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A Narrative Study of the Emotional Processing of a Female Victim of Stalking by an Ex-Intimate Partner

Elspeth Cockerell

Word Count 60,854

This research was submitted to the University of Kent in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Clinical Science 2021

Abstract

Background

There is a body of literature which already suggests that being stalked is associated with an increased risk of mental health difficulties, such as elevated anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. However, the current research lacks a detailed picture of the emotional toll that being stalked can take on its victims.

Aim

This research aimed to investigate the emotional impact of stalking behaviours on five females by their ex-intimate partners, using a qualitative approach to shed light on emotional experiences embedded in their stories and experiences.

Methodology, Methods and Analysis

An in-depth investigation was conducted, using semi-structured interviews with five female students and staff members from the University of Kent. Each was identified as victims of stalking by their ex-intimate partners using a stalking checklist.

A narrative inquiry was chosen as the ideal qualitative approach in order to gain insight into how a person experiences a particular phenomenon. The interviews were analysed and interpreted, taking into account the themes and plots that constructed the participants' stories. The researcher used narrative inquiry based on a thematic approach to study events as described in the words of the participants. The interviews were transcribed and coded, and subsequently organised into themes chosen to best describe the information given.

Findings

The findings from this research illustrated that being stalked has an impact on the victim's ability to process and regulate their emotions in a functional and appropriate manner. Three themes identified were: Stalker Behaviour, Impact of Stalking on the Victim, and Victim Response. Additionally, the use and impact of coercive control by ex-intimate partners during the period of stalking, were important components affecting the emotional responses of victims, as illustrated through the stories they told.

The findings support previous theories that being stalked can have a significant detrimental impact on a person's mental health. The findings offer further insight into the manner in which that emotional impact can occur, and may pave the way for future research into victim response, coercive control and possible deficits in emotional processing and difficulties with emotional regulation, during and after a stalking experience.

Limitations and Recommendations

Narrative research is suited to a small sample size, and this study was limited due to the small amount of participants involved. It was also restricted geographically to one location and to a female gender. Further research will be valuable to move beyond these limitations and provide additional insight into an area where there remains much to be discovered about the emotional impact of stalking.

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Contents

Title	Page
Title Page	0
Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	3
Contents	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	6
Chapter Overview	6
Definition of Stalking	6
My Own Positionality Within the Research	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Structure of the Thesis	10
Conclusion	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
Chapter Overview	14
The Current Context and Prevalence of Stalking	14
Literature Review Methods	16
Review Results	19
Gender and Stalking	19
Ex-Intimate Partner Stalking	21
Stalking Behaviours	25
Strategies of Stalking: Coercive Control	28
The Psychological and Physical Impact of Stalking	34
Emotional Impact: Emotional Processing and Regulation	37
Limitations and External Validity	42
Conclusion	44
Chapter 3: Methodology, Methods and Analytical Processes	46
Chapter Overview	46
Philosophical Approach	46
Methodology	48
Reflexivity	52
Methods of Data Collection	53
Ethical Considerations and Research Process	54
Analytical Procedure	60
Validity and Transferability	62
Conclusion	64
Chapter 4: Analysis	66
Chapter Overview	66
The Participants	66
Composite Narratives	67
Thematic Analysis and the Stalking Experience	72
Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour	75
Theme 2: Impact on Victim	80
Theme 3: Victim Response	87
Conclusion	92
Chapter 5: Discussion	93

Chapter Overview		93
Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour		93
Coercive Control and Stalking Behaviour		94
Coercive Control and the Stalker's Pursuit of Power		95
Components of Coercive Control and Manipulation		97
Theme 2: Impact on Victim		100
Emotional Processing		101
Theme 3: Victim Response		104
Emotional Regulation		105
Verbalising Events		109
Conclusion		110
Chapter 6: Conclusion		112
Chapter Overview		112
Summary of Research Findings		112
Implications for Practice		114
Contribution to Knowledge		120
Future Research		120
Limitations of the Study		122
Final Words		123
References		126
Appendices		137
1	Literature Review Sources	137
2	Ethics Review Checklist	153
3	Ethics Approval	165
4	Recruitment Poster	167
5	Recruitment Email Response	168
6	Consent Form	169
7	Interview Questions	171
8	Sample Transcript	172
9	Table of Analytical Codes and Descriptions	197
10	Table of Analytical Codes and Categories	202

Index of Tables

Table	Title	Page
Table 1	Participant Pseudonym and Vocation	6
Table 2	Relationship Table of Analytical Codes into Categories and into Themes	73
Table 3	Recommendation for Clinicians Treating Clients with Histories of Ex-Partner Stalking	115
Table 4	Phases of The Life Cycle of Stalking	118

Index of Figures

Figure	Title	Page
1	PRISMA Flow Diagram	18
2	The Construction of Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour	74
3	Graphic Illustration of Themes	75

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter Overview

This chapter will be presented in seven sections, which will begin by providing a working definition of what is meant by 'stalking'. It will present the researcher's own positionality within the research, followed by an outline of the research aims and research questions. The structure of the thesis will be mapped out, followed by a chapter summary.

Definitions of Stalking

This thesis includes the theoretical definition of stalking to better explain the psychotherapeutic considerations of stalking. The legal definition of stalking will also be considered given the jurisdiction the participants found themselves under. Theorists have always debated varying definitions of stalking, and while the exact language used does vary, the most commonly accepted definition across literature related to stalking incorporates a reference to the repeated nature of the behaviour, and also includes the addition of threat or fear (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004). One example that includes the key components typically used is by Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2004), which states: "Stalking refers to a course of conduct by which one person repeatedly inflicts on another unwanted intrusions to such an extent that the recipient fears for his or her safety" (p. 573). Use of the term 'harassment' is commonplace amongst attempts to define this set of behaviours (Sheridan, Davies and Boon, 2001; Kamphuis *et al*., 2005; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005). There is currently no single legal definition of stalking in the UK, however, a suspect cannot be found guilty of stalking

without harassment, according to current legal guidelines (Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), 2018). The exact definition varies across current literature to include wording such as “abnormal, persistent, unwanted attention” (Kamphuis *et al*., 2005, p. 215), or “repeatedly imposing unwanted contacts” (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007, p. 114). Stalking has generally been regarded as the intentional, repeated harassment of another individual, resulting in the victim feeling scared, threatened and intruded upon (Kamphuis *et al*., 2005; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005; Spitzberg and Cupach 2007, p. 114). This theoretical definition of stalking will provide the focus for the current study.

With the advancement of technology, electronic information and access to the internet has become available to many people (Maple *et al.,* 2012). The introduction of technology such as mobile phones, social media, websites and emails, has opened up a wide array of new ways to stalk a person without requiring the close proximity required for ‘offline’ stalking (Maple *et al.,* 2012; Chang, 2020). As with in-person stalking, the definition of ‘cyberstalking’ varies across stalking research. Several studies defined it as the use of electronic means, or the internet, to incite fear through repeated unwanted intrusions (Pittaro, 2007; Maple *et al.,* 2012; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017).

Although some researchers view cyberstalking as an extension of ‘traditional’ offline stalking, Chang (2020) felt that while the two were related, it needs to be taken more seriously and have a definition in its own right. Following an analysis of past definitions of cyberstalking and current legislation, Chang (2020) found that cyberstalking can include online stalking, mobile phones and electronic communication, and described cyberstalking as an “umbrella term referring to a wide range of harmful interpersonal behaviours experienced through online platforms” (p. 1188).

There is currently no legal definition of cyberstalking in the UK, however, existing legislations such as the Malicious Communications Act (1988) and the Protection from Harassment Act (1997), provide some protection against harassment and stalking online

My Own Positionality Within the Research

The idea for this research was driven by questions I held about the nature of the relationship between a stalker and their victim, and the subsequent emotional impact of being stalked. Having encountered my own challenges whilst navigating harassment, I was left with many questions as to the nature of harassment, stalking, and the emotional toll it can take on the victim. Following my own encounter, I wondered about the experiences of others in similar situations. This interest led me to discussions with colleagues and close acquaintances, and I often found that the stories told contained similar components that echoed my own experiences of coercive control, a struggle to regulate emotions under duress, and shared feelings of confusion and helplessness.

When working with clients in psychotherapy who had experienced stalking, harassment, and emotionally abusive relationships, I was struck by how often these issues seemed to overlap and became curious about the ways they interconnect and influence each other. I considered my own experiences and how my search for answers could influence the therapeutic choices I made. I wondered about the best way to work with individuals expressing such a complex array of trauma, emotional abuse and cognitive confusion. Current theories in mental health treatment can fail to move beyond the conclusion that stalking can result in deep psychological distress, and may neglect to incorporate additional considerations such as trauma, memory, coercive control and emotional regulation. I wondered if other healthcare professionals found themselves confused or uncertain when working with stalking and questioning the best way to proceed with treatment, considering the complexities of the cases.

Research in this area provided me with an opportunity to explore these questions and build upon knowledge and ideas yet to be formulated. A highly detailed understanding of the emotional processes that occur as the result of being stalked would allow for enhanced understanding and further

consideration to be made when choosing an appropriate intervention to assist those who find themselves in a similar situation.

A Note on Cognitive Processes, Society, Gender, and Race

It is important for this research to consider issues relating to cognitive processes, society, gender, and race. During this study, cognitive influences on emotional processing will be mentioned, and it is acknowledged that it is an important factor to the different directions of emotional processing research to date. The focus of this study is on the emotional experience of ex-partner stalking, and as this is an area that has not had a great depth of research to date, it was considered necessary to make the emotions experienced the primary focus, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

It is important for this research to make a note about issues relating to society, gender and race. There will be times during the study that these issues, in particular around gender, will be mentioned as they have been central to the different directions stalking research has taken to date. This study chose not to focus on the influence of society, and more than one gender or race, and how they can relate to stalking experiences. While these are important issues to consider, current knowledge regarding emotional processes in response to stalking behaviours contains such large gaps that it was felt necessary to make the primary focus of this study the most commonly reported form of stalking by an ex-intimate partner, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to contribute to the development of awareness amongst clinicians involved in the care of the victims of stalking. In so doing, it hopes to inform the direction of the mental health treatment of victims of stalking in the future. Existing research on stalking provides some

insight into the mental health challenges the victim may face, both during and in the aftermath of the ordeal. Unfortunately, the literature is largely quantitative so offers a limited scope of knowledge when considering the emotional impact of stalking. This gap in the literature will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

The aim of this research was to provide a range of highly detailed narratives about the stalking experience to shine a light on the powerful emotional journey undertaken by the victims. To achieve this goal, five participants were invited to put their experiences into words, which were analysed and interpreted to build a new wealth of understanding about the emotional impact of stalking.

Research Focus and Questions

The research questions were generated to provide structure and focus to this study. The questions were:

1. What emotions are described in response to the stalking behaviours?
2. What are some of the common features of stalking, both individually and across the participants?
3. What effects do the features of stalking have on the emotional processes and emotional regulation of the victims?

Structure of the Thesis

Each stage of this research will be organised into sections following the introductory chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 contains the literature review which will take into account current knowledge relevant to the research and identify information about stalking, the victim of stalking and the impact on their mental health. This chapter will

include current thinking on the subject of coercive control, emotional regulation, emotional processing and also trauma research. It will also address the extent to which the literature may have been applied directly to stalking and the implications of this. Current gaps in the knowledge will be identified and discussed, as well as the implications of this study on current research. The strengths and limitations of the literature presented will support the rationale behind this research and the necessary questions it will address.

Chapter 3: Methodology, Methods and Analytical Processes

Chapter 3 will detail the methodology of the research through the narrative stance chosen, the researcher position and the epistemological approach to the work. Current theories regarding narrative inquiry will be addressed to assist in providing clear justifications for the process of analysis and interpretation of data. This chapter will describe the methods used, including how the participants were selected, the ethical considerations and data collection methods, as well as map out how the analysis was undertaken.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Chapter 4 will present the emotional experience of the victims by exploring the narrative meanings they gave to their stalking. From the findings, it emerged that the participants all experienced coercive control, a struggle to process and regulate their emotions, and an intense confusion when attempting to navigate their experiences that pointed towards psychological manipulation and trauma. Possible consequences of such trauma pointed towards dangerous interruptions when processing thoughts and decision-making that could impede the safety of a stalking victim.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings of the research as they emerged from the themes. The main themes will be discussed in the context of existing knowledge in the field and the relationship between them explored.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter 6 will form a conclusion, which will return to the original question posed for the research, and by summarising the findings, suggest possible implications that have emerged, as well as limitations and proposals for future research.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an introduction to the study, drawing on a definition of stalking to bring clarity to the meaning of this research. It considered the motivations underpinning this study, and included an outline of the research aims and structure of the chapters. Chapter 2 will present the literature search that was undertaken to explore existing research in the area and provide background knowledge to the research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter will introduce the context and prevalence of stalking and consider the main stalking theories. The methods of the literature review will be outlined and the results of the literature search will be presented. Issues pertaining to gender, ex-intimate partners, stalking behaviours, coercive control, the psychological and physical impact of stalking, and emotional processes and regulation, will be critically analysed and discussed in relation to stalking research. The review uses the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, in order to give a structure that allows for a systematic review of the available literature (Moher *et al*., 2009).

The aim of this literature review is to explore published research on the emotional impact of stalking in order to gain an understanding of the key factors identified in the emotional responses of victims of ex-intimate partner stalking in particular, and to consider potential gaps in current research, thus underpinning the research activity reported later. The emotional impact of stalking has been widely researched, and the majority of work has been carried out using quantitative studies. As such, a qualitative study could provide depth and detail to this subject.

Database searches using PsycInfo, PsycArticles, Academic Search Complete, Web of Science and SCOPUS, yielded 260 papers, of which 70 were included in this literature review, using PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews (see Appendix 1) (Moher *et al*., 2009). Studies were

assessed for suitability using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP,2020) checklist.

Emotional impacts identified included an increased likelihood of experiencing anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and fear. Factors such as domestic violence largely associated with ex-intimate partner stalking, gender, societal beliefs and access to mental health treatments were also identified as additional aspects of the stalking experience.

The review suggests the emotional impact of stalking can potentially be severe and long-term. Further research into the long-term impact of being stalked and the rate of recovery is therefore required. As more is understood about this phenomenon, potential psychological interventions might be tailored to meet the needs of the victims, thus improving their effectiveness and efficacy.

The Current Context and Prevalence of Stalking

Research into stalking dramatically increased in the 1990s following several high-profile celebrity stalking cases, such as the 1993 stabbing of tennis star Monica Seles by a dangerously-obsessed fan of her rival, Steffi Graf (Hoffman and Sheridan, 2005). Coupled with this, was an increasing interest in protection from domestic violence which was beginning to be linked to stalking by ex-intimate partners (Douglas and Dutton, 2001; Ferreira and Matos, 2013; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019). This was evidenced by the search yield for 'stalking' from the electronic database PsycInfo, which provided 20 results between 1980-1989, 61 between 1990-1999, 389 between 2000-2009, and 518 between 2010-2019. The legal definition of stalking can be vague, and varies depending on the country it is reported in, frequently relying on a list of behaviours to describe the crime (Sheridan, Davies and Boon, 2001; Sheridan Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007; Korkodeilou, 2016). For example, Korkodeilou (2016) reported that in the United States, the definition of stalking can be vague and subjective.

Consequently, charging a person with the crime of stalking can be dependant on the interpretation of an individual law enforcement officer (Sheridan and Roberts, 2011).

Figures vary in terms of the extent of the problem stalking poses to society. From a sample of 12,727 men and women selected during a random-digit telephone survey in the United States, Breiding *et al*. (2015) observed that 21% of those interviewed had been stalked. Hellman and Kliem (2015) used an anonymous postal questionnaire to assess 5,779 people across Germany and reported a stalking prevalence rate of 15.2%. Roberts (2005) reported a stalking prevalence rate of 34.4% out of 305 female undergraduates in the UK. These studies illustrate the variation in stalking data available, for reasons that Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2004), and Logan and Walker (2009) claim may be linked to either an individual's ability to recognise that they are victims of stalking, or a fear of reporting this behaviour. However, the number of people claiming to have been stalked, may allow for the conclusion that stalking poses a significant problem to societies in the populations studied, which focused on the UK, Europe, the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Roberts, 2005; Sheridan and Lyndon, 2012; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017).

While current anti-stalking laws in the UK still do not provide a precise definition of stalking, according to the CPS (2018), the current law considers stalking using a list of behaviours, such as following and watching, as well as a breach of the Protection from Harassment Act (1997), which includes a list of behaviours as examples of stalking, such as following or unwanted contact. Figures released by the CPS between 2017-2018 put stalking prosecution rates of 1,616 per annum (CPS, 2018), which may not reflect the true extent of the problem (Logan and Walker, 2009; Taylor-Dunn, Bowen and Gilchrist, 2018).

The obsessive nature of stalking suggests that it may not be an easy behaviour to discourage once underway (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007; McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie, 2009; Davis, Swan and Gambone, 2012). Studies have indicated that it is typically not a short-lived problem for the

victims, and although figures vary, the average duration of stalking has been reported as 22 months (spanning 4-85 months) in a meta-analysis of 175 stalking studies conducted in the US (70%), UK (8%), Australia (8%), Canada (5%), European countries (2%) and mixed nationality/ other (7%) by Spitzberg and Cupach (2007). In a postal survey of 236 mixed gender respondents in Australia, Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2004) reported that if the duration of stalking exceeded an initial two-week period, the mean duration of stalking was six months. Björklund *et al*. (2010) highlighted this variation in their study of 615 Finnish male and female students, reporting the mean duration of stalking as 10 months. In these studies, it was commonly reported that the victim experienced a sense of distress and desperation due to the helplessness they felt in trying to stop their stalker for a significant length of time, finding the perpetrator seemingly impossible to deter (Miller, 2012). Studies that undertake cross-cultural investigations highlight the idea that stalking may be a global phenomenon, spanning many cultures, definitions and legislations (Sheridan, Davis and Blaauw, 2003; Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007).

Literature Review Methods

Following initial searches for suitable literature, a range of search terms were noted, and in order to ensure that the review was comprehensive and systematic, the PRISMA protocol was used (Moher *et al*., 2009).

Search Strategy

The literature review searched five online databases: PsycInfo, PsycArticles, Academic Search Complete, Web of Science and SCOPUS. Sources that explored the emotional impact of stalking committed by an ex-intimate partner were of interest. Key words were taken from the research questions were selected as key concepts. For each key concept, alternative synonyms were tested and included if they yielded additional relevant results. A truncation symbol allowed for alternative endings to search terms. For this study key words chosen to assist in the search included the following key

concepts: ‘stalking’ AND ‘emotion*’ OR ‘mental’ OR ‘mind’ OR ‘psychol*’ in combination with AND ‘partner’ OR ‘husband’ OR ‘spouse’.

Study Eligibility

The search focused on stalking behaviours in all of their forms on adult female participants over 18 years, with a particular reference to their emotional impact. The search was not restricted by publication date, but was restricted to full text and peer-reviewed papers written in the English language.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Full text paper
2. Peer-reviewed journals
3. Written in the English language
4. Adult population over 18 years
5. Research that was relevant to the emotional impact of stalking on the victim

Exclusion Criteria

1. Abstract only
2. Non-peer reviewed journals
3. Not written in the English language
4. Non-adult population (under 18 years)
5. Not related to stalking and emotions of the victim
6. Duplicates between different databases

Data Extraction and Quality Assessment

The search strategy and data extraction are shown in the following flow chart devised by Moher *et al.* (2009) (see **Figure 1)**. The initial search yielded 260 results. Where databases found duplicate papers, they were removed,

reducing the total to 169. Additional data were identified using snowballing methods, bringing the total to 213. The titles and abstracts were screened for relevancy, matching the key words and content within the paper against the aims of the present study, leaving a total of 122. The full articles were read and evaluated for eligibility, and were then assessed using the CASP checklist for systematic reviews. The 70 remaining search results were used in this literature review

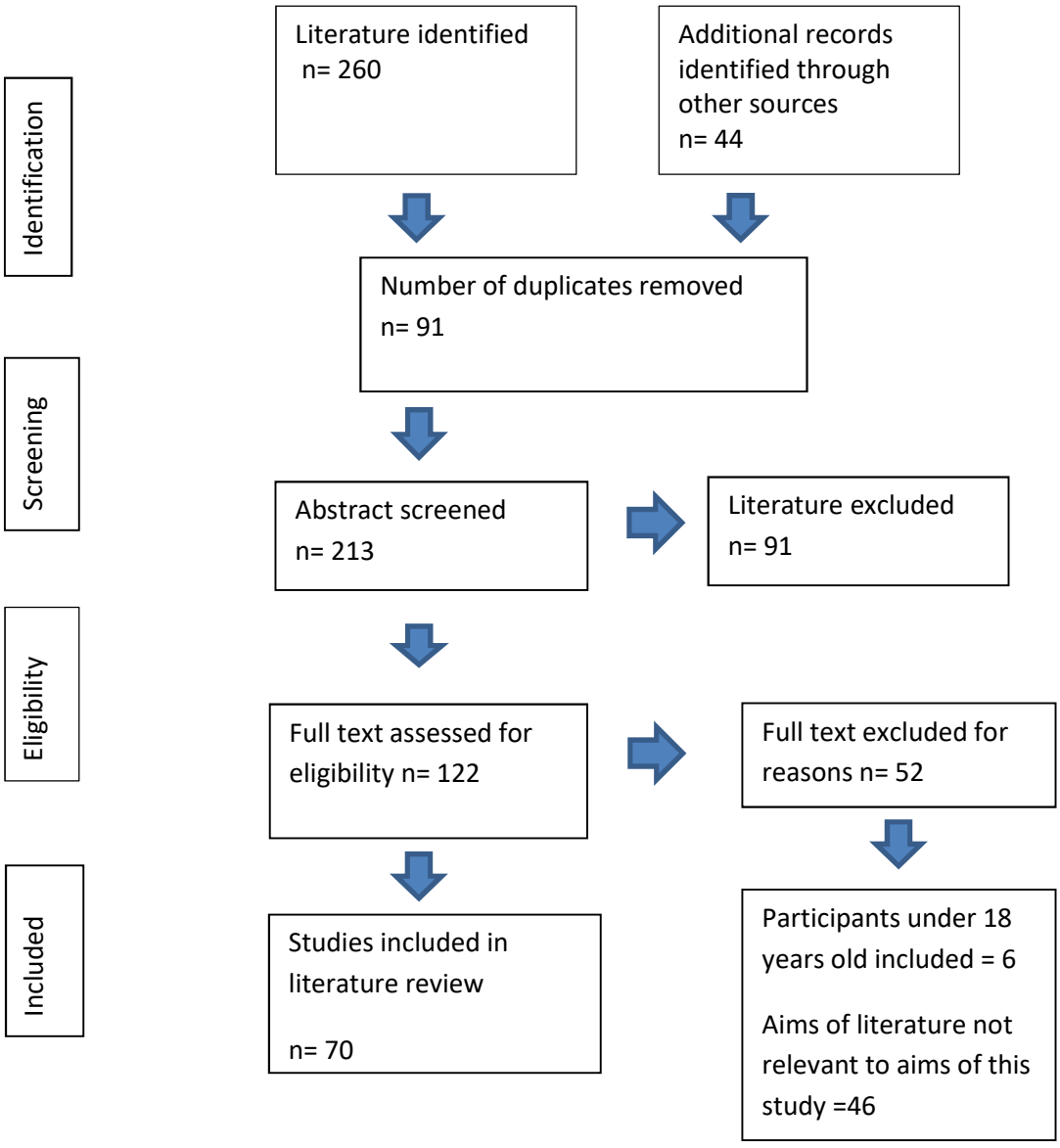

Figure 1. *PRISMA Flow diagram (Moher et al., 2009)*

Review Results

The studies included in this review incorporated the experiences reported by victims of stalking. Studies investigating trauma were included, in particular where they related to intimate partner abuse, and where trauma and stalking research was not available. Coercive control, emotional processing and emotional regulation research was also of interest, and deemed relevant to the emotional experiences encountered by the victims of stalking (Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Kraaij *et al*., 2007).

Gender and Stalking

Gender was identified as an important factor associated with the likelihood of experiencing stalking. Of the studies in this literature review, it was frequently observed that the victims were a majority female, and stalkers were often male (Sheridan and Lyndon, 2012). Maran and Zedda (2014) investigated stalking victimisation using a sample of 144 university students in Italy. Of the 36 identified as victims of stalking, 81.6% were female, and 13.9% male. Owens (2017) found that of 1144 victims of stalking aged 18-90 in the US, 808 were female and 336 male. Similarly, research by Björklund *et al*. (2010) reported 91.8% of the stalkers in their study to be male. The study recruited 615 Finnish students, aged between 18 and 24 years who were identified as victims of stalking using a questionnaire based on one devised by Sheridan, Gillett and Davies (2000), to assess both their perception of what constitutes stalking behaviour, and if they themselves had been subjected to these behaviours. While a student population, though accessible to researchers, may have limited generalisability, the results concurred with other studies that used a broader sample of the population (Burgess *et al*., 2001; Dietz and Martin, 2007; Kraaij *et al*., 2007).

A study by Davis, Ace and Andra (2000) reported that of 169 college students in the US (age range not included) who were identified as victims of stalking, 233 were female and 139 male. A smaller sample was used by Jansen van Rensburg (2017) who found that of 12 stalking victims (aged 19-

24 years) from the University of South Africa, nine were female, and three were male. A smaller proportion of female stalking victims compared to male were reported by Nobles *et al*. (2018). In a three-sample cross-sectional survey of a US-nationwide sexual diversity special interest group, university students and general adult population, it was reported that 59.5% of the victims interviewed were female and 36.9% male (average age reported at 32 years). Similarly, Dardis and Gidycz (2019) reported a figure of 67% female stalking victims in their study involving 1167 college students in the US. Like Davis, Ace and Andra (2000), Dardis and Gidycz (2019) did not record the age of the stalking victims in the college, so any differences across the age range could not be considered.

The literature reviewed often reported a majority of male perpetrators of stalking (Burgess *et al*., 2001; Blaauw *et al*., 2002) Galeazzi *et al*., 2009; Björklund *et al.,* 2010). Björklund *et al*. (2010) highlighted this in their study of 615 Finnish male and female students, reporting 91.8% male perpetrators. A study by Burgess *et al*. (2001) investigated the stalking patterns of batterers, using 165 perpetrators in the US who attended a court-mandated assessment programme. Burgess *et al*. (2001) reported that 90% of the batterers were male, which could be indicative of males being linked to an increased likelihood to physically assault a person, in particular a partner (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies 2003). However, it may be a factor that men are more likely to be arrested and charged for physical assault of their partner than women (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000; Sheridan *et al*., 2003).

Despite the differences across the data reporting gender and stalking, Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) concluded that not only has it been widely accepted that the majority of stalkers are male, but also that the majority of victims appear to be female. This demographic could have serious implications regarding the emotional outcome for victims, since in their study, Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) found that female participants in the US showed higher levels of psychopathology post-stalking than males.

The search yielded 14 studies reporting the responses to stalking using female-only participants. Dunn (2001) selected nine victims of stalking from

the Domestic Violence Unit in the US to investigate victimisation in stalking cases, however the purpose of this study was to investigate how the women were perceived as 'victims' in the criminal justice system, so male participants were not included. Dietz and Martin (2007) conducted a study to investigate patterns of fear reported by women in the US aged over 18 years, who responded to the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). While the women surveyed did not always report feeling fearful, some forms of stalking prompted more fear than others. For example, women being stalked by an 'intimate' were 2.3 times more likely to report fear than stranger-stalking (Dietz and Martin, 2007, p. 267).

Kraaij *et al*. (2007) focused on cognitive coping in female victims of stalking, as did Toews and Bermea (2017), who investigated the experience of controlling behaviours following the end of an intimate relationship in 47 female participants aged between 22 and 46 years in the US. Toews and Bermea (2017) identified a range of controlling behaviours used by former intimate partners, highlighting the risk that abuse can continue post-separation. Ex-intimate partner stalking will be discussed further in the next section. Both studies not only identified the control and stalking tactics employed by male perpetrators, but also the methods of coping and vulnerabilities to emotional distress that women may experience.

Ex-Intimate Partner Stalking

Many of the studies indicated that stalking occurs less frequently between strangers, with a higher proportion of victims either knowing their stalker, or having previously been engaged in an intimate relationship with them (Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Björklund *et al.*, 2010; Maran and Zedda, 2014; Toews and Bermea, 2017). For example, in a study by McEwan *et al*. (2012) of 211 individuals (90 male, 21 female) at a specialist stalking clinic in Australia, 71% had previously engaged in an intimate relationship with their stalker. The stalking definition used by McEwan *et al*. (2012) was comprised of clinic attendees who had been convicted of stalking, or if they had not been convicted, had engaged in stalking behaviours exceeding two weeks. By

including the two-week threshold established by Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2004), McEwan *et al.* (2012) did not restrict the sample to attendees who had been convicted of stalking. Similarly, Blaauw *et al*. (2002) reported a similar finding, with 68% of the 241 victims in the US being ex-intimate partners of their stalker. In this case, the stalking was defined using a one-month duration minimum and a minimum of one instance of stalking behaviour.

Maran and Zedda (2014) reported 41.7% of stalking victims identified their stalker as an ex-partner. The study consisted of 144 university students in Italy, and a high number of the people who responded were female, at 76.7%. Stalking was defined as repetitive, intrusive and unwanted behaviours, surveillance and monitoring. The nature of the relationship between victim and stalker was restricted to intimate romantic or intimate non-romantic, and strangers and acquaintances were excluded, which may have influenced the high proportion of ex-partner stalkers in this study. Studies relying upon the participants' ability to self-identify as a victim of stalking may discount those victims who were neither willing nor able to recognise the behaviours as stalking (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004).

Häkkänen, Hagelstam and Santtila (2003) researched stalking styles in relation to the relationship to the victim, and reported a high figure of 74% being an ex-partner. The data were taken from 240 police and court reports of restraining orders in Finland. As the participants were seeking protection from their stalker, it may have been more likely that the victim and perpetrator were no longer in a romantic relationship, and hence the victim may have had an increased awareness of the abuse and the need for self-preservation. Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000) found that of 114 females who self-identified as victims of domestic violence, 95 had left their partner and experienced stalking behaviours. Like Häkkänen, Hagelstam and Santtila (2003), Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000) recruited participants that were seeking help, so may have been more likely to have separated from their abusive partner. Similarly, Dunn (2001) investigated victimisation in ex-intimate partner stalking by collecting stalking cases from the Domestic

Violence Unit in the US, and as the victims were seeking help, they were more likely to no longer be in a romantic relationship with their stalker.

Several studies identified in the literature search that had a focus on ex-partner stalking, used only participants that had separated from their partner. Toews and Bermea (2017) carried out a study of post-separation abuse experienced by 22 women in the US (aged 21-50 years) and reported that controlling and abusive behaviours exhibited during the relationship continued long after it had ended. Ferreira and Matos (2013) reported that fear and denial were associated with the stalking experienced by 107 female post-intimate stalking victims in the US. Similarly, Brewster (2002) investigated trauma symptoms of former intimate partner stalking victims by interviewing 187 female victims in the US. Due to the specific focus on ex-partner stalking, these studies cannot be generalised to different relationship stalking, for example, stranger stalking.

Despite research indicating ex-intimate partner stalking being a common form of stalking, figures vary as to the proportion of stalkers having previously been engaged in an intimate relationship with the victim. For example, Blaauw *et al*. (2002) reported that in 68% of the cases, the stalker had a prior intimate relationship with the victim, whereas Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) reported 46.7% of cases. The criteria required to meet the definition of stalking can vary between studies. Some included the legal definition of the jurisdiction (McEwan *et al.*, 2012; Taylor-Dunn, Bowen and Gilchrist, 2018), and others used definitions established in previous research (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004; Kraaij *et al*., 2007; Nobles *et al*., 2018).

Research detailing the pre-existing quality of the relationship before separation, using domestic violence as an indicator, found that in many cases, victims of stalking had a prior relationship with the perpetrator that involved some form of abuse (Robert and Saunders, 2010). Melton (2007) found that of 21 victims abused by an intimate partner, 80.9% reported that stalking had begun before the relationship had ended and 47.6% found that the stalking worsened once the relationship had finished. However, this was a relatively small sample (n=21). Bendlin and Sheridan (2019) conducted an

analysis of 369 Australian police reports of domestic violence where stalking was indicated, and found that 34.7% reported severe violence. This may reflect the violent incidents that can be associated when the stalker is not a stranger. The reports were a mixture of intimate and ex-intimate partner stalking cases though, so some would not apply to ex-intimate partner stalking specifically.

Studies have indicated that the motivation for ex-intimate partner stalking may be reconciliation or revenge for the perceived rejection, or possibly a response to a perceived loss of control (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Roberts, 2005; Melton, 2007; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019). Melton (2007) reported the key motivation of ex-intimate partners to become stalkers is associated with control, anger, jealousy, reconciliation, or to intimidate. This concept of rejection from an ex-intimate partner as a motivation to stalk was linked to the narcissistic world of the stalker by Meloy (1999). Meloy (1999) reported a reaction to rejection that can trigger a rage towards the self, which in turn may result in a defensive need to attack the source of rejection. This pattern can potentially be observed across many of the stalker's angry and destructive behaviours reported in this review, and may offer some insight into the seemingly delusional aspect of the unwanted pursuit of the stalker. (Burgess *et al*., 2001; Wigman, Graham-Kevan and Archer, 2008; Bendlin and Sheridan, 2019; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019).

Ex-intimate partners may be more persistent with their stalking behaviours than stranger stalkers, as McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie (2009) identified. In their research of stalkers and their victims, they found a link between the duration of being stalked and a pre-existing relationship with a stalker, proposing that stalking can continue for a longer duration if carried out by a former intimate partner (McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie, 2009). However, they also noted a longer duration for acquaintance stalkers than stranger stalkers, suggesting that the relationship did not necessarily need to have been romantic. Miller (2012) also stated that: "if the stalking persists for longer than four weeks, it is likely to continue for another six to 12 months,

and in some cases, as long as 76 months; this is more common in cases involving a prior relationship of some kind" (Miller, 2012, p. 496).

As well as an increased duration, the rejected ex-intimate partner stalker has been reported to be more likely to use a wider range of stalking behaviours (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003), which will be discussed further in the next section. Logan and Walker (2009) reported both a longer duration and a wider variation of stalking behaviours, such as telephoning or following, for this category than any other type. Although not extensively discussed, the intimate knowledge of the victim can lead to an increased duration and increased range of behaviours (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick, 2000; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005). In the current research, it was important to explore the application of stalking behaviours as well as the possible use of coercive control, especially considering the female demographic in question. These behaviours will be discussed further in the next sections of this literature review.

Stalking Behaviours

None of the studies identified in the literature search addressed the issue of stalking without also including some detail about the stalking behaviours. Studies of stalking have reported that the methods used are not generally limited to a single behaviour, but instead, typically consist of several different behaviours (Blaauw *et al*., 2002). Sheridan and Davies (2001) reported a similar phenomenon, describing these groups of behaviours as 'clusters' (p. 156), whereby the stalker will adopt a variety of stalking behaviours rather than just one. For example, Blaauw *et al*. (2002) found the most likely group of stalking behaviours to include following, surveillance and nuisance telephone calls. Studies reported similar patterns of stalking behaviours, with telephoning, following and sending unwanted gifts or letters, ranking amongst the most frequent (Pathe and Mullen, 1997; Sheridan and Davies, 2001; Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Roberts, 2005; Maran and Zedda, 2014). The range of behaviours was similar across multi-national studies, for example

across Belgium, Italy and Slovenia, in research by Galeazzi *et al*. (2009), indicating a cross-cultural tendency to utilise similar methods of stalking.

There may be overtly illegal acts of stalking, such as breaking into a victim's home or damaging property, and there have also been reports of subtler and seemingly inconspicuous methods of stalking, such as standing near the victim, visiting a place of leisure where the victim is known to frequent, or simply walking past the victim's residence (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004). Consequently, the context has been highlighted as important when taking into consideration the methods used to stalk a victim and the associated distress these methods cause (Logan and Walker, 2009; Davis, Swan and Gambone, 2012; Taylor-Dunn, Bowen and Gilchrist, 2018).

The accumulative nature of many small acts has also been found to contribute to the distressing nature of stalking. Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies (2003) compiled evidence from over 100 studies on stalking in Europe, the United States and some non-Western countries such as Japan and Iran, and described it as a composite of many behaviours rather than a single action, or as they state, "[a] course of deviant conduct" (p. 156). Reports from case studies of victims who have endured stalking over a long period of time, using multiple forms of abuse, suggest that the persistent and intrusive nature of the harassment can in itself, be the source of intrusion and distress for the victim (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004; Logan and Walker, 2009).

Some studies support the idea that the use of sustained repetition in stalking can result in psychological damage without requiring overt gestures of harassment, such as physical violence (Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Diette *et al*., 2014). In addition, Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2005) reported that the additional psychological pressure of repetition or bombardment, alongside threats, increased the likelihood of psychological and emotional damage, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, anxiety and depression. However, in these studies, bombardment was defined as 'repeated' harassment, without indication as to the precise nature of the stalking, other than the use of a '2-week threshold' to distinguish between

short-term and longer-term stalking (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005, p. 417).

The involvement of others in assisting a stalker has been identified as another possible component of stalking (Melton, 2007). The term ‘proxy stalkers’ has been developed to describe this phenomenon of friends or acquaintances becoming involved or even assisting the stalker (Melton, 2007, p. 353). Sheridan, Davies and Boon (2001) studied 348 women in England and Wales aged 18 to 46 years (and above), and reported that 40% of the stalking victims had experienced stalking by proxy. Studies have suggested that the use of other people to assist a stalker can occur in order to increase the sense of isolation in the victim, reduce levels of social support and to increase feelings of helplessness (McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie, 2009).

The techniques used to stalk a person electronically are diverse, and include acts such as: emailing, making contact on social media, contacting acquaintances of the victim online, distributing intimate photographs, spreading false information about the victim or impersonating the victim online (Pittaro, 2007; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017; Chang, 2020). Cyberstalking has been reported to include behaviours that are both an extension of in-person stalking, and also behaviours that are unique to online stalking, such as the use of social media to monitor a person without needing to be physically close (Cavezza and McEwan, 2014; Chang, 2020). Cavezza and McEwan (2014) conducted a study comparing online and offline stalking using 271 mixed gender perpetrators attending a clinic in Australia. Cyberstalking was defined as using the internet to stalk the victim and included ‘communicative’ stalking, which involved direct contact such as emails, or ‘non-communicative’ stalking, which involved indirect harassment such as creating a website about the victim (Cavezza and McEwan, 2014, p. 960). Emailing was the most popular form of cyberstalking, used by 64% of the cyber-stalkers, with social networks being used by 36%. Cavezza and McEwan (2014) also found that the online stalking was often accompanied by offline stalking, such as watching the victim’s home or following. For

example, in their study, 58% of the cyber-stalkers used the telephone to stalk, and 17% would follow the victim in person.

A study conducted by Jansen van Rensburg (2017) used thematic analysis to investigate the cyberstalking experiences of 12 participants (nine female, three male) aged between 19-34 years in South Africa. The participants were self-defined victims of cyberstalking and listed behaviours including: monitoring the victim online, threatening electronic messages, spreading false information online and contacting friends and family members of the victim online. This research used a small sample, but the results reflected patterns of behaviour by the perpetrator designed to threaten, intimidate and harass the victim. Both Cavezza and McEwan (2014) and Jansen van Rensburg (2017) invited the participants to self-define as victims of stalking, which relied on each victim's perception of the stalking. Adopting this stance on a definition could be difficult considering the ambiguous nature of online and offline stalking. When self-defining as a victim of stalking, or cyberstalking, the participants may not find that they meet the legal definition of harassment or stalking, despite feeling that they are victims of this crime. For example, stalking behaviours can overlap with legal, seemingly benign behaviours, such as telephoning or sending gifts, and can rely upon the victim recognising and proving that these actions are a pattern of behaviours intended to harass and provoke fear (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004; Owens, 2017).

Strategies of Stalking: Coercive Control

The need for control and dominance was identified in nine studies as a feature of stalking, eight studies with a focus on domestic violence and two studies with a focus on trauma. While evidence may point towards the possibility that stalking a person following the end of an intimate relationship may involve coercive control, the two issues are not widely considered in the same research. However, a detailed reference did emerge from Dutton and Goodman's (2005) exploration of coercive control, which acknowledged stalking as a common component used to track the victim. Toews and

Bermea (2017) identified eight self-reported features of controlling behaviours from ex-partners, which included: physical, emotional, economic; using children, the system or “stuff to try to hurt me”; threats, harassment and intimidation, as well as disrupting the relationship with the children (p. 2172). For Dutton and Goodman (2005) and Toews and Bermea (2017), stalking behaviours were categorised as a component of the abuse, rather than a category in their own right.

Davis, Ace and Andra (2000) used both male and female participants, which could potentially reduce the risk of producing gender-biased results. Using self-reported incidents of stalking following a breakup, the studies identified the need for control as a contributing factor to stalking. Davis, Ace and Andra (2000) reported that the emotional reaction to a breakup may result in persistent and harassing behaviours for reasons such as a desire to reconcile with the ex-partner, or alternatively to exact revenge. Similarly, in a study of reconciliation or retaliation following a breakup either in person or cyber, Dardis and Gidycz (2019) used Relational Goal Theory (RGT), Attachment Theory and Coercive Control Theory to measure Unwanted Persistent Behaviours (UPB). The use of UPB rather than stalking to define the unwanted pursuit was chosen due to the variety of definitions stalking can have. While RGT was associated with minor UPBs, coercive control was more strongly associated with severe in-person and cyber UPBs, as well as minor UPBs. These results may have concerning implications when considering stalking and the increase in risk when coercive control is a factor. This supports the idea that following the termination of a romantic relationship, there may be a risk of experiencing coercive control as one feature of the stalking (Ferriera and Matos, 2013). A limitation of the study by Dardis and Gidycz (2019) was the time frame, which was restricted to stalking that had occurred in the past three years. This could both eliminate historic stalking from more than three years in the past, and also rely on the participant’s ability to recall events during this time period.

In a study of the stalking patterns of batterers by Burgess *et al*. (2001), features of dominance and control were reported. The participants were

asked to self-report a list of 13 stalking behaviours they may have engaged in while separated from their partner in the past year. For example, the most commonly reported stalking behaviour was contacting their ex-partner at home, at 48.5%. As mentioned in the previous section, one limitation of using perpetrators of stalking may be that the results rely on the ability to recall certain actions from the past, honesty with responses, and also the ability to recognise their own stalking behaviours.

Abusive behaviour amongst intimate partners has been the focus of research to attempt to investigate the psychological and emotional damage this form of entrapment has been reported to inflict (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Logan and Walker, 2009; Irving and Liu, 2020). By interviewing victims of domestic abuse, Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000) identified that emotional abuse may be a predictor of stalking following a breakup. Irving and Liu (2020) investigated the protective strategies used by 40 participants recruited from a Domestic Violence service in the UK to assess the extent that the victims were “beaten into submissiveness” (p. 294). The extent of the abuse resulted in an average of 18 protective strategies used by the victim, with placating the perpetrator potentially increasing their vulnerability (Dunn, 2001; Irving and Liu, 2020). Such strategies utilised by the victim for protection may be counterproductive, but also highlighted the desperate search for safety when exposed to domestic violence, and the link between power, abuse and the impact this can have on the ability of the victim to safely navigate the situation (Dunn, 2001; Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Irving and Liu, 2020). Studies of intimate partner abuse have also highlighted the need to recognise non-physical abuse as a form of coercive control (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Beck and Raghavan, 2010). Beck and Raghavan’s (2010) study of 762 divorcing couples through court-appointed mediation in the US, identified coercive control as a motivator for intimate personal violence (IPV) and was linked to psychological damage and victimisation of women.

When stalking an ex-partner, the perpetrator might use intimate knowledge to coercively control their target. For example, Davis, Ace and Andra (2000)

outlined a list of typical ex-intimate partner stalking behaviours that could also be classified as coercive control. These included unwanted contact, threatening behaviour, or attempting to use coercion to reunite with the ex-partner. Unfortunately, behaviours that could be classified as psychological abuse, which can be associated with coercive control, such as insults and swearing, were not included in the study, which could omit an important component of this phenomenon.

Such behaviours could also have occurred during the course of the victim's intimate relationship with their stalker, as Logan and Walker (2009) reported using an example of an abusive spouse who divulged his partner's secrets to a family member if she did not comply with his wishes. In fact, similarities between the patterns of behaviour used in coercive control and by ex-intimate partners when stalking, often closely overlap (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Logan and Walker, 2009). The act of coercive control typically engages methods to both dominate and threaten the targeted individual (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Roberts, 2005; Toews and Bermea, 2017; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019), to break down their personality and monopolise their world, with a severity often likened to the experience of hostages and prisoners of war (Logan and Walker, 2009; Williamson, 2010). Similarly, ex-partner stalking has been associated with the desire to re-establish a relationship and regain control in response to a relationship break-up (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

The lack of consensus regarding the definitions of stalking and coercive control, affects the level of understanding and consistency in upholding legislation governing these crimes, as well as the difficult conversations faced by both the victims and police when faced with providing proof of the crime (Dunn, 2001; Hanna, 2009). Hanna (2009) described the challenges faced by police to determine the truth of what took place as an obstacle for convicting stalkers. This issue links back to legal issues and the impact the lack of definition may have on the law and prosecution. Taylor-Dunn, Bowen and Gilchrist (2018), conducted a thematic analysis of 35 (29 female, six male) participants in the UK to investigate how victims of stalking perceive

the response of the police. This study found that the majority of the participants found the response of the police unsatisfactory, often either not helping, or taking inappropriate action. Police inaction was reported by participants to be often due to the police not finding that their complaint met their definition of stalking, for example, some were informed that the stalker was allowed to sit outside the victim's house as this was not illegal.

Furthermore, the difficulty in reaching definitions has been aggravated by mixed messages from researchers, with some suggesting that stalking is a behaviour that utilises coercive control as part of that behaviour (Davis, Swan and Gambone, 2012), whereas others propose that coercive control is a series of behaviours with stalking as one possible component (Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

An example of this confusion can be found in a report by Sheridan, Davies and Boon (2001) that lists the methods of stalking as: surveillance, invasion, harassment, intimidation, coercion, threat, physical aggression and violence, in line with other stalking research carried out to date (Miller, 2012). However, Dutton and Goodman (2005) defined all of the previously listed behaviours as coercive control in a model of controlling behaviours, and so it would seem that following the dissolution of a relationship, coercive control is no longer defined as such. This discrepancy calls into question the nature of stalking and how it is categorised, depending on whether the victim is currently engaged in a romantic relationship with their abuser, or has ended the relationship, but continues to experience harassment and maltreatment.

Despite varying definitions of coercive control and stalking, research suggests that the psychological impact may be strikingly similar. Studies have proposed that victims of stalking and coercive control experience PTSD, depression and anxiety, with similar struggles to recover (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick, 2000; Dietz and Martin, 2007; Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007). It has been suggested that the psychological entrapment of coercive control can result in changes to the thoughts and perceptions of its victims, to the extent that brainwashing occurs (Herman, 1992). The emotional bond that can arise in domestic violence cases has even been compared to

Stockholm syndrome (Wallace, 2007).[1] The theory of coercive control has been used to explain the process of confusion or disorientation, during which the victim's personality is broken down and attempts to escape fail, to the extent where decision-making becomes impossible and the victim is engulfed in helplessness (Dutton and Goodman, 2005). Further examples of 'traumatic bonding' have been recorded, whereby increased helplessness can result in reliance upon the perceived person in power (Herman, 1992, p. 384; Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

Similarly, reports of mind-manipulation occurring in religious cults, addictions or abusive relationships have warranted an 'intervention' or a form of 'exit counselling' (Kent and Szimhart, 2002, p. 258). Specialist therapies may be designed to carefully empower the victim to regain a sense of control and enable them to reintegrate successfully back into their social sphere, but there is limited information on exit counselling across the stalking literature. The fact that the notion of mind-control or the Stockholm syndrome remains fairly controversial may be a reason for this (Kent and Szimhart, 2002). It is, however, important to consider all relevant options when studying the implications of coercive control and stalking and the likelihood of more intensive, specialist treatment being necessary.

The issue of power and coercive control may be relevant for ex-partner stalking research to explain the degree of distorted beliefs and helplessness that victims can report, however at present, much of the theory of coercive control draws focus on intimate partner violence rather than post-separation dynamics. One factor of coercive control that also features in the model by Dutton and Goodman (2005) purports that a perpetrator of coercive control establishes a belief in the victim that the perpetrator has the power to either deliver or remove something unpleasant or unwanted via a degree of behavioural conditioning. Once established, the victim comes to learn that failure to comply will result in punishment, and compliance elicits either relief

[1] The Stockholm syndrome was first used by Nils Bejerot following a 1973 bank robbery, and is further described by Namnyak *et al.* (2008) as a form of traumatic bonding associated with hostages and victims of abuse, when escalating fear and violence can result in a person becoming attached to the abuser.

from punishment, or a form of reward (Herman, 1992; Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

Confusingly, the behavioural control recorded in cases of domestic abuse and coercive control can be labelled differently depending on the source. What has been labelled 'operant conditioning', or 'aversive control', Dutton and Goodman (2005) defined as "the achievement of control through compliance" through systems of reward and punishment (p. 745) (Pittaro, 2007, p. 189). Research detailing stalking and behavioural control has been relatively absent, despite the potential association between distortions of thought, ex-partner stalking, domestic abuse, and coercive control (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick, 2000; Douglas and Dutton, 2001; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Toews and Bermea, 2017).

The Psychological and Physical Impact of Stalking

The effects of stalking on the psychological and physical well-being of victims have been emphasised as both potentially serious and enduring (Kamphuis and Emmelkamp, 2001; Blaauw *et al*., 2002). Furthermore, the psychological, social and economic impacts of stalking have been widely researched across studies, with consistent results, providing data representing the potential damage incurred, and highlighting the need for further knowledge in the area and adequate treatment of those affected (Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Toews and Bermea, 2017). Despite the large volume of studies investigating the emotional impact of stalking, the present review yielded four qualitative studies (three in stalking research and one in coercive control research). The remaining studies identified in this review were often limited to numerical descriptions of emotions, which only offered a narrow view of the experiences of the victims and may risk overlooking details that do not fit into the rating scales used (Pathe and Mullen, 1997; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005).

Negative impacts on the victims of stalking can be wide-ranging and have been reported to include depression, loss of income and withdrawal from social activities (Sheridan, Davies and Boon, 2001; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Sheridan and Lyndon, 2012). Dressing, Kuehner and Gass (2005) conducted a study in Germany of the psychological impact of stalking, and of 679 respondents, 74 were victims of stalking. Of the stalking victims, 87% were women, and they reported a 44% occurrence of elevated anxiety. Of those stalked, 28% reported depression and 12% reported panic attacks as the result of being stalked. Similarly, when reviewing the psychopathology of stalking victims, Galeazzi *et al*. (2009) carried out an 'impact of stalking survey' across Belgium, Italy and Slovenia, to rate the psychological impact of stalking. From the 391 victims surveyed, 48.6% reported an incidence rate of high fear levels.

Owens (2017) conducted a study involving the impact of gender on the likelihood to report fear when stalked and reported that 47.8% female participants felt afraid compared with 13.7% male. The difference in likelihood to report fear could be influenced by gender roles and the male participants may have been more reluctant to express fear. Owens (2017) reported that the women in the study may have been more likely to self-identify as stalking victims, and were more likely to experience severe stalking behaviours for a longer duration, which could have increased the likelihood of experiencing fear. The issue of gender in stalking has been discussed in greater detail in the section above.

Sheridan and Lyndon (2012) conducted an international study across Europe, the US, Canada and Australia and found that 60.1% of the English-speaking, female victims interviewed felt very frightened. These results were sourced from a 12-part Yes/No list of questions related to the psychological impact of stalking, for example, asking whether or not they experienced fear, anger or anxiety. It could be argued with Galeazzi *et al*. (2009), Owens (2017) and Sheridan and Lyndon (2012), that using Likert-type scales and closed questions in these studies, lacked the depth required to capture a

more detailed, accurate response to adequately investigate something as complex and variable as emotional responses.

Brewster (2002) assessed symptoms of trauma in victims stalked by a former partner with the use of the Trauma Symptom Checklist (TSC-33). The study found that anxiety and depression were worse if victims had experienced violence from their ex-partner. It may have been that the presence of violence during an intimate relationship added credibility to the threats during the stalking. Sleep disturbances seemed to impact most victims of stalking, whether violence had been present or not during the relationship, which is indicative of psychological disturbance (Brewster, 2002; Dressing, Kuehner and Gass, 2005; Maran and Zedda, 2014).

In recent years, there has been growing awareness that the ability to think clearly and reflect upon internal and external experiences can be significantly hindered when an individual is subjected to abuse and manipulation, such as coercive control (Dutton and Goodman, 2005). Victims of stalking have been found to adapt to the difficulty and confusion of the trauma by blaming themselves, normalising the experience, dissociating, or increasingly complying with the demands of the abuser (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Williamson, 2010).

In terms of the possible psychological consequences of stalking, another factor taken into consideration across the literature has been trauma and the potentially long-term effect on the mental health of stalking victims. The combination of seemingly inescapable psychological and emotional abuse, combined with actual physical or threatened physical harm, are factors associated with trauma, in particular PTSD in victims of domestic abuse and stalking (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick, 2000; Dutton, 2009; Diette *et al*., 2014). In relation to the challenge that trauma can pose for the victim, Robert and Saunders (2010) highlighted the interference with cognitive processes that can occur, leading to a disturbance in processing information, understanding and subsequently verbalising an experience. Importantly, research linking trauma, anxiety and PTSD following stalking behaviours to the inhibition of negative, unbearable emotions, may point towards a

hindered ability to process and regulate such unbearable emotions. This feature may play an important role in the increased risk of emotional dissociation, impaired emotional understanding and a compromised decision-making ability when being stalked (Tull *et al*., 2007).

The emotional impact of cyberstalking reported has been significant and often takes a similar form to offline stalking, as discussed in the sections above (Cavezza and McEwan, 2014; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017). Jansen van Rensburg (2017) found that the psychological effects of stalking included fear, stress, anxiety and depression. Chang (2020) focused on the technological aspects of cyberstalking while reviewing the emergence of cyberstalking. Chang (2020) noted several features of cyberstalking that a stalker may utilise, such as the ability to disguise or hide their identity, ability to erase or encrypt information and a lack of geographical restriction to stalk. The techniques used to stalk may be different online as the perpetrator does not need to be in close proximity to the victim to infiltrate their lives, but there is evidence that the emotional impact may be similar and equally damaging to that experienced through stalking offline (Cavezza and McEwan, 2014; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017).

Physical risks posed to victims of stalking were often communicated by the stalker using threats of death and physical violence (Häkkänen, Hagelstam and Santilla, 2003; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005; Kraaij *et al*., 2007; Maran and Zedda, 2014). Maran and Zedda (2014) reported a 19.4% rate of physical assault on victims of stalking, and Häkkänen, Hagelstam and Santilla (2003) found that assault occurred for 62% of the stalking victims, assault with a weapon for 12%, and threats to kill for 51%. Kraaij *et al*., (2007) reported a physical assault rate of 61% for stalking victims, and sexual assault rate of 23%.

Emotional Impact: Emotional Processing and Regulation

Within the literature, there is broad agreement that stalking exposes the victim to an increased risk of psychological damage (Pathe and Mullen, 1997; Brewster, 2002; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005; Diette *et al*., 2014; Maran and Varetto, 2018). These difficulties have been typically recorded using quantitative research, with particular focus on anxiety, depression and PTSD. Although evidence of mental health damage did provide some insight into the experiences of stalking victims, quantitative research can fail to explore the consequences of stalking beyond identifying the type of trauma. This was reflected in the literature search, as combining 'stalking' with common terms for emotional regulation or emotional processing yielded few relevant results.

Research into the impact of stalking has reported elevated risks of PTSD, anxiety or depression, however there are fewer studies linking complications associated with trauma to stalking (Pathe and Mullen, 1997; Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Brewster, 2002). Based on the sample within this review, there appeared to be few studies on the effect of stalking on emotional regulation and emotional processing, with the current review yielding two (Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019). Emotional processing and emotional regulation were associated with 16 studies investigating trauma, PTSD and related subjects to ex-intimate partner stalking such as domestic violence, however.

Trauma research has reported that exposure to sustained, intimate abuse impacts cognitive processes, in particular, the way information is received and processed. For example, Stein, Kennedy and Twamley (2002) tested 39 female victims of intimate partner violence, recruited from specialist domestic violence services in the US, and recorded poorer responses for working memory, auditory attention and response inhibition. In terms of maladaptive coping strategies, normalisation, denial, dissociation and self-blame have all been linked to an attempt to modify distressing emotional responses following a traumatic experience or abuse. A study by Moser *et al*. (2015) tested 16 women in Geneva with male perpetrated interpersonal violence (IPV) related PTSD and 19 healthy controls to compare the different brain

activations when exposed to scenes of male-female interaction with different levels of emotional content. Moser *et al*. (2015) reported a strong correlation between victims of IPV and a deficit in emotional processing. The tests showed evidence of the IPV participants downregulating their emotional responses to perceived male-female violent images, which is consistent with reports of people suffering with PTSD who cope with fear-based stimuli using avoidance or dissociation to reduce arousal. However, this study used female participants so the results only represent female brain activations and cannot be generalised to the population as a whole.

Telch *et al*. (2004) reported a similar relationship when testing 60 students from a university in the US who had been classified as 'severely claustrophobic' towards a reduction in access to certain cognitive processes when under duress (p. 222). Poorer performances at cognitive tasks during fear activation, pointed towards a reduction in access to certain cognitive processes when under duress. Telch *et al.* (2004) theorised that to manage a threatening situation, a reduced ability to attend to distractions was necessary and without sufficient emotional processing to resolve their fearful responses, the ability to manage the demands of other experiences or behaviours appeared limited. However, many of the ratings to assess fear were limited to a Likert-type scale, and although the scale was quite large, ranging from zero to 100, it still restricted the detail of the responses obtained.

Similarly, Tull *et al*. (2007) recruited 108 undergraduate students in the US (aged between 18-71 years), and reported a strong correlation between traumatic events reported by their participants, and a decreased ability to regulate emotions and attend goal-directed tasks. Participants displayed a link between trauma and emotional distancing, as well as an increase in impulsive responses when upset. Whilst there is evidence linking traumatic life experiences with a reduced ability to both process and regulate unpleasant emotions, data linking the toll of stalking to changes in emotional regulation are lacking.

The use of dissociation or avoidance as a coping technique in order to regulate unbearable emotions, has been argued to inhibit an individual's ability to express themselves to others; consequently, isolating a victim of stalking further and forming an obstacle when producing witness statements or engaging in therapy (Kamphuis, Emmelkemp and Bartak, 2003; Miller, 2012). In line with these findings, Peace, Porter and Brinke (2008) studied sexual violence and traumatic memories of 44 women referred from a trauma agency in Canada using both their written narratives to provide subjective accounts, as well as objective measures recorded in questionnaires. A link was found between poor levels of emotional processing, resulting in self-reported memory loss and traumatic memories, suggesting that trauma negatively impacts a person's ability to access emotional memories for reasons including dissociation and suppression.

Similarly, studies investigating impaired emotional processing suggested that victims of trauma are less able to process emotional material correctly (Rachman, 2001; Rauch and Foa, 2006; Baker *et al*., 2010). Baker *et al*. (2010) developed an emotional processing scale for clinical use in order to identify signs of dysfunctional, emotional suppression, unprocessed emotions not yet assimilated, excessive control over emotions, avoidance and unclear understanding of emotions. During the development of the scale, they noted that unsuccessfully processed emotions following a traumatic event may result in inappropriate responses to associated memories, such as suppression and an inability to label and understand the associated emotions. Alternatively, victims might develop hypervigilance regarding similar situations in the future, preserving the traumatic memory and invoking a similar fear-response to any perceived comparable experience (Rauch and Foa, 2006). Using two case studies seeking psychological exposure treatment for PTSD, Rauch and Foa (2006) supported this theory and indicated that dysfunctional processes in a person's 'fear structure' following trauma, can result in inappropriate or overactive responses to false fear-cues (p. 61). Whilst not directly referring to the victims of stalking, the research investigating emotional processing does entail fearful responses, and so may be relevant to the responses of the victims in this research.

Rauch and Foa's (2006) findings were supported by Ehlers and Clark (2000) who devised a model of emotional processing to explain the nature of re-experiencing trauma when threat appraisal failed to be appropriately processed, causing threat levels to remain current for the individual. Schalinski, Schauer and Elbert (2015) devised a model of fear responses that supported the notion of misappraisal of threats following sustained trauma, due to inappropriate trauma-related responses when a trigger caused the experience to be replayed. However, when this theoretical model was elaborated upon for the formulation of a dissociation scale, Schalinski, Schauer and Elbert (2015), noted that data used for the PTSD participants were from female participants only.

Different theories of emotional processing have emerged that incorporate factors such as cognitive and behavioural responses and their impact on emotion. Ehlers and Clark (2000) developed a cognitive model of PTSD and emotional processing, which included thought processes and the consequences of intrusive, unwanted thoughts, perceptions and memories on the emotions experienced. Rachman's (2001) study combined cognitive processes with the theory of emotional processing, and reflected on the connection between unwanted or intrusive cognitions, disruptions to behaviour, and emotional disturbances. Rauch and Foa's (2006) study did include dysfunctional cognitions such as thoughts and memories; however these disturbances were largely described as a 'fear structure', rather than a cognitive process (p. 61).

In comparison, when Baker *et al*. (2010) refined the emotional processing scale, the focus was on the emotions experienced and whether there were signs that these emotions were unregulated, unprocessed or avoidant. Cognitive mechanisms were not linked in to this model, for example, repetitive thinking about emotions was classified as a sign of unprocessed emotions.

The cognitive and emotional mechanisms identified in the studies of emotional processing have highlighted the process of both sense making and meaning making in relation to trauma. Ehlers and Clark's (2000) study

investigated the sense being made of an experience using a process of cognitive appraisal to attempt to understand and respond to events. In contrast, Baker *et al.* (2010) focused on the process of meaning making, which considered an individual's unique emotional interpretation of events, and the subsequent emotional response.

Limitations and External Validity

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this review. The literature was restricted to publications written in English, so risking cultural bias. This was reduced by the range of countries included in the study, including the UK, Europe, the US, Canada, South Africa, Japan, Iran and Australia (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Roberts, 2005; Sheridan and Lyndon, 2012; Jansen van Rensburg, 2017). It is possible that future literature searches could identify different and/ or new research, and this literature review used only five major search databases out of many others. Similarly, peer-reviewed journals were used for quality purposes, and as a result, not all relevant studies may have been located.

One key limitation as to the generalisability of published research findings regarding stalking could be the population samples used. Many studies have drawn data from samples of student groups, which may limit the generalisability of the results to wider populations (Buhi, Clayton and Surrency, 2009; Björklund *et al*., 2010).

Summary of Findings

The present study aimed to explore the current level of understanding of the emotional impact of being stalked. This systematic review followed PRISMA methodology, using 70 studies that were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria (Moher *et al*., 2009).

Studies identified by the search were largely male perpetrators and female victims. 14 of the studies in this review represented only female victims of stalking. Despite this general finding, some reports do identify a quantity of female stalkers and male victims (Owens, 2017; Maran and Varetto, 2018). This highlights the importance of acknowledging stalking as a crime that can affect any gender.

Ideas vary as to the reasons behind the majority of stalkers being male, with one theory emerging from research that men are more likely to engage in controlling behaviours in an attempt to dominate woman, especially following the termination of an intimate relationship (Burgess *et al.*, 2001; Toews and Bermea*,* 2017; Dardis and Gidycz2019). However, research by Owens (2017) found that women were more likely to report fear than men, suggesting there may be additional reasons why the majority of stalking victims coming forward are female.

The definition of stalking often varied across the research, highlighting the challenge faced by researchers and law enforcement when attempting to identify and classify stalking behaviours. Studies included in this review that investigated the toll of stalking, all included some focus on stalking behaviours. It may be unhelpful to consider the emotional toll of stalking separately from stalking behaviours because they are important when considering the full picture.

The emotional toll of stalking has been clearly documented across the research, with anxiety, depression and PTSD commonly reported amongst the mental health damage incurred (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick, 2000; Dressing, Kuehner and Gass, 2005; Roberts and Saunders, 2010). The ability to process and regulate emotions has been reported to be hindered as the result of traumatic events such as stalking, fear and domestic violence (Stein, Kennedy and Twamley, 2002; Telch *et al.*, 2004; Tull *et al.*, 2007; Peace, Porter and Brinke, 2008; Moser *et al.*, 2015). However, stalking research remains largely quantitative, with this literature search only identifying five qualitative stalking studies.

Emotional processing and difficulties regulating emotions have not received much attention in the available literature to date, so require further investigation. Regarding the emotional consequences of stalking, there is a need for greater insight into the potentially long-term impact also (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005).

Coercive control may be more commonly associated with domestic violence, rather than stalking alone. This literature search for research associated with stalking and emotions found ten studies linking control to stalking, and twelve where the focus was on trauma or domestic violence and coercive control. These studies demonstrated that controlling behaviours and denigration can be associated with ex-intimate partner stalking, both during a relationship and following its termination.

The literature review findings indicated that the process of being stalked includes a complex system of behaviours, techniques and responses that interconnect to form a range of strong emotional responses. Although previous studies have highlighted these issues, the need to understand in more depth, the process of being stalked and the emotional impact, are clear.

Conclusion

Within this systematic review, the author has consolidated and critiqued studies associated with the emotional impact of ex-intimate partner stalking. This literature review has identified six areas of interest connected to stalking, including: gender and stalking, ex-intimate partner stalking, stalking behaviours, coercive control, the psychological and physical impact of stalking and the impact of stalking on emotional processing and emotional regulation.

One significant contribution of this literature review was the identification of studies investigating the emotional impact of stalking. This review identified stalking studies reporting the potential for significant emotional damage associated with the experience of being stalked. Being limited to a yield of

only 3% qualitative stalking studies, it is unfortunate that this review lacks comprehensive accounts of the emotional impact of stalking, especially detailed direct testimonies.

This literature review also highlighted the potential role of coercive control in ex-intimate partner stalking. Studies suggest that ex-partner stalking can be preceded by coercive and controlling behaviour, and that stalking behaviours can entail features of coercive control. However, this theory garnered limited attention across the stalking research included in this review, with ten studies identifying control as a component of stalking.

This review raised important questions about the nature of the trauma experienced by stalking victims, however only two studies emerged that linked stalking to theories of emotional processing and emotional regulation. This avenue for further investigation will be useful to establish a stronger link between these subjects, and lay the groundwork for further investigations into the nature of trauma experienced during and after stalking.

Gaining a deeper understanding of stalking experiences directly from the victim will be important to allow for healthcare professionals to appropriately respond to the needs of those seeking help. Additional research about the emotions involved with being stalked, including the trauma of stalking, could provide important insights into the most effective types of mental health intervention. Further investigation could also provide a coherent understanding of the potential use of coercive control to stalk an ex-intimate partner, and the coping strategies utilised by the victim.

Chapter 3

Methodology, Methods and Analytical Processes

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with a description of the philosophical approach of this research, then an explanation of the chosen methodology. This is followed by an explanation of the relevance of reflexivity. The subsequent sections respectively describe the methods of data collection, and then the ethical considerations which link into the research process. The penultimate section details the analytical procedure, followed by a final section which provides an overview of the techniques used to strengthen validity and transferability of the study.

Philosophical Approach

Rather than positivism, which relies upon a deductive approach and the belief in one universal truth or fact, this research was situated within relativist ontology. Ontology in research is concerned with the nature of the world and reality, and is driven by the question seeking what there is to know (Creswell, 2013). Relativism considers reality as a multi-faceted, subjective experience that differs between people, rather than an existence of an objective, obtainable, single truth (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Harper and Thompson, 2012). This research does not intend to establish a generaliseable 'truth' about the emotional experience of being stalked, but rather, it seeks to

answer questions about the stalking experience in an attempt to understand the unique experience of each participant, and what their reality was as they understood it.

Epistemologically, that is to say, the philosophical perspective associated with how knowledge is acquired and how truth is defined, the experience of being stalked varied between individuals, which does not fit the positivist approach that the stalking experience can be measured objectively, generating one absolute truth (Creswell, 2013) Rather, the research was consistent with an interpretivist approach, which permitted the focus to be placed on the understanding and sense of reality that people formulate in their everyday lives by studying and interpreting their unique experience (Weaver and Olson, 2006). As such, adopting an interpretivist approach gave the research a relativist ontological perspective and accepted that in the social world there are multiple realities, and there is not one true reality that can be discovered through research. This project was located in the belief that each person mentally constructs their own understanding of the world around them, and in turn, a unique interpretation of experience develops (Gergen, 1999). Further, that the participant's experience is a subjective reality created by them, located in a constantly changing world of multiple realities that are variably influenced, depending on the context (Chowdhury, 2014). Adopting an interpretivist approach, it was possible to access these varying subjective truths through an inductive process of forming understandings and interpretations of emerging ideas or themes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Locating the study in a relativist interpretivist paradigm, provided a structure to explore participants' shared experiences and for participants to contribute their experiences of being stalked. Following the philosophical underpinning of this research, the methodological framework is outlined below.

Methodology

This research investigated the complex multiple realities of being stalked, and as such, an appropriate methodological framework was selected that permitted access to the range of subjective and complex participant experiences. For this study, participants shared personal accounts, provided a rich and deep source of data and organised their experiences into sequence, to form a coherent recall of events (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007).

It was recognised that there were many other qualitative methodological approaches that might have been adopted to investigate human experience, each dealing with the collection and analysis of data, albeit from different perspectives and with different focuses (Cresswell, 2013). Phenomenology for example, would have offered an approach to the research which focused on descriptions of lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). The associated Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), would have enabled the in-depth examination of how meaning was constructed, with the aim of understanding the essence of an experience. However, IPA would have steered this study into a restructuring of the participant experience in search of the essence of a single phenomenon. Equally, grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) again, offered the opportunity to focus on experiences but with an emphasis on systematically constructing an 'inductively derived' theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 24); the intricate process of fragmenting participants' experiences in order to create a theory (Creswell, 2013).

However, rather than seeking to examine the process of creating meaning or generating a single theory, this study sought to look beyond one phenomenon; to understand the complexity of lives and experiences that were weaved into what participants shared. The research was interested in the content of the experiences shared. As such, a narrative inquiry was selected as the methodology was consistent with my philosophical approach and the interpretivist paradigm. Narrative inquiry offered a systematic

approach to exploring the accounts of participants, and a framework to consider the message being conveyed.

Narrative Methodologies and Narrative Inquiry

In exploring the field of narrative methodologies, it was possible to appreciate that ‘narrative’ is a term that encompasses a group of different approaches that draw information from a variety of sources, such as written or spoken word, or visual sources, such as photographs or paintings, to investigate the inner workings of human communication and attempt to understand the meaning in the life of a person or group. In terms of background, narrative approaches have been adopted by researchers during recent decades, gaining popularity in the 1980s and 1990s (Labov, 1997; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007). Different forms of narrative approaches have been developed over the years by key figures, including Labov (1997), Polkinghorne (1988), Clandinin and Connelly (2000), and Riessman (2008). Narrative research methodologies have also been used within the field of sociology, psychology and, in part, from the work of Foucault (1972) and the psychoanalytical work of Lacan (1977), who were among many researchers, keen to gain an insight into the subjective human experience by understanding the conscious and unconscious significance of narratives.

The approaches to narrative research can vary depending on the questions posed by the researcher, such as how a narrative is shared, or why. How a narrative is analysed may be influenced by the focus of the researcher’s interest, such as content, language, structure, plot, the interactional context and pragmatics (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). As narrative research methodologies have evolved, so has the subtle but significant distinction between narrative inquiry and other forms of narrative research become apparent.

Narrative methodologies include narrative inquiry and narrative analysis, which share some common features, but can also be set apart. For some narrative analysis researchers, emphasis has been placed on language as crucial for gaining insight into an individual’s experience of their environment,

and the analysis of the language used can be central to the aims of the research, in particular, what is said, how it is said and why (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1991). The detailed analysis of language, its form, and the use of metaphors, can be the focus of interrogation in some variants of narrative analysis (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013).

However, for others, narrative inquiry enables gradual construction of understanding regarding the impact of experience, as each participant reveals their unique and personal lived experience (Riessman, 2008; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013). Narrative inquiry focuses on the themes and patterns that emerge by examining the content of the narratives being created, offering insight into the emotions and the impact endured as participants reveal the sense they have made of the life events they have experienced.

Over a period of 50 years, narrative inquiry has evolved the position that a person's version of their experiences might be created between the researcher and participant, and the participant and their external world, spanning across the past, present and future. In this sense, narrative inquiry is interactive and its relational aspect shapes the way a narrative is told and how it is experienced by the listener. Whilst Ricoeur (1991) considered the influence of narrative emplotment, dwelling to consider on how people understand the significance through the ordering of a narrative sequentially, more recently, narrative inquiry has developed into a broader exploration, to cover how a significant event in the life of the participant has been experienced (Polkinghorne, 1988; Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013).

Although in selecting narrative inquiry, its limitations were recognised. It is necessary to acknowledge that due to the detailed nature of this methodology, narrative inquiry is unsuitable for working with a large number of participants. However, narrative inquiry as a typical example of qualitative research is suited to gathering highly detailed data with rich descriptions that would not be possible with a whole population. It also involves close scrutiny of the researcher as well as the participants' narratives, which can be

challenging for the researcher (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011). The involvement of the researcher can be managed with careful reflexive and reflective practice, which is covered in the next section.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential for a limited degree of factual accuracy, the possibility of intentional deceit, and the prospect of omission of information to produce a more favourable account (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Elliott, 2005). Through the interpretations of the data, it was important to recognise that some events may be omitted, and therefore the narrative may only be a partial window into the worldview of the participant. Nevertheless, the importance of the experiences shared, move beyond whether or not the stories are factual or accurate.

Although, as detailed above, for some researchers, narrative approaches might be considered limited as a means to access each person's subjective truth, and lack hard fact. However, it is precisely the lack of distraction on exactness, which offers the opportunity to examine the ambiguous, the expressed beliefs, interpretations and emotions, and the constructed truth, as the participant discloses them at a particular moment in time. From these revelations, it is possible to detect underlying themes, which are at the core of what the participant is disclosing, derived from their contributions, which provide a version of sense and meaning, as they recall and recount what they place emphasis on, in respect to their experience, for the benefit of the record being compiled (Polkinghorne, 1998; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Elliott, 2005; Caine, Estafan and Clandinin, 2013).

As such, adopting narrative inquiry as a methodology enabled this study to consider the significance discovered in the aspects of the narrative that were important to the participant and the process of narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to form an interpretation that reflected the intentions of the participants' words (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008). It was possible to take into account the events and emotions experienced by participants whilst being stalked. The experiences that were shared also detailed the external influences, such as the actions of the stalker, and the influence of the participants' family, friends, and the environment they found themselves in.

The social influences, the patterns that emerged in the events described, and the relationship between their experiences and their sense of self, can also combine to form a unique worldview (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008). Therefore, narrative inquiry was ideally suited to give voice to the participants, as well as create an opportunity for deeper meaning that viewing the combined experiences might give.

Adopting a narrative inquiry approach for this study provided the basis for the collaborative effort between the researcher and participants, resulting in the formation of a deeper understanding that might not have otherwise been permitted. It was recognised that the rapport between the researcher and participant shaped the way a narrative was told, and care was taken to ask questions during moments of uncertainty, in an attempt to understand more deeply what was being said, as a crucial basis to ensure the subsequent interpretations reflected what was important to the participant (Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008).

Reflexivity

As with most qualitative methodologies, the researcher has the potential to influence the subject under scrutiny, and so in an attempt to achieve a more neutral position, reflexivity was adopted.

As the researcher could not entirely disengage from their own preconceived beliefs and biases (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), it was important to acknowledge the role of these influences through a process of reflexivity (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011). Reflexivity involved the careful, ongoing examination of the personal beliefs and biases of the researcher, and encouraged a degree of honesty that acknowledged the perspectival nature of interpretations, rather than the objective nature (Temple, 2008; Bishop and Shepherd, 2011; Caine, Estafan and Clandinin, 2013).

Recognising the standpoint of the researcher and the epistemological position of the research was an important part of reflexivity (Yardley, 2000). In-line with the ontological and epistemological position of this research, a

new understanding of the 'truth' of the stalking experience emerged from the narratives, both from the participant through their re-telling of the narrative, and the researcher through their interpretations of it. Taking into consideration the impact of the insider/ outsider position of the researcher, a sense of clarity could be established regarding the intentions of the research, thus helping to avoid interpretations becoming motivated by the interests of the researcher (Yardley, 2000; Riach, 2009).

Time for reflection and space to consider assumptions and allow personal biases to come to light were essential. There were aspects of the narratives that triggered strong emotions for the researcher, and these emotional reactions required careful consideration and management. Therefore, the researcher kept reflective notes and used supervision to consider any beliefs or personal biases in order to monitor their influence on the participants' narratives. While some aspects of the researcher's influence may have been unconscious, and unknown to them, reflexivity allowed for the researcher to locate their influence in the research, where possible (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011).

The next section will outline the methods of data collection, ethical considerations, the research process and the rationale for the methods used for data analysis.

Methods of Data Collection

This section will outline the methods used during this research, which included the ethical considerations and research process, the analytical procedure, validity and transferability. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) reported particular methods such as conversations, videos, and focus groups to elicit the narrative from a person, as well as the most commonly used method of interviews to gather data. For this research, individual interviews were chosen to create an environment in which the participants felt comfortable, and trust could be built upon to allow for personal and sensitive information to be shared. Semi-structured interviews conducted for this

research were open-ended and allowed for an increased opportunity for lived experiences to be disclosed. This method of data collection can be limited however, by different interviewers who may vary in their interpretations of the stories. In terms of narrative inquiry, Elliott (2005), Riessman (2008) and Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2013), all suggest that semi-structured interviews are a suitable method of data collection.

The details provided in this section will allow for the research project to be replicated by future studies. In order to collect the data needed for this research, semi-structured interviews were carried out, transcribed and then coded using an analytical strategy of thematic analysis.

Ethical Consideration and the Research Process

Ethical Consideration

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, the consideration of ethical issues was paramount to setting up and carrying out the study. Creswell (2013) provided guidelines for the consideration of ethical issues across different qualitative research designs, while Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Elliott (2005) offered ethical guidance within the narrative methodology. The main ethical concerns were considered during the initial ethics review checklist with Kent University, and after subsequent approval, these issues were upheld during the research. Key areas for consideration were confidentiality, informed consent, right to withdraw, reflexivity, and the anonymisation, storage and retention of data, which will be expanded upon in this section. The issue of reflexivity in this research was discussed previously. To ensure that there was no coercion or undue influence from the researcher, it was clearly communicated to the participants, both verbally and using a consent form, how their data would be stored using digital encryption, that identities would be protected, and that they had the right to withdraw and would experience no negative consequences if they did. The

participants were informed that pseudonyms would be assigned and identifiable data removed during transcription. The nature of the study was explained clearly to the participants to ensure that they felt comfortable, had trust in the researcher, and were aware of their role in the research and what participation would entail.

It was the researcher's ethical duty to ensure that the participants were not experiencing stalking currently, and for their own personal safety, to ensure that they were seeking appropriate assistance during the actual time of crisis and were not side-tracked by this study (Tarzia *et al*., 2017).

The Research Process

Recruitment and Selection: Initially, seven volunteers were recruited through the University of Kent, using a recruitment poster within university bulletins, newspapers and online forums (see Appendix 4). During recruitment, participants were provided with information about the aims of the research and it was confirmed that they met the necessary criteria (outlined below).

The selection criteria for participants were that they were female, 18 years old or over, and were required to speak fluent English, due to the detailed analysis required of the narratives.

The classification for being victims of stalking, followed careful guidelines identified in the recruitment stage by McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie (2009), who sought to identify a link between stalker characteristics and persistence. Based upon McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie's (2009) proposition that the majority of stalking extends beyond two weeks, including ex-intimate partner stalkers, it was decided that to be included, each participant should have experienced stalking for a minimum of two weeks. Additionally, stalking is "rarely confined to one behaviour", which accounted for the decision to classify stalking as two or more behaviours in this study (Sheridan, Davies and Boon, 2001, p. 164).

Gender selection was restricted to female because, as outlined previously, stalking has been reported to be a majority female experience, with a high percentage of stalkers found to be male (Björklund *et al*., 2010; Sheridan and Lyndon, 2012; Maran and Zedda, 2014; Owens, 2017). Therefore, as far as can be determined, for one of the first studies of this nature, it was decided to begin with the most likely gender to be stalked (Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie, 2009; Björklund *et al*., 2010). Whilst this did limit the study, it nevertheless provided a basis for subsequent studies in the future.

The particular characteristics needed for this research and a willingness to volunteer to participate, resulted in a challenge recruiting appropriate participants. As a result, aside from the stalking checklist used to ascertain whether or not the potential participants had experienced stalking, the inclusion criteria were kept as broad and non-restrictive as possible. The final group of five participants was selected from the seven volunteers, as a consequence of the criteria for inclusion. Two volunteers did not fit the criteria; one due to having no prior intimate relationship with their stalker, and the other, due to their stalker also being their current intimate partner. All participants were invited to contact the researcher through an email address and a convenient time for an interview was arranged (see Appendix 5 for the recruitment email response).

Consent: Informed consent was ascertained from all participants by explaining the risks and benefits of the research to help the participants make an informed decision about whether or not they wished to take part in the study (Bolderston, 2012). Prior to each interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form, informed that their data would be anonymised, securely stored using password protection, and were informed about what to expect during the interview (see Appendix 6). This served to clarify the participants' rights, confidentiality and privacy in the research process (King and Horrocks, 2010). The option to receive a summary of the research findings was also offered in the introductory information, if participants wished to know the outcome of the study. Participants were informed of their

right to withdraw at any time and that the interview would be recorded.

Confidentiality: Maintaining privacy and confidentiality entailed the secure storage and anonymisation of data to protect the safety and trust of the participants (King and Horrocks, 2010). Confidentiality was a primary concern when carrying out the participants' interviews. It was important to protect the safety of all of the participants, due to any potential danger posed by their stalker, despite the stalking being a past event. The safety of the participants was ensured by taking careful measures to ensure confidentiality was paramount. To manage the interview in a quiet, private space, the location chosen was deemed to be a secure venue on the University of Kent campus, where participants would feel at ease and certain that the research was being conducted in the strictest of confidence (Byrn, 2001). Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to preserve their anonymity (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015). The pseudonyms allocated by the researcher were: Paula, Rachel, Nina, Carol and Kim.

Risk of Distress: The interview was carefully considered during the construction of the research and the significant risk of causing emotional distress was taken into account given the topic being investigated. The wording of the questions was structured in order to be open and neutral enough to allow for free reflection on the part of the participant (see Appendix 7) (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Due to the researcher's position as a trainee psychotherapist, the nature of their role as researcher in relation to this training was considered. Morse and Field (1995) highlighted the risks of the researcher interrupting the course of the interview, and accidentally turning it into a counselling session, for example, by reflecting parts of the interview back to the participant. Striking a balance between putting participants at ease and resisting one's training to engage with participants in a therapeutic manner was important. If participants were encouraged to reflect on their emotions on a deeper level, as one would do in a psychotherapy session, then consequently, there could be a risk of opening them up to emotional distress (Morse and Field, 1995). As a result, questions during the interview were open-ended, allowing the participants to lead the

dialogue and explore their memories without prompts from the researcher to access or confront difficult emotions as one might in a psychotherapy session. Length of time was considered, and allowing for an interview to extend beyond an hour could have exposed the participants to exhaustion or an increased risk of distress.

Participants were informed prior to the interview commencing, that they could stop at any point if they found it too distressing, and were advised of places they could visit for appropriate support if there were any difficult emotional repercussions after the interview took place. Instructions detailing how to arrange counselling at The Wellbeing Centre on the University campus if required were included (see Appendix 6).

Pilot: The first interview was chosen to be a pilot interview due to an amendment to the interview questions. During this initial interview, it was discovered that the questions risked leading the participants' answers. For example, asking if the participants were 'anxious', risked implanting the notion of anxiety into their answers. Hence, the questions were refined for future interviews, based on this experience (see Appendix 7). Following this interview, one more question was added to the list that was necessary to incorporate into the first interview, but was not on the initial interview schedule. This brought the total number of questions to seven, as it was felt that it would assist in encouraging the participants to explore their experiences. The pilot interview was included in the final results as the addition of the extra question was considered a minor change, and the data from the interview were of value to the research.

Semi-Structured Interview Development: The interviews followed an interval schedule (see Appendix 7) and a one-hour, semi-structured interview was employed. Areas for consideration included preparation for the interview, allowing participants the freedom to talk without intruding upon the conversation, consideration regarding the influential nature of the researcher's responses and creating an environment of trust (Fraser, 2004). The interviews began with introductions, a discussion about the process of

the interview and space for any questions from the participant. Participants were asked to recall their experience of events, with the researcher actively listening throughout and providing them with non-verbal responses, such as nodding, at appropriate junctures.

The subject areas covered were:

- Background to the stalking event
- The form the stalking event took
- Actions taken by the participant to stop the stalking behaviours
- Participants' feelings towards and understanding of the stalking and his behaviours

It was deemed necessary to encourage the exploration of any possible emotional impact without influencing the participants' answers by suggesting a feeling, such as anxiety or anger. The questions used were not based upon a previous model of inquiry into stalking, due to the lack of qualitative research in this field, but they came about following a detailed analysis of the literature available.

Transcription: The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed by the researcher with all identifiable information removed and using pseudonyms for anonymity (Cresswell, 2013; Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015). The process of anonymising the transcripts involved following a guide by Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger (2015), with the goal that all traceable data, such as locations and names, were removed (see Appendix 8). Notes were made during transcription to monitor the reactions and thoughts of the researcher during this process. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, the participants did not wish to be involved in member checking the transcripts. Whilst member checking would have offered the opportunity to verify the trustworthiness of the researcher's results, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Doyle, 2007) unfortunately, that was not possible without the co-operation of the participants.

Analytical Procedure

As outlined in the previous sections, narrative inquiry rather than narrative analysis was selected as the framework for this study. Consistent with narrative inquiry is an approach using thematic analysis, as a means by which to analyse the data (Riessman, 2008). As this study used a form of narrative inquiry that focused on content, thematic analysis was an appropriate analytical tool. A thematic approach can enable a researcher to identify themes and patterns that occur both within and across the narratives. Riessman (2008) wrote of the relationship between narrative inquiry and thematic analysis, commenting on the significance of bringing the two approaches together, stating that when conducting narrative research, “in thematic analysis, content is the exclusive focus” (p. 53).

Thematic analysis was selected as it is compatible with an interpretivist epistemology and consistent with inductive reasoning, which allowed the researcher to code across the five narratives without attempting to fit the data into a pre-existing theory (Green *et al*., 2007). Validity of process was achieved by selecting a framework that had resonance and congruence with the methodology and methods and facilitated the aim and objectives of the research project (Green *et al*., 2007; Bazeley, 2013). As such, thematic analysis provided a valuable framework for understanding the process of organising and making sense of the participants’ words, and to uncover common themes across cases whilst simultaneously preserving the participants’ stories as a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988; Elliott, 2005; Green *et al*., 2007; Riessman, 2008, p. 58; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013). This approach to analysis allowed the researcher to identify, analyse and interpret patterns as they emerged from the data (Green *et al*., 2007; Riessman, 2008).

A clear framework for the process of analysis was important for this research, in order to examine the highly detailed data produced during the interviews. Green *et al*. (2007) offered a model for thematic data analysis using four steps that allowed development of a ‘compelling narrative’ from

the participants and a means through which to understand the subject being investigated (p. 549).

Application of the Thematic Analysis Model

This section will outline the four stages of the Green *et al.* (2007) model and how these were applied in the context of the study.

Stage 1- Immersion: The first stage of analysis involved immersion in the data to examine the content in great detail (Green *et al*., 2007, p. 547). The analysis began with reading and re-reading the transcripts several times to familiarise the researcher with the stories being told. Notes were taken to record any thoughts or ideas that emerged during this stage.

Stage 2 - Coding: The second stage involved free coding to produce nodes taken directly from the transcripts, using the language of the participant to draw out important thoughts and ideas (Green *et al*., 2007, p. 548). The interviews were coded using NVivo. There were a total of 137 codes. A short description of each code allowed for clarity of the meaning of each code, and to monitor the similarities and differences as the codes emerged (see Appendix 9). The transcripts were re-read at this point to review the codes and assess whether anything had been overlooked.

Stage 3 - Categories: During the third stage, the codes were grouped into categories consisting of a shared relationship, as discussed by Green *et al*. (2007, p. 548). The codes were grouped into relevant categories to both make sense of the smaller narratives and themes located in the transcripts and also to provide an emerging sense of the overriding narrative as a whole.

There were a total of 12 categories and each category was linked to a definition (see Appendix 10).

Stage 4 - Identification of Themes: The final stage consisted of the identification of themes to allow the researcher to move beyond the

description of categories and towards an interpretation of the data (Green *et al*., 2007, p. 549). The categories were grouped together into common, overarching themes. There were a total of three themes. Each theme was given a definition, which assisted the researcher in the task of explaining and illustrating the interpretations of the narratives. The construction of themes will be detailed further in the next chapter (Chapter 4), where the data is presented in **Table 2** and **Figure 2.**

Whilst examining shared themes across the transcripts, the similarities and differences were also considered. For example, shared responses and actions taken were of interest to this research as they allowed the reader access to elements of the stalking experience that might be commonly felt amongst the victims, beyond the individual stories being shared. The results of this study present a framework of themes that emerged from the stories, all of which represent both a series of smaller narratives and the overarching narrative the participants chose to share as a whole (further detail is provided in **Table 2** and **Figure 2** in Chapter 4).

Validity and Transferability

There are many perspectives regarding assessing the accuracy and authenticity in social research, and typical quantitative terms, such as ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’, have been aligned with a positivist perspective where objective conclusions are sought to be made and the ‘truth’ to be found (Creswell, 2013). Social research instead, often endeavours to be ‘trustworthy’ and ‘credible’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), with Polkinghorne (1988) describing validity in narrative research as being “well-grounded and supportable” (p. 175). Polkinghorne (1998; 2007) argued that narrative research should permit the reader to trace the research claim back to the text and make a judgement on its plausibility (Polkinghorne, 2007). The approach to establish trustworthiness in social research can be dependent on the research paradigm, and it may be appropriate to use multiple strategies needed for the purpose of credibility indicators (Creswell, 2013).

For the purposes of strengthening trustworthiness and rigor in this research, the researcher upheld transparency throughout the data collection, analysis and the interpretations made. Transparency involved clarity about the methods used, the choices made during analysis, as well as any assumptions, with the aim that the research was clear enough to enable the procedure to be replicated. Whilst it was not possible to include member checking (as outlined previously), it was nethertheless important to include peer reviewing to maintain honesty in the research, and challenge the assumptions of the researcher where necessary (Creswell, 2013). Peer reviewing is defined as an "external check of the research process" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251), and was achieved by using a supervision group to review and interrogate the research process (Cresswell, 2013). Peer reviewing was a useful tool in the study to review coding and check for emerging biases within the analysis. Additionally, a thick, rich description brought a level of high detail to the research (which will be discussed further in the next section). Further accuracy of the study could be assessed due to an externally auditable trail (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2013), for example, through the detailed account of how it was conducted and examples of the coding tables.

Coherence was important given the rich detail of the analysis, to ensure that the philosophical underpinning, methodology, methods and data analysis process and interpretations were coherent and clearly understood. Langridge (2007) expressed a requirement for the researcher to "be fully present to the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 155), which was achieved by the researcher through continuous self-monitoring and reflexivity, as discussed earlier in the chapter.

Transferability

The purpose of the methodology used in this research was to uncover information about individual human experiences, rather than prove generaliseable facts, which influenced how the validity and generalisability were considered (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, some researchers using

narrative inquiry have argued that generalisability is also not congruent with this style of research, due to the high level of detail required of a small number of participants (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 101; McMullen and Braithwaite, 2013, p. 95). This research purposively 'selected' (rather than sampled) [2] individuals who had the characteristics that the researcher was seeking and who were prepared to be interviewed. While the purpose of qualitative research was not generalisation (Creswell, 2013), in accordance with Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the results of this project can be transferrable (Creswell, 2013; McMullen and Braithwaite, 2013).

Transferability involves the degree to which this research could be applied to a different context or setting (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Cresswell, 2013). This was facilitated through a high degree of rich, detailed description throughout and included the context of the research, such as the environment, setting or situation (Creswell, 2013). The intention of the study was to illuminate the experiences of the five participants, with a view that any reader might identify with or recognise synergies or relevance to their own work.

Conclusion

This chapter considered the philosophical approach of this research, in relation to the aims and chosen methodology. This research is considered to fall within a relativist, interpretivist paradigm, thus the reality of being stalking is considered to be an individually constructed, multi-faceted experience. While it can be argued that different methodologies may be suited to investigate the lived experience of an individual, narrative inquiry allowed the author to access the unique voices of the victims of stalking and consider the deeper meaning of events and emotions experienced.

The analysis required immersion, coding, forming categories and the identification of themes, using thematic analysis to draw out the meanings of the experiences shared by the participants. The emerging themes revealed both the individual and shared experiences of being stalked by an ex-

intimate partner. Consideration was paid to the role of the author and any potential impacts on the process of analysis and interpretations made.

The results of the analysis will be detailed in the following chapter, with an exploration of the findings and subsequent implications of stalking behaviours, the responses of the participants, and the lasting impact on their lives.

Chapter 4

Analysis

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with two composite narratives to provide a profile of the two groups of participants involved in this research, and the main features of their stalking experiences. The second section will present episodes of the participants' stalking experiences, which will be presented using direct extracts from the transcripts, integrated with narrative inquiry to highlight and link similarities and differences across the narratives.

The Participants

The five participants were a mixture of three academic participants who were students at the University of Kent and two professional women who were advanced in their careers and visiting the University. Each was assigned a pseudonym, which can be seen in **Table 1**. Two fictional characters representing these two age groups of participants will be depicted in the composite narratives below.

Table 1: Participant Pseudonym and Vocation

Pseudonym	**Vocation**
Rachel	University of Kent student
Paula	University of Kent student
Kim	University of Kent student
Carol	Professional
Nina	Professional

Composite Narratives

Composite narratives are fictional accounts that combine the common features of a group of participants (Goodson *et al*., 2017). The two composite narratives below were designed, not as part of the data analysis model, but rather to permit the reader to gain a better understanding of the participants, as a means to provide context prior to presenting the analysis of the collected data. Thus, the composites represent the two age groups of female participants contributing to this study. Both composite narratives have been included to allow the reader access to a complete picture of the stalking journeys and to convey the similarities and differences that arose, given the two different life-stages of the participants.

Meanwhile, whilst permitting the reader an element of accessibility, the composite narratives preserve the participants' anonymity; an ethical imperative for those victims of stalking who live in fear that their stalkers could still potentially gain access to them (Willis, 2019).

The first composite, 'Michaela', combines the common features of three accounts of stalking provided by undergraduate university students.

Composite 1: Michaela

> Michaela was a 20-year-old undergraduate student in her second year of study, attending the University of Kent. Michaela studied Biomedical Science and passed her first year, although was disappointed with her performance. Michaela lived off-campus with two other female housemates and visited her parents and younger sister at home in London between each term. Michaela's parents had high hopes for her education and subsequent career, and Michaela often worried about the expectations placed upon her. Before university, Michaela was a hard-working student, achieving good grades for her 'A' levels,

which she was proud of.

At university, Michaela was involved with several social groups, and frequently socialised with her housemates and friends. While visiting her parents at her family home, Michaela met a man three years older than her and they formed a romantic relationship. At first, Michaela enjoyed the attention and flattery bestowed upon her, however things quickly turned sour between them. His behaviour became increasingly controlling, emotionally abusive and threatening. As her boyfriend monopolised more of her time, she was able to devote less time to her academic studies and social groups, and found that her grades were worsening and she was becoming socially isolated. He was openly resentful of her position at university as it took her away from his home in London, and back to Kent during each term-time. He would often tell her to leave university, as he was more important and he would attempt to undermine her confidence by telling her that she would fail her course and shame her family.

Michaela became afraid of her boyfriend and confided in her friends and parents about his recent behaviour, however she only told them a small part of the narrative as she felt ashamed. She found that they downplayed it as “not that bad”, and provided her with little support. Michaela attempted to end the relationship, but her boyfriend did not react well. At first he was angry, and then he attempted to placate her, promising that he would change his behaviour and pleaded with her to change her mind. Michaela relented, but after several months her mind was made up and she ended the relationship.

Michaela had always felt safe in her student accommodation as her ex-boyfriend lived in London, however, following their breakup he would often tell her that he knew where she lived and that he could come and see her whenever he wanted to. He would inundate her with messages on her mobile phone and through social media, and at times he would contact her friends also in an attempt to find out about her. Michaela’s ex-boyfriend would threaten her with harm, or threaten

to harm members of her family, as he knew where they lived. He would also call her family home on the land-line and hang up when somebody answered. Michaela was terrified, and became increasingly paranoid when she left the house that he was following her.

Michaela experienced high levels of anxiety, fear, and started having panic attacks. Her university work was negatively affected as she struggled to concentrate, and this increased her feelings of low self-esteem. Michaela found that she was too afraid to walk around in public on her own, and stopped going out unless she felt she had to.

After six months, Michaela told her father all about the stalking, and at this point he took it seriously. He helped her to talk about it with her mother, and together they spoke with the police. The police were helpful and warned Michaela's stalker to stop. To Michaela's relief this was enough to stop the stalking behaviours.

At first, Michaela was relieved and thought her traumatic experiences were over. However, over the weeks and months after the stalking had finished, she found herself constantly on high alert, expecting him to contact her without warning. When out shopping, Michaela would become very frightened, thinking she would see him, and would often mistake strangers for him and become very frightened. At university, Michaela's friends were very sympathetic and told her that they wished they had known. Michaela felt that in hindsight she had hidden a lot of the stalking from her friends out of shame, as she had often blamed herself, or she thought people would not believe her.

Despite the symptoms of emotional trauma from the stalking continuing to be felt over a year since the stalking ended, Michaela feels glad it is over. She tells people that she has recovered with little impact on herself.

The second composite combines the common features of the stalking accounts of two women in their forties, who have been working in a

professional career for many years, alongside raising their young children.

Composite 2: Frankie

Frankie was a legal secretary based in Croydon where she lived in a rented property with her two children. Frankie was a 45-year-old woman who had been divorced for 11 years. She first met her ex-husband at work, where he worked as a lawyer. For the first year, the relationship was a happy one, and Frankie was impressed by his thriving career, charisma and friendliness. They enjoyed working together and Frankie was overjoyed when he proposed on their first anniversary. During their engagement, Frankie's friends and family became alarmed about the 'warning signs' they had noticed in his behaviour that he might be controlling and emotionally abusive, but Frankie made excuses for this, brushing it off, and felt angry towards anybody expressing concern.

Once Frankie was married and pregnant with their first child, her husband's behaviour progressed to include physical violence, and this was harder for her to ignore. Frankie felt afraid and trapped and did not know what to do. By this stage, her husband had eroded her sense of self-worth and confidence, leaving her reliant on him, blaming herself and feeling very alone. The physical and emotional violence was underpinned by a need for control and dominance by her husband, and he eventually forced her to resign from their workplace. Frankie was terrified of her husband and knew that she would be in terrible danger if she attempted to end their marriage. Being pregnant with their second child only served to worsen the abuse.

It was when Frankie's husband kidnapped and attempted to kill her that she was finally able to break free of their marriage, with the help of the police and her family. She quickly divorced her husband, and he received a short sentence in prison. However, from prison, Frankie's ex-husband was able to continue his campaign of abuse by stalking her. He would post threatening letters and tell her friends and family

lies about her. Frankie made a complaint to the prison about his behaviour, but this did not stop him.

Upon release, the stalking escalated and Frankie's ex-husband widened his range of stalking behaviours to include posting fake pornographic websites about her, sending her intrusive gifts and falsely reporting her to the police for stalking. Frankie lived in a world of paranoia and fear, never knowing when he would do something or reappear in her life. He had access to their children and would often badmouth her to them, telling them lies about Frankie and trying to convince them to live with him.

Frankie's mental health suffered, and she experienced frequent panic attacks, high anxiety levels and depression. Financially, Frankie was also penalised, as during their marriage her ex-husband had run up debts in her name that she was left with while he was in prison. Frankie managed to rebuild her career at a new law firm, but was often on sick leave due to the pressures on her mental health, and she was in constant fear of her ex-husband telling her colleagues lies about her.

The stalking ended five years after her ex-husband was released from prison because he entered a new relationship. Despite this, Frankie still feels fearful to the present day that the stalking will begin again, and while she feels happier, she has been left with an anxious hypervigilance that she may one day encounter him again.

Despite the differences in age and vocation, the two accounts above share a common narrative of abuse, fear and lasting psychological damage. The actions of the stalker, impact of the stalking, and lasting consequences for the participants, will be presented in the next section through the different themes that emerged from the analysis.

Thematic Analysis of the Stalking Experience

As outlined previously, three themes emerged from the coding and categorising process linked to three different areas that formed the structure of the stalking experience. The construction of the three major narrative themes from the 137 minor narrative codes can be seen in **Table 2.** A visual representation of the construction process can be seen in **Figure 2,** which provides an example of the formation of Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour.

Table below illustrates stage 4 of analysis, with the grouping of 137 codes into 14 categories, and 3 themes.

Column 1 provides the group of code numbers which then feed into column 2 which provides the categories which feed into column 3. Column 3 provides the themes and column 4 provides an initial explanation of each theme.

Table 2: Relationship Table of Analytical Codes into Categories and into Themes			
Column 1	**Column 2**	**Column 3**	**Column 4**
Code	**Category**	**Theme**	**Initial Explanation of Theme**
1-4	**1. Location**	**1. Stalker Behaviour**	**A series of unwanted behaviours utilised by the stalker, which were spread across many different areas of the victims' lives.**
5-6	**2. Material**		
7-9	**3. Physical**		
10-37	**4. Psychological**		
38-45	**5. Social**		
46-51	**6. Using Technology**		
52-58	**7. Social**	**2. Impact on the Victim**	**The impact of the stalking across many different areas of the victims' lives.**
59-61	**8. Personal Safety**		
62-64	**9. Economic**		
65-68	**10. Physical**		
69-75	**11. Emotional**		
76-110	**12. Coping Behaviours: Adapting**	**3. Victim Response**	**The ways the victim responded by attempting to adapt to the stalking and changing areas of her life in order to navigate these circumstances**
111-123	**13. Coping Response: Compliance**		
124-137	**14. Coping Response: Escape**		

Figure 2 shows the construction of Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour from the codes and categories.

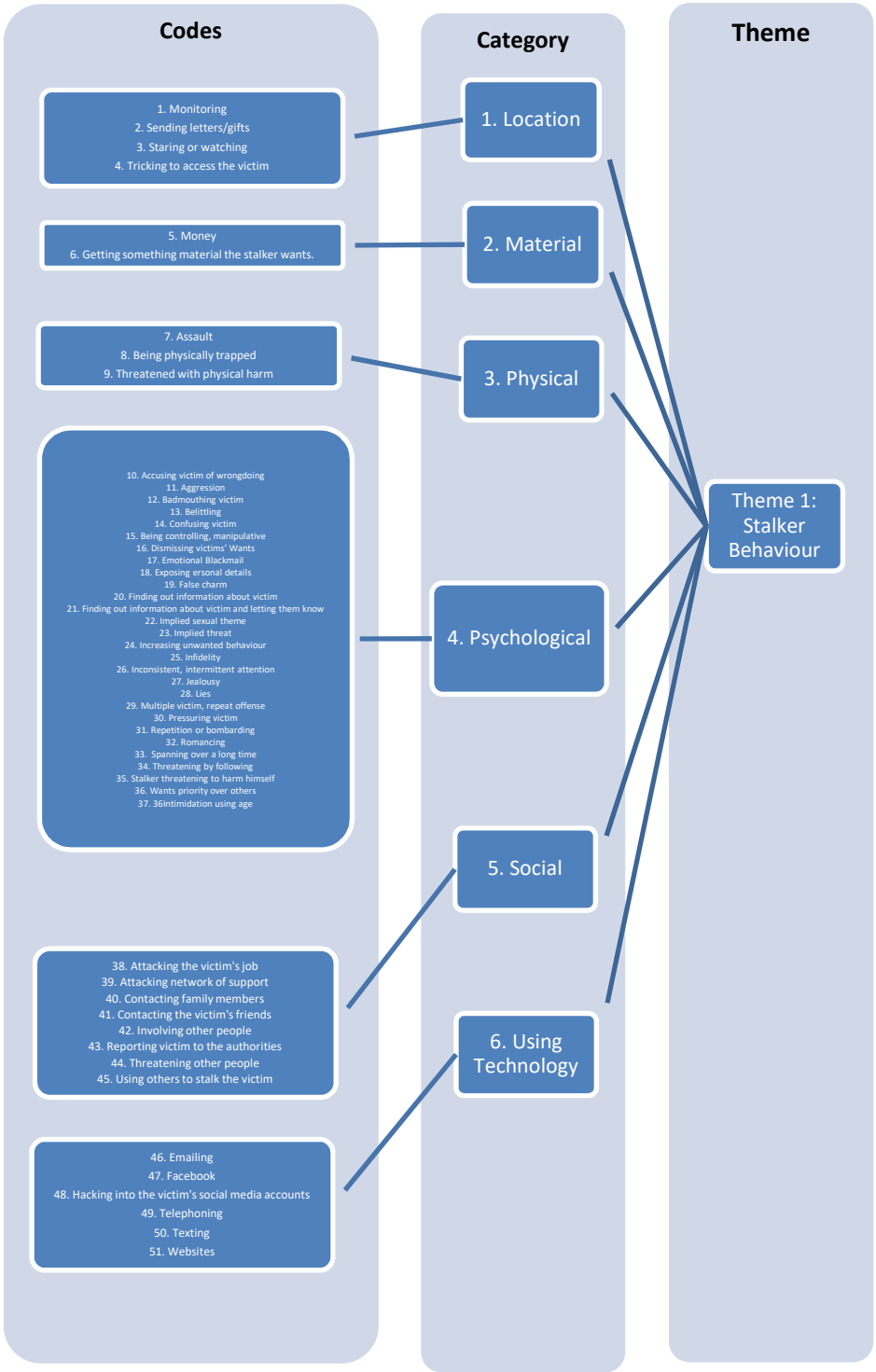

Figure 2: *The construction of Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour*

The core of the experience comprised the Stalker Behaviour theme, which was followed by the participants' depiction of the Impact of Stalking on the Victim theme. Following these two themes, the Victim Response theme emerged. Each of these themes will be presented in turn, with examples taken from the transcripts of the participants to support the interpretations made.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the themes uncovered and illustrates the manner in which the stalking begins with behaviours, and expands out through the impact on the victim, resulting in the response from the victim.

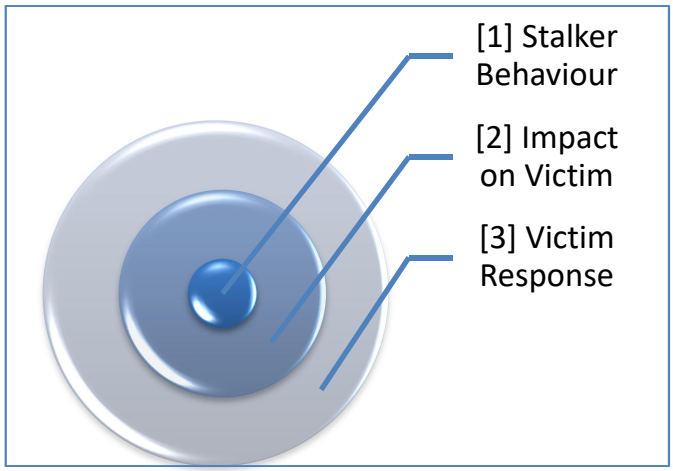

Figure 3: *Graphic illustration of themes*

Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour

Theme 1: Stalking Behaviour was defined as a series of unwanted behaviours utilised by the stalker, which were spread across many different areas of the victims' lives. The behaviours included the use of the victims' location, of material goods such as money, threats of physical harm, psychological tactics such as manipulation, attacking the victims' social support and the use of technology to stalk. The wide range of tactics was

reflective of how overwhelming the experience was, and how the stalking affected seemingly every part of the victims' lives.

Rachel recalled the letter sent to her by her stalker. Within this theme was a strongly descriptive element where conveying the experience in high detail takes precedence. Her stalker's attempts to manipulate or coerce Rachel by 'testing' her were interwoven within the details of his behaviour:

> "… he wrote me a letter in a big like an A4 brown envelope and it was just a flat A4 page in this envelope and then next to the A4 page was a smaller, like a business envelope, a white business envelope, erm and I can still remember the way he wrote my name on the envelope, and I read the letter and the letter was like, erm... it said things like, 'you may not believe it but that summer that we spent together was the best summer of my life' and 'we've both seen each other in good lights and bad lights and we, we both need to admit that nei- that we were both at fault in what happened between us' and things like, like implying that it was both our faults that we stopped being together and things like that and... and at the bottom it said something like erm, 'I just wanted you to know that I love you' or 'I loved you.' I can't remember if it was past or present and the last line said, 'if you don't believe me look in the envelope' meaning the little white business envelope erm which I guess was his way of like, testing me or something, I don't know and... so I opened the envelope and inside was a fucking ring, s'like a), I don't wear jewellery, or I didn't wear jewellery at the time." **(Rachel)**

Further suggestions of coercion and control were evident in the use of a letter to shift the blame to Rachel, and at the same time profess his love for her.

The extract shared by Nina highlights a similar attention to detail when describing the events of the stalking. The behaviour of Nina's stalker was described as predatory and very threatening, and involved kidnapping and sexual assault:

> "… and having to ring my boyfriend and say to him, 'he's raped me' cause he also worked at [Workplace Name] and um that was that's so that was on the proceeding week and it was the Monday or the Tuesday of the following week that I, that he kidnapped me for want of a better word, um and er I recorded the conversation so on the Friday after he'd done that I said to my boyfriend I-I don't want to work there any more, I'm going to hand in my resignation, I was employed through an agency [indecipherable], um I was employed through an agency So I made an appointment when I left work on the Friday to go and see the-my employment contact um I gave them the tape and said "I want out"]… um, but you need to understand what has been happening, you know, you might judge me for being in a relationship with him, the fact that he was married, the fact that I was married at the- to start with um but I need out this man is dangerous. Um, they suspended me, they suspended him on gardening leave, um and I was called in over at the next couple of weeks I was called in for various interviews at the agency…" **(Nina)**

Nina recalled the violent and dangerous actions of her stalker, who kidnapped and raped her. Her stalker's actions forcefully exerted power over her, which coincided with her attempts to disengage with him and move on with a new relationship. Nina attempted to organise events by different days, which may have reflected an attempt to organise her thoughts into something manageable or understandable. Nina appeared to be struggling to navigate herself towards a safe position in response to a series of very dangerous behaviours exhibited by her stalker. The attempts to make sense of events may be linked to how seemingly senseless the experience was for her. Her attempts to protect herself and escape the situation seemed to not only not help her, but resulted in a punitive response from her work, while they appeared to be more lenient on her stalker.

For Carol, like the other participants, there was a highly descriptive, detail-orientated element to her narratives. Carol's stalker seemed to be harassing her in an attempt to coercively control her, using bombardment as a means

to confuse. The fact that she did not recognise the behaviour as stalking until she read the recruitment poster for this research points towards an inability to think clearly or recognise the extent of the stalking while it was happening:

> "… but during the five years that he was in prison, erm and when he came out subsequently, he was I suppose I hadn't so much thought of it as stalking I just thought of it as harassment but then when I read your thing [recruitment poster] I thought no actually it ticks quite a few of those boxes… even though he wasn't physically, couldn't physically get to me… erm so from prison he erm, we've got two children as well so, erm from prison he was sending me letters all the time erm and they were, I mean I've got two lever arch fold-lever arch files full of the letters… erm some of them were just really nasty like insulting aggressive letters and then the next one would be like, 'Oh I still love you, I want to get back together' and you know all this stuff and then sometimes he was even being quite sexually explicit, things like that. Um I also got death threats from him from- all this he was able to do from prison you know, it's like, there's not much there to protect the victim really but um and um he was writing to all my friends, my family and er people all around sort of badmouthing me and trying to turn them against me but also he was um he also, there's lots of different things he did, he also wrote to, um, he three times reported me to social services with a load of lies, you know saying I was a drug dealer and a prostitute…" (**Carol)**

Like Rachel's experience, Carol struggled to know what would happen next, as the stalker alternated between loving and abusive messages. Combined with his stalking behaviours was the message that Carol found herself unprotected at a time when her stalker was not only bombarding her with letters, but also targeting her social support network in an attempt to discredit her. Carol's experiences echoed Nina's sense of vulnerability and helplessness without support from outside sources.

Paula described monitoring behaviours that began during her relationship with her stalker. The manner of downplaying events highlighted how

seemingly innocuous stalking behaviours can appear when lacking the wider context of the stalking. His suspicion of her fidelity to him and following behaviours, pointed towards a desire to maintain control over her. What seemed important to Paula was viewed by her uncle as “not that big a deal”, and this potentially placed her in a vulnerable position as she accepted the gift that appeared to be a means for her stalker to make his presence known:

> “ Erm, once when I was with my family we were in the relationship, but I could see a bit, that there was a problem and I hadn’t at that point tried to get out of it…and erm, I’d told him that I was going to [Location] that day in [Location] and I was with my family and he turned up there with his friend um didn’t speak to me, didn’t say anything and um he must have won a teddy or something like that and I was on a ride um and I was sat with my uncle and he got his friend to just drop the teddy bear in front of me, um, and my uncle didn’t know anything at the time, he was just like, someone’s given her a present um so he just said, ‘take it Paula, it’s not that big a deal’ erm, and I was just like, ‘ok’, so I took it, erm, thinking about it like, in hindsight, it, it, it’s weird that he wanted to be around me, I don’t think he believed a lot of my, a lot of what I’d say, so if I’d said, ‘I’m going to [Location] with my family’ he was there to check that I was with my family, he didn’t believe that I was, he thought I was with someone, he thought I’d be with someone else…” **(Paula)**

Like Carol, there was a difficulty recognising the extent of the problem at the time, and Paula seemed unaware during the events described that his behaviour was not appropriate, only recognising it in ‘hindsight’.

Kim recalled her stalker’s behaviours as threatening towards her or her family in order to manipulate her into giving him money:

> “So I think that made it worse when it started being about like, other people it was... it definitely made it more stressful for me cause I was suddenly like, well before I was responsible for my own safety and, like, you know... it wouldn’t be nice it would be unpleasant but, you

know, I've put myself in this situation kind of whereas when it's like them it was like I feel like I have to protect them because it's not their fault that this guys coming after them, he's only- he would only go after them because of me… and there it would be like my fault that they were getting hurt so that made the situation a lot harder (clears throat) It's one of those... really horrible, like I don't really... believe he would have done it but because there was the risk that he might of, it was kind of like... I mean, he used to do this stuff, so he'd get money, so he'd be like, 'Oh, I'm gonna go after your dad, or give me fifty quid.'… So then I'd be like, 'Well just take the money' like, I'd always be like 'just, like if you need money just, like, have it', that's, that's generally how it went he'd be like, 'Oh, I'll get your sister, unless you transfer me', like because he was... a drug addict… so, erm, he would always need money for that so he'd be like, 'Oh transfer me the money, or I'm going to go after this person', so... I can't remember where I was going with that but..." **(Kim)**

There was a strong sense of responsibility for her stalker's actions, which suggested a degree of coercion on behalf of her stalker, to shift the blame away from him, and lower her sense of self-esteem. Kim's stalker had elevated himself to a position of power, whereby his threats were believed and thought credible enough to comply with his demands.

Theme 2: Impact on Victim

The second theme, Impact on Victim, was defined as the toll the stalking took across many different areas of the victims' lives. For the participants, the impact was spread across many aspects, which included social isolation, financial loss, and negative psychological and physical consequences. Kim described a strong sense of isolation, and explained the reasons for this to occur:

"… but at the time, like, it was horrible and like, I felt awful, but I was like, no one else, like, is gonna really see it- and because I think when you're in a controlling relationship, when you try and talk to people

> that haven't got any background of it or don't, like, haven't experienced themselves or don't really know a lot about it, to you it can seem kind of, like... like, little things that like, he'd do which built up, when you try and explain them to someone they don't seem like anything significant… and it's like, you don't really understand it, until you're in that situation yourself and then you feel like you've got no way of like getting out but if you talk to someone outside they're like, 'well, why don't you just...you know, break up with him, why don't you just stop replying to messages?' and stuff like that, so I think I just thought that a) No one else would really like think it was that much of a big deal and I thought I'd be able to cope on my own, which is, not [indecipherable]…" **(Kim)**

This extract highlighted the notion that only Kim could understand the stalking. Kim shared that she would not be believed if she let others know what was happening, and, like Paula, feared people would downplay the stalking. Kim described feeling trapped and isolated, and she struggled to cope with the stalking on her own. The picture of stalking as a composite of small, seemingly benign actions appeared to be a contributing factor to these experiences:

> "Um... well now I'm thinking about all the bad times, generally I think I'm at a point now- I mean the forefront is everything that he did to me sort of like the violence, the controlling, like, the threats that's like the first thing that I think about… um, I'm at a point now where I can talk about it, there was like a big long period where I couldn't say anything, like I couldn't say his name, I couldn't like try and tell after the policeman, I'd try and tell friends about it but I couldn't talk about it without like bursting into tears and be in floods of tears, and now I think about that sort of stuff but I'm not, I don't feel as emotionally connected to it, I feel like, I've kind of dealt with it, I can talk about it, but, you know, it still, it is quite upsetting generally, but then in-un-other times, like, I don't know, if I'm being soppy, reminiscing, like, there are still- we did have good times, like, prior to everything and

like, his family, although he was not entirely like, there in the head, but his family were all lovely and I still think, like, 'oh, like you know I wonder what the kids are doing,' like his sister had kids, and I was like, 'oh I wonder what they're doing' and like they, we'd like go on holiday and stuff, and there were... like, obviously like went on holiday, we had a massive argument and stuff like that, but there were a couple of good days and it's really difficult to like, distinguish sometimes you'll think about it and you'll be like, 'oh yeah I remember doing that with [Name]' and you'd be like, 'oh' and it's kind of like a nice memory, but as soon as you have that nice memory it's kind of like, 'oh yeah but remember he did all this as well' so generally like, the abuse springs to mind, like more than the good memories…" **(Kim)**

Kim found that she was unable to verbalise her struggles during the stalking. Her description of that inability to talk about it was linked to a fear of the strong emotions connected to the stalking, and a need to contain those feelings through avoidance or denial. Additionally, Kim found that one impact of the stalking was the confusion related to having a stalker who was once an intimate partner. For Kim, the memories of good times during their relationship were intertwined with the abuse, and she recalled missing his family also.

The stalking seemed to impact Carol's social network in two ways. The first was a lack of trust as a result of her stalker enlisting others to assist his stalking behaviours. The second impact was a nervous feeling that people would find out the lies he told about her and these could have a negative impact on her work life:

"… before when I was getting emails every day, before letters and post and emails every day it was that constant, um, then but I think I'm still I still have a sense of it being difficult to know who I can trust and because there's so many things I don't know about him, who told him, the same people are in my life that were then… so I still, still sometimes question who I can trust about things…. yeah it makes me

nervous as well cause on the internet there's still stuff out there that he put out about me and um… sometimes I get nervous about thinking who might find things that because, you know sometimes people at work, if you're, if you're making a new contact with someone, sometimes you might look them up on the internet just to see a bit about their background or whatever and I always think people I'm dealing with at work might find some of this stuff and er you know…" **(Carol)**

Carol described a sense of the 'unknown' about her stalking that might have resulted in a long-lasting vulnerability as she was not aware of who might pose a threat to her.

This impact of the pursuit of Nina by her stalker resulted in a strong feeling of fear, leading to an attempt to seek help from others, and a resulting lack of assistance. Nina did not elaborate on this emotion, and quickly moved to a description of events:

"… On one occasion I was walking up [Name] high street and he was on his lunch break and he was walking down and he pursued me into a bank um and he was, he was, I-er don't really remember what he was saying, I was so, so frightened…the bank realised that I was obviously in trouble and they pulled me into a room, they smuggled me out of the back way, escorted me to my car, erm he had found my car and he, he followed me home and I rang my mum and said, 'open the door I need to come in, I need to lock the doors, I need to get away from him,' erm and as it was he kind of, he tailgated me to a certain point and he drove off, back off to work. I reported it to the police, they said because he hadn't, despite the history, because it was only threats, um and this was texting, phone calls at all hours of the night and day he'd be sitting at the end of my road watching what I was doing, following me wherever I went. Because he hadn't done anything to me, they couldn't do anything except have a friendly chat…" **(Nina)**

Nina's recollection was filled with facts such as locations, events and characters, without linking in her emotional responses, which highlighted a sense of priority these details held for her, rather than dwelling on the difficult emotions in the moment.

Another extract from Nina detailed the sense that her stalker was inescapable, and a figure in her life that would never leave:

> "Um and we-we went through a horrible situation to whilst they'd investigated what I'd said at my interview, what I'd-what I'd put down and he'd-he'd found me through LinkedIn, so I'd I'd stopped using Facebook um, I mean I used Twitter and LinkedIn for professional purposes but erm I was then under suspicion from this company that actually I'd lied and I was cheating and and all these other things, ultimately- and they said to me at the time, 'Do you know who did it?' and I said 'I've got a fair idea who it might be' and my husband used this corporate investigator who investigated and found out that yes indeed it was him. So this-this was as recently as two years ago he's still, he's still trying to have an influence, cause his marriage broke up, erm and he was paid off from his job very handsomely as these companies seem to do- I got nothing, erm and he's now got quite a good job, senior job- but you know, there's always that... anxiety there that it's not going to quite go away. So there we are, there's the background." **(Nina)**

This account illustrated the compounding nature of different stalking behaviours, resulting in the suggestion of permanent damage to Nina, as her stalker became embedded in her life, and she felt she could not recover.

Paula found that the stalking had a negative impact on her academic pursuits. There was a sense of confusion as her stalker said he would leave her alone, but did not, leaving her struggling to focus her mind, and 'everywhere'. Additionally, Paula described a sense of desperation to free herself from the situation, without knowing how to, which was linked to the confusion she felt:

"Um, it was hard, it was, I was trying to do my 'A' levels at the same time and I didn't do very well because of it, it was, I had January exams and um all of this sort of happened from between December and January… and um he'd, he would always just say, 'I'm going to leave you, I'm going to step away from you, I'm gonna let you go'… but he never did, um… [Interviewer: So you didn't really know where you stood with him?]…I just wanted to get away I was just like, I just want to go, I just want you to leave me alone, and um….I just couldn't concentrate properly because my mind was just everywhere, I-I didn't, I couldn't think about my work and it, with, obviously you remember 'A' levels it was consistent work that you've got to do throughout the year, you can't just cram for your exams… you've just got to start from the beginning and um I didn't, I-I with him, he, he wasn't academ-he wasn't into academ-academia at all, he just didn't really care about education , um, I did and so... that period he basically, he took me away from my education in a sense that I just, I wouldn't really go into college that much, I wasn't really attending my- I wasn't attending my lessons a lot and um, it just pushed me back in my class, like, in my work I just, I didn't know what was going on fully, so… when I'd actually tried to end it, and tried to focus it was too late at that point for me to do anything…" **(Paula)**

This extract also illustrated Paula's sense of loss, and her feeling that her stalker 'took' something from her. The fact that she did not feel education was important to her stalker highlighted the sense that he would impose his behaviours on her, dismissing Paula's wishes to satisfy his own needs.

Another account from Paula was filled with a significant emotional impact of being stalked that still continued to the time of the interview:

"… thinking about him, thinking emotionally it was, I still, I still fear, I still get panicky every so often and... the effects of the way he was and the panic that I used to get I st-it still, if I get stressed about anything, my workload, or anything like that it just triggers and I just get very panicky very easily it's like, my... panic attacks sort of evolve

now I'm, it's like a, a choking sort of sensation that I get when I have them, and I was, I was always very carefree when I was younger, I was just, I didn't really care about much. I was just happy, um, ever since then I've just sort of... I've been a lot more of an introvert I guess, and I don't, I don't open up, I don't ... I think I find it very difficult to... connect with someone as well…" **(Paula)**

Paula experienced fear and anxiety, which culminated in panic attacks. She reflected on her younger self, highlighting a feeling of change, loss, and a sense that the stalking has taken a 'carefree' part of her identity. She also seemed affected socially, as she recalled that she still found it hard to 'connect' with people. Paula mentioned triggers in the present day that caused feelings of panic, which suggested a state of hypervigilance and possible inappropriate fear responses to a range of cues.

There was also a long-lasting impact of the stalking on Rachel that continued to the time of the interview. Rachel found herself physically 'freezing' when with her current boyfriend, and it was implied that this would happen during physically intimate occasions:

"… but I might not be able to make myself move into it, like even now just imagining it I'm quite tense… and like I'm not feeling like I want to move anymore (Laughs) erm and usually I'll just I'll seize up and I-I-I usually cry and there isn't really anything I can do about it either I just kind of have to wait for it to pass and it doesn't help to try and allow myself the feeling and it doesn't help to try and push the feeling away [Interviewer: Mmhmm. You just have to wait for it to pass?]… Yeah, and it's just like I can't move and I can't think and I can't really breathe and there's nothing anyone else can do to help except be patient and sometimes maybe it helps to tell me that it's not my fault... like it, like I'm not the one to blame for not wanting to do something like it's acceptable for me to not want to do something…" **(Rachel)**

Rachel seemed to be responding to a fear response linked to her stalking experiences that had been activated in her new relationship. Rachel felt

helpless to this physiological symptom of fear, and described a powerlessness that left her unable to breathe or move. For Rachel, the remedy was linked to being reassured that she was not to blame and it was appropriate for her to turn down sexual advances if she did not want them. This suggested that during her relationship with her stalker, Rachel may have received the message that she was to blame, and should do as her stalker wanted, irrespective of her own wishes.

Theme 3: Victim Response

The third theme, Victim Response, was defined as the ways the victims attempted to adapt to the stalking, and change areas of their lives in order to navigate these circumstances. Kim discussed the degree to which she adapted her life in an attempt to cope with the stalking:

> "I mean, I fell for it completely, like, it was a horrible few months, but I, like when I used to go out in [Location] I didn't go out on my own I always used to have a friend with me and then we'll like walk round, like coming up to uni coming home from uni I'd never be on my own... um, and I felt that he still had a hold over me, that there was no end to the relationship really he was very controlling when we were together and it just got worse after we broke up and I didn't feel like I had any power to do anything, his, like, I-It's not like he was, not like big-big but like stronger than me like, I don't have that kind of violent streak in me at all, I'm like completely the opposite so... like, there was nothing that I would be able to do or say that would like at all make him think about what he was doing so I was completely like under his influence as well and it was just, it did get worse and worse cause it was like the point where I hated going outside I didn't really like being out of the house, like in town in second year and I would like stay at friend's houses so that he wouldn't know where I was um I had a friend that lived just outside of [Location] so I'd go to her- go to his and get the train in rather than being in [Location] itself just because I knew that like he could, like, turn up in [Location] whenever he wanted, so I,

like... didn't want to be around here. I used to like spend evenings in the library like I'd feel safe after it got to the point where you could only get in with the card because then I knew he wouldn't be able to get in so I used to spend a lot of time- I mean it was actually quite good, generally for my grades, cause I did all this work, but um, I used to like hide myself... in the library, just so that, like it was a safe place- I knew he wouldn't be able to get into the library…" **(Kim)**

This extract shows that Kim attempted to cope with the stalking largely through avoidance. She found herself hiding from her stalker, going out less, and not going out alone. Feeling unsafe seemed to have a significant impact on her safety-seeking behaviours and need to find a place of security away from her stalker. Additionally, this extract highlighted a sense of helplessness, and it seemed that Kim had assigned a great deal of power to her stalker.

Nina spoke of coping with her stalker by complying with his demands and attempting to placate him. Nina's stalker was clearly very threatening towards her, endangering both her career and the safety of her family:

"… and I actually said to him 'I'm sorry, I-I can't be with you any more,' um and he started to bring out the 'well, you wouldn't want to lose your job' and 'I'm going to tell them that we're in a relationship' and all this sort of thing erm and for some reason then it- the job was the most important thing to me but his behaviour became, because I wanted to try and keep him sweet so that I could keep my job. I was, erm I was, er tolerating an awful lot and one morning he was, he picked me up and he locked the car doors and he drove as if he were driving to work and then carried on driving and he was er levelling all kind of abuse at me, he was saying things- and so we weren't in a relationship, we were just colleagues at this point Interviewer: Right, ok]… he was saying things like um my grandfather has just died, he said, 'your Nan's very vulnerable on her own and it wouldn't take much to frighten her into a heart attack and die.' My father has brain damage so 'how do you think your Dad would cope with erm, with

being hurt' erm, 'I'm gonna set fire to your house, I'm going to kill you' erm, he er I mean that-that was just the horrendous experience I must have been locked in that car for about two- and-a-half hours but I had a Dictaphone with me…" **(Nina)**

Nina accepted his offer to drive her to work, which could have been a placatory act, linking to her statement about "trying to keep him sweet". By tolerating her stalker's abuse, Nina may have been inadvertently complying with her stalker's attempts to coercively control her. Additionally, her attempts to placate her stalker may have been in part an attempt to protect herself and possibly regulate her emotional response to the abuse. Towards the end of this extract, Nina also responded by trying to defend herself from her stalker as she had a Dictaphone in order to record his abuse and gain evidence.

Rachel described the upset she felt when her stalker cut his arms, and with this behaviour established between them, she recalled adapting to the situation by complying with her stalker's wish to hold his hand:

"… and like I told- I told him not to do it but obviously that's not gonna stop him doing whatever he wants to do to his body and I told him it upset me and everything and he put the jacket back on and then erm we were talking and we decided to go for a walk so we went for a walk and we were holding hands while we were walking and then he decided he was gonna ask me to help him get back with my friend... which was like, ok so you've done all this you've been really affectionate, you held my hand, you even kissed me and now you're gonna say help me get with the person that you cheated on me with. What are you even thinking?" **(Rachel)**

Like Nina, Rachel was attempting to manage her feelings of 'upset' and manoeuvre the situation into a safer position. Her recollection that he was being affectionate and then asking her for a favour highlights the manipulative, coercive aspect of their interactions. Rachel struggled to

understand her stalker, and this confusion was emphasised as she asked the question “what are you even thinking?”.

Paula attempted to cope with the stalking by assigning blame to herself. She shared feelings of ‘hate’ towards her stalker, reflecting that she did not want to say it, or blame him:

> “Um, so all of that, I just he makes- it makes me... I don’t want to say the word hate, but, it makes me feel like that towards him cause... and I don’t want to blame him for everything cause I know it was, it was my fault as well, but um, not-not the whole situation, but just um, not doing as well as I could have done (laughs) …” **(Paula)**

It may be that sharing the responsibility for the stalking gave her some sense of clarity and control if she considered an alternative scenario where she did something differently with a better outcome. Additionally, the propensity towards self-blame could have been the result of her stalker manipulating her perspective using techniques of coercive control.

Rachel also adapted to the stalking by avoiding a location in order to stay away from her stalker when he moved close to her family home:

> “It was like... he just couldn’t let it drop at all, either of it, any of it, and... he was, so he was seeing her, and she lived two streets away from me and he moved in which meant that he was right there all the time and I didn’t want to go home because I didn’t know whether he was gonna be there or no it was horrible and it made my home not feel safe anymore and the fact that it was, you have to pass par- you have to walk past the park that I went to on the night that he supposedly was going to kill himself in order to get to her house so it just brought everything back and it was like I’m never gonna be able to forget this…” **(Rachel)**

Rachel knew that her stalker was close and felt he was “there all the time”, which provided insight the experiences that can lead to a feeling of

helplessness and fear. Rachel reflected that it was ‘horrible’ for her, and caused her to feel unsafe. In her attempts to feel safe, Rachel adapted her behaviour to avoid the location, and it may have helped her to regulate unbearable feelings by avoiding the fear cues associated with the stalking, such as the park.

Carol spoke of trying to understand her stalker in order to protect herself, both in the past and present. Her reflections revealed signs of hypervigilance when attempting to cope with the stalking:

> “Yeah and I used to just think um, I used to just think I want to know what he’s thinking, I want to know what he’s up to. Um, and er I still don’t really know how he, how he knew all the things that he, some of the things he did know about me, and I don’t know whether all the people I think I can trust I can, you know what I mean, I haven’t- I still- its not that long ago is it that its all sort of I still hear his name because the kids still have contact with him]… and… um… and I know, but he was wasting so many other people’s time cause social services can’t afford to deal with it, though course they had to like do a bit of an investigation each time, and speak to me, speak to the school and then kind of rule it off, and you know they did put it down as being malicious they recognised it as being malicious- it’s still taken their time (indecipherable) um and then he would tell me, oh that’s right the other thing he said… yeah the other thing he said as well that when, um when he was in prison he said that he had uncovered, um a big paedophile ring going on in there and that because the-it had come out that he was the one that had reported it that that had then put me and the kids in danger because people want to get back at him by coming after us…” **(Carol)**

Carol wanted to know what her stalker was thinking and what he was doing in order to find out how he was carrying out some of the stalking behaviours, to protect herself and her children. This constant mode of being on ‘high alert’ resulted in a sense of paranoia that people could not be trusted and the stalking would not stop, Sharing children with her stalker ensured his

continued presence in her life, which may have contributed to the struggle to recover, as she could not even escape hearing his name

Taken together, these themes presented a narrative of the evolution of the stalking event, beginning with the stalking behaviours, which led to the impact of the stalking, and resulted in the participants' responses as they attempted to cope. Each narrative presented a different experience of the stalking event, and yet, despite the unique set of circumstances each participant faced, similarities emerged across the behaviours, impact and responses described.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the narratives in terms of the questions posed in this research. Using thematic analysis, the author formed individual and overarching narratives of the stalking experience through the voice of the victim. The analysis revealed three themes encompassing each participant's attempt to make sense of an intricate network of stalking behaviours, the impact, and the response. Taken together, these themes formed a life cycle of stalking experiences that each participant found herself locked into. The analysis provided a rich description of the stalkers' pursuit, and insight into the significant sense of loss and damage incurred throughout the lives of each participant.

The next chapter will present a discussion of the analysis and the implications of this research for support and interventions for victims of stalking.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the findings presented in the results section will be discussed in reference to the literature review, with an aim to answer the questions posed by this research. Each theme identified by this study will be discussed followed by the chapter conclusion.

The research aimed to uncover the emotional impact of stalking on each female participant as they attempted to navigate the experience of being stalked by an ex-intimate partner. The narratives provided evidence of a difficult emotional struggle undertaken by the participants, and this was reflected in both the narratives as a whole unit, and also the codes and themes that emerged during analysis.

The participants shared their experiences of stalking through their narratives that were structured into three themes. These themes often overlapped, highlighting the complex mixture of (1) Stalker Behaviour, (2) Impact on Victim and, (3) Victim Response, which combined to form the stalking experience. These three themes together formed an overall picture of the life cycle of stalking for the victim, as illustrated in the previous chapter in **Figure 3**.

Theme 1: Stalker Behaviour

The first theme represented the actions taken by the stalker in order to achieve the goals underpinning the stalking behaviours. Overwhelmingly, the

behaviours of the stalker appeared to be designed to intimidate, isolate and dominate with an overarching need to assert or regain control over the participant. These behaviours typically aligned themselves with features of coercive control, and had a significant impact on the emotions experienced by the participants. As such, the behaviours of the stalker will be discussed alongside theories of coercive control.

Coercive Control and Stalking Behaviours

The participants spoke about behaviours that could be categorised as coercive control, and their narratives included themes of social isolation, psychological abuse, threats of physical harm, surveillance, attacks on their location and place of employment, as well as the abuse of their finances. The manner in which these experiences integrate to form a life cycle of stalking illustrated the ability of the stalker to dominate so many areas of the participants' lives. The participants depicted a sense of helplessness and loss of autonomy, with a central focus on the resources the stalkers drew upon in order to pursue them. The participants also spoke of not knowing what to do and at times would assign control or power to their stalkers. These behaviours echo reports from domestic violence research, including coercive control, that map out a wide array of abuse, spanning every aspect of the victims' lives which can have a devastating impact on their psychological, physical and social wellbeing (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Toews and Bermea, 2017; Irving and Lui, 2020). Although their research makes little reference specifically to stalking, Dutton and Goodman (2005) include stalking behaviours, such as surveillance and monitoring, and also base their research on the field of domestic violence, which is related to this research. When describing ex-partner stalking, a similar set of behaviours has been reported, with the overriding aim of resuming contact using manipulation, intimidation and coercion, often with the purpose of restoring the stalker's lost sense of dominance and control (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Sheridan, Blaauw and Davies, 2003; Logan and Walker, 2009; Dardis and Gidycz, 2019). The presence of coercive control in the participants' reflections highlights an important component of the stalking experience that

could provide valuable insight into the lives of the victims. However, additional research investigating links between ex-intimate partner stalking and coercive control is required, to further explain this complex relationship, as current research linking both is very limited.

All participants depicted a sense of helplessness and loss of autonomy, with a central focus on the resources the stalkers drew upon in order to pursue them. The participants spoke of not knowing what to do and frequently found themselves assigning control or power to their stalkers. For example, Kim described her stalker as 'controlling' and her perception was that she had "no way of… getting out". The influence of her stalker's coercive and controlling behaviour was likely to have resulted in Kim's overwhelming sense of powerlessness. This is in-line with reports from the literature detailing the process of establishing vulnerability in the victim, a sense of confusion, and a feeling of powerlessness when confronted with the perceived power and control of the abuser (Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

Coercive Control and the Stalker's Pursuit of Power

Within the participants' interviews, a sense that the stalker was asserting power and dominance in order to manoeuvre them into a subordinate position was often referred to. Part of the effectiveness of this form of suppression and dominance may be due to the discrete and often indirect manner in which the stalker gained control, which has been highlighted by Dutton and Goodman (2005), and Logan and Walker (2009), as a prominent feature of stalking. The victim of coercive control may find it difficult to identify one clear example of their perpetrator's controlling behaviour, leaving them lost in a web of confusing and unclear memories as they attempt to decipher exactly what happened to them (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Williamson, 2010). In terms of the participants' confusion, this was illustrated across their narratives, resulting in a sense of subordination. For example, references were made across the transcripts to feeling powerless, with the participants often believing their stalkers' threats. What arose from the participants' narratives was the sense that there is an overlap between

research into the abuse of intimate partners, and continued abuse in the form of stalking, that is possible once a relationship has ended.

The process of weakening the resolve of the stalking victim was reported by Dutton and Goodman (2005) in their model of coercive control by stating that the power sought by the perpetrator encompasses both restricting access to resources and imposing something on the victim that they do not want. Whilst the stalking in itself, was clearly described by all participants as an unwanted act, there were examples of more discrete impositions that emerged in the codes and themes. For example, Paula received a gift she did not want and Carol did not welcome the letters her stalker sent to her. Dutton and Goodman (2005) linked this form of power-motivated coercion to an increased likelihood of compliance from the victim, which was often reflected in the participants' narratives. Whilst this model was devised for coercive control in the context of domestic violence, it is still relevant to this research due to the prior intimate relationship the participants had with their stalkers. Rachel complied and held her stalker's hand, and Nina tried to "keep him sweet", suggesting an attempt to appease the stalker and protect themselves.

Power dynamics played an important role in the participants' experiences as they found themselves manoeuvred into weakened positions, resulting in the stalker influencing many aspects of their lives, such as rendering a location unsafe or causing them to mistrust others. For example, Paula, Carol and Rachel all depicted a sense that their privacy and security had been negatively impacted by their stalkers monitoring their locations and turning up unexpectedly, which reduced their sense of security. Often the participants would find themselves avoiding certain areas and experiencing a sense of vulnerability, at times even in their own homes. Subsequent references to feeling weakened were commonly reported by the participants, which have been supported by research echoing similar techniques used to gain power, both in the coercive control model devised by Dutton and Goodman (2005), and in coercive control research by Williamson (2010).

Components of Coercive Control and Manipulation

A sense of confusion was often present in the participants' narratives, which links to previous research, connecting psychological manipulation and a reduced capacity to think clearly, to techniques commonly employed in coercive control (Logan and Walker, 2009; Beck and Raghavan, 2010). This confusion was often reflected in the participants' decreased ability to understand events, or to know what to do during the stalking. For example, Paula's stalker was able to manipulate her, pressurising her to resume their romantic relationship against her better judgement. Similarly, Rachel described a sense of being manipulated into holding her stalker's hand, and Carol's uncertainty related to who was spying on her, resulted in a sense of paranoia and isolation. The sense of not knowing what was happening, or understanding the actions of their stalkers, seemed to manoeuvre the participants into a position where they could be increasingly susceptible to manipulation or subordination (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Williamson, 2010).

Often, the participants' thoughts and beliefs appeared distorted by their stalkers' manipulative behaviours. A degree of psychological compliance seemed to be achieved by the stalker when the participants spoke of believing their threats or trying to appease them. For example, Rachel found herself coerced into complying with her stalker's wishes due to a combination of confusion as he could switch from abuse to romancing her, and a sense of responsibility she felt for her stalker's behaviour and the upset she would feel if he harmed himself. Dutton and Goodman (2005) linked the stalker's use of guilt and shame to a desire to solicit fear, obedience and a reduction in self-esteem in their victims; a dynamic reaffirmed by Irving and Lui (2020) who investigated attempts made by the victim to placate the stalker. Additionally, signs of compliance, such as Kim giving money to her stalker, illustrated the manner in which her perception of choice was affected, since she complied with her stalker's demands, rather than risk any negative consequences. This highlights the influence of distorted beliefs, linking the theory of obedience to the rules laid out by an abuser, with perceived negative

consequences to ensure compliance (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Logan and Walker, 2009; Williamson, 2010).

The set of rules established by each stalker followed a similar pattern to the strict regimes established in abusive intimate relationships, for example, the first-hand accounts used in coercive control research by Williamson (2010), and these were meaningful due to the lack of qualitative, subjective accounts of this crime. Williamson (2010) stated that for the victim of coercive control, their view of reality becomes distorted to focus on the abuser, so for example, the victim cleans their house, not because they maintain their home, but to follow the rules of the perpetrator. Across the themes in this research, the participants found their world views overshadowed by their stalkers' manipulative behaviours. Logan and Walker (2009) wrote of a case example of aversive punishment in which a husband would divulge private information about his wife to family members as a punishment for non-compliance. Consequently, a form of operant conditioning can occur, causing the victim to modify their behaviour in order to avoid punishment (Pittaro, 2007; Irving and Liu, 2020). Herman (1992) and Williamson (2010) linked the impact of the rules and punishment in intimate partner abuse, including stalking behaviours, to a view that the abuser can be the danger but also the saviour, as long as the victim complies with their stalker's demands. The deconstruction of willpower, resilience and grasp on reality, appeared to result in the participants' adapting their lives to appease the stalker and manage the level of threat (Herman 1992; Williamson, 2010; Irving and Liu, 2020). For Nina to be coercively controlled, the threat of losing her job was established by her stalker and considered sufficiently credible that he could gain a sense of power over her (Dutton and Goodman, 2005). Due to their prior intimate relationship, Nina's stalker gained intimate knowledge about what she might not tolerate to be threatened with, which in this case was her career, and so was able to manipulate her with this information.

The possibility of traumatic bonding, subordination and obedience expressed during the narratives, may suggest a degree of Stockholm syndrome experienced by the participants (Williamson, 2010). The relationship with the

stalker seemed to consume the lives of the participants. Although there were few signs of positive regard towards the stalker, there were signs that the participants viewed him as powerful and in control, and he remained the focus of their attention even after the stalking had appeared to finish. Carol reflected on this ongoing relationship by commenting that she did not know if her stalker would come back, and so remained afraid of him. This highlighted the power a person can maintain following a breakup, and the risk they can pose, even without easy access to the victim.

Coercive control has previously been reported to require personal knowledge and a degree of access to the intended target, which have largely been studied in the context of intimate relationships (Logan and Walker, 2009; Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000). One key change to this dynamic was the fact that the participants were largely no longer in intimate relationships with their stalkers, and so access to them was limited. Throughout the narratives, the participants spoke of behaviours that seemed to suggest that their stalkers were adapting to the lack of access to them, which is in-keeping with previous research on stalking behaviours (Davis, Ace and Andra, 2000; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004; 2005).

Toews and Bermea (2017) reported a modification of the control tactics of ex-partners and discussed a wide array of stalking techniques that would be increased or changed in order to achieve the goal of the stalking. For example, according to Herman (1992), Dutton and Goodman (2005) and Toews and Bermea (2017), perpetrators can use coercive control to attack the social network of their victims, using intimidation or badmouthing. However, in the narratives of the participants in this research, the relationships had ended, so the stalkers navigated their lack of access to the participants by affecting their social groups in alternative ways. Often, the social networks of the participants were attacked using shame and fear that others would not understand which resulted in a sense of helplessness that they could not escape their stalkers. For example, Kim found that she could not tell her friends and family because she felt that others would not recognise the behaviours as stalking. Toews and Bermea (2017) linked

similar experiences to a form of Stockholm syndrome, reporting that a victim who can no longer rely upon others for support, may become more reliant on the abuser. However, in Kim's example, she was able to reach out for help, which allowed for the police to intervene and family to support her, which seemed to provide protection from the threats of her stalker.

Theme 2: Impact on Victim

The second theme reflected the impact of the stalking behaviours on the participants' lives, and revealed a deep vulnerability and loss of self-esteem that often seemed to worsen their situation, manoeuvring them increasingly under the control of the stalker. . Examples of the impact emerged through maladaptive cognitions in the form of intrusive thoughts or distorted self-perceptions of blame. The impact was also evident in the participants' behaviour, for example by adapting their actions by avoiding certain locations. The impacts of the stalking, in relation to the emotions experienced, such as fear or anger, often pointed towards a struggle to process emotions, so the topic of emotional processing will be included in the discussion.

A loss of self-esteem has been linked to an increased degree of vulnerability to abuse, coercion and domination. Davis, Ace and Andra (2000), Dutton and Goodman (2005) and Toews and Bermea (2017) were each able to outline an array of behaviours designed to dominate the victim and render them increasingly vulnerable. For some of the participants, they conveyed a low sense of self-esteem through self-blame, shame, fear, insecurity and perceived helplessness. The feelings of shame and damage to their inner-strength and confidence, led to long-term anxiety, uncertainty and paranoia.

The fact that some of the participants still struggled with signs of low self-esteem associated with the stalking, suggests that some of the actions taken by the stalker were permanently incorporated into their thought patterns. Following the end of the stalking, the participants portrayed a sense of struggling to recover and move on from their helpless positions. There were frequent references made to a continuing sense of anxiety, hypervigilance

and panic that would likely have originated with the psychological and emotional trauma associated with stalking. For example, Carol's previously described feeling of paranoia may have resulted from an exaggerated sense of power assigned to her stalker that she failed to resolve. Additionally, she illustrated a sense of confusion associated with not knowing what could happen next, and a repetition of abuse that has been linked to subordination and compliance as responses to exhaustive repetition (Logan and Walker, 2009; Irving and Lui, 2020).

Carol's stalker seemed to have established such a credible threat to her that she believed he could reappear at any time, despite the fact that the stalking had ended. For all participants, the sense of not knowing what their stalkers would do or when, seemed worse to the victims than actually knowing, which has been identified in previous research, highlighting the anxiety that victims of stalking feel in relation to unrelenting, unexpected intrusions. The psychological impact of not knowing what will happen, or when, was looked into by Williamson (2010) as a component of stalking behaviours. Williamson (2010) described this process as the abuser "constructing and maintaining unreality" (p. 1414), whereby the victim's lack of control and the perpetrator's unpredictable behaviours culminate in an exchange of their own sense of reality for their abuser's reality. Williamson (2010) used an example of a victim of abuse shopping to buy a type of meat that will appease her partner, rather than shopping to buy food for her home simply too cook with. This breakdown of reality emerged throughout the themes. For example, Kim would describe going to her university campus library as an act of avoiding her stalker, rather than using it for academic pursuits.

Emotional Processing

Across the themes, the impact of stalking on the participants resulted in signs of trauma, and an inability to effectively process the emotions related to their experiences. The description of their experiences was in-line with theories linking sustained fear, trauma and distress to maladaptive coping mechanisms (Stein, Kennedy and Twamley, 2002). Rachman (2001)

proposed the theory that a failure to adequately process emotions following an unpleasant event can lead to excessive avoidance and unintegrated emotions. Even at this early stage, Rachman (2001) linked a failure to process emotions to post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), which may be relevant to some victims of stalking exhibiting similar symptoms. However, each victim will experience their own level of trauma, and some feel little or no fear, or may not realise they are being stalked (Owens, 2017). The participants in this study all described some degree of fear and trauma, such as distressing, intrusive thoughts, or returning feelings of fear and dissociation, which Rachman (2001) categorised as signs of "unsatisfactory emotional processing" (p. 168). Later work by Baker *et al*. (2010) applied the theory of emotional processing to a broader array of psychological disorders, such as phobias, trauma, depression and anxiety disorders, which provided a broader range of psychological disorders to compare with the responses of the participants in this research. The emotional processing scale developed by Baker *et al*. (2010) included five categories including: suppression unregulated emotions, impoverished emotional experiences, unprocessed emotions and avoidance. The participants' attempts to share their stalking experiences often aligned with the emotional processing scale by Baker *et al*. (2010). For example, Kim kept quiet about her stalking, which can be categorised as 'suppression', and Paula's attempts to downplay her experience could fall in the 'avoidance' category. Rather than stalking victims, Baker *et al*. (2010) recruited participants that were classified as healthy, experiencing pain or mental health problems. Unfortunately, there currently remains little evidence linking emotional processing directly to stalking victims, despite past research indicating that stalking victims can also experience trauma, anxiety and depression (Brewster, 2002; Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005; Kraaij *et al*., 2007).

The participants all described feeling trapped in unmanageable situations that were prolonged and confused and commonly featured strong, unpleasant emotions. Fear was an emotion experienced by each participant, although their associated language was typically vague, unclear and fleeting. This could point towards a maladaptive fear-response, associated with

emotional dysregulation, as illustrated by the emotional distancing necessary for safeguarding for the duration of the stalking. This also falls in-line with the emotional processing scale developed by Baker *et al*. (2010) that considers a lack of awareness or understanding of emotions as a sign of overactive fear responses that can lead to an increased risk of 'response inhibition' proposed by Stein, Kennedy and Twamley (2002) in their study on information processing and intimate abuse.

The memories of the participants were highly factual and placed an emphasis on describing the events and actions of the characters involved. This emphasis was evident across the participants' recollections. For example, when referring to the actions of her stalker, Nina focused on factual aspects, such as locations and characters rather than dwelling on the fearful emotion she also referred to at one point, before moving back to the description of events. From this, it was apparent that Nina was able to list the factual series of events, however, it may not have been a priority, or possible for her to focus on the emotional component of her memories. Direct questioning at this stage in Nina's interview could have encouraged her to discuss the emotional links to her memories, however, this could also have risked exposing her to emotions she was not ready to confront yet, and detracted from the authenticity of her account by risking undue influence from the researcher and leading away from the natural course of her memories. Additional signs of unhelpful fear responses were evident amongst the descriptions of the behavioural responses of the participants, for example avoidance behaviours, when they did not want to go to certain locations, and hypervigilance when trying to detect signs of threat that were not present.

Inhibited emotional experiences have also been linked to a failure to integrate new information that contradicts the past fearful experience, allowing for the modification of existing fear structures and subsequent recovery. Telch *et al*. (2004) and Rauch and Foa (2006), both supported this theory in their work on emotional processing theories. Despite not being recent, both studies were particularly relevant to stalking victims and hence

this research, as they explored fear-responses and traumatic incidents, such as sexual assault. Insufficient emotional processing has been linked to maintaining unhelpful fear responses found in anxiety and PTSD and there were signs in the narratives of similar mechanisms reflected through increased hypervigilance, social anxiety and unresolved fear. For example, Paula's account of her continuous feeling of fear highlighted that these emotions might not have been successfully processed "and... thinking about him, thinking emotionally, I still fear". Paula's lack of recovery was reflected in her ongoing feeling of fear despite the cessation of the stalking, suggesting that she was unable to resolve her fearful response to it.

The destructive impact that stalking has on the mental health of its victims has been rigorously documented to date. Research reporting anxiety, depression and PTSD, has recorded elevated chances of experiencing these effects, both during and after stalking (Kamphuis and Emmelkamp, 2001; Sheridan, Davies and Boon, 2001; Blaauw *et al*., 2002; Dressing, Kuehner and Gass, 2005; Dutton, 2009). This research highlights the likelihood of trauma resulting from stalking or abuse, that can result in long-term difficulties in processing and regulating unbearable emotions, freezing the victim in a traumatised state so that recovery is delayed or blocked (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Tull *et al*., 2007; Dutton, 2009; Williamson, 2010).

The evidence that has emerged of dysfunctional emotional processing is an important aspect of the exploration of the experience of stalking. The notion that victims of stalking might encounter difficulties when processing their emotions, allows for the lack of emotional content in their narratives to be better understood as a coping mechanism, and this has implications for the way victims' testimonies are questioned and received by those hearing accounts of their experiences.

Theme 3: Victim Response

The third theme depicted the attempts made by the participants to navigate themselves towards positions of safety, when confronted with the stalking behaviours. Attempts were made to down-regulate emotions and manoeuvre

the level of distress to a more manageable level through maladaptive attempts to regulate emotions, such as denial or avoidance. As such, the discussion about the response to stalking will consider emotional regulation as a significant influence in this theme.

Emotional Regulation

Researchers have reported that prolonged psychological and emotional strain can impede a person's ability to regulate their emotional experiences (Tull *et al*., 2007). Although not directly related to stalking victims, the study of trauma and emotional regulation by Tull *et al*. (2007) did include intimate partner abuse, exposure to threats to safety, and threats to the lives of the participants, which were also features of the stalking experiences in the current study. Tull *et al*. (2007) reported a link between trauma and insufficient emotional regulation, resulting in poor decision-making, increased difficulty identifying emotions and avoidance. All participants in this research discussed the behaviour of the stalker, in particular the behaviour that seemed psychologically torturous in nature, highlighting the potential strain experienced when attempting to cope with the stalking that may have contributed towards emotional regulation difficulties.

The duration of the trauma seemed significant to the psychological distress expressed by the participants, reflected through the sense in their narratives that it would never end. Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000) linked the relentlessness of stalking to an elevated risk of psychological damage, such as depression and PTSD. Although not recent, the work of Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000) remains relevant to this research because it highlights the link between stalking and intimate partner relationships, which is less commonly seen in other stalking research studies One example was Kim's description of the omnipresent nature of her stalker, illustrating the sense of ongoing emotional strain: "… he still had a hold over me…" This example resonated with research on both distress tolerance (Rauch and Foa, 2006; Schalinski, Schauer and Elbert, 2015) and coercive control (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Irving and Lui, 2020), both of which reported a

reduction in the ability to tolerate distressing emotions when exposed to trauma across an extended period of time.

Similar to research by Rauch and Foa (2006), Kim and Nina's description of their ever-present stalker was accompanied by a lack of emotional reflection, which can serve as a protective factor, and can be associated with a reduction in the capacity to tolerate distress. Despite studying domestic violence victims, rather than those of stalking, the emotional regulation strategies measured by Moser *et al*. (2015), included a lack of awareness or suppression of emotions, and as such, are meaningful to this research.

Paired with the extensive description of coercive control designed to bombard, confuse and intimidate them, the narratives shared by these participants appeared to illustrate their struggle to reflect upon, adequately comprehend or appropriately respond to the stalking, which echoed research by Logan and Walker (2009) and Williamson (2010). The association between coercive control and a compromised ability to think clearly, as reported by Logan and Walker (2009), was a prominent feature of studies of coercive control and stalking impact reports, such as the detailed account of the struggle to think clearly in female victims of stalking by Dutton and Goodman (2005). Both coercive control and stalking studies link well to this research due to the manifestation of both within the participants' narratives. The experience narrated by the participants in the current study, was one of coercive behaviour and attempting to manage the situation with reactive behaviours based upon survival and coping, including signs of increased compliance and identification with the aggressor, which could be indicative of an unhelpful strategy to navigate the situation. For example, Rachel found herself complying with her stalker's demands, going to the park to find him as he had instructed, rather than not complying and adopting a safer, more proactive approach, such as contacting the police.

Evidence of an unhelpful, reactive response demonstrated Rachel's struggle to regulate her emotions and recognise appropriate ways to navigate her experiences, which was a behaviour pattern displayed by all participants. The confusing impact reported by Dutton and Goodman (2005) in stalking

victim research, such as self-blame and rumination, and in Williamson's (2010) coercive control theory, such as confusion and helplessness, contribute valuable insights into the reduced capacity to appropriately respond when under duress. These responses also relate to emerging theories from studies on interpersonal violence by Stein, Kennedy and Twamley (2002) and Moser *et al*. (2015) who reported that fear and traumatic abuse were associated with a reduced capacity to respond to cognitive tasks and an increased likelihood of downregulating emotional responses, due to the demands of maintaining attention on the threatening situation. Although not directly related to domestic abuse studies, the inclusion of a fear response is pertinent to this research due to the presence of fear across the participants' narratives.

The stalking experiences were reported as largely unpleasant for the participants of this research, as illustrated by the coded narrative. The victims' responses to the stalking, for example Nina trying to placate her stalker by "keeping him sweet," pointed towards the notion that the threats being made were believed. Overall, the modified behaviour of the participants failed to provide the desired effect, and the stalker was often depicted as either continuing the harassment or increasing it.

Another example was Carol's abusive ex-husband who was imprisoned for physically assaulting her and yet he was able to continue the harassment while incarcerated, unabated. Without relief from the stalking behaviours, Carol revealed signs of maladaptive coping strategies by way of minimising the emotional impact, as well as using denial and avoidance, echoing previous research by Dutton and Goodman (2005) and Williamson (2010) who reported that minimising, denial and dissociation have been linked to experiences of coercive control in response to a feeling that the abuser is inescapable. This was further evidenced by the participants as they distanced themselves from the emotional impact of stalking by using vague, poorly-formed language such as 'stuff', 'bad' and "I don't know".

Carol's narrative exhibited a similar lack of emotional fluency, which was present in PTSD research by Tull *et al*. (2007), who linked an excessive

avoidance of emotion and a difficulty identifying emotions to poor levels of emotional regulation. This supports the notion that the trauma of stalking can result in a difficulty regulating emotions, as emerged in this research. For the participants, the limited identification and discussion of emotions and a sense of quickly moving away from emotional content as they were sharing their memories of events, suggested a struggle to recognise and evaluate emotions. For example, the participants often described their feelings in a single word such as ‘afraid’ or ‘horrible’ before quickly moving back to descriptions of events.

Signs of avoidance that may be associated with unhelpful emotional regulation strategies appeared throughout the narratives; however, different forms of coping were also illustrated. In some cases, the coping responses associated with stalking revealed signs of the potentially serious psychological harm widely reported in stalking victim research (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2004; 2005; Williamson, 2010). This was illustrated by Paula as she recalled the consequences of the stalking, “I get very panicky very easily,” and despite seeming clear that his actions were wrong, she would blame herself by stating that “it was my fault as well”. Panic attacks following stalking and abuse have been linked to signs of emotional trauma, such as PTSD and anxiety disorders, which in some cases can be serious and prolonged, as illustrated in Paula’s reflection of her enduring panic. However, by contradicting herself, Paula shut down the possibility of making any links between her experience and her panic attacks. It could be inferred that if Paula were struggling to regulate her emotions, she might cope by denying her emotional experience, subsequently failing to process any thoughts or feelings associated with her stalker, which could risk an unwelcome trigger of emotional content in the form of flashbacks or panic attacks, as reported by Schalinkski, Schauer and Elbert (2015) in their study of inappropriate trauma-related responses. Whilst not directly related to stalking, the work of Schalinkski, Schauer and Elbert (2015) provides valuable insight into the complexity of memory and trauma that is meaningful to the distressing experiences of the participants in this research, all of whom have lived through traumatic experiences and bear the psychological scars.

While the research by Schalinkski, Schauer and Elbert (2015) was based on female participants who were not necessarily victims of stalking, they had experienced traumatic events and were exhibiting symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

The indicators of poor emotional regulation and the decision-making processes that emerged from the narratives of these participants, have provided valuable insight into the complex routes that lead to sometimes unhelpful choices made by the victims of stalking that are often based on a desperate attempt to survive (Irving and Lui, 2020). Further research into emotional regulation and ex-intimate partner stalking would be useful, to allow for a more meaningful comparison of stalking victims, as there is currently very little research available that investigates this issue.

Verbalising Events

Moser *et al*. (2015) referred to defensive reactions as the result of trauma, such as the downregulating of emotions, and Peace, Porter and Brinke (2008) linked trauma to a difficulty when accessing emotional memories. Both consider the idea of emotional dissociation linked to the impact of the abuse that may have resulted in a form of affect avoidance, as discussed in previous sections. In their narratives, the participants reflected a struggle to connect with their thoughts and feelings, linking to previous reports of avoidance-based survival during emotional and psychological abuse, and a wish to protect themselves from becoming overwhelmed by unbearable emotions in the present (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Williamson, 2010).

Societal pressures and shame could have impacted the narrative style of the participants (Beck *et al*., 2011). The non-physical abuse detailed in the narratives, illustrated the covert nature of the stalkers' use of coercive control during the stalking. The participants' descriptions of coercive control illustrate the influence a stalker can have on their victims' emotions and the struggle to verbalise their experiences. Hanna (2009) argued that definitions of coercive control have been historically difficult to define and prove, and thus could be associated with the difficulty of putting the experience into words, which

might reflect the low conviction rates for stalking, as discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review (Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Taylor-Dunn, Bowen and Gilchrist, 2018).

Conclusion

The discussion of the findings highlight the unique and detailed nature of ex-intimate partner stalking investigated in this study. The emotional impact of stalking has shown to influence the past, present and potentially the future of each participant. This research has also highlighted the many areas of a person's life that stalking can infiltrate.

This chapter considered the contribution the findings make to existing theories of ex-intimate partner stalking by providing a deeper insight into the cycle of stalking and the emotional toll endured. The findings of the first theme provide a detailed insight into the stalking behaviours studied, furthering our understanding of the use of control, manipulation and dominance in ex-intimate partner stalking. The insight gained from the second theme highlighted the significance of the impact of the stalking, and the emotional processes encountered. The prolonged sense of trauma seemed to expose the female victim of stalking to an increased risk of difficulty when processing emotions. The final theme provided a new understanding of the response of the stalking victim and the difficulties encountered with emotional regulation when attempting to respond appropriately. A compromised ability to make decisions and safely navigate the stalking experience highlights the dangers faced by the victims of stalking.

Consistencies between the findings of this study and theories that emerged from previous studies were considered, and links were made between earlier observations and the experiences of the participants. This study was able to consolidate existing theories into one discussion; integrating ideas pertaining to stalking, domestic violence, coercive control, trauma, emotional processing and regulation.

The following chapter outlines the conclusions, recommendations for future research, limitations and the impact of this study.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Chapter Overview

This chapter will begin with a summary of the research findings, which will draw together the original aims of the research with the key findings identified during this study. The second section will consider the implications for practice, followed by contribution to knowledge, future research and limitations of this study. The thesis will conclude with the final words in the finishing section.

Summary of the Research Findings

This thesis was prompted by three main questions. These questions will be revisited in turn, along with the related findings.

1. **What emotions are described in response to the stalking behaviours?**

The emotions discussed by the participants in relation to the stalking experience were central to this research. What emerged from the narratives was a combination of many emotions such as fear, anger and feelings of vulnerability and helplessness, which at times were challenging to put into words. The narratives portrayed an experience associated with emotional strain and a struggle to manage strong and at times unpleasant emotions, over the course of the stalking and beyond.

2. **What are some of the common features of stalking, both individually and across the participants?**

Each participant shared a detailed narrative of stalking behaviours carried out by the stalker. Common features of the stalking included threats to safety, monitoring or following behaviours, and psychologically manipulative behaviours that were often found to coerce or control the participants. The stalking behaviours identified in this research have shown that coercive control may play a part in the stalker's ability to threaten, control and dominate an ex-intimate partner. This feature of stalking was also associated with the increased feeling of helplessness and vulnerability displayed by the participants.

3. **What effects do the features of stalking have on the emotional processes and emotional regulation of the victims?**

This research discussed the damaging nature of stalking behaviours on the participants' ability to effectively process and regulate their emotions. The narratives shared by the participants indicated that the emotions associated with the experience were not always freely available to them when attempting to make sense of events, which may be an indicator of insufficient emotional processing. Excessive or unhelpful emotional distancing can be associated with a need to avoid potentially disturbing or overwhelming feelings. By defending themselves against the associated emotions however, victims of stalking could fail to adequately process these important emotions, leaving them unable to fully understand their feelings and potentially hinder their chances of recovery.

In addition, this research suggested that the victims' ability to regulate emotions during and after stalking could be affected by their experiences. Effective emotional regulation is important to be able to understand and respond to the demands of different emotions and events in an appropriate manner, moderating feelings where necessary. The struggle to navigate the experience of being stalked, for example, if a stalking victim adapted their

behaviour to comply with their stalker's demands, suggested that emotional regulation may not be functioning on an effective and helpful level.

The analysis identified three key themes: Stalker Behaviour, Impact on Victim, and Victim's Response. These themes indicated that the experience of being stalked encompasses a huge aspect of a person's life, and the emotional experience can be intricately interwoven within the behaviours of the stalker and the responses of their victim.

This research was guided by an interpretivist view, which built upon previous largely quantitative research, and aimed to shed light on the emotional impact of being stalked. Previous research has indicated that stalking can be associated with psychological distress, including an increased risk of depression, anxiety-related disorders or PTSD (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005). This important point demonstrated the likely forms of emotional distress encountered during and after being stalked, which this research built upon, to present a detailed account of the patterns of stalking behaviour and the associated thoughts and feelings encountered by victims.

Implications for Practice

In this research, the participants' narratives suggested that accessing emotional memories and verbalising feelings may be compromised following the trauma of stalking. There may be a great importance, when considering talking therapies, of recognising this predicament and allowing or linking emotions that may not have been integrated or yet acknowledged. Recommendations for clinicians treating clients with a history of ex-intimate partner stalking are outlined in **Table 3**:

	Table 3: Recommendations for Clinicians Treating Clients with Histories of Ex-Partner Stalking		
Consequences of Stalking for victim	**Potential challenges**	**Potential risks**	**Options for treatment**
Extra time needed to build trust and security with others.	Client may be working in therapy at a slow pace, carrying feelings of shame and mistrust.	Clinician may move too quickly with intrusive questioning before the client is ready, risking the therapeutic alliance and premature termination. (Beck *et al.* 2011).	Recognition of the vulnerability of the client and implications of potentially traumatic experiences. Take time to build trust and security with the client before past experiences can be addressed and understood. (Bateman and Fonagy, 2013; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013).
Distancing from emotions to cope.	Client may not be able to readily access emotions.	Clinician may interpret lack of access to emotions as avoidance.	Allow client to work through trauma and help with linking to emotions and reintegration. (Kilborne, 1999; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013; Goldblatt, 2013).
Loss of control/autonomy and/or feeling trapped in the life cycle of stalking	Client may struggle with control, boundaries and relationships.	If choice and control is not promoted, distorted beliefs could be maintained, such as self-blame and progress could be hindered.	Training about the life cycle of stalking to understand the different components that can lead to the victim feeling entrapped and powerless. Re-instigate sense of power and control as part of the recovery to move towards a restored degree of autonomy. (Wilson, Fauci and Goodman, 2015; Sweeney *et al*., 2016

When seeking professional mental health treatment, it may be helpful for the practitioner to modify their technique in order to accommodate the traumatised client, for example when addressing insufficient emotional regulation (Bateman and Fonagy, 2013; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013). If a victim of stalking is unable to access emotional content initially, instead focusing on more factual content, or dissociating from the emotional content,

a counsellor or therapist may be required to allow for the traumatic events to be addressed first and work towards a deeper level of emotional processing, rather than moving prematurely into the exploration of feeling-states (Bateman and Fonagy, 2013; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013).

If potentially traumatic experiences and unbearable emotions were poorly handled or prematurely addressed, the chances of unexpected termination of therapy, such as psychotherapy, could be high (Ford and Russo, 2006). The increased likelihood of working with feelings such as shame in victims of ex-intimate partner stalking may provide obstacles when building a therapeutic alliance with a practitioner (Beck *et al.* 2011). During the process of therapy, a client may find themselves coming into contact with painful, unwanted feelings, and, in consideration of this, establishing trust may be essential work when considering the effectiveness of the chosen therapy (Beck *et al*., 2011; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013). Trust and security could be particularly important when working with victims of ex-intimate partner stalking, as they may still be hypervigilant to potential sources of threat and may attempt to regulate these feelings in the therapeutic relationship through avoidant behaviours, such as prematurely terminating the therapy (Beck *et al.* 2011).

When working with stalking victims in psychotherapy, the distancing or denial of emotions may be considered a defence mechanism in response to a traumatic experience. This can be regarded as defensive splitting, which has been defined as a protective mechanism distancing unbearable aspects from awareness and separating them into good and bad (Kilborne, 1999; Hahn, 2000). Attempts to avoid intolerable emotions such as shame could result in the victim projecting, or defensively distancing the intolerable experience from themselves onto another person (Hahn, 2000; Goldblatt, 2013). This process of defensive splitting and projection can result in the therapist being seen as threatening or condemning, eliciting feelings in the stalking victim such as hostility and contempt (Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013; Goldblatt, 2013). The victim may devalue the therapy, for example by undermining the therapist, or disengaging from the sessions (Zaslav, 1998; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013). The therapeutic relationship would need careful management,

with a therapist attuned to this process and able to respond sensitively and appropriately, allowing for the recognition and re-integration of unbearable emotions (Kilborne, 1999; Black, Curren and Dyer, 2013; Goldblatt, 2013).

Counsellors and health professionals who are not adequately trained to work with victims of trauma and stalking, could risk re-traumatising individuals seeking help, for example, with overly intrusive questioning that could re-enact the abuse of the stalker (Raja *et al*., 2015). Recognising the vulnerability of victims of stalking when they come into contact with mental health services may require further consideration beyond the remits of current options, due to the lack of modified counselling readily available. Additional training to enable counsellors or therapists to adapt their technique in order to recognise and work with trauma in this manner may be an important goal for popular forms of mental health treatment. Examples of modifications to work with victims of trauma include the use of less intrusive interventions, extra training to understand the effects of trauma, and discussion with the patient as to the impact that dysfunctional beliefs may have on behaviours (Raja *et al*., 2015).

The excessive self-blame, helplessness and anxiety identified in the narratives require careful management during treatment and support previous theories that victims of stalking can experience high levels of trauma. The consideration of specialised treatment may be beneficial for victims of stalking due to the intense psychological abuse and manipulation encountered (Dutton and Goodman, 2005). Trauma Informed Care (TIC) proposed that emotional security, the promotion of choice and control, as well as utilising functional coping techniques, can be beneficial following trauma, in particular coercive control, which can result in a diminished sense of autonomy (Wilson, Fauci and Goodman, 2015; Sweeney *et al*., 2016). The sense of vulnerability, lack of power and maladaptive coping techniques that were displayed by the participants in this research, reinforce the importance of considering the needs of stalking victims beyond the remit of counselling. The possibility of a traumatic reaction such as PTSD, has been commonly associated with stalking victims, linking back to the possible benefits of care

specialised to work with trauma, or the possibility to adapt methods of care to work with trauma victims (Purcell, Pathe and Mullen, 2005; Wilson, Fauci and Goodman, 2015; Sweeney *et al*., 2016).

The findings from this study produced the concept of the life cycle of stalking which could provide a deeper understanding about the experience of being stalked. The three themes that emerged from this study combine and reinforce each other in a manner that can encompass many areas of the victim's life. This model demonstrates the process in which the female victim of ex-partner stalking can become ensnared in the stalking experience, and could inform the practice of clinicians working with the victims. The framework could support psychotherapy or counselling aimed towards linking events for the client to guide their understanding of the experiences, responses and how the stalking may continue to impact their lives in the present. The phases of stalking that can form a life cycle have been extracted and simplified into **Table 4**:

Table 4: Phases of The Life Cycle of Stalking

Phase of The Life Cycle of Stalking	**What happens**
Phase 1: Stalking Behaviour	The stalking behaviour is initiated, such as following or telephoning.
Phase 2: Impact on Victim	The stalker attempts to gain control and the victim finds herself with feelings such as helplessness, powerlessness or fear.
Phase 3: Victim response	The victim attempts to navigate to a position of safety, such as hiding or fighting back.
Phase 4: Cycle starts again at Phase 1. If the victim has found a way to stop the stalking, this is where the cycle could potentially end.	The stalking behaviours continue or worsen, beginning at Phase 1 again to restart the cycle. On occasion, the victim has found a way to stop the stalking, such as involving the police and the phases end here.

Each phase represents the level of engagement between stalker and victim, with a separate column providing a summary of what happens. The life cycle of stalking begins at Phase 1 with an initial engagement from the stalker, and continues through Phase 2, 3, and 4 where it will usually begin again at phase 1; unless the victim has found a way to finally stop the stalker. The details of what happens during each phase can vary for each victim; however, these stages display the similarities across the cases in this study. This model of stalking could be explored further in future research.

For some of the participants, professional services, such as the police and social support networks, responded in an unhelpful manner, possibly associated with a lack of understanding. More information and training about coercive control and stalking should be an important future goal, to encourage the likelihood of appropriate support and improve the chances of recognising the warning signs so often missed (Dutton and Goodman, 2005).

Finally, it may be important to focus attention on not just the victims of stalking, but also the people most likely to perpetrate stalking behaviours. Currently, incarceration is often the most effective way to stop a stalker, however, mental health treatment for stalkers could also be highly important to have an impact on the increasing instances of stalking that occur on a daily basis (MacKenzie and James, 2011). Providing interventions for stalkers, through education and re-learning interpersonal skills that work to prevent the use of domestic abuse and coercive control, could provide preventative rather than curative measures McEwan, Mullen and MacKenzie, 2009; MacKenzie *et al*., 2010). However, the opportunity for appropriate perpetrator interventions are often missed, reinforcing the need for an increased recognition of the problem of coercive control and stalking in order to further develop current treatment options (MacKenzie *et al*., 2010; MacKenzie and James, 2011).

Contribution to Knowledge

This research contributed to the development of knowledge about ex-intimate partner stalking by exploring the use and impact of coercive control and the impact it can have on the lives of its victims. In particular, the use of coercive control by the stalker not only impacted the behaviour of the participants, but was also associated with a vast array of unpleasant or unbearable emotional responses. The research was in-line with previous research that pointed towards coercive control being a possible component of stalking, and also that difficulties regulating and processing emotions can be employed as coping mechanisms when under duress (Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Dutton and Goodman, 2005; Kraaij *et al*., 2007). However, this research was able to bridge some gaps that might link this literature to current ideas about stalking and its victims. The possible difficulties with self-esteem, confusion, and sense of identity may illustrate the devastating and long-term impact that stalking can have.

This research highlighted important links between the behaviours of the stalker and their victims and the impact on their emotional processes and ability to regulate emotions to a new degree of detail. The influence of coercive control in ex-intimate partner stalking is an important addition to the current level of understanding about this form of abuse. It is hoped that this research demonstrates the value of qualitative research to current understandings of stalking and the victims also, which could encourage future research to employ similar, in-depth methodologies. This research has also opened up a narrative of coping with a stalker's will to dominate and the subsequent process of making sense of this experience that the victim may be left with.

Future Research

Designing a qualitative study for research investigating emotional experiences, proved challenging when addressing emotions related to trauma. The use of narrative inquiry was appropriate to investigate the

internal world of the victims, however, given the lack of content that directly addressed emotions, the results were limited to a restricted degree of exploration. There are strengths and weaknesses to different qualitative methodologies, and researchers interested in this topic may find an alternative methodology that provides insightful results. Emotional experience of being stalked might benefit from further research however, and this would require careful consideration of the appropriate approach to explore potentially sensitive states of feeling. Possible options could include the use of focus groups to encourage reflection on the emotional patterns as they emerge, or a reflective journal to facilitate the exploration of feelings. Additionally, questions designed to elicit details about the emotional experience could encourage further exploration by participants, reducing the likelihood of a highly factual account of stalking.

Further research is needed regarding the nature of separating from a partner who then engages in stalking behaviours and subsequently enlists methods of coercive control. Additionally, the way victims respond to the abuse experienced and the investigation of more appropriate countermeasures requires further attention.

With the advancement of technology, the techniques used to stalk vary increasingly, with social media and text messaging playing a vital role as identified by this research. For future research, the growing use of technology would be an important factor to consider as an ever-expanding catalogue of electronic applications become available to a wider proportion of society.

Future research could also consider different genders, and also different forms of relationships, for example same-sex stalking, moving beyond the most common form of stalking; ex-intimate partner stalking. Whilst coercive control was employed by the stalkers in this study, an investigation of stranger stalking, which, by definition, infers less intimate knowledge of victims, may yield different techniques, with subsequently differing emotional responses. Importantly, the use of coercive control, not just in an intimate

relationship, requires further research in order to increase understanding and to uphold new laws introduced to protect against it.

Stalking is a commonly experienced, pervasive range of behaviours that presents in many forms. Cases of ex-partner stalking, stranger stalking, celebrity stalking, rejected stalking and cyberstalking are amongst the many forms that exist, and undoubtedly, there are many more (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007). The result of such a broad range of motives is that almost anybody is at risk of experiencing stalking. Furthermore, the potential scope of research is vast, since many sections of society can be affected by stalking.

Limitations of the Study

The high level of detail required by narrative inquiry did not allow capacity for a large quantity of participants; however, the transferability of the study was established through rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2013). Narrative research is ideal for a smaller sample size to obtain enough data to provide a detailed description of the subject under investigation. This point was reinforced when the saturation point was reached, with enough information gained to address the aim of the research, at five interviews. The participants were sourced from The University of Kent, so geographically were a restricted group, limiting the degree to which this study can be applied to a wider population with the same degree of certainty. However, because of the inclusion of staff as well as students, the age range was broader, providing extra variation in the sample of participants.

This research was limited by not taking into account specific age ranges or occupations, which future research could consider, in order to explore the potential impact on the emotional responses of stalking victims. The sample group in this study was restricted to female only; a choice influenced by the lack of similar qualitative studies on the subject, so the restricted sample was viewed as a starting point. However, it is understood from existing research detailed in the literature review that stalking can be a gender-biased crime.

Consequently, the findings were gender-biased, and it is yet unknown how research samples from a variety of genders, geographical locations and cultures would respond to the same line of inquiry. Additionally, the limited information sourced from a review of existing literature and gaps in the research restricted this study when drawing upon previous research. For example, despite finding compelling evidence of stalking behaviour, there has been limited coercive control research in the field of stalking, resulting in a lack of previous evidence underpinning this area.

During analysis, reflexivity played an important role, especially during transcribing and coding, and interpretations were closely monitored to minimise contamination of the transcripts. Evidence was drawn directly from the interviews wherever possible, in order to link to the analysis in the most authentic manner possible. However, it would be impossible to truly avoid a subjective element to this study and the role of the interviewer was carefully considered as part of the process, especially during analysis, but member checking by peers controlled for this to some extent. The opportunity for the participants to be involved with member checking was limited in this research, thus restricting respondent validation and increasing the risk of contamination from researcher bias. However, overall, the research was able to adapt to this limitation and meet the credibility indicators required of qualitative research by member checking with academic colleagues when the participants could not be involved, and adhering to Creswell's (2013) procedures for validation by establishing transferability through the thick, rich descriptions used.

Final Words

This thesis aims to inform the direction taken of existing treatments and build upon current research which, to date,lacks the depth and detail of qualitative studies, despite the prevalence of ex-intimate partner stalking.

The experiences of the participants in this study have been analysed in depth and the narratives shared have provided fresh insight into the life cycle

of stalking events, exposing the significant impacts on the lives of the participants, leaving behind a lasting emotional legacy. This thesis contributes to current knowledge regarding the nature of stalking from the perspective of the victim. Each of the five women in this study shared their attempts to navigate these difficult circumstances; a common thread throughout was a struggle to find safety, and cope with the emotional strain of the experience.

This study shows, through each of the narratives of the participants, how victims of stalking attempt to navigate the distressing conditions created by the stalker, struggling to find a feeling of safety from physical and emotional harm, and cope with the emotional strain of the experience.

This study highlights the numerous possible dangers that are associated with stalking, exploring the many ways in which it might infiltrate a person's life. The reflections of the stalkers' attempts to coercively control the participants offer insight into many of the mechanisms of ex-intimate partner stalking.

The observed use of coercive control by the stalker furthers the level of understanding regarding the emotional entrapment felt by the victims of ex-intimate partner stalking in this study. This process of manipulation and control infiltrated the narratives across the themes, linking back to issues relating to a person's ability to cope when under emotional strain. This is a significant contribution to the understanding of potential mechanisms at play, and the resulting emotional impact suffered by the victim, when a person is stalked by an ex-intimate partner.

The next stage needs to see more research undertaken to further understand stalking, its emotional impact, and the involvement of coercive control used by the perpetrator in ensnaring the victim. There is an apparent need for a greater level of training given to those who deal with victims of stalking professionally outside of the mental health community to encourage earlier, appropriate intervention. There is also evidence suggesting the benefits of the adaptation of techniques developed specifically to deal with the trauma related to ex-intimate partner stalking within the mental health

community, which may be crucial for the practitioner to assist the stalking victim towards a goal of emotional recovery.

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Appendix 1

Literature Review Sources

Author	Title/Journal	Year	Is the journal Peer Reviewed	Source	Summary
Baker, R., Thomas, S., Thomas, P.W., Gower, P., Santonastaso, M. and Whittlesea, A.	The Emotional Processing Scale: scale refinement and abridgement (EPS-25). Journal of psychosomatic research	2010	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science	A 38 item, 8 factor self-assessment scale that was devised by adding 15 more items resulting in a 53-item scale, tested to result in 25 items- to assess levels of emotional processing
Beck, C. & Raghaven, C.	Intimate partner abuse screening in custody mediation: The importance of assessing coercive control Family Court Review	2010	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Quantitative study of 967 couples seeking mediation- coercive control a better indicator of relationship distress than violence and linked to high fear, safety and reduced fairness in mediation.
Bendlin, M. and Sheridan, L.	Risk factors for severe violence in intimate partner stalking situations: an analysis of police records. Journal of interpersonal violence	2019	Yes	SCOPUS	369 domestically violent police incident reports. Quantitative study reported correlation between DV, violence and stalking

Bjorklund, K., Hakkanen-Nyholm, H., Sheridan, L. & Roberts, K.	The prevalence of stalking amongst Finnish University students Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2010	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Quantitative study: 615 students in Finland. 86.6% female. 22.3% experienced stalking. 25% ex-intimate partner stalking. 52.4% females stalked. 91.8% stalkers were male. Mean duration of stalking 10 months.
Blaauw, E., Winkel, F., Arensman, E., Sheridan, L. & Freeve, A.	The toll of stalking: The relationship between features of stalking and psychopathology of victims Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2002	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 241 victims of stalking. Min 1 month, +1 intrusive behaviour. 89% female victims. 68% ex-intimate partner. 88% stalked by male. Telephone 86%, letters 41%, enters home, 41%, following 74%. Anxiety 12.8 GHQ score (gen pop 5.9) Depression 7.3 (gen pop 6.4)
Brewster, M.P.	Trauma symptoms of former intimate stalking victims. Women & Criminal Justice.	2002	Yes	SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 187 female victims of stalking interviewed using Trauma Symptom Checklist. Common signs of trauma included sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression
Burgess, A.W., Harner, H., Baker, T., Hartman, C.R. and Lole, C.,	Batterers stalking patterns. Journal of Family Violence	2001	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	A clinically based study asked 165 batterers attending a court-mandated assessment program to quantify a series of behaviours that occurred since being convicted of battering. The behaviours clustered into 2 factors:(1) an Ambivalent Contact Pattern and (2) The Predatory Contact Pattern
Chang, W.J.	Cyberstalking and Law Enforcement. Procedia Computer Science	2020	Yes	SCOPUS	Article reviewing the emergence of cyberstalking, definitions, legislations and challenges faced enforcing laws.
Dardis, C.M. and Gidycz, C.A.	Reconciliation or retaliation? An integrative model of post relationship in-person and cyber	2019	Yes	PsycInfo PsycArticles	The present study assessed an integrated model of in-person and cyber UPB perpetration proposed by Davis, Swan, and Gambone (2012) toward former partners among 1,167 undergraduate men and women

	unwanted pursuit perpetration among undergraduate men and women. Psychology of violence			SCOPUS	This study revealed effects of self-control difficulties and possessiveness on UPB perpetration primarily along the coercive control pathway, with effects of anxious attachment primarily along the reconciliation pathway.
Davis, K., Ace, A. & Andra, M.	Stalking perpetrators and psychological maltreatment of partners: Anger, jealousy, attachment and break-up context Violence and Victims	2000	Yes	PsycInfo SCOPUS	Quantitative studies: 169 students (123 female, 46 male) and 203 students (110 female and 93 male) Attachment anxiety and need for control identified in stalking. Recipient of breakup more likely to stalk than initiator.
Davis, K., Swan, S. & Gambone, L.	Why doesn't he just leave me alone? Persistent pursuit: A critical review of theories and evidence Sex Roles	2012	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Review of three theories: coercive control, relational goal pursuit and attachment theory, to discuss gender differences in coercive control
Diette, T., Goldsmith, A., Hamilton, D., Darity, W. & McFarland, K.	Stalking: Does it leave a psychological footprint? Social Science Quarterly	2014	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Quantitative study using data of stalking victims from the NCS-R. Psychological wellbeing of victims, mental disorders and trauma all associated with being stalked.
Dietz, N.A. and Martin, P.Y.	Women who are stalked: Questioning the fear standard. Violence Against Women	2007	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 8000 sample females from National Violence Against Women Survey. Stalking victims found to be more likely to be more fearful. 975 stalking victims felt fear, 361 no fear.
Douglas, K. S. and Dutton, D.	Assessing the link between stalking and	2001	Yes	PsycInfo	Paper evaluating the link between domestic violence and stalking

G.	domestic violence. Aggression and Violent Behavior			Web of Science SCOPUS	
Dressing, H., Kuehner, C. & Gass, P.	Lifetime prevalence and impact of stalking in a European population: epidemiological data from a middle-sized German city The British Journal of Psychiatry	2005	Yes	PsycInfo Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative: 2000 surveys sent Germany, 679 responded (34.2%) 400 women, 279 men.32% ex-intimate partner. 1+ intrusive behaviour, minimum 12 weeks. Phoning 78%, following 38%, enter home 15%. Agitation 56%, anxiety, 44%, sleep problems 41%, panic attacks 12%. Consulted GP or psychologist 24%.
Dutton, M.	Pathways linking intimate partner violence and posttraumatic disorder Trauma, Violence & Abuse	2009	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	Research review of 3,429 women enrolled in HMO in US for 3+ years (English speaking) Linking IPV and PTSD & trauma.
Dutton, M. & Goodman	Coercion in intimate partner violence and posttraumatic disorder Trauma, Violence & Abuse	2005	Yes	Academic Search Complete	Uses previous literature to develop a model of coercive control in intimate partner violence- to inform researchers and practitioners.
Ehlers, A. and Clark, D.M.	A cognitive model of posttraumatic stress disorder. Behaviour research and therapy	2000	Yes	PsycInfo	Proposal for a cognitive model for PTSD- sense of current threat and memory disturbances: framework for treatment
Elliott, D., Bjelajac, P., Fallot, R., Markoff, L. and Reed, B.	Trauma-informed or trauma-denied: principles and implementation of trauma-informed services for women.	2005	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Article discussing the development of TIC in women's services and the locations TIC is implemented.

	Journal of Community Psychology				
Ferreira, C. and Matos, M.	Post-relationship stalking: The experience of victims with and without history of partner abuse. Journal of family violence	2013	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 107 post-intimate stalking victims. 48.7 % found stalking “something serious”. 11.3% found stalking “normal”. 36.5% reported high fear. 60.7% coping strategies- help from friends/services. 53.3% negotiate with stalker. 20.6% deny or minimise stalking.
Galeazzi, G., Bucar-Rucman, A., DeFazio, L. & Groenen, A.	Experiences of stalking victims and requests for help in three European countries. A survey Source European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research	2009	Yes	Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 391 subjects. 80.9% victim’s female. 76.1% male stalker. 46.9% ex-intimate partner stalker. 78.8% telephone, 56.6% following, 47.3% spying. 48.6% high fear. 73.5% went to family/friends for help, 42.5% police, 19.7% to a mental health professional.
Häkkänen, H., Hagelstam, C. and Santtila, P.	Stalking actions, prior offender-victim relationships and issuing of restraining orders in a Finnish sample of stalkers. Legal and criminological psychology	2003	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	The court and police. les of a random sample of 240 Finnish stalking cases, in which a restraining order had been issued, were content analysed for the existence of 30 stalking action variables to identify different stalking styles. This quantitative study identified three structural themes for the actions: instrumental/pursuit, instrumental/manipulation and expressive/violence.
Hanna, C.	The paradox of progress: Translating Evan Stark’s coercive control into legal doctrine for abused women. Violence Against Women	2009	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science	This article examines Evan Stark's model of coercive control and what this paradigm shift might mean for the law.

				SCOPUS	
Herman, J.L.	Complex PTSD: A syndrome in survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma. Journal of traumatic stress	1992	Yes	PsycInfo Web of Science SCOPUS	This paper reviews the evidence for the existence of a complex form of post-traumatic disorder in survivors of prolonged, repeated trauma.
Irving, L. and Liu, B.C.P.	Beaten into submissiveness? An investigation into the protective strategies used by survivors of domestic abuse. Journal of interpersonal violence	2020	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Quantitative study of 40 female participants recruited from a domestic abuse service in the UK. Findings showed that women utilized a diverse range of protective strategies with placating strategies being most intensely used and rated as helpful. However, placating strategy usage could be a risk factor as opposed to a protective factor
Jansen van Rensburg, S.K	Unwanted attention: The psychological impact of cyberstalking on its survivors. Journal of Psychology in Africa	2017	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	This quantitative study investigated experiences of cyberstalking by analysing the psychological impact on young adult users (n= 12; females= 9) aged 19-34. The findings indicate that people who have experienced cyberstalking report feelings of stress, hurt, paranoia, insomnia, betrayal, anger, fear, and depression
Kamphuis, J & Emmelkamp, P.	Traumatic distress among support-seeking female victims of stalking American Journal of Psychiatry	2001	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 207 female members of Dutch anti-stalking foundation. 43% responded. 81% experienced stalking. 89% stalkers male. 73% ex-partner stalkers. 89% telephoned, 75% followed, 70% letters.

Kamphuis, J.H., Emmelkamp, P.M. and Bartak, A.	Individual differences in post-traumatic stress following post-intimate stalking: Stalking severity and psychosocial variables. British Journal of Clinical Psychology	2003	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 131 Dutch female victims of stalking to assess impact. Affective reactions included affective liability, fear, shame and loss. Associated maladaptive beliefs included decreased trust, increased alienation and isolation, and self-blame.
Kent, S.A. and Szimhart, J.	Exit counselling and the decline of deprogramming Cultic Studies Review	2002	Yes	PsycInfo	Article detailing the history and current theories of deprogramming and exit counselling
Kraaij, V., Arensman, E., Garnefski, N. & Kremers, I.	The role of cognitive coping in female victims of stalking Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2007	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study. 47 female victims of stalking- links to depression, anxiety and PTSD. Method of coping linked to increased depression and trauma symptoms.
Logan, T. & Walker, R.	Partner stalking: Psychological dominance of “business as usual”? Trauma, Violence & Abuse	2009	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Exploring differences in perceptions and responses of partner stalking by examining existing literature
Maran, D. and Varetto, A	Psychological impact of stalking on male and female health care professional victims of stalking and domestic violence.	2018	Yes	PsycInfo Web of Science SCOPUS	This quantitative study aimed to investigate stalking experiences in a sample of Italian female (96) and male (51) who experienced domestic violence and stalking. The findings showed that largely the victims experienced stalking by a stalker that was not of the same gender. The nature of the relationship was often romantic for both female and male subjects, suggesting that the key motivation of stalking is the

	Frontiers in psychology				interruption of an intimate relationship.
Maran, D.A. and Zedda, M.	Stalking victimization among Italian university students. Gender and Behaviour	2014	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	The purpose of this study was to describe stalking experiences among a sample of 142 Italian University Students. 1/4 of the sample reported experiencing stalking victimization. Results indicated the most common strategies adopted by stalker, the duration of stalking campaign and the intervention to stop the repetitive and intrusive behaviour, the tactics used by victims and other persons to cope to stalking, the physical and emotional consequence.
McEwan, T., Mullen, P. and Mackenzie, R.	A study of the predictors of persistence in stalking situations Human Behaviour	2009	Yes	PsycInfo PsycArticles Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 200 stalkers (178 male) of stalking that persists despite intervention from police etc. Motivation, behaviour and mental health are all factors in persistence.
McEwan, T. E., Mackenzie, R., Mullen, P. & James, D.	Approach and escalation in stalking The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology	2012	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 211 cases referred to specialist clinic. 71 ex-intimates, 140 non ex. 5 categories: rejected, intimacy seekers, the incompetent, the resentful and the predatory. (Derived from Mullen, Pathe & Stuart, 1999) Ex-intimates more likely to communicate and approach. Phone 52.6%, following 19.9%, letters 30.3%, loitering 46.9%, enters home 13.9%.
Mechanic, M., Weaver, T. & Resick, P.	Intimate partner violence and stalking behaviour: Exploration of patterns and correlates in a sample of acutely battered women Violence and Victims	2000	Yes	PsycInfo SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 114 female victims of domestic violence in shelters and community. Stalking rate high among abused women, emotional abuse may be a predictor of likelihood to stalk.
Melton, H. C.	Stalking in the context of intimate partner abuse: in the victims' words. Feminist Criminology	2007	Yes	PsycInfo SCOPUS	Qualitative study (IPA) of 21 female victims to investigate stalking in the context of IPV- motivation and behaviours such as jealousy and control discussed.

Meloy, J.R.,	Stalking: An old behaviour, a new crime. Psychiatric Clinics of North America	1999	Yes	PsycInfo Web of Science SCOPUS	Article exploring psychiatric diagnosis of stalkers, psychodynamics of stalking, pursuit techniques, stalking behaviours and clinical risk management.
Miller, L	Stalking: Patterns, motives and intervention strategies. Aggression and Violent Behaviour	2012	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Review of existing literature detailing what constitutes stalking, summarising stalking techniques, victim interventions.
Moser, D.A., Aue, T., Suardi, F., Kutlikova, H., Cordero, M.I., Rossignol, A.S., Favez, N., Rusconi Serpa, S. and Schechter, D.S.	Violence-related PTSD and neural activation when seeing emotionally charged male–female interactions. Social cognitive and affective neuroscience,	2015	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	This quantitative study tested how women with male-perpetrated interpersonal violence-related PTSD (IPV-PTSD) differed in their brain activation from healthy controls (HC) when exposed to scenes of male–female interaction of differing emotional content. 16 women suffering from PTSD and 19 healthy controls. emotion perception and appraisal, which are essential to social interaction, are significantly affected among women with IPV-PTSD
Namnyak, M., Tufton, N., Szekely, R., Toal, M., Worboys, S. and Sampson, E.L	Stockholm syndrome: psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth? *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*	2008	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	Article exploring 12 papers with reference to Stockholm syndrome. No diagnostic criteria identified, however four categories emerged: direct threats, kept in isolation, had an opportunity to escape during their period of captivity but did not use it and showed sympathy with their captors following liberation.
Nobles, M.R., Cramer, R.J., Zottola, S.A.,	Prevalence rates, reporting, and psychosocial correlates	2018	Yes	PsycInfo Academic	Quantitative study: The present study assesses the question of stalking victimization prevalence among three groups. Psychosocial risk and protective factors associated with stalking

Desmarais, S.L., Gemberling, T.M., Holley, S.R. and Wright, S.	of stalking victimization: results from a three-sample cross-sectional study. Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology			Search Complete SCOPUS	victimization experiences were assessed. Victimization under reporting to healthcare and legal professionals were observed. Stalking victimization modalities was observed, with the most frequent stalking-type behaviors of being followed, experiencing unwanted calls and messages (including electronically), and gossip/lies to damage reputation. Stalkers known and unknown to the victim.
Nobles, M.R., Reyns, B.W., Fox, K.A. and Fisher, B.S.	Protection against pursuit: A conceptual and empirical comparison of cyberstalking and stalking victimization among a national sample. Justice Quarterly	2014	Yes	Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: Using data from the 2006 Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), this study compares stalking and cyberstalking Including situational features of their experiences and self-protective coping. Difference between stalking and cyberstalking victims, including their number of coping behaviours adopted, duration of contact with their stalker, financial costs of victimization.
Owens, J.	A gender-biased definition: Unintended impacts of the fear requirement in stalking victimization. Crime & Delinquency	2017	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 808 females and 336 males- This study investigated (a) whether or not, compared with men, women are more likely to report being frightened by stalking behaviours, and (b) whether or not men and women have significantly different (gendered) reactions to factors associated with increased levels of fear. Women were more likely than men to report fear, despite controlling for indications that women had experienced the more serious stalking incidents.
P. Pathe & Mullen, P.	The impact of stalkers on their victims The British Journal of Psychiatry	1997	Yes	PsycInfo	Quantitative study: 100 victims of stalking interviewed. Increased levels of PTSD, anxiety and hyperarousal identified following stalking.
Peace, K.A., Porter, S. and Brinke, L.T.	Are memories for sexually traumatic events “special”? A within-subjects investigation of trauma and memory in a clinical sample. Memory	2008	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science	How sexually traumatic memories are processed and recalled in a different way to other memories- vividness, sensory and detail.

Pittaro, M.L.	Cyber stalking: An analysis of online harassment and intimidation. International journal of cyber criminology	2007	Yes	Academic Search Complete	Review of the behaviours and tactics associated with cyber stalking crimes, legislative intervention measures, and preventative measures created specifically to curtail this emerging global crime.
Purcell, R., Pathe, M. and Mullen, P.	When do repeated intrusions become stalking? Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology	2004	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Definition of the point intrusiveness becomes stalking. Two weeks defined as threshold. Quantitative study of 1844 men and women- 432 met criteria for stalking.
Purcell, R., Pathe., M & Mullen, P.	Association between stalking victimisation and psychiatric morbidity in a random community sample The British Journal of Psychiatry	2005	Yes	PsycInfo Web of Science SCOPUS	Random community sample in Australia to assess psychopathology of stalking victims. Quantitative study involving 1844 people. Increased psychiatric morbidity found including symptoms of PTSD.
Rachman, S.	Emotional processing with special reference to post-traumatic stress disorder International Review of Psychiatry	2001	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	The cognitive influence on emotional processing and applications to PTSD. Factors that interfere with emotional processing.
Rauch, S. & Foa, E.	Emotional processing theory (EPT) and exposure therapy for	2006	Yes	PsycInfo	Presentation of emotional processing theory and updating the clinical application of treatment of PTSD e.g. under and over engagement: using case examples.

	PTSD Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy				
Roberts, K.	Women's experience of violence during stalking by former romantic partners: Factors predictive of stalking violence Violence Against Women	2005	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 220 female undergraduate students at the University of Teesside. Association reported between threats, partner jealousy, drug use and stalking violence.
Robert, P. & Sanders, C.	Piloting PTWI- A socio-legal window on prosecutors' assessments of evidence and witness credibility Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	2010	Yes	Web of Science SCOPUS	Qualitative study researching the impact trauma can have on memory processing and verbalising- cognitive interference identified.
Schalinski, I., Schauer, M. and Elbert, T.	The shutdown dissociation scale (Shut-D). European journal of psychotraumatology	2015	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Using the evolutionary model of the defence cascade (fright, flag, faint) shut down applied to different trauma patients- prone to dissociation. Shut-D interview assessed with validity reported.
Sheridan, L., Blaauw, E. & Davies, G.	Stalking knowns & unknowns Trauma Violence and Abuse	2003	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete	Lit review

				SCOPUS	
Sheridan, L. & Davies, G.	Violence and the prior victim-stalker relationship Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health	2001	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 95 victims of stalking surveyed. 87 females. Ex-intimate partner most intrusive and aggressive. Sample taken from people who had contacted a stalking charity.
Sheridan, L., Davies, G. & Boon, J.	The course and nature of stalking: a victim perspective The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice	2001	Yes	Academic Search Complete	Quantitative study: 95 UK victims of stalking. 48% ex-intimate partners. 92% female victims. 87% stalkers were male. Links found between stalking and domestic violence.
Sheridan, L. and Roberts, K.	Key questions to consider in stalking cases. Behavioural sciences & the law	2011	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study of 1,565 victims of stalking from North America, the United Kingdom and Australia - Likelihood of aggression and violence identified. Motivation including relationship to victim discussed.
Sheridan, L. & Lyndon, A.	The influence of prior relationships, gender and fear on the consequences of stalking victimisation Sex Roles	2012	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 1214 stalking victims surveyed. 896 women, 318 men. 46.7% ex-intimate partners. 80.7% stalkers male. 60.1% female victims “very frightened”.
Spitzberg, B. & Cupach, W.	The state of the art of stalking: Taking stock of emerging literature	2007	Yes	PsycInfo Academic	Meta analysis of 175 studies on stalking

	Aggression and Violent Behaviour			Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	
Stein, M., Kennedy, C. & Twamley, E.	Neuropsychological function in female victims of intimate partner violence with and without posttraumatic stress disorder Biological Psychiatry	2002	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 39 female victims of domestic violence showed cognitive deficits- poorer working memory, executive functioning and response inhibition
Taylor-Dunn, H., Bowen, E. and Gilchrist, E.A.	Reporting harassment and stalking to the police: a qualitative study of victims' experiences. Journal of interpersonal violence,	2018	Yes	SCOPUS	Qualitative study of 35 stalking victims. Stalking behaviours and actions taken such as contacting the police investigated. Many victims felt the police did not take enough action and did not understand them or take them seriously.
Telch, M., Valentiner, D., Ilai, D., Young, P., Powers, M. & Smits, J.	Fear activation and distraction during the emotional processing of claustrophobic fear Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry	2004	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Quantitative study: 60 participants with claustrophobia fear-exposure to fear activation and distraction not associated with greater fear activation or fear reduction post treatment
Tjaden, P. & Theonnes, N.	Prevalence and consequence of male to female and female to male intimate partner	2000	Yes		Quantitative study: Telephone survey of 8000 US men and women 8% women stalked; 2% men stalked.

	violence as measured by the national violence against women survey Violence Against Women				
Toews, M.L. and Bermea, A.M.	"I was naive in thinking,'I divorced this man, he is out of my life'": A qualitative exploration of post-separation power and control tactics experienced by women. Journal of interpersonal violence	2017	Yes	PsycInfo SCOPUS	Qualitative study investigating the controlling behaviours experienced by 22 women following their divorce- Main themes identified: Using the Children; Using Threats, Harassment, and Intimidation; Emotional Abuse; Economic Abuse; "Stuff to Try to Hurt Me"; Disrupting Her Relationships With the Children; Using the System; and Physical Violence.
Tull, M., Barrett, H., McMillan, E. & Roemer, L.	A preliminary investigation of the relationship between emotional regulation difficulties and posttraumatic stress symptoms Behaviour Therapy	2007	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	108 undergraduates. PTSD found to be associated with lack of emotional acceptance, limited emotional regulation, poor decision-making skills, impulse control and emotional clarity.
Wallace, P.	How can she still love him? Domestic violence and the Stockholm Syndrome. Community Practitioner	2007	Yes	SCOPUS	Article discussing the link between domestic violence and Stockholm syndrome- the question of why women living with violence stay in the situation is explored.
Wigman, S.A., Graham-Kevan, N. and Archer, J.	Investigating sub-groups of harassers: The roles of attachment, dependency, jealousy and aggression. Journal of Family Violence	2008	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of	Quantitative study 177- 50 male, 127 female to investigate different degrees of harassment could be predicted by responses on a number of behavioural and dispositional measures. The results suggest that jealousy, dependency on the victim and attachment theory were associated with stalking

				Science SCOPUS	
Williamson, E.	Living in the world of the domestic violence perpetrator: Negotiating the unreality of coercive control Violence Against Women	2010	Yes	PsycInfo Academic Search Complete Web of Science SCOPUS	Narrative account of coercive control and domestic violence. Reduction of liberty and psychological impact of coercion/manipulation impacts the victim's sense of reality.

Appendix 2

Ethics review checklist:

ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH

ETHICS REVIEW FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

CHECKLIST **Part 1**

A checklist should be completed for every research project in order to identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

The principal investigator or, where the principal investigator is a student, the supervisor/module leader is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research. (All boxes are expandable)

Section I: Project details	
Project title:	What emotional processes occur for a female victim of stalking activities by an ex-intimate partner?
Describe the aims of your research and how you are going to manage ethical issues or concerns (in no more than 500 words) *My research will investigate the emotional world of a victim of stalking. My aim is to build upon existing knowledge of stalking victims with a more in depth, detailed investigation than has been previously researched. Ethical issues will be managed with careful preparation during recruitment and being fully aware of the risks involved.*	

Planned start date: January 2015			Planned end date: December 2016	
Funder:	Self			
Section II: Applicant details				
Applicant name:	Elspeth Cockerell			
Department:	Centre for Professional Practice			
Email: ec271@kent.ac.uk			Telephone number:07951439343	
Contact address:	Flat 10 Crow Corner Buildings, Crow Lane, Rochester, Kent. ME1 1RF			
Applicant signature:				
Section III: Students only				
Undergrad. ☐	Postgrad ☐	Masters ☐	Doctorate ☒	Other (please specify)
Supervisor / Module Convenor's name:	Dr Suzanne Martin			
Supervisor / Module Convenor's signature:				

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow, and to ensure that all researchers involved with your project follow, accepted ethical practice and appropriate professional ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. You must take all reasonable steps to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants. This includes providing participants with appropriate information sheets, ensuring informed consent and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.

If all questions in the checklist are answered as 'No', **please send the completed and signed form to The Secretary, Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee. Email: cppethics@kent.ac.uk with any further required documents, for their records.**

*If any questions in Section IV(A) are answered 'Yes', y***ou will need to consult Nicole Palmer (N.R.Palmer@kent.ac.uk), the Research Ethics and Governance Officer in Research Services. Any required forms should be completed with her guidance. You will then need to send a copy of the completed form to the Centre for Professional Practice.**

If any questions in Section IV(B) are answered 'yes', **you will need to complete the full application form and send it to the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee for review, along with a copy of the project protocol and any supporting documentation such as patient information sheets and consent forms.**

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research should be notified to the Centre for Professional Practice

Research Ethics and Governance Committee and may require a new application for ethics approval.

Part 1

(Cont'd)

Section IV: Research Checklist

Please answer all questions by ticking the appropriate box:

A) Research that may need to be reviewed by an NHS Research Ethics Committee, the Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC) or other external ethics committee (if *yes*, please give brief details as an annex)	**YES**	**NO**
Will the study involve recruitment of patients through the NHS or the use of NHS patient data?	☐	X
Will the study involve the collection of tissue samples (including blood, saliva, urine, etc.) from participants or the use of existing samples?	☐	☒
Will the study involve participants, or their data, from adult social care, including home care, or residents from a residential or nursing care home?	☐	☒
Will the study involve research participants identified because of their status as relatives or carers of past or present users of these services?	☐	☒
Does the study involve participants aged 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent? (e.g. people with learning disabilities or dementia)	☐	☒
Is the research a social care study funded by the Department of Health?	☐	☒
Is the research a health-related study involving prisoners?	☐	☒

If the answer to any questions in Section IV A is 'yes', please contact the Research Ethics & Governance Officer for further advice and assistance.

B) Research that may need full review by the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee	**YES**	**NO**
Does the research involve other vulnerable groups: children; those with cognitive impairment; or those in unequal relationships, e.g. your own students?	☐	☒
Will the study require the cooperation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. students at school; members of a self-help group?)	☐	☒
Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places?)	☐	☒
Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity; drug use; criminal activity?)	☐	☒
Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	☐	☒
Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	☒

Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	☒	☐
Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	☐	☒
Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?	☐	☒
Is there a possibility that the safety of the researcher may be in question (e.g. international research; locally employed research assistants)?	☐	☒
Does the research involve members of the public in a research capacity (participant research)?	☐	☒
Will the research take place outside the UK?	☐	☒
Will the research involve respondents to the internet or other visual/vocal methods where respondents may be identified?	☐	☒
Will research involve the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the initial consent given?	☐	☒
Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	☒
Will the proposed findings be controversial or are there any conflicts of interest?	☐	☒

FULL APPLICATION
Part 2

If any of the questions in Section IV B is answered 'yes', a full ethics application must be made to the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee. This also applies for studies not defined as 'research' in the narrow sense, i.e. evaluations/audits, etc. Complete this form and send it to the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee along **with supporting documentation: a copy of the full research proposal; any participant information sheets and consent forms; any questionnaires, interview schedules; any advertising material or proposed website wording.**

Overview
Lay summary. (Please provide a brief summary of the study)
My study will provide an in depth measure of the emotional impact of stalking on a female victim by analysing the responses to a semi structured interview.
Summary of main issues. (Please summarise the main ethical and design issues arising from the study and explain how you have addressed them)
The risk of upsetting participants will be minimised by ensuring both that they are in a stable, safe position during recruitment, and also that they understand how and where to seek support should they feel they need it at any point during or after the study. Safety risks to both participants and myself will be attended to with careful attention to data protection and confidentiality. All identifiable details of participants will be disguised and any data collected will be password protected.
What is the principal research question/objective?
What impact does stalking have on the emotional world of female victims?
What are the secondary research questions/objectives, if applicable?
What emotional patterns arise from the experience of being stalked?. How do the findings from this project compare with two popular theories on the internal world of stalking victims. Both attachment theory and feminist theory will be considered.

How has the scientific/intellectual quality of the research been assessed?	
☒ Internal review ☐ Independent external review ☐ None	Details: I presented my proposal to fellow students and lecturers at my end of year review to ensure that the project was appropriate to the requirements of doctoral level research.
If none, please provide a scientific/intellectual justification for the study.	
How have the statistical aspects of the research been reviewed (if relevant)?	
☐ Internal review ☐ Independent external review ☒ None	Details: My sample size is small because I am aiming for an in depth study.
If none, please provide a justification for the sample size (if relevant)	
Please describe the methods of analysis (statistical or other appropriate methods, e.g. for qualitative research) by which the data will be evaluated to meet the study objectives	
I will use Narrative Analysis (NA) to analyse the data collected. NA is an in depth study tool used in qualitative research to interpret a person's recollections in order to formulate an understanding of the meaning an individual has made of a particular experience. From the data I will draw themes and patterns to offer insight to my inquiry I will be verifying my coding of the interview transcripts by presenting sections of the text to the DClinsci research group (2 fellow students and 2 Supervisors). The group will then undertake coding of the text so that I can test my coding for inter-rater reliability. This will also enable me to become more alert to my natural bias in interpreting the underlying meaning of the narrative.	
Please give a full summary of your design and methodology (it should be clear exactly what will happen to the research participant, how many times and in what order)	
I will recruit 5 participants from the University of Kent using posters. All participants will sign informed consent forms. I will carry out a 1 hour semi structured interview comprising of 7 questions. Interviews will be taped. I will study the tapes and choose 3 for final analysis.	

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Risks and ethical issues
Please list the principal inclusion and exclusion criteria
Participants will be female. They will meet the classification of having been stalked as set out during the recruitment stage. They will be fluent in English.
How long will each research participant be in the study in total, from when they give informed consent until their last contact with the research team?
1 hour
What are the potential risks and burdens for research participants and how will you minimise them? (Describe any risks and burdens that could occur as a result of participation in the research, such as pain, discomfort, distress, intrusion, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle. Describe what steps would be taken to minimise risks and burdens as far as possible)
The risk of becoming upset or distressed during or after the study will be minimised during

the recruitment stage. I will ensure that participants are in an emotionally stable and safe position for the study, and alsoensure that they are aware of how to seek support or counselling should they need it. On the consent form it will be stated that should they wish to withdraw at any time, they can with no consequences. I will also state that should they become upset they can request to pause or stop the interview. *Issues of safety will be covered by ensuring participants are not currently being stalked. I will further safeguard this with anonymity and strict data protection.*
Please describe what measures you have in place in the event of any unexpected outcomes or adverse effects to participants arising from involvement in the project
If a participant becomes distressed, participants can request to pause or stop the interview.
Will interviews/questionnaires or group discussions include topics that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could occur during the study?
Yes, possibly shame or embarrassment.
If yes, please describe the procedures in place to deal with these issues
Informed consent and at the start of the interview participants will be informed that they do not have to disclose anything they don't feel comfortable with.
What is the potential benefit to research participants?
Participants will have the opportunity to share their story of being stalked.
What are the potential risks to the researchers themselves?
None as the stalking will be in the past.
Will there be any risks to the University? (Consider issues such as reputational risk; research that may give rise to contentious or controversial findings; could the funder be considered controversial or have the potential to cause reputational risk to the University?)
No
Will any intervention or procedure, which would normally be considered a party of routine care, be withheld from the research participants? (If yes, give details and justification). For example, the disturbance of a school child's day or access to their normal educational entitlement and curriculum).
No

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Recruitment and informed consent
How and by whom will potential participants, records or samples be identified?
Participants will be indentified by an allocated number.
Will this involve reviewing or screening identifiable personal information of potential participants or any other person? (If 'yes', give details)

No
Has prior consent been obtained or will it be obtained for access to identifiable personal information?
No
Will you obtain informed consent from or on behalf of research participants? (If 'yes' please give details. If you are not planning to gain consent, please explain why not).
Yes, participants will sign a document of informed consent.
Will you record informed consent in writing? (If 'no', how will it be recorded?)
Yes (as above)
How long will you allow potential participants to decide whether or not to take part?
From the time they read the poster they can decide. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time. If I receive no responses to the poster campaign I will consider new places to advertise.
What arrangements have been made for persons who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information given in English, or have special communication needs? (e.g. translation, use of interpreters?)
I will be excluding participants with special communication needs because the study requires the in depth analysis of the participants spoken narrative.
If no arrangements will be made, explain reasons (e.g. resource constraints)
Participants will be required to be fluent in English.

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Confidentiality
In this section personal data means any data relating to a participant who could potentially be identified. It includes pseudonymised data capable of being linked to a participant through a unique code number.
If you will be undertaking any of the following activities at any stage (including in the identification of potential participants) please give details and explain the safeguarding measures you will

employ

- Electronic transfer by magnetic or optical media, email or computer networks
- Sharing of personal data outside the EEA
- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers
- Publication of direct quotations from respondents
- Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals
- Use of audio/visual recording devices
- Storage of personal data on any of the following:
  - Manual files
  - University computers
  - Home or other personal computers
  - Private company computers
  - Laptop computers

All identifiable information about participants will be removed and their identity will be disguised using an allocated number.

Audio recordings and transcripts will be password protected.

How will you ensure the confidentiality of personal data? (e.g. anonymisation or pseudonymisation of data)

No personal information will be allowed into the public domain. All information will be anonymised.

Who will have access to participants' personal data during the study?

I will have access along with my supervisor and two members of my study group.

How long will personal data be stored or accessed after the study has ended? (If longer than 12 months, please justify)

All data will be destroyed once the study ends.

Please note: as best practice, and as a requirement of many funders, where practical, researchers must develop a data management and sharing plan to enable the data to be made available for re-use, e.g. for secondary research, and so sufficient metadata must be conserved to enable this while maintaining confidentiality commitments and the security of data.

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Incentives and payments
Will research participants receive any payments, reimbursement of expenses or any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research? (If 'yes', please give details)
No
Will individual researchers receive any personal payment over and above normal salary, or any other benefits or incentives, for taking part in this research? (If 'yes', please give details)
No
Does the Chief Investigator or any other investigator/collaborator have any direct personal involvement (e.g. financial, shareholding, personal relationship, etc.) in the organisations sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest? (If 'yes', please give details)
No

Publication and dissemination
How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? If you do not plan to report or disseminate the results please give your justification.
It is for my doctorate so I plan to publish a research article in a relevant peer reviewed journal.
Will you inform participants of the results? (Please give details of how you will inform participants or justify if not doing so)
A summary of the results will be available to participants if they request it. (This will be explained to participants in the consent form.)

Management of the research
Other key investigators/collaborators. (Please include all grant co-applicants, protocol authors and other key members of the Chief Investigator's team, including non-doctoral student researchers)
NONE
Has this or a similar application been previously rejected by a research Ethics Committee in the UK or another country? (If yes, please give details of rejected application and explain in the summary of main issues how the reasons for the unfavourable opinion have been addressed in this application)
No
How long do you expect the study to last?

• Planned start date: *Jan 2015*	• Planned end date: *Dec 2016*	• Total duration*: 2 years*

Where will the research take place?
The University of Kent

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Insurance/indemnity
Does UoK's insurer need to be notified about your project before insurance cover can be provided? *The majority of research carried out at UoK is covered automatically by existing policies, however, if your project entails more than usual risk or involves an overseas country in the developing world or where there is or has recently been conflict, please check with the Insurance Office that cover can be provided. Please give details below.*
No

Children
Do you plan to include any participants who are children under 16? (If no, go to next section)
No
Please specify the potential age range of children under 16 who will be included and give reasons for carrying out the research with this age group
Please describe the arrangements for seeking informed consent from a person with parental responsibility and/or from children able to give consent for themselves
If you intend to provide children under 16 with information about the research and seek their consent or agreement, please outline how this process will vary according to their age and

Participants unable to consent for themselves	
Do you plan to include any participants who are adults unable to consent for themselves through physical or mental incapacity? (If yes, the research must be reviewed by an NHS REC or SCREC)	
No	
Is the research related to the 'impairing condition' that causes the lack of capacity, or to the treatment of those with that condition?	
☐ Yes	If 'yes' proceed to next question
☒ No	If 'no' the study should proceed without involving those who do not have the capacity to consent to participation
Could the research be undertaken as effectively with people who do have the capacity to consent to participate?	
☒ Yes	If 'yes' then the study should exclude those without the capacity to consent to

	participation
☐ No	If 'no' then the inclusion of people without capacity in the study can be justified
Is it possible that the capacity of participants could fluctuate during the research? (If yes, the research must be reviewed by an NHS REC or SCREC)	
No	
Who inside or outside the research team will decide whether or not the participants have the capacity to give consent? What training/experience will they have to enable them to reach this decision?	
N/A	
What will be the criteria for withdrawal of participants?	
Any participants can withdraw at any point either verbally or in writing.	

Part 2

(Cont'd)

Declaration	
To be signed by the Chief Investigator • I agree to comply, and will ensure that all researchers involved with the study comply with all relevant legislation, accepted ethical practice, University of Kent policies and appropriate professional ethical guidelines during the conduct of this research project • If any significant changes are made to the design of the research I will notify the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee and understand that further review may be required before I can proceed to implement the change(s) • I agree that I will notify the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee of any unexpected adverse events that may occur during my research • I agree to notify the Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee of any complaints I receive in connection with this research project	
Signed: Elspeth Cockerell	Date: 04/11/2014

What to do next
Send your completed form, along with all supporting documentation, to The Secretary, Centre for Professional Practice Research Ethics and Governance Committee. Email: cppethics@kent.ac.uk

Checklist	

Please ensure you have included the following with your application:	
• Participant information sheet	☐
• Consent form	☐
• Covering letter (if relevant)	☐
• Any questionnaires/interview schedules/topic guides to be used	☐
• Any approved instruments/measures to be used	☐
• Any advertising material to be used to recruit participants	☐
• Confirmation that project is covered by UoK insurance policies (if necessary)	☐
• You have permission from your organization to proceed	☐
• You have gatekeeper approval for use of data bases (if necessary)	☐

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Appendix 3

Ethics Approval

First name	Surname	Student no	Student email	Research proposal subject	Further notes	Supervisor
Elspeth	Cockerell	09900203	ec271	What emotional processes occur for a female victim of stalking activities by an exintimate partner?		Dr Suzanne Martin

Ethics approval granted: Yes

Additional action is to be taken: Please get in touch with Centre Administration Manager (cppcam@kent.ac.uk) if you have any questions regarding this.

Key points for student:	Key points for supervisor:
N/A	N/A

Signed by Chair		9 February 2014

Dr Terence Nice		

Appendix 4

Recruitment poster

Have you experienced stalking?

Have you experienced repeated intrusive behaviours from an ex-partner that have made you feel harassed, threatened or afraid?

Female participants needed for a study into the impact of stalking

What is the goal of the study?

To create new knowledge about the emotional impact of stalking that will be used to further current research into the consequences on victims of harassment.

In the past have you experienced one or more of the following for 4 weeks or more?

- Following you and showing up wherever you are.
- Repeatedly sending letters, texts, phone calls, emails and unwanted gifts.
- Repeatedly asking you out or approaching you
- Causing damage to your home, car, or other property.
- Monitoring your phone calls or computer use.
- Driving by or walking around your home, work or places in the university you visit.
- Threatening to hurt you, your family or friends.
- Finding out about you by using public records or on-line search services, going through your belongings, or contacting your friends, family, neighbours, or co-workers.

What is involved in the study?

The study involves taking part in a 1-hour interview in a confidential location at the university. All information provided will be strictly confidential and all personal details disguised for the study. Stalking must be a historic event, if you feel you are currently being stalked you are advised to contact the police.

For more information and to participate please email: ec271@kent.ac.uk

Appendix 5

Recruitment email response

I am conducting a study for my DClinSCi In Psychotherapy looking into the impact of stalking on women. If you, or anybody you know has been stalked in the past (not at present), this would be a great opportunity to contribute to vital research in the field. All information gathered will be strictly confidential and interviews will be held in a secure location.

Please email me at ec271@kent.ac.uk for more information if you are interested.

Appendix 6

Consent form

Participant Consent Form

Purpose

The purpose of my study is to analyse the emotional process a victim of stalking goes through while being stalked by a former romantic partner.

Procedure

If you agree to this study you will

1. Take part in a semi-structured interview and talk about your experiences of being stalked.
2. The interview will be recorded. Recordings will be password protected and only accessed by myself and my research team.
3. The interview will take up to 1 hour.

Benefits/Risks

Participants are offered the chance to share their experiences of being stalked.

If you feel you are in any danger at any point, or are concerned about any criminal activities you may have experienced, you are aware of how to contact the police. (E.g. Dial 999)

If you feel disturbed or upset after the study and wish to seek support, please be aware that the Wellbeing Service in the University of Kent can provide you with counselling, or you can visit your G.P.

Rights to Withdraw

You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study with no consequences. If you become upset during the interview and wish it to pause or stop completely, you can ask to do so.

Confidentiality

The data we collect will be password protected and all personal details will be disguised. Instead of your name, you will be assigned a participant number. All data will be destroyed once the study has ended.

Participants can request a summary of results after the study has ended by emailing ec271@kent.ac.uk

By signing below you are agreeing that (1) you have read and understood the consent form, (2) questions about your participation have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of any potential risks, (4) you are taking part in this study voluntarily, and (5) you agree for the interview to be recorded.

Participant's Name (Printed)

Participant's signature

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)

Signature of person obtaining content Date

Appendix 7

Interview Questions:

1. How did the stalking behaviours begin?
2. How did they manifest themselves?
3. What actions did you take to stop the stalking behaviours?
4. What were your thoughts or feelings surrounding the consequences of these actions?
5. What did you think your ex-partner was doing/why was it happening?
6. How did you think it would end?
7. What are your thoughts or feelings surrounding your ex-partner?

Appendix 8

Sample Transcript

Participant 4: Rachel

All names have been replaced by pseudonyms, which are Rachel (participant) and Dan (stalker)

I= Interviewer

R= Rachel (participant)

D = Stalker (Dan)

1 R: It's all kind of... convoluted and like everything happened so and so I've never told someone that I wasn't really close to at the time so it's just kind bear that in mind my mind

2 I: Yeah, that's absolutely fine

2 R: um it's like, I was fifteen and he was seventeen and... erm... so it started like he wasn't at the same school as me or anything erm, I liked him and he was a friend of my friend, and I knew that he liked my friend and erm... so...because I'm a really nice person I decided that erm I would try and get them together and then she said that she wasn't interested... so I perceived that as nothing was happening and so when we started being more than friends I it didn't seem like anything um...so we were... we were never like officially together as you know, as teenagers

3 I: Yeah

3 R: but like we behaved like we were so we were together basically. Erm and then... during the relationship he would he pressured me into stuff that I didn't want to do, which has obviously affected me negatively

4 I: Mmm

4 R: so I don't know how like entwined that is with the stalking stuff erm...

5 I: Does it feel entwined to you?

5 R: Yeah I think so... like I, I'm not sure if I can separate the things that he did and then separate the effects of how like my emotions are now about the whole thing, erm... then when erm... so basically it ended because I discovered that he was also seeing my friend... and this wasn't something that I'd said was ok or anything like that

6 I: Mmm

6 R: and she didn't know either so when we were, so we both decided that because we both knew each other liked him that we were gonna admit to each other around the same time that we were seeing him, and when we did, it was like, "oh shit", so... we both broke it off with him and then from there that was when he started to try to get in contact with us in ways that we didn't want him to... he was doing the same things to me as he was to her

7 I: Right

7 R: in that he would at first it was like ok I want to still be friends with you even though you've done me wrong

8 I: Mmm

8 R: so I would reply to him and I would text him, then I realised because I still cared about him it was affecting me negatively and I just wanted to break off contact so I could get over him. Erm, so I stopped talking to him and he would text or call or show up at her house and then she realised that it was... affecting her badly however so she stopped contact so he came back to me.

9 I: Right

9 R: and it went in cycles of it was texting and calling and he showed up at my house a lot and...and it was literally like bouncing from one to the other

10I: Between you and your friend

10R: Yeah. And because sometimes he would treat me as though we were still together as well... and obviously I hadn't, I didn't want that any more cause I broke it off

11I: Mmm

11R: Erm... and so like there were times when he would just keep texting me and I would try sometimes I'd try to ignore it and sometimes I would tell him to leave me alone. Sometimes I 'd swear at him.

12I: Did any of it work?

12R: No.

13I: Did it, like, it didn't matter which one you tried?

13R: Yeah, it was like sometimes he would stop for a little bit, like maybe half an hour, maybe half a day, and then he would start again and then there were times when it would stop for like a week or two weeks which I now know was when he was doing the same thing to her

14I: Mmhmm

14R: so at those points it was like, has he stopped?

15I: Mmm

15R: or is he gonna do it again? And it was all like, it just, it just made me all, like, my back was up the whole time, erm, I didn't know what was gonna happen and, erm, because he lived really near the school that I was at as well when I as at school I just couldn't settle, I couldn't be comfortable

16I: Mmm

16R: erm I was always worried he was just gonna show up and... also because he wouldn't leave me alone it meant that I couldn't get over him

17I: Mmhmm

17R: so and I hated that I still cared about him, just the whole time it was just like I hate you, but I love you, leave me alone!

18I: Mmm

18R: so I can deal with this. And.. erm he started to... people that we were both friends with or the people that he and me and my friend were friends with, he would start to bother them. Erm, or people that I knew that he was friends with, or, like, one of the worst times was the night where he told his friend to tell me that he was coming to my house and the friend told me what he said was cause I never heard this from the boyfriend, but the friend said er "Dan's coming to your house and if you won't see him and if you won't get back together with him he's gonna kill himself". And the friend said erm "he's waiting at"- there was like a, like a children's play park near my house, and he said, "erm he's waiting there and if you don't go tonight then he's gonna kill himself". Erm kind of telling the story out of order now (laughs) I just realised

19 I: That's ok, as you remember it really

19 R: erm... and yeah that I was terrified because I believed that he would

20I: Mmhmm

20R: and... so I went to speak to my parents and they were like, just-just go to bed he's not going to do anything, but I genuinely believed that he was gonna kill himself

21I: Mmm

21R: so eventually I got my parents to go down to the park with him-with me

22I: Mmhmm

22R: my brother must have been in bed and they walked down to the park and I couldn't- I couldn't let go of my mum, I was terrified, um we were walking around the park in the dark looking for him calling his name and he wasn't there and eventually, must have spent like half an hour in the park and it's not a very big park

23I: Mmm

23R: we were just looking for him and we couldn't find him so we went home and... I was still freaking out, erm my dad called- my dad... I gave my dad his number cause I still had it on my phone so that I wouldn't answer then I, the calls so my dad phoned his mobile and he didn't' answer so my dad phoned his home phone erm and spoke to his mum and his mum said, "oh he's just he's smoking on the back porch" and...

24I: What did you make of that?

24 R: ...I believe he was down there...I don't think he m-deliberately lied, erm... but I think... I mean, when we get to the end of the story, erm, so like, there was there was another time when he...this is why I believed that he would kill himself,

25 I: Mmhmm

25 R: was because erm it was maybe a week or two after we broke up and he'd been trying to get back with her and then he came to my house, was the first time he came to my house and he came over and I still thought maybe we could be friends

26 I: Mmm

26 R: so he came in, he came into my room- my room is, I would consider it my sanctuary it's the place where I can feel safe all the time and he didn't make it feel safe... and it was probably maybe the first or second time it's ever not felt safe

27 I: Mmm

27 R: so just him being in there we were talking in kind of a friendly way but kind of like a dating way

28 I: Mmm

28 R: and like the lines were blurred in the way we were behaving and he and then when he sat down on my bed he deliberately took his jacket off and I know that it was deliberate because what he'd done was all up his forearms from his elbow to his wrist both sides he taken a knife and gone, like (slashing motions)

29 I: Right

29 R: and I know that he took his jacket off deliberately because if you didn't' want someone to see you would leave it on

30 I: oh right?

30 R: so he was I think he was trying to make me feel guilty and to make me feel like it was my fault and for just to manipulate, like to pull my heart strings and see a. whether I still cared about him, and b. to kind of, I guess make me still care about him and

31 I: ok

31 R: well cause I already... cause the whole time we were together I was like trying to make sure he was happy and everything anyway so it it defin-I already felt like that and it just seeing it horrified me

32 I: Mmm

32 R: and it just even the memory just chills me

33 I: Mmm

33 R: and like I told- I told him not to do it but obviously that's not gonna stop him doing whatever he wants to do to his body and I told him it upset me and everything and he put the jacket back on and then erm we were talking and we decided to go for a walk so we went for a walk and we were holding hands while we were walking and then he decided he was gonna ask me to help him get back with my friend... which was like, ok so you've done all this you've been really affectionate, you held my hand, you even kissed me and now you're gonna say help me get with the person that you cheated on me with. What are you even thinking?

34 I: So do you have any idea what he was thinking?

34 R: I just ultimately I think he just didn't understand like I know he had a slightly disordered upbringing anyway erm and it was like he thought that it was legitimate request and he wasn't really thinking about the idea that it might hurt me

35 I: Mmm

35 R: in some way so basically he was an idiot (laughs)

36 I: I see

36 R: erm, but I was an idiot too because I said I would see how she felt and maybe er talk to her so like that shows how obsessed I was with him at the time, erm, yeah, so there was … there were a few like big things that stick in my mind like these and then … erm, so there was a night when, um, I wasn't there, I just heard about it erm, yeah, in relation to the one before, erm, like a few days later some- one of his friends posted on Facebook a picture of his bedroom wall and it had her name painted on his bedroom wall in his blood

37 I. Right

37 R. and his friend tagged me in it and the comments were like, "this is what you did" and "look at what you've done" and "this is all your fault" and it wasn't my fault it just made me feel horrendous, like it was my fault he was trying to kill himself or harm himself

38 I. Mmm so other people were involved as well a bit there

38 R. yeah but I don't, he's really, like, I think it was the friend that posted it, his friend but it could have just as easily have been him or his friends, but like, I'm pretty sure it was the friend because the friend was also a little bit fucked up

39 I. Mmm

39 R. So… I don't really know about that, it was the same friend who told me that he was gonna kill himself

40 I. Mmhmm

40 R. and then there was another night when I wasn't there, but my friend was, er, the one that he cheated on me with

41 I. Mmhmm

41 R. -----, she was there and what they used to do, er, as like a group was go down to one of the parks, erm, and they would play hide and seek in the dark, like in the trees and stuff. So they were playing that and, erm, he was that night he did things like run through the trees yelling and like in a way that was that he wasn't doing it deliberately, in a way that his mind wasn't quite there

42 I: Right

42 R: and then he went missing for about an hour and people were freaking out because they believed that he would harm himself too

43 I: Mmhmm

43 I: Erm... and he... yeah he disappeared and he wouldn't' answer or anything like that and everyone was freaking out and then he showed up randomly like it was nothing and everyone was like, "what happened? What just gone on?" he wouldn't or couldn't say

44 I: What did you make of that?

44 R: and it just kind of, it was a little bit freaky

45 I: Mmm

45 R: because of what I, everything else I knew about him

46 I: Mmm

46 R: I didn't know like whether he'd, I didn't know where he'd gone or what he would have been doing

47 I: Mmm

47 R: he could have been doing anything um and at this point I believed that he could harm other people as well because when we were together I knew that he carries a knife which freaked me out

48 I: Mmhmm

48 R: and I think deep down I didn't feel safe or I tried to push it away and like make it not a big deal but I definitely didn't like it and when um we were walking through town um one day we passed someone that he used to know called ----- and um in the past with this guy he'd he'd had a falling out because Dan was attracted to a girl that ----- was also attracted to

49 I: Right

49 R: the girl really liked ----- and had no interest in Dan so when she told Dan no, Dan developed a hate for ----- and that's a re-it's obviously a really simplified think of what happened

50 I: Mmm

50 R: but it was before I knew him when I didn't know, I don't know really, exactly what happened but the gist of it was that, what I got from it was that he was irrationally and un- what's the word, un-justifiably felt wrong by it

51 I: Right

51 R: so he hated -----

52 I: Mmm

52 R: and when he saw ----- this day he said that if I hadn't been there he probably would have stabbed him and when we were together I completely pushed this memory out of my head, I just forgot about it, because it was just too, too scary

53 I: Mmm

53 R: to think about so... but afterwards like the more that happened the more it came to mind

54 I: Mmhmm

54 R: and then... so after secondary school erm, cause that was in year eleven and then I went to sixth form, no that was in year te-year ten... yeah, that was year ten and then I went to year eleven and in year eleven I actually met ----- properly and I started going out with him

55 I: Right

55 R: which Dan did not like

56 I: Mmm

56 R: and I found out that he actually threatened to kill ----- to his face and that was obviously rather scary as well

57 I: Mmhmm

57 R: to think that his targeting of me would lead to targeting ---- or

58 I: he was involving other people

58 R: any other friends, and erm he would do things like show up and my house randomly erm when we were together we talked about him teaching me to play the guitar

59 I: Mmhmm

59 R: so he decided he was going to leave his guitar in my front garden for me as though it was a welcome gift. It was not a welcome gift. Erm, and then so that night cane it was night time, he texted me saying "look outside" which obviously freaked me out cause I thought he was outside and then when I went out it was just this guitar like there

60 I: What did you make of that?

60 R: It's like, is he tr-I don't know, is he trying to win me back?

61 I: Mmhmm

61 R: or was he trying to apologise or was he just being really weird and thinking it was an acceptable gift, I don't know

62 I: Was it while you were very definitely not together (indecipherable)

62 R: Yeah, this was before the suicide night but after the cutting thing

63 I: Mmm

63 R: and, and he'd already been showing up randomly at my home anyway and having chats to my parents which I didn't know about at the time but like a few months later, or maybe a year later they told me that he'd been coming round, um, so like there was one day that I came round and he was still there casually having a cigarette with my mum

64 I: In your house?

64 R: In my house. Sat at my d-dining room table having a cigarette, so the fact that he was smoking with my mum and wouldn't leave my mum alone

65 I: Mmm

65 R: so the night he left his guitar I decided, cause my dad used to sit in the garage that night so I decided to take the guitar in to the garage and like tell him what had happened. And when I opened the door my dad was sat on the sofa in the garage and Dan was next to him

66 I: Mmhmm

66 R: and it's just...it was like whatever happened he just he wouldn't' leave me alone

67 I: And he was getting in with your family a little bit as well

67 R: Yeah and it wasn't even, at the time it felt like he was making friends with my parents, not that he was threatening them, which was more threatening than the idea that he might hurt them because I thought they could look after themselves, but I

68 I: Mmm

68 R: the idea that he might bring them over to his side was worse than the idea that he might hurt them

69 I: Right

69 R: (sighs) and there was even times when my parents might try to take me out to, like, a different city or something to distract me from it, and he would still call

erm like, I'd stopped answering his, his phone calls when I knew it was him but he phoned on the home phone and I didn't know who it might be so I answered it

70 I: Mmhmm

70 R: and it was him and (sighs) it was just like I couldn't escape wherever I went he was following me and he would always be there

71 I: And where did that leave you?

71 R: What do you mean?

72 I: meaning like, if he was always there, always calling you wherever you went, what kind of position did that leave you in, like did you feel quite trapped, or...

72 R: Yeah. It was like, it didn't matter what I did and whatever choices I made he was always gonna be there to kind of... I guess negate it. Like, because he'd already it was also like compounded on the whole like he pressured me into letting him touch me sexually

73 I: Mmhmm

73 R: and it was... like he was always gonna be making choices for me deciding whether I got to see him or speak to him or not

74 I: Mmhmm

74 R: And... he was always gonna be, like... like he was always present whether he was in the room or not like I could feel him

75 I: Mmhmm

75 R: and just, oh, and I can feel it now just talking

76 I: Mmm

76 R: about it, it's... and like, even if it's...six years ago, it still feels like it's always gonna affect me in some way

77 I: Mmhmm

77 R: and it's just not fair

78 I: Mmm so the aftermath of it afterwards it's really left you with something as well

78 R: And...like even now there are places in ----- where I'm from where I can't go

79 I: Mmm

79 R: because when I go there I just, all I see is him there and things we did there and just feel his presence there

80 I: Mmm

80 R: It's j-like even going to visit my old school, it's like, even though I know he's moved out and he doesn't live there any more it still doesn't' feel like he's gonna, it still feels like he might just randomly show up

81 I: It still feels quite kind of um like unknown

81 R: Yeah. Like and I recently found out that he's changed his name on Facebook which meant, it means that he's...he's there but I don't know where and the un-knowing is worse

82 I: Mmm

82 R: like, if I know that he was walking, like, if I knew that he was in the room next door I would feel better about

83 I: Yeah

83 R: him being there than the possibility that he might be aimlessly walking around campus... um... so at, after about ten months

84 I: Mmhmm

84 R: he wrote me a letter in a big like an A4 brown envelope and it was just a flat A4 page in this envelope and then next to the A4 page was a smaller, like a business envelope, a white business envelope, erm and I can still remember the way he wrote my name on the envelope, and I read the letter and the letter was like, erm... it said things like, "you may not believe it but that summer that we spent together was the best summer of my life" and "we've both seen each other in good lights and bad lights and we, we both need to admit that nei- that we were both at fault in what happened between us" and things like, like implying that it was both our faults that we stopped being together and things like that

85 I: Mmm

85 R: and... and at the bottom it said something like erm, "I just wanted you to know that I love you" or "I loved you". I can't remember if it was past or present and the last line said, "if you don't believe me look in the envelope" meaning the little white business envelope

86 I: Mmhmm

86 R: erm which I guess was his way of like, testing me or something, I don't know and... so I opened the envelope and inside was a fucking ring, s'like A. I don't wear jewellery, or I didn't wear jewellery at the time.

87 I: Mmhmm

87 R: erm, and B. Why does he thing that's proof of anything

88 I: Mmm

88 R: and C. Why does he think that that's acceptable and also it didn't even fit which was kind of funny

89 I: What did you make of the letter? It sounds like he was making it quite a joint responsibility

89 R: Well that pissed me off apart from anything else, it really upset me because I know that, I know that I'm not prefect... but I don't think I did anything to t- I definitely didn't do anything to deserve the way he treated me

90 I: Mmm

90 R: and I know that when we were together I pushed away any signs that he may have been seeing ----- at the same time but I don't think that means that he was right to see her

91 I: Mmm

91 R: at the same time... like I know that I kind of brushed things off and ignored it, but that doesn't make it right

92 I: Mmm

92 R: and it doesn't make it my fault so he shouldn't have been trying to put the blame on me... and... and part of affirming... even thought I still didn't want him to, it was like... I was still caught up in him and it didn't matter how along it was I'd always still be caught up in him and in some ways it's true because of how everything just, it clings so there's like some part of me or some part of my heart that's attached to him whether I Want it to be or not, just because of how long it went on and everything I felt at the time... and it's just, yeah, eurgh... and then maybe a month later when I was in the middle of my year 11 exams which at the time were pretty important

93 I: Mmhmm

93 R: and he knew it was exam period, he knew it, which pisses me off, he wrote me a Facebook message to say literally just "I'm really sorry, I didn't want to have to do this but can I have the ring back"... I don't even und-like I don't know why and part of me really wants to know why, just like was he trying to pawn it or... was, did he want to give it to someone else?

94 I: Mmhmm

94 R: or like was it ------‘s turn with the ring, I don’t know, do we need to set up custody for this ring?

95 I: Did you give it back in the end?

95 R: Yeah...I really wish I’d just been like, “well fuck you, I threw it away”

96 I: Mmm

96 R: but I didn’t, I kept it, of course I kept it, and the letter and I knew exactly where it was

97 I: Mmhmm

97 R: erm...so what I did was I wrote him a letter and I typed it up so I didn’t want it to seem personal, I wanted it to be more cold

98 I: Mmm

98 R: so I typed it up and said things like, “you’ve tormented me for so long and it’s time that you left me alone” erm, “so this is the last time you will hear from me and I expect to never hear from you again”... and then I didn’t sign it I didn’t put his name on it, but I expected him to know it was from me because I put the ring in the envelope

99 I: Mmhmm

99 R: and I put it through his door and I had, I had a friend go with me because I did not want to be there on my own

100 I: Yeah

100 R: erm and that, I did that after my last exam, I remember it quite vividly... and tha-that’s the most horrible thing like when you can remember stuff like that so vividly

101 I: Mmhmm

101 R: even after this amount of time it’s just

102 I: it’s very clear for you

102 R: Yeah, and and then but after that it was kind of like (exhales) I’m gonna drop everything of this episode, that’s what it felt like after we put it in there and walked away and we sat in a park on, on some grass or something (indecipherable) sorry- and we just chatted and had food and we ate loads of junk and it was great- me and this friend, and then... except he couldn’t let me have the last word and he wasn’t about to let me control the situation

103 I: Yeah

103 R: so he went to my house and...erm... when I got home because I told my parents that I wasn't in contact with him any more er and I hadn't been for a few months at least and each thing each contact had been a few months apart by that point like two months or something erm... so my parents were really confused so when I got home my dad was like, "have you been in contact with Dan?" and I told him, "no", he said, "cause he came round and showed me a letter that you wrote him, but he said he wasn't sure if it was you and he just wanted to check", but he obviously knew it was me unless he gave the exact same ring to somebody else and asked exact same thing for it back

104 I: So what did you think he was up to?

104 R: So I just think it was a control thing, like he didn't wanna let me ha-control when the last word was and it was gonna be on his terms, because for some reason he couldn't let me be strong

105 I: Mmm

105 R: and that's all I wanted was control over the situation and my life, and I wanted to control the ending and I couldn't

106 I: Mmhmm

106 R: and... it frustrated me as well that he came round and showed it to my parents because it was a very private letter and I didn't necessarily want them reading it... and... it was just taking all control over me as though A. I wasn't allowed to be in control of the situation but and B. I wasn't even autonomous because my parents were in control of me... and I know I was 16 and I was still legally a child but I was autonomous in that I could take actions for myself and I could write someone a letter without needing to be like, "mummy, please"

107 I: Mmm

107 R: "can I write him a letter telling him to fuck off"... so I was like... what am I? Is it because I'm a woman or is it because I'm younger than you or is it just because you've hounded me all this time, you've pushed me into a box where you think I'm less than you or less than everyone else in the world... like, I don't know, but it just (sighs) wasn't fair, it wasn't right

108 I: Sounds like it left you quite, kind of, I don't know if confused is the right word, but without the answers that you wanted

108 R: Yeah... all I wanted I guess was to be able to put a stop to it and then that was the last time that I directly heard from him. But it didn't even leave me then because like, two years later, er... two?... yeah, so a year later I was seeing somebody that had a friends at his course and she became my friend when he-the new boyfriend broke up with me and... we're still best friends, so we're still

really close and we've always because she was, because like that was right at the end of... erm, that was right at the end of... it was at sixth- at the end of GCSE that the new boyfriend broke up with me, so he was, I was with him throughout a lot of the stalking... and... so then at that point so many friends were going off to different places that I was kind of alone, especially after- go away (she presses a button on her phone then laughs) especially after he broke up with me as well

109 I: Mmhmm

109 R: so kind of, we became really close, me and ----- and we ba-we were best friends from basically from the get go and erm but about a year or two after that she met Dan completely independently of me and... this must have been just as I started university because I came home and she was seeing him

110 I: Right

110 R: and it was like, even when he's not even trying he just won't leave me alone

111 I: Do you think that that was an accident or do you think there's something more there?

111 R: Well, that's the weird thing about it, I think it was an accident that we were friends, but it was deliberate in that he said that ----- reminded him of someone he used to date... but I don't think it was me, I think it was ----- cause I think that he only liked me because I reminded him of ----- so the fact that he was still trying to find people to replace -----

112 I: Mmm

112 R: because she didn't want him either

113 I: Mmm

113 R: it was like... he just couldn't let it drop at all, either of it, any of it, and... he was, so he was seeing her, and she lived two streets away from me and he moved in which meant that he was right there all the time and I didn't want to go home because I didn't know whether he was gonna be there or not

114 I: Mmm

114 R: it was horrible and it made my home not feel safe anymore and the fact that it was, you have to pass par- you have to walk past the park

115 I: Mmhmm

115 R: that I went to on the night that he supposedly was going to kill himself in order to get to her house so it just brought everything back and it was like I'm never gonna be able to forget this and... they were together for quite a while but

towards the end he started to be quite abusive to her in like a ru-in a subtle way until the point that he actually hit her

116 I: Right

116 R: and she, because we were so close, she knew everything he'd done to me but she, because she liked him, she was pushing it t-to the side in the exact same way I pushed

117 I: Mmhmm

117 R: everything else to the side

118 I: Must have been quite difficult for you to watch

118 R: (nods) and it was like, I wanted to go to all her birthday events and everything, erm, when I didn't want to go because I knew he was gonna be there and I knew the whole time I wouldn't feel safe

119 I: Mmhmm

119 R: Um and I went and I didn't feel safe and so much of the time she was like, "why can't you just move on from it and accept that Dan wants to be your friend now or just try to be around him" and she either didn't understand or she was pretending that it didn't exist anymore that it could just be like a closed book now like you could just put it in a box and put it away but you can't like it sticks with you

120 I: Mmm

120 R: and... so she didn't get it and he was being more and more like making her always need to be around him and... it was, like I could see it because she would tell me when they had arguments or tell me what was happening or if she didn't come to meet me, then it was because she was seeing him

121 I: Mmhmm

121 R: every time and I could see what was happening because I've read about abuse and I was outside the situation but if I told her like that shouldn't happen, things like this shouldn't happen she... she wasn't defensive in a kind of aggressive way like she didn't blame me but she just- she said that I had the wrong end of the stick basically like I didn't know what was actually happening

122 I: Right

122 R: and...like I could just see more and more what was happening to her and I didn't, I saw her less as well because I didn't want to be around him and she didn't wanna not be around him and he was obviously living with her and then.... there was a day when they had a massive argument and he just hit her and

even then when she told me what happened and she was crying her eyes out and on Facebook or msn or whatever it was at the time telling me what had happened and I told her, “that’s not ok”

123 I: Mmm

123 R: “no-one should hit you and get away with it” and she still forgave him and... it was like even when he’s not directly affecting me and I’m not seeing him he’s still having a-an effect on me because he’s hurting the people that I care about and it’s not even aimed at me any more

124 I: It’s kind of extending out to you anyway

124 R: Yeah because I know what he’s like and I can see what he’s doing, I just, I felt like... I don’t know, maybe I should have warned her better but how could I know that she was gonna go and... want to be with him

125 I: Mmm

125 R: and...

126 I: You feel quite responsible in a (indecipherable) way

126 R: Yeah and like because she was my friend and so I wanted to help her get out of that situation. And I couldn’t even go near him

127 I: Mmm

127 R: without freaking out...so...like I didn’t know what to do and eventually she...kind of I guess took my advice and stopped seeing him but (indecipherable) it was facilitated by the fact that she went away to university and moved away

128 I: Mmhmm

128 R: um bit he was still living in her house with her mum and... I didn’t know whether he was or not, like I knew that he was and then after a little while I didn’t know whether he still was and...sh-they weren’t together any more but they were still friends, it’s like, I could see that he was still impacting her life

129 I: Mmm

129 R: which reminded me of how he wouldn’t let me go and so he wouldn’t also also wouldn’t let her go

130 I: Mmhmm

130 R: and... it's just... I don't know... part of me feels like he should be somewhere where he can't have girlfriends so that he can't do this to people cause he's done it to at least three people now

131 I: It sounds like you witnessed a lot, and not just with you

131 R: It's like he's a serial dickbag and just... there comes a point, like once, you can...when he's a teenager and he maybe has, like I know that he's also not mentally, I don't want to say abnormal but he is mentally abnormal

132 I: Mmm

132 R: so like maybe it was just he didn't understand which is how it felt at the time

133 I: Mmhmm

133 R: um... but when you do it three times either you have something severely wrong with you or you're doing it deliberately

134 I: Mmm

134 R: and... it was while that he was with ----- that she told me that he'd been diagnosed with multiple personality disorder which explained things like him disappearing while they were all in the park

135 I: Mmm

135 R: and then not remembering it and him saying he was gonna kill himself or going down to the- my park and then completely not being there and being completely fine

136 I: Mmhmm

136 R: three hours later...and... we-we found out that his mum had always known and had never got him a diagnosis and she kind of, she tried to push him into a mould of a normal kid which I guess repressed it this all this shit happened

137 I: He tried having relationships

137 R: Yeah and it just exploded out in a really harmful way to him and others

138 I: Mmhmm

138 R: Um but when I found that out I also found out that he blamed me... he said that he thought I caused it

139 I: His, um

139 R: His multiple personality disorder

140 I: Right

140 R: Which I don’t believe it possible apart from anything I believe that's something that there’s a pre-disposition for at least

141 I: Mmm

141 R: and he already always had it he just hadn’t-it hadn’t manifested yet which... by that point I was just furious at him for still being in my life

142 I: Mmhmm

142 R: so that just made me so angry that he could dane to blame it on me. Like, I didn’t do it, you did all of the things, everything that happened was your doing

143 I: Mmhmm

143 R: so whether you think it was all of the things that happened with us or not it’s still not my fault

144 I: Mmm

144 R: and you can’t make me take the blame when you took all the control... and... ahhh just...it makes me so angry (laughs)

145 I: I can see that. And where do you think that it left you, I know we talked about it a little bit, but afterwards, what you’ve been left with, where do you think it’s left you

145 R: Well when... when they broke up and after they, after the feeling of not knowing whether he was still living there

146 I: Mmhmm

146 R: there was still all the insecurity about whether, where he was

147 I: So you didn’t know when he was going to pop up or where from

147 R: I still feel like that

148 I: Yeah

148 R: like there was a-a long time where I thought maybe he’d somehow managed to get himself killed but I didn’t know like it was just a possibility there’s even still like a tiny bit of caring about him because I don’t want him to go and off himself

149 I: Mmm

149 R: or somehow get into a fight that he can't win, but there's also kind of I feel really guilty about it but part of me feels like... if he died I would have relief because he could never ever bother me again... um, but like after a while it was pretty clear that he wasn't gonna seek me out

150 I: Mmm

150 R: because I hadn't heard from him or heard about him for a long time and then he showed up on Facebook again tlaking to the people that I know so he was in my feed purely because we had mutual friends

151 I: Right, was that quite recent, or

151 R: Yeah like a few months ago, and it's, I was able to forget about him for a long time just by thinking maybe he moved away, that would have been really nice like if he'd moved to a different country

152 I: Mmm

152 R: where I will never have to go. Like he could move to, where have I been? (Laughs) He could move to Paris because I've been to Paris so many times that I never need to go there again that would be great, but the French would really hate him (laughs)

153 I: Move the problem on a bit

153 R: Erm, it kind of feels like if he did die, I would be safe

154 I: Mmm

154 R: and I would be able to have all the control back

155 I: Mmhmm

155 R: It's like even now he's still got some kind of control over me just by the fact that he exists and he did the stuff and it's like, I've got some sort of scar on me or I don't know, I'm permanently marred by this experience, and... which gives him control over me and I hate it, that's the bit I hate most that he took control away from me

156 I: Mmhmm

156 R: and partly that's like the whole the pressuring me into doing stuff but also that I just couldn't escape him no matter what I did and I keep, I keep trying to take as much control over my own life as I can

157 I: Mmhmm. Nowadays it's that, do you think that's a consequence, you're quite keen to get that control back

157 R: Definitely. Which means that I'm... I guess like in relationships, like, with boyfriends and girlfriends and with friends as well I'm pretty blunt about stuff like I try to make my wishes known or like just how I feel about stuff like a year or two ago I was much shyer about it, but it definitely helped that I went on a year abroad and I was able to kind of gain some more confidence in myself. I don't know if the lack of confidence was to do with him or I'm just naturally shy but like definitely gaining like being so completely independent has definitely made me more confident

158 I: Mmm

158 R: and... so now I'm like... I'm far more willing to say when something makes me uncomfortable

159 I: Yeah

159 R: because that was something that I didn't do... and I definitely, I've done it with other partners as well, but like er I'm two relationships at the moment and I'm pretty open about things that I'm comfortable with and not comfortable with now with both of them but definitely something that still affects me is that er sometimes during sex I might have panic attacks

160 I: Mmhmm

160 R: which comes, definitely comes from a lack of control

161 I: Mmm

161 R: If I feel like... I'm, if I feel threatened I will... It's like I can't think about what to do, about my situation like my brain just doesn't let me take charge

162 I: Mmhmm

162 R: So like... it happens a lot if I have a new sexual partner because I know that they're expecting me to do something

163 I: Right

163 R: but I might not be able to make myself move into it, like even now just imagining it I'm quite tense

164 I: Mmhmm

164 R: and like I'm not feeling like I want to move anymore (Laughs)

165 I: Mmm

165 R: erm and usually I'll just I'll seize up

166 I: Yeah

166 R: and I-I-I usually cry and there isn't really anything I can do about it either I just kind of have to wait for it to pass and it doesn't help to try and allow myself the feeling and it doesn't help to try and push the feeling away

167 I: Mmhmm. You just have to wait for it to pass

167 R: Yeah, and it's just like I can't move and I can't think and I can't really breathe and there's nothing anyone else can do to help except be patient and sometimes maybe it helps to tell me that it's not my fault... like it, like I'm not the one to blame for not wanting to do something like it's acceptable for me to not want to do something

168 I: And that, you find that helps

169 R: Yeah

169 I: being told that

170 R: like, erm... apart from things that... Dan pushed me into I was pretty much a virgin before I started dating my boyfriend and it really helped that I- I told him everything

171 I: Mmhmm

171 R: and with the boyfriend in between Dan and the one that I was with before I met my friend, erm... I don't want to blame him because he, I'm almost certain he didn't know what was going on in my head but I just let him do things in a way of like, I felt like it was my job

172 I: Mmhmm

172 R: and it was the natural way that relationships went so when he wanted to touch me I just let him and, but then, when he wanted me to touch him I couldn't because I would seize up and freak out

173 I: Mmm

173 R: I just couldn't even move

174 I: Mmhmm

174 R: and eventually he would just get up and walk away and then the-m as the relationship went on more he would say things like "Well, I do things for you, why won't you do things for me"

175 I: Mmhmm

175 R: and it made me feel more and more like I was not doing what I should

176 I: Right

176 R: like it was my job to bring him pleasure

177 I: Mmm

177 R: and I'm disgusted at myself that I felt like that but I did feel like that, so I would try harder to make myself, which made it worse

178 I: Right

178 R: and the harder I tried the more I would freak out or have panic attacks and the more frustrated he got

179 I: Mmhmm

179 R: because we would get so far

180 I: Yeah

180 R: and then I would just freeze up and he... didn't do anything to help and this, I hated this as well because, like he was supposed to care about me and he just didn't try and help me at all, erm so when it came to my current boyfriend who I've been with for five years now erm, I told him everything about Dan and about ----- the one who wouldn't help me, erm and about the panic attacks, and it really helped that he was just like, "It's ok"

181 I: Yeah

181 R: "You don't have to do anything that you don't want to do and if you want to but you're struggling you can tell me and I'll help you and we can stop whenever you want" and we just, it really helped because we worked it through together and I might still freeze up sometimes but never in the same...

182 I: It sounds like you kind of progresses into a slightly more healthy relationship

182 R: Yeah

183 I: That's helped

183 R: Yeah and I would definitely say we're a healthy relationship

184 I: Yeah

184 R: because he's as much about my, er, consent and independence as I am now. I definitely wasn't when we started

185 I: Mmhmm

185 R: I don't know if that's because I was so shy or feeling like I was supposed to be the lesser one in the relationship erm, but he has definitely helped me to be more independent, er more healthily, healthier emotionally, erm like I was a really jealous person, and I was really paranoid and it was things like if he didn't text me back in five minutes I would freak out

186 I: Do you think that's a product of all of your experiences earlier it sounds like you got quite messed around

186 I: Probably, yeah erm that obviously frustrated him so in the end he had to like not sit me down, but like have a proper conversation with me

187 I: Yeah

187 R: to say like you can't depend on my in this way and you can't make m-you can't expect me to do everything that you want

188 I: Mmm

188 R: or even just to... be constantly there and it's definitely helped like me grow and everything and yeah so I think he's, I think we're much healthier

189 I: Yeah definitely

189 R: So... that's good

190 I: That is good.

Sample of researcher notes made during transcription:

Her timeline is out of order.

D uses self-harm and suicide as a threat if she doesn't do as he says.

D uses friends to pass threatening messages to R. They go along with this and pass them on. I note my own feelings of anger in response to this sub-story of other people assisting the stalker.

R has made it clear from the offset that she feels vulnerable in the manner she presents herself, body language and tone. Knowing this, I check in with her throughout the interview in a supportive way such as asking questions to verify her recollections, thus creating a more comfortable alliance where we are on the

same page. I notice my wishes to reassure R that I listening and that I understands what she is saying.

R's stalker confuses her by behaving as though they were still in a relationship after they had broken up. Is this his delusion that they are still together or a coercive strategy to confuse her and question her own reality? I note my own sense of confusion at this stage.

R's stalker would vary the time gaps between contact. It was the not knowing when he would pop up that kept her unsettled.

Appendix 9

Table below illustrates stage 2 of analysis, which produced 137 codes. Column 1 provides the code number, column 2 provides the title of each code, and column 3 provides an initial description of each code:

Table of Analytical Codes with Descriptions		
Column 1	**Column 2**	**Column 3**
Code Number	**Title**	**Initial Code Description**
1	Monitoring	Behaviour/stalking technique of monitoring
2	Sending letters/gifts	Behaviour/stalking technique of sending letters or gifts
3	Staring or watching	Behaviour/stalking technique of staring at or watching
4	Tricking to access the victim	Behaviour/stalking technique of trickery to gain access
5	Money	Behaviour/stalking technique of using money or finances
6	Getting something (material) the stalker wants	Behaviour/stalking technique of getting something they want
7	Assault	Behaviour/stalking technique of physical harm
8	Being physically trapped	Behaviour/stalking technique of physically trapping
9	Threatened with physical harm	Behaviour/stalking technique of threatening physical harm
10	Accusing victim of wrongdoing	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via blame
11	Aggression	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via threatening
12	Badmouthing Victim	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via socially isolating
13	Belittling	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via self-esteem
14	Confusing victim	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via confusion
15	Being controlling/manipulative	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive
16	Dismissing victim's wants	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via ignoring wishes
17	Emotional blackmail	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via emotional blackmail/coercion
18	Exposing personal details	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via shame of exposing personal details
19	False charm	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via presenting a false/misleading charm
20	Finding out Information about the victim	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by gathering information about the victim
21	Finding out information about the Victim and letting them know	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by letting the victim know they have access to their private information
22	Implied sexual theme	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive using an implied sexual theme
23	Implied threat	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically

		manipulative/abusive using indirect implied threat
24	Increasing unwanted behaviour	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically damaging using an escalation of unwanted behaviour
25	Infidelity	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via infidelity during the relationship
26	Intermittent, inconsistent attention	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via inconsistent, unpredictable abuse
27	Jealousy	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via jealous actions or language
28	Lies	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by lying
29	Multiple victims, repeat offense	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive across more than one victim as a pattern of behaviour
30	Pressuring victim	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive
31	Repetition/bombarding	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by overwhelming the victim with a bombardment of unwanted behaviours
32	Romancing	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative by attempting to rekindle the romance/speaking lovingly
33	Spanning over a long time	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive via length of time/duration
34	Threatening by following	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by following
35	Stalker threatens to harm himself	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by threatening to harm themselves
36	Wants priority over other	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by trying to become sole focus of attention
37	Intimidation using age	Behaviour/stalking technique that is psychologically manipulative/abusive by asserting dominance using age difference
38	Attacking the victim's job	Behaviour/stalking technique that attacks the job of the victim
39	Attacking network of support	Behaviour/stalking technique that attacks social support
40	Contacting family members	Behaviour/stalking technique by contacting family members
41	Contacting victim's friends	Behaviour/stalking technique by contacting friends of the victim
42	Involving other people	Behaviour/stalking technique by involving additional people
43	Reporting victim to the authorities	Behaviour/stalking technique of reporting to the authorities with the aim of negative repercussions for the victim
44	Threatening other people	Behaviour/stalking technique by threatening other people as well as the stalking victim
45	Using others to stalk the victim	Behaviour/stalking technique of enlisting others to help stalk
46	Emailing	Behaviour/stalking technique of using email
47	Facebook	Behaviour/stalking technique of using Facebook
48	Hacking into the victim's social media accounts	Behaviour/stalking technique of using technology by accessing the digital accounts of the victim
49	Telephoning	Behaviour/stalking technique of using technology by telephoning
50	Texting	Behaviour/stalking technique by using technology by text messages
51	Websites	Behaviour/stalking technique of using technology by using

		websites
52	Feeling misunderstood by others	Impact of stalking on social support by feeling others do not understand
53	Worries about being alone	Impact of stalking on changed need for social support
54	Going out less	Impact of stalking on social access
55	Mistrusting others	Impact of stalking on social support by not trusting others
56	Other people intervene to help	Impact of stalking on social support where other's try to help
57	Other people make things worse	Impact of stalking on social support where other's worsen the situation
58	System biased in favour of the stalker	Impact of stalking on social support where the support system supports the stalker
59	Home safety	Impact of the stalking on home safety
60	Lack of protection for the victim	Impact of the stalking leaving the victim unprotected
61	Regular location safety	Impact of the stalking on the safety of regular locations
62	Financial difficulty	Impact of the stalking on economic/finances
63	Financial reward for the stalker	Impact of the stalking that the stalker benefits financially
64	Work suffers	Impact of the stalking on source of income
65	Feeling sick	Physical impact of the stalking is feeling sick
66	Not sleeping/eating	Physical impact of the stalking is difficulty sleeping/eating
67	Physically unable to move	Physical impact of the stalking is physically freezing
68	Shaking	Physical impact of the stalking is shaking
69	Afraid	Impact of stalking is emotional based upon fear
70	Angry, bad or negative feeling	Impact of stalking is emotional based upon anger or bad or negative
71	Anxiety	Impact of stalking is emotional based upon anxiety
72	Confused	Impact of stalking is emotional based upon confusion
73	Sad	Impact of stalking is emotional based upon sadness
74	Positive feeling	Impact of stalking results in a positive emotion
75	Uncategorised	Impact of stalking is emotional but cannot be put into words
76	Apologetic	Coping with the stalking by being apologetic
77	Behaving in a way she does not like	Coping with the stalking by behaving in a way she does not like
78	Blames Him	Coping with the stalking by blaming him
79	Coping with alcohol	Coping with the stalking by drinking alcohol
80	Critical of Him	Coping with the stalking by criticising him
81	Critical of other people	Coping with the stalking by criticising other people
82	Cries	Coping with the stalking by crying
83	Does not talk about it	Coping with the stalking by not talking about it
84	Downplays It	Coping with the stalking by downplaying it
85	Eats Less	Coping with the stalking by eating less
86	Hypervigilance	Coping with the stalking by becoming hypervigilant
87	Feels he Is misogynistic	Coping with the stalking by thinking negatively of him
88	Feels he sees himself as the victim	Coping with the stalking by thinking negatively of him
89	Feels he was abusive	Coping with the stalking by acknowledging his abuse
90	Feels she has or can recover	Coping with the stalking by feeling she has or will recover
91	Feels she has changed	Coping with the stalking by feeling that she has changed/is different
92	Feels she lacked courage	Coping with the stalking by blaming herself
93	Feels she learned from it	Coping with the stalking by finding a learning opportunity in it
94	Feels victimised	Coping with the stalking by feeling victimised

95	Finds it weird	Coping with the stalking by trying to understand it, but finding it weird
96	He wants to control her	Coping with the stalking by acknowledging his motives to control
97	Her wants to destroy her	Coping with the stalking by acknowledging his motives to destroy
98	It is unfair	Coping with the stalking by questioning how fair it was
99	Jokes	Coping with the stalking by joking
100	Laughs	Coping with the stalking by laughing
101	Monitoring him	Coping with the stalking by monitoring him
102	Not aware at the time	Coping with the stalking by not being aware/ignoring/dissociating
103	Other people minimise it	Others cope with the stalking by minimising it
104	Self-critical	Coping with the stalking by being self-critical
105	Talking about something else	Coping with the stalking by changing the subject or talking about something different
106	Things worsen increasingly	Struggling to cope as things worsen
107	Thinking he could come back	Coping by thinking about when/if he could come back: planning
108	Thinks he is crazy or mentally unwell	Coping with the stalking by questioning his sanity
109	Wants control	Coping with the stalking by wanting to gain control
110	Wants to forget it	Coping with the stalking by wanting to forget it
111	Believed what he says	Responding with compliance by believing the stalker
112	Blames herself	Responding with compliance by blaming herself and taking responsibility
113	Compliance with his demands	Responding with compliance with his demands/wishes
114	Defending him	Responding with compliance by defending him
115	Feels it will never end	Responding with compliance by believing in the inescapability of the stalker
116	Focusing on him	Responding with compliance by focusing on the stalker
117	Gets back together with him	Responding with compliance by resuming intimate relationship with the stalker
118	Isolates herself	Responding with compliance by isolating herself
119	Perceived autonomy distorted	Responding with compliance by believing that she no longer has personal autonomy/control over her life
120	Resumes contact	Responding with compliance by contacting the stalker
121	Tries to reason with him	Responding with compliance by trying to reason with the stalker
122	Tries to soothe him	Responding with compliance by trying to soothe the stalker
123	Tries to stop him from carrying out his threat	Responding with compliance by trying to stop him from carrying out his threats
124	Avoids locations	Escape response by avoiding locations
125	Changing telephone number	Escape response by changing phone number
126	Does not agree with him	Escape response by disagreeing with him
127	Does not believe what he says	Escape response by not believing him
128	Does not look online at her name	Escape response by avoiding her online presence
129	Fights back	Escape response by fighting back
130	Friends/family tell her to get away	Escape response from friends/family by telling her to get away
131	Hides	Escape response by hiding
132	Ignores him	Escape response by attempting to ignore him
133	Runs away	Escape response by running away from him
134	Tries to leave	Escape response by attempting to leave a situation
135	Tries to seek help from others	Escape response by seeking help from others

136	Wants him gone	Escape response by wanting him out of her life
137	Wants it to stop	Escape response by wanting the actions to stop

Appendix 10

Table below illustrates stage 3 of analysis, which grouped 137 codes into 14 categories. Column 1 provides the group of code numbers allocated to each category, column 2 provides the names of the categories and column 3 provides an initial description of the categories:

Table of Analytical Codes and Categories		
Column 1	**Column 2**	**Column 3**
Code Numbers	**Categories**	**Initial Description of Categories**
1-4	**1. Location**	Behaviours associated with location used to stalk
5-6	**2. Material**	Behaviours associated with material items used to stalk
7-9	**3. Physical**	Behaviours associated with physical threat/safety used to stalk
10-37	**4. Psychological**	Behaviours associated with psychological impact used to stalk
38-45	**5. Social**	Behaviours associated with social support used to stalk
46-51	**6. Using Technology**	Behaviours associated with technology used to stalk
52-58	**7. Social Impact**	Impact of stalking on social support
59-61	**8. Personal Safety**	Impact of stalking on personal safety
62-64	**9. Economic**	Impact of stalking on economic means
65-68	**10. Physical**	Impact of stalking on physical safety
69-75	**11. Emotional**	Impact of stalking on emotions
76-110	**12. Coping Behaviours, Adapting**	Response of victim by attempting to cope with and/or adapt to the stalking
111-123	**13. Compliance**	Response of the victim by complying with the stalker
124-137	**14. Escape**	Response of the victim by attempting to escape the stalker