

CYPPE

University of Surrey Conference Centre

27.02.2016

First lunchtime discussion (12:00)

QT – question or theme. LL – Leslie Lund response. C – comment.

Q/T: Helicopter parents

Parents are under tremendous pressure from schools, particularly in International schools, with multiple emails and events most weeks and an expectation of responding and attending. This creates an unhealthy cycle where we as therapists are telling parents to let their children have space and their own real experiences but they are under this huge pressure to conform. How can we break this cycle and help children be independent?

LL Whenever there's a dilemma like this I ask myself why? I don't often know the answer but I think it's a much healthier way of looking at creating possible solutions rather than just getting upset and saying 'it's a bad thing' It's obviously a bad thing and it's one of those Gordian knot moments where there doesn't seem to be an obvious solution.

C Mothers who don't work are particularly susceptible to (being helicopter parents), looking to their children for emotional fulfilment and to achieve their own unfulfilled ambition.

LL You're saying mothers or the parent at home needs a job, which makes them particularly keen (to become a helicopter parent).

C There's a funny combination of intrusiveness and neglect of emotional needs.

LL In terms of psychology we know that if parents themselves haven't been nurtured emotionally, if they don't feel their internal world as valuable then they can't see it in their children. So some of this is about the vulnerabilities of parents.

C Risk has been mentioned, taking risk and being risk averse and parents being risk averse for their children which makes them 'hover'. But perhaps schools are also risk averse because they are providing a product and don't want to get it wrong as they'll then get no money, it's a societal thing as well.

LL You're on to something there.

Q/T: Are schools too focussed on the academic?

They ask parents to be supportive with things like homework but they don't offer broader guidance on how to support the development of resilience in children.

LL Part of this is about the histories of parenting and schools; the psychological sciences or arts are not very old, not very mature as a group of ideas whereas the educational world is, it's been through many incarnations and knows how to get 'A's out of kids. I've been looking at pedagogical research

on this and there are reams of papers, whether you test kids or not, how to present materials, an ocean of information, often contradictory but a massive discussion going on. In contrast, supporting the psychological development of kids in families and at home still seems to be in this little pod of psychology, in the attachment research, not being disseminated out into the real world which I regret because I don't think the parents and schools have any idea what it is the kids need emotionally.

C There's also a fear of mental illness in society, a fear that if you actually look at it it might get worse, so schools diminish it and hope that it will go away. A lot of these parents have had to deny their own emotional needs to achieve their own success and so can't handle that in their children.

C There's also a stigma attached to anything being officially documented, that's a parental concern. Also is there a difference in expectations between selective schools with entrance exams and those that don't [have these expectations] but charge the same amount of money? In my experience parents can be quite unrealistic about the true potential of their kids which is a problem if there isn't that entrance exam that says the child is academically bright because they passed them, as opposed to just being able to pay the fees and have them walk in.

Q/T: Parenting

As a parent I can see both sides of it, if you have a child at an independent school spending six days a week at school, who's seeing the child the most? The school has a big responsibility, in loco parentis, they need to be looking much more at the whole child's development not just their academic development, they are responsible for their social development too, they're not looking at it nearly enough.

C It's results though, look on the websites, 70% of our kids get A*, that's what's important to them.

C To contradict that, I think a lot of parents are frightened to parent now. They don't trust their gut instincts, basic common sense has gone out of the window. I have parents ring me up and say "oh they're so tired you know, they were on the X Box until one in the morning, I just don't know what to do". Well cut the Wi-Fi, that's really easy or it would have been if you'd instilled it from the beginning, they need rules. Also if they are away at boarding school they want to be the good guys when they see their kids, they don't want to be the rule enforcer. I get quite agitated but it is basic parenting which we seem to have lost the art of and people are frightened of their own kids so they swing between no pressure and too much pressure. There's no middle ground.

C As someone who went to boarding school, you fought your own battles. You don't have that home support so by the time you do go home at the end of term you may have been going through something and dealt with issues with your friends and your parents weren't there so you've dealt with it yourself. I remember going home and my mother trying to coach me or tell me something and I thought 'don't do that now you weren't there when I needed support'. It's an attachment break and sometimes the child has to make a conscious decision that they will allow the parent to parent. The parents may actually want to do it but when you've had to muddle through stuff and built up your defences on your own, you're not going to let your parent in as by the next time something comes up you'll be back in school and they won't be there.

LL So we're talking about the vulnerabilities of the system, that the parents feel vulnerable because they don't see the kids much. Schools are taking over [life], especially boarding schools, and schools that just have the kids forever! I've got a couple of slides that talk about how many hours kids are spending at school each day.

C Extra-curricular activities and expected to do homework as well. When you put that in there how much contact is there with the child for mum and dad? They're probably working through dinner and way into the night. That's another question for schools, how are we going to get well rounded students if we're drowning them in this stuff.

LL Again I ask myself why, about things like that. I see on the next step up the ladder are the universities jockeying for position in that prestige world of being able to provide fabulous educations for people that need lots of money. So they're courting students from all over the world to come to their universities because they'll pay the full whack rather than local students. Everything is about branding these days, the brand of the university. I think it's Malcom Gladwell, I remember reading a couple of great articles by him, he works for The New Yorker magazine. He writes about how universities have changed the requirements from just academic stuff, it used to be 'C's, then it was 'B's then it was 'A's, and then it was character evaluations. Then the kids had to do community service and show they knew how to build rockets as well! It's just escalated because of the competition and the honing of certain top universities into prestige organisations. That has a huge effect on all of us.

Q/T: Children buying into the system

C The problem is I find the students have their own pressures, when I ask them to come and see me at lunchtime they can't because of extra-curricular activities, then they say they've got too many but if I suggest they drop some they say they don't want to drop any. The values of the parents and the schools get embedded in the children unfortunately, there's a tension there you can't really (deal with).

C There's something about greed here too, "if something's available I should be able to have it", "if I'm just human then it's completely unreasonable that I should be restricted by that".

LL We could talk about the narcissism as well, that powerful position of "I am one of the elite and I deserve to achieve and I deserve to get whatever I want". And then you add to that the rage of the child who is pushed aside and expected to cope on their own without those kinds of emotional supports and mentoring, the parenting. You've got a very potent mix of things that compel people to get whoppingly huge jobs of power and glory and then do the dirty on the people below them because they feel entitled.

Q/T: Instant gratification

I was thinking about parents' capacity to tolerate emotional pain. A very simple example, a child loses their iPhone 6 and the parent automatically replacing it instead of giving the child the opportunity to understand a bit about loss. The capacity to bear the loss, the frustration of not getting things instantly gratified and have more space to understand what are their own desires, what have they got an appetite for as opposed to the parent saying this is what you should have an appetite for.

C That's so right, it comes back to that same thing: parents are so frightened of their children, so frightened of disciplining them. If I had a penny for every time I've heard a parent say, "...but I want to be their friend"; children have enough friends and that's their privilege to make their own friendships, but a parent is a parent is a parent. We have to be the good guy *and* the bad guy. When the iPhone or whatever is damaged and children are complaining, really they should either not have anything at all or be given some basic replacement but parents are too frightened.

C We had that, my son dropped his new phone and broke the screen and said “you’ve got to replace it” but we said “no, you’ve got to replace it”. And he did, he worked and saved and eventually could pay for it. In the meantime we gave him a ‘brick’, which made him the talk of the school with kids saying “oh my god, your mum’s so mean, mine would have fixed it!” I’m like “yep, that’s me” “It was like a badge of honour.

C It is that capacity (in the parent) to be able to bear being hated!

Q/T: Rules and boundaries are for others

C Leslie you mentioned about parties, I’ve had parents phone me and say that their 13 or 14 year old child is having a party and asking for advice on how much beer they should supply. When I ask them what the legal age is for being supplied alcohol they’ll acknowledge that it’s probably 18 but that somehow that doesn’t apply to them and their child, it’s a different agenda. I like the law in the United States, if alcohol is found in a house and adolescents are drinking, it’s the adults that are prosecuted. It’s very clear, parents have split agendas, they know what’s right but then there are *their* children.

LL It does seem to come down to this issue of not being able to tolerate stress, the emotions that flood us when we’ve got a dilemma like that. It’s obvious that the parents are un-resilient.

C I think we may be polarising this a bit. I’m a parent, I have been afraid of my children, I have given them alcohol at parties and I am also a therapist. When I reflect on that it may in part be a reaction against my own quite authoritarian, ‘Victorian’ parents. We have an improved understanding of child development these days, which is a good thing, but we can let this go too far the other way and let the child become the person who has the power in the house rather than the adults. It’s a hard job, I didn’t have a manual, it’s not just that you are either a good or bad parent, we’re all trying our best.

C Isn’t that the point? That parents being given ‘permission’ to f*uck up sometimes experience a huge relief. The point of parenting and being in relationships is that they are dynamic; you’re working things out, trying things out a little at a time, dosing, titrating, seeing what effect things have. That’s the point of the parenting.

C If you are in the top 6% then you are going to feel quite special I would imagine, does that breed a thinking that ‘rules don’t actually apply to me? I know they’re there. I know that is the law of the land but actually that doesn’t touch me.’ That will feed down into the children as well.

LL That’s the maverick bit that I was talking about, rules applying to other people. Is there also a soul sickness that comes from that consumerist lifestyle, where you can just buy things? About putting your money on the barrel with the attitude, ‘I’ve paid you, now you owe me a service’.

C I think this stops people needing to develop social skills because their money does the work for them, that sense of entitlement and rage when they don’t get what they want.

C There’s also a certain sense of isolation, if you’re in the top 6% what is normal? It’s never having anyone say no to you, where do you go with that if that’s your normality?

Q/T: Entrepreneurs & creativity

C Another part of that normality in corporate positions is that although you are taking risks you’re doing that within an uncreative framework that’s very restricting and that feeds down into parenting. Kids have to fit in like corporate robots. You talked about the entrepreneurs, a different

type of personality: the mavericks. Malcom Gladwell went through [the employees at a consulting firm?], he looked at the age parents had died at and around 90% of these people had lost a parent by the age of 20 and a very high percentage had lost a parent by the age of 5, so many entrepreneurs have never *had* parenting so they don't know how to *be* parents.

LL That makes perfect sense, in fact I forgot to say that there are great similarities in the little project I did with those CEO biographies; 17 out of the 18 authors had had significant trauma as children, the death of a parent, the burning down of a house, homelessness, so when I said they were survivors they were true survivors.

C Just to go back to the point about the 6% and risk taking: There's something about (children) taking risks to seek out where boundaries lie and to see *if* parents are taking notice. As Adam Philips says, "you have to be bad in order to work out what kind of good you want to be".

LL I agree, totally, that's a big part of it, waiting to see if someone will notice.

C There must be a lot of fear, fear of falling, fear of not being good enough, outed, seen. That I would imagine just goes from grandparents, through parents to children through the psyche and just sits there.

C Fear of losing or not being able to maintain wealth as well.

LL And it's just as easy to lose wealth, probably easier than trying to make it.

C We're talking about academia and grades but we're talking about children and we've not mentioned play once. We're not talking about workaholics or work addiction either but isn't that what we're all describing? An adult who isn't addressing their emotional stuff ploughs everything into work and creates another little workaholic.

LL When they're born we give them little briefcases and say "go off to work now"!

C This is a personal experience, my little girl in year 1 had her school close down and we had to find a school within 6 weeks and it was a private one. I only found out after she started that they had no time for creative art, nothing messy, the only thing was paper weaving.

C I was a play therapist and went into a school, they told me to take out the clay, the glue and the glitter; they wanted to vet the play therapy kit for anything messy.

Second lunchtime discussion (12:45pm)

(These notes are not verbatim but are true to the comments)

C: I'm not convinced by the US research which may not be true in the UK.

LL: Neither am I. We don't know anything about privileged kids in the UK. We need anonymous research to find out what is happening to them right now but schools are prickly about letting researchers take surveys of their students. We have an advantage being a group from many different schools because we won't have to identify any one school as better or worse than any other. The data can go into a collective pot.

C: It's good to combine diverse views and get the whole picture.

C: I work in a girl's school and it's obvious [from your info on parental traits compared to typical adolescent traits] that it seems it's not ok for privileged girls to have typical adolescent behaviour.

C: Looked after children have a lot of easy to identify behavioural problems whereas privileged kids often have contained [and hard to see] behaviour.

LL: If kids are in boarding schools, do they develop good R's with parents?

C: Boarding schools may be a safe place, whereas home is dangerous.

C: Boys have fathers who work huge hours, golf at weekends, and have very limited time with sons. So boarding may give other nurturing R's with adults. Sons and mums may both be angry with the dad that he's absent.

C: [A delegate who was at boarding school said] Where were you? We didn't have a voice! We are not fine! I am really happy this conference is happening today.

C: Parents are hugely important gatekeepers. Could we do workshops for parents?

LL: This is just the beginning.

LL: When I've spoken to administrators, they are aware my practice is full of A* kids who are cutting or suicidal, but they don't feel their schools are 'hothouses' like those other schools. 'Our school is a caring school.'

C: Counselling has grown in schools. It is hard work, but we are in schools.

C: Schools are trying to protect their image.

C: It is good to be creative when trying out possible solutions to these problems. We have to be creative or clever. Speak in a language they can tolerate or understand.

C: These issues are very scary for parents. 'Palatable' is the key.

LL: We have to acknowledge that people are ripped apart by 'Gordian Knot' dilemmas, and we must find ways to let them know we sympathise. This is the only way to work toward 'good enough' solutions.

C: Parents try to help their kids survive as individuals. We are battling this with parents.

C: Speaking to teachers or parents can get an invitation to make modified presentations to kids.

C: [We should encourage individual choices.] Put it down [offer something] and see if anyone will pick it up, rather than imposing.

C: I work in a school where the counsellors are listened to. It's hard work but we, as a service, have a voice.

LL: You are a vanguard. I presented to a head of school who was alarmed by the word privilege, resistant to the word and the idea of people having a leg up, as if [the social situation] negates all the hard work of teachers and kids.

C: Parents are shamed if kids have counselling, even the top performers. All very cloak and dagger. Access is difficult. Educating parents is part of [a possible solution].

C: Kids are closely attached to parents and share their shame.

C: We can talk to groups about counselling. Teachers may be there to hear too. To normalise and demystify. This might make a difference to how parents see counselling.

LL: We can only redress the balance little by little.

C: Parents are desperate, but clueless. They say: 'Why would you teach suicide prevention [implying there is no need for this]?' Parent education is essential because, when the kids go home after being taught mindfulness, the value is lost [if the home environment doesn't support this learning]. This applies to day school mostly.

C: People are more open to positive psychology.

C: Our school's recent shift to abolish homework for kids needed to be done very carefully. Parents reacted, but now working well. And it is still a high achieving school, but you need to show parents the research.

C: Kids need to learn that, if they want to be leaders, they need to question the status quo.

LL: That's very subversive.

C: Sometimes we need to consider that CEOs may be mothers. It's a flip in family dynamics.

(Second large group discussion, 2:30pm)

C: Five years ago I noticed a lot of anxiety in rough regular schools. Every day was like ground hog day in my practice. I kept seeing the same problems, all stress related. I used a mixture of techniques for teaching kids coping strategies and have now developing an app. How will it be marketed? Hit parents in elite schools. We now have an app called 'cool calm results', to be followed by 'cool calm parenting'. L: Conversations are difficult with parents because of shame, and psychology is still very young.

C: An easy way in is with social media. Making links with other people doing the same kind of work.

C: Nothing is joined up at the moment.

LL: How do we solve this? What do we do?

C: Speaking at schools conferences, maybe ECIS [European Community International Schools].

C: This is the conversations we need to have with Heads: How would we know if this is an emotionally healthy school?

C: Head needs to be able to hear reality.

C: What are we going to do with the information? Why the research?

LL: Research is about gathering information over a wider field. Individual schools will not be identified. We should give schools something back. Tools for schools. Psycho-education.

C: We can try to get schools to slow down rather than just finding a solution. That is a process that takes time.

C: I provide parent classes in corporate settings because I can access parents who don't have time during the day, using different language.

C: We need to start much younger. Mums and babies, long before we get overwhelmed teenagers. The government tried support vouchers, but only for lower socio-economic groups. Totally failed, but now they plan to extend them to elites. We should be addressing these issues of social division.

LL: We therapists are privileged to see behind the curtains and have a responsibility to society, not just to the individual client. We seem to have lost the ability to influence society. Think about the wider life around our clients and discuss it in supervision groups.

C: There's a good Young Minds website. In my agency, we insist on working with senior leadership first in the workplace and, if we get them on board, we then involve the workers. The schemes don't work unless the senior management buy in. (It should start from the top.)

LL: Sometimes we need to work from the top, but how much power do we have? Mind is working on parity of mental and physical health but lobbying hasn't been very effective so far.

C: Parents in elite schools have a lot of power, even if teachers are not so willing. [They could effect change.]

LL: How do you get to parents?

C: Parents are the customers, but they don't want the shame.

C: [Counsellor in a day school] Parents will come if they are asked. I have always found parents very willing to engage with these issues.

C: [Counsellor in a boarding school] Parents won't come!

C: But admin sometimes don't want counsellors talking to parents. They can be so territorial, but it depends on the Head.

C: Data can show a relationship between mental health and achievement. [People will pay attention to that.]

C: But if you invite parents and only get a few of them the first time, they will bring more next time. If you grow the program gradually, it might take five years.

C: Some topics elicit fear of the unimaginable. Call it emotional wellbeing rather than mental health. Use positive psychology terms, like resilience.

[quiet]

LL: What is your experience of having to carry the psychological burden? Maybe we can share the job of dealing with the power people.

C: We need to spread the word that mental health makes people productive.

C: How about demystifying what we do? Widen out and join up thinking. Schools will then move to acknowledge the MH differences between kids rather than saying we don't have kids like that.

C: We sometimes have to take a risk, stand up and take a risk. Go into the Head, using appropriate language, and discuss a situation. Can we talk about this? How can we deal with this?

LL: We take risks every day with individual clients. When I prepare myself for an session, I never know what is going to happen. I need to be ready and available for whatever walks in the door. It takes personal courage. We should use this skill in talking with all the gatekeepers.

C: In Scotland, there is a woman who is Zeedyk who is very positive about risk. She has stuff on media and YouTube. Watch it!

C: We should be advocates for these children, empowering kids to say how they feel. This would change the culture.

C: We all have relationships with authorities which can be scary. Acknowledging these problems involves risk. We might lose our jobs. Are we going to be emotionally blackmailed? [We have to make choices.] Do I want to work for an organisation like this?

C: Many students are seeing therapists out of school. What are the causes of this? Are we getting below the surface of the kids' problems? What do we take away [from their lives]? What are the criteria for success [in their world]? Where does the pressure come from? Is it perhaps the universities?

C: Dare we mention the word 'capitalism, where everything has a price and schools are a microcosm of this system?

LL: [Description of my research] Group therapy has gone out of fashion and become anathema. But kids suffer isolation, being alone, so we need groups. I need access to groups of regular kids, 11-18, to ask them how they feel. What are their experiences in their world? In my practice, I find that kids are craving an honest conversation. There are limitations with groups because they might not feel comfortable disclosing personal information in front of people who are not their friends, but groups can talk them into saying things [that they need to say. They need to hear each other].

C: Will they divulge? Will they admit to being in therapy? They're vulnerable. [These ethical issues need to be thought about very carefully before asking kids to disclose anything personal.]

LL: I will balance the roles of therapist and researcher and pay close attention to the ethics of working with young people. If I feel they are sensitive or vulnerable, I will back off, just as I do in therapy with my clients.

C: How big are the groups?

LL: It depends on schools and what they offer me.

C: Is parental consent needed?

C: It depends on the school if done on school premises during school. The schools can chose if they think it is needed [but I will encourage them to get full permission].

C: Would the school counsellor be present?

C: Yes, if they want to be. We would have to talk about it.

C: Do a TED Talk for Heads!

LL: You've just discovered my closet wish to do a TED talk! I don't think I'm ready for that right now, but I might do it some day.

C: Next week is the GSA conference. You should send an email to the secretary to advertise your research.

C: I have a general question about whether we therapists are seeing gender and sexuality problems increasing in kids. This has been my experience. Has anyone else noticed this?

C: Yes, this is something I've seen too. Kids just a few years ago were coming out as gay, then as bisexual. Now it is 'pansexual', which means they're into everything. Maybe they're saying they don't want to be limited by our categories.

C: Boundaries have been opened up and this has pros and cons. There is more access to pornography online, especially for youngsters.

C: Yes, there is an increase and, in our school, we're open to discussions on gender issues.

Comments recorded in small groups: (flip chart notes)

Group 1: (themes discussed)

Guilt about being privileged. Parents have guilt and compare themselves to less privileged

Culture: A theme of constant loss

Vulnerability of privileged children

Counselling versus coaching- needing both!

Issues of confidentiality and risky behaviour

Low self-esteem and privilege

Emptiness of privilege

Prevention- What can we do? Pastoral care

Shame: Having to use a counsellor. Counselling seen as failure.

Competitive environments create shame.

Cut-offs for 'adolescence'? (What age?)

Pressure on staff in schools

Building up pastoral care in schools

Preventative work

Privileged but not wealthy?

Group 2:

In private schools, when kids are bullied, the nature of the distress for privileged young people (PYP) is not worse, just different. No [reliable] peer relationships. 50% attempted suicides have been bullied.

Lack of parents, emotional neglect as they are busy working.

Absence of fathers, especially for boys aged 12-14. Away working. There is no masculine figure to help kids work out their own identity.

Expectations for PYP that they are 'supposed to do better', do something with their privileged position. May have high expectations from parents; but they do not have the necessary skills themselves. Kids who have everything get 'got at' more. They should do better!

Two extremes- PYP and less privileged adoptive families. The privileged children are more likely to be referred to an educational psychologist [if they are emotionally dysregulated], whereas the less privileged children are **expected** to be emotionally dysregulated. They have similar attachment issues at both ends.

There is a stigma attached to needing help from others. Self-made men expect their kids to be able to do it rather than realise that they themselves learned through their own struggles.

There is pressure to do sport.

There is pressure to get those A's in order to get to the top universities.

Whatever any student does is never enough. There is always something better they can do. Exceptional [or unusual instances] of low performance are picked on by parents who ignore anything good that might be happening too.

Dysregulated emotional systems [are made worse by] isolated computer worlds and increasing competition. Kids haven't got the inner resources to deal with these things.

Parents are unwilling to let children make mistakes, not recognising that mistakes are good things.

Parents say the kids only need to do their best, but when they only get a B, parents say it is not their best.

'Playground politics': Parents compete with each other about their kids and what they are achieving.

Students put pressure on themselves, even when parents are not putting it on them. The kids take this pressure from the environment and are almost born into it. There is high peer pressure in this competitive environment.

Messages come from the world: You are lucky to get into the school, be aware of the fees and know that it's an elite school.

There is a culture of fear. Fear of failing and fear of not getting into university. Does it come from universities? They now need such high grades to get in for popular subjects. Universities used not to be so pressurised but became so when they compete for league position. This worked for the universities, but resulted in increased pressure and suicides for students.

People skills are often lacking [in the kids]. They have a lack of empathy, are out for themselves and live in an impersonal internet world.

Sport can facilitate team building.

Parents put blame on others rather than their own children, and blame the school, etc. They will not let their children take responsibility for their own actions. Sometimes, when a student fails a test, parents blame the test or teacher rather than recognising their child may not have studied enough.

Parents are often themselves emotionally dysregulated.

Parents have a sense of entitlement, that they should be given everything, reinforced by the fact that they pay. It is their right to demand anything from the school, teachers, etc. Teachers can come from a different socio-economic background from students. This can exacerbate difficulties between the two groups.

Group 3:

Rise in private medicalisation of mental health. Is there a connection between this and the extra time [students ask for] on tests? Staff can be sceptical about diagnoses. Can this be used for student academic advantage?

Some families resist getting children assessed for ADHD. Sometimes there are conflicts within the family. Mother and child don't want medication for the child. Father does.

How can we best work collaboratively with parents, psychologists or children in holistic ways? Often information is hidden from schools. Whoever at the school is in charge of pastoral care needs to be connected with all involved parties.

Often the 'family problem' (eg. Alcoholism) is located in [expressed by] the child so the child is the one seen as having the problems. [We should] approach this from a family system perspective. The family unit may break down in everyday communication, which leads to emotional neglect and kids doing their own thing too much. Kids still need boundaries and guidance.

Group 4:

We need more education for parents about how to parent effectively. Many of them have been to boarding school and weren't parented themselves. There are double standards of things such as alcohol use, parents drinking every night but telling kids not to.

Should there be a community approach to parenting?

We should be training students/children to have difficult conversations with their parents? These young people don't feel unconditionally loved. They are products.

How scared are the parents of parenting? There's always an expert out there saying to do something better.

Having time, resources and money can allow kids to indulge in risky behaviour, especially with smart phones.

Some kids are starved for attention and [disclosing] their emotional condition can get them some attention, even if it is negative.

Often emotional issues arise later, when children are living their parents' dreams with top jobs of their own. They drop out or break down, or are simply confused about their purpose.

Group 5: (themes discussed)

Therapists should liaise with staff and parents.

Social isolation of PYP

Lack of resilience means they fall harder than others.

Hidden pain--- Shame!

Denial from schools about mental health needs.

Hidden neglect is a safeguarding issue.

Mental health services are overwhelmed. Needs are overlooked. Schools are not showing awareness of the severity? Lack of consultation with therapists.

The need for parent workshops or training is the missing piece of the jigsaw!

Group 6:

Problems aren't 'worse' [in these kids]. There are different pressures which are linked to expectations from school, parents, boarding and academics standards.

Boarding school syndrome.

Supportive versus competitive

There is a wide spectrum of wealth at schools.

Group 7:

Topics of discussion were work, clothes, companions, food, sport, entertainment, and research.

Group 8:

Attachment issues. Parents are absent and nannies replace them. Emotional neglect.

There are different qualities of state and private schools.

In private schools you have old and new money.

Familiar issues: Loss, loneliness at home and in the world, tears, rage

Safety compromised by wealth perception. Parents look for quick cure when their child is emotionally distressed.

Counsellors have to manage multiple groups within schools as well as social services.