

- Title: *A Systematic Review: Exploring the Impact of Parental Paranoid Schizophrenia on Children and Young People.*
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- MA Children and Young People's Mental Health: ECAS7007.



Introduction

Rationale

- Parental psychosis increases developmental risk (Gladstone et al., 2023; Southall, 2025).

Paranoid schizophrenia involves:

- Persecutory beliefs.
- Heightened threat perception.
- Pervasive mistrust (APA, 2022; Heckeroth, 2023).

- Paranoia-related secrecy and mistrust (Darlington et al., 2022; Reuprert & Maybery, 2021).

Statistics

- UK: ~800,000 CYP care for a parent with severe mental illness (Coker, 2023).
Global: 2–8% (Joseph et al., 2023).

Limitation

- Prevalence reflects severe mental illness broadly rather than paranoid schizophrenia specifically (Bird et al., 2021; Radley et al., 2023).



Theoretical Framework.



- Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969).
- Caregiver emotional inconsistency and threat (Amos et al., 2024; Southall, 2025).
- Developmental Trauma Perspective (Cook et al., 2005; van der Kolk, 2005).
- Chronic relational threat (Humphreys et al., 2022).
- Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
- Child development - interacting family, educational and service environments (Darlington et al., 2022; Featherstone et al., 2023).
- ACE - Adverse Childhood Experiences Framework (Felitti et al., 1998).
- Cumulative exposure to adversity increases long-term developmental vulnerability (Finkelhor, 2023; Hughes et al., 2023).

- **Strength**

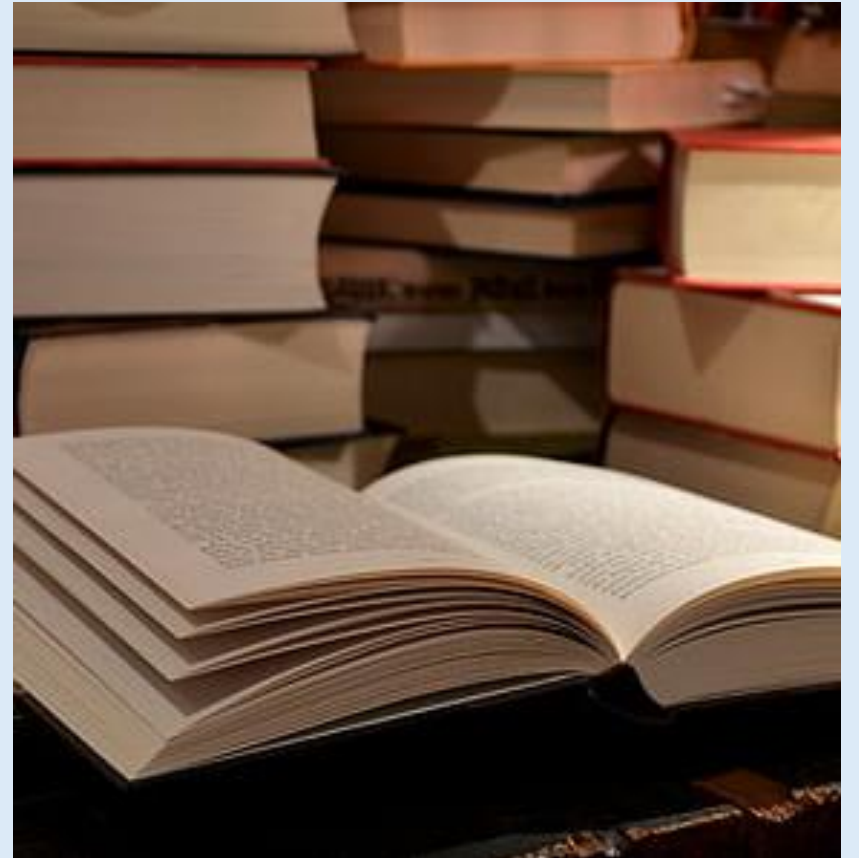
Provides a multi-level understanding of CYP experiences - supported by consistent qualitative findings across contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Felitti et al., 1998; MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Rahmani et al., 2022; Villena-Jimena et al., 2023).

- **Limitation**

Small qualitative or cross-cultural samples (Chen et al., 2021; Ni & Wang, 2023; Radley et al., 2022; Villena-Jimena et al., 2023).

Literature

- MacDonald & McLaughlin (2024) - UK - IPA - $n = 6$ young adult carers (all female), aged 19–24..
- Strength: rich experiential depth (Dobener et al., 2022).
- Limitation: small, retrospective sample (Bird et al., 2021; Harries et al., 2023; Radley et al., 2023).
- Rahmani et al. (2022) - Iran - interviews - $n = 18$ adolescents, aged 13–17.
- Strength: direct CYP perspective (Strand & Boström, 2021).
- Limitation: limited transferability (Villena-Jimena et al., 2023).



Methodology



Design

Systematic literature review (2018–2025)



Search strategy

Seven databases: ScienceDirect, JSTOR, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar (Tyndall, 2010).



Boolean search across four facets: parental mental illness; CYP; professional perspectives; qualitative experience



Reference lists manually screened



Quality appraisal

PRISMA-P; COREQ; AACODS

Key inclusion criteria

- **Empirical qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods studies.**
- **Parental schizophrenia/psychosis with paranoia-related traits.**
- **Participants: CYP, retrospective adults, or professionals.**
- **English language; peer-reviewed or formal reports.**

Key exclusion criteria

- **No child or professional perspective.**
- **Not specific to schizophrenia/psychosis.**
- **Insufficient methodological detail or no live participants.**

Table of Superordinate and subordinate themes

Themes from the literature	Key subthemes in the literature	Refined themes (present study)	Subthemes (present study)	Representative studies	Conceptual development
Emotional disconnection and mistrust	Emotional withdrawal; fragile bonds	Theme 1: Relational Disruption in the Parent–Child Dyad	Emotional withdrawal and disconnection	Villena-Jimena et al. (2023); Ni & Wang (2023)	Reframed with attachment and developmental risk focus
Disrupted family roles and communication	Role reversal; hypervigilance; premature responsibility	Theme 1: Relational Disruption in the Parent–Child Dyad	Role reversal and emotional hypervigilance	MacDonald & McLaughlin (2024); Rahmani et al. (2022)	Reinterprets hypervigilance as burden rather than resilience
Barriers to professional and educational support	Stigma; secrecy; mistrust of services	Theme 2: Systemic Barriers to Engagement and Support	Mistrust of professionals and institutions	Oakes et al. (2023); Radley et al. (2021); Villena-Jimena et al. (2023)	Extends to safeguarding and service-level processes
Concealment in professional contexts	Non-disclosure; emotional masking	Theme 2: Systemic Barriers to Engagement and Support	Emotional masking by children	Bird et al. (2021); Rahmani et al. (2022)	Highlights hidden need within educational/professional settings
Limited intervention adaptation	Generic programmes; low engagement	Theme 3: Intervention Gaps and Adaptation Challenges	Limited paranoia-specific adaptations	Radley et al. (2022); Chen et al. (2021)	Identifies lack of paranoia-specific frameworks
Practitioner challenges	Resistance; perceived intrusiveness	Theme 3: Intervention Gaps and Adaptation Challenges	Professional struggles in implementation	Oakes et al. (2023); Radley et al. (2021)	Adds practitioner perspective on implementation barriers

Results



Superordinate Theme 1: Relational Disruption in the Parent–Child Dyad

- Relational strain associated with parental mistrust, withdrawal and emotional burden (MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Rahmani et al., 2022).
- Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969).

Subordinate Theme 1.1 – Emotional withdrawal and disconnection

- Reduced warmth and emotional availability
- Fragile or inconsistent parent–child relationships (MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Rahmani et al., 2022).

Subordinate Theme 1.2 – Role reversal and emotional hypervigilance.

- CYP monitor parental mood and behaviour
- Premature caregiving and emotional exhaustion (MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Rahmani et al., 2022).

Critical interpretation

Hypervigilance (Chen et al., 2021; Rahmani et al., 2022).



Discussion

•Links

- Attachment Theory (Amos et al., 2024; Bowlby, 1969).
- Emotional withdrawal (MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024).
- Developmental trauma perspectives (Ensink et al., 2020; Humphreys et al., 2022).
- Emotional monitoring and early caregiving responsibilities (MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024).
- ACE framework (Felitti et al., 1998).
- Reported emotional burden and exhaustion (Hughes et al., 2023; MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Rahmani et al., 2022).

• Critical limits

- Attachment security, trauma symptoms & developmental pathways (*Harries et al., 2023; MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024*).
- Small qualitative samples (*MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Radley et al., 2023*).
- Focus on individual experience (*MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024; Reuprert & Maybery, 2021*).

Conclusion For Systematic Literature Review.



Key findings



Emotional withdrawal, role reversal and hidden developmental vulnerability (Gumley et al., 2021; MacDonald & McLaughlin, 2024).



Strength



Relational disruption and caregiving burden (Rahmani et al., 2022).



Conclusiones

Limitation

Small qualitative samples (*Harries et al., 2023; Radley et al., 2023*).

Focuses primarily on CYP or parent experience (*Maybery et al., 2023; Schrank et al., 2022*).

Gap:

Paranoia-related developmental risk - conceptualised within practice.

Rationale for IPA:

To explore professional meaning-making and decision-making.

Overall aim:

Provide contextually grounded insight.

Introduction: Qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study (IPA).



Title: Exploring the Impact of Parental Paranoid Schizophrenia During Childhood: Insights from Professionals Working or Have Worked with Affected Children and Young People.

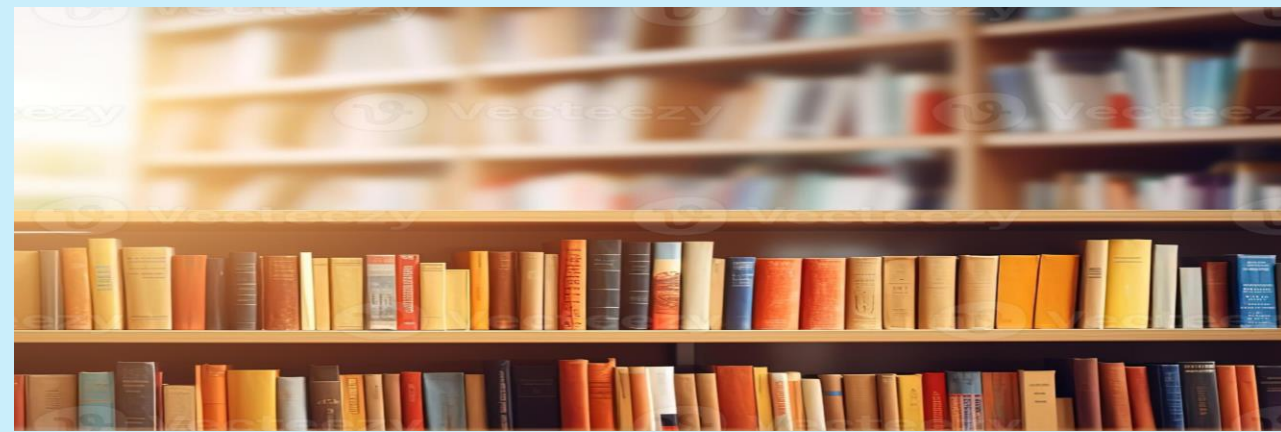
Aims: To explore the Impact of Parental Paranoid Schizophrenia During Childhood: Insights from Professionals Working or Have Worked with Affected Children and Young people.

The three research question:

1. How do professionals perceive the influence of parental paranoid schizophrenia on the social, cognitive and emotional development of CYP?
2. How do professional insights relate to existing psychological theories and literature on child development, attachment, trauma and parental mental illness?
3. How might professional observations inform safeguarding practice, trauma-informed care and inter-agency responses when supporting individuals affected by parental paranoid schizophrenia?

Literature

- Pierce et al. (2020) – UK population study (N > 2 million children)
- Elevated socioeconomic and developmental adversity among CYP (Darlington et al., 2022).
- Gumley et al. (2021) – UK, n = 40
Clinical study with parents receiving NHS mental health services.
- Paranoia-related mistrust - emotional withdrawal - constrained reflective parenting (*Chen et al., 2022; Onwumere et al., 2023*).



- Schrank et al. (2022) – UK, n = 31
Professional views: Mistrust as barrier to engagement and safeguarding.
- Parental mistrust: identified as a key barrier to engagement (Platt et al., 2021; Riebschleger et al., 2022).
- **Critical note.**
- Research remains largely cross-sectional and service-engaged (Darlington et al., 2022; Maybery et al., 2023).



Participants

- Seven professionals (6 female, 1 male).
Mean age 41.7 (33–52).
Mixed professional roles.

Design

- Qualitative IPA study.
One-to-one semi-structured interviews.

Ethical approval

- Granted by UWTSD.
- Informed consent - obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality - Data were securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality.
- Participants debriefed and provided with support information.

Data Collection

- Ethical approval was granted by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- Participants were recruited from Mind in Carmarthen and all had professional experience supporting children and young people affected by parental paranoid schizophrenia.
- Participants were provided with information sheets and completed consent, demographic and debrief forms prior to participation.
- Face-to-face, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted between November 2025 and January 2026.
- Interviews were audio-recorded (Dictaphone) with consent and took place in a confidential setting. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw within two weeks.

○ The Three Key Questions For This Presentation Explored:

- 1. *How do you interpret the emotional impact on children or young people in these circumstances*
- 2. *How do you interpret the cognitive or psychological impact on children or young people who grow up with a parent experiencing paranoid schizophrenia?*
- 3. *How do you interpret the cognitive or psychological impact on children or young people who grow up with a parent experiencing paranoid schizophrenia?*

Data Analysis

- Verbatim transcription completed.
- Anonymisation: All names changed for confidentiality.
- Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2015; 2022).
- Inductive coding: Themes developed iteratively.
- Reflexivity: Supported through supervision.

Table of Superordinate & Subordinate Themes

1. Growing Up in a Climate of Psychological Threat.

1.1 Chronic Hypervigilance and Anticipatory Anxiety.

1.2 Fear, Confusion, and Emotional Insecurity.

1.3 Cognitive Overload and Disrupted Attentional Capacity.

2. Premature Responsibility and Disrupted Development.

2.1 Role Reversal and Emotional Caretaking.

2.2 Restricted Independence and Identity Formation.

3. Silence, Stigma and Barriers to Support.

3.1 Secrecy as a Learned Survival Strategy.

3.2 Stigma, Shame and Internalised Difference.

3.3 Mistrust of Services and Help-Seeking Inhibition.

Results: Superordinate Theme

Growing Up in a Climate of Psychological Threat: "people are a threat" (David, T3, P47, L1166).

- CYP's environments
- Anticipating danger
- Threat - Emotional, cognitive and behavioural functioning.



Subordinate Theme 1.1: Chronic Hypervigilance & Anticipatory Anxiety: “monitoring constantly” (Gwynedd, T6, P78, L1928).

CYP described as living in persistent alertness and threat monitoring.

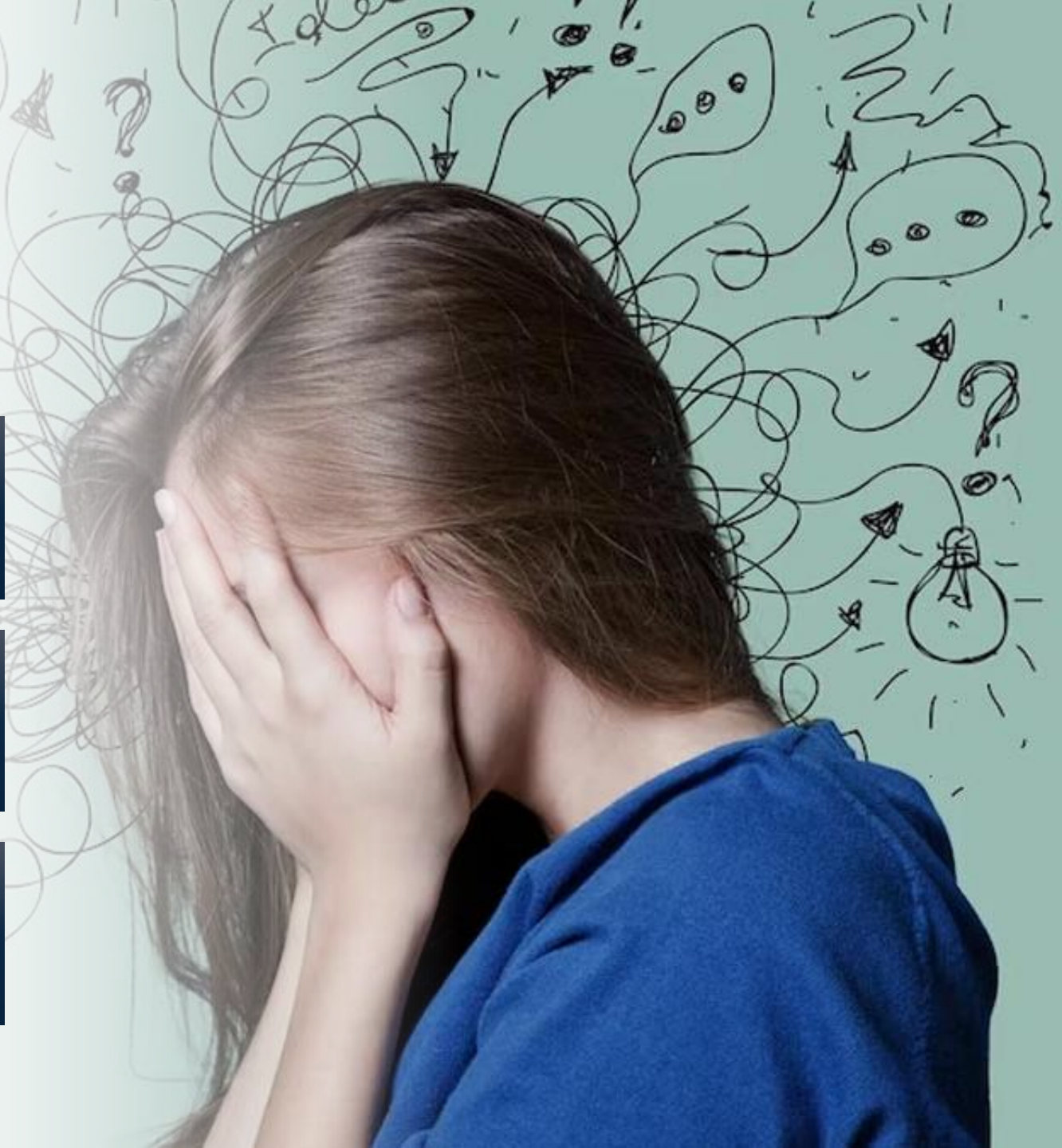
Gwynedd described a child who: “couldn’t relax” (T6, P77, L1903–1904).

Rose emphasised cognitive anticipation: “constantly planning for worst case scenarios” (T5, P63, L1554).

Angharad observed behavioural vigilance who: “scan the room constantly” (T2, P15, L353).

Sarah highlighted relational monitoring: “listening to his tone of voice, watching his mood” (T1, P3, L57–59).

Critical interpretation:
Vigilance - adaptive threat-management.





Subtheme 1.2 – Fear, confusion & Emotional insecurity: “I caused this or I made them angry or I’m the problem” (Marleen, T7, P104, L2589).

- Threat - Self-blame and responsibility.
- Marleen: “I’ve done something wrong” (T7, P96, L2377–2378).
- Rose: “I have to be good so Mum doesn’t get stressed” (T5, P61, L1510–1511).
- David: “carrying tension all the time... and there’s guilt” (T3, P31, L763–765).
- Sarah: “loved her dad but didn’t feel emotionally held” (T1, P4, L78–79).
- **Critical interpretation:**
- Emotional insecurity
- Disrupted relational safety - behavioural adaptation.

Discussion.

Superordinate Theme: Climate of Psychological Threat.

- Ongoing psychological threat shaping development.

Attachment processes

- Emotional insecurity, self-blame, reduced safety.
- Reduced emotional availability → relational insecurity (*Bowlby, 1969; Gumley et al., 2021*).

Trauma and cumulative stress

- Constant monitoring, threat anticipation.
- Chronic stress and vigilance over time (*Ensink et al., 2020; Humphreys et al., 2022; Felitti et al., 1998; Hughes et al., 2023*).
- **Practice context**
- Paranoia-related mistrust shapes safeguarding engagement (*Schrank et al., 2022*).



Critical considerations

- Based on professional interpretations only.
- Risk-focused accounts may overlook strengths.
- Single-service sample limits generalisation (*Maybery et al., 2023*).

Implications for practice

- Trauma-informed, relational responses (*Ensink et al., 2020; Maybery et al., 2023*).
- Behaviour understood within relational context (*Darlington et al., 2022*).
- Early identification and coordinated services (*Reupert & Maybery, 2021; Darlington et al., 2022*).

Strengths and Limitations of this study

Strengths

In-depth qualitative exploration - insight into paranoia-specific relational dynamics - mistrust and inter-agency decision (Rahmani et al., 2022; Strand & Boström, 2021).

Limitation

Small sample size - Reliance on professional perspectives. Limit representation - lived experience (Radley et al., 2023; Villena-Jimena et al., 2023).



Conclusion:

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Project.

- **Key finding**

Professionals - living with chronic psychological threat, premature responsibility and hidden vulnerability (Gumley et al., 2021; Pierce et al., 2020; Schrank et al., 2022).

- **Limitation**

Small regional sample - reliance on professional perspectives - risk-focused interpretations - limit transferability.

- **Implications**

Highlights the need for trauma-informed, relational and paranoia-specific practice, alongside improved inter-agency understanding.

- **Overall**

Parental paranoia -Threat and systemic mistrust.

- **Future Research**

Relational intervention and enhanced professional training.





Title: Critical Reflection: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988).

Description

- Limited specific literature.
- Recruitment time constraints.

Feelings

- Initial uncertainty.
- Confidence grew interviewing.

Evaluation

- Valuable qualitative insight.
- Smaller planned sample.

Analysis

- Research shaped practically.
- Time limits recruitment.

Action Plan / Advice

- Check literature early.
- Allow extra recruitment time.



THANK YOU
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS!

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