |
| Questioning | 19 | 43 |
| Rapport | 26 | 91 |
| Reflective | 26 | 110 |
| Reflexive | 9 | 21 |
| Resources | 15 | 22 |
| Space | 15 | 20 |
| Supporting consultees | 12 | 27 |
| Time | 22 | 61 |
| Understanding of SEN | 3 | 7 |
| Use of aids | 10 | 22 |
| Way forward | 13 | 22 |
| Willing to engage | 19 | 41 |
| Consultee ownership | 15 | 27 |
| Consultees as experts | 5 | 6 |
| Efficient | 18 | 43 |
| Outside system | 8 | 12 |
| Realistic | 7 | 11 |
| Varied space for approach | 10 | 15 |

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