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**A Study of Sexual Violence in the Digital Age: Working with
Technology-facilitated Sexual Violence against Women within
Sexual Violence Support Services**

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Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Professional Studies

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mum, missed always and loved always.

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A heartfelt thank you to all the practitioners who took part in the study for the generosity with which they shared their experiences, knowledge and insights into their work. This would not have been possible without you. Also to the three women who I started this journey with in the pilot study. Your voices continue to be heard and valued.

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Abstract

The progressively interactive capabilities of new technologies are combining to change the landscape of personal, social and professional lives. Research is growing on the use of technologies to sexually exploit, harass and abuse individuals, with the majority of studies focusing on the experiences of young people. Less is known about the experiences of adult women and the subsequent impact of these events. Addressing this gap in the research is therefore important in responding to and supporting women's experiences of sexual violence facilitated by the use of technology.

The study is from a social constructionist perspective and utilised a qualitative methodological approach in the form of narrative inquiry and thematic analysis to analyse the data and is based upon interviews with five participants who work within sexual violence support services. It explored how participants construct meaning in relation to technology-facilitated sexual violence against women, how they respond to it and how it subsequently impacts victims. The data was then examined using thematic analysis, which identified four primary themes.

The findings demonstrate that understanding technology-facilitated sexual violence is a complex process encompassing the context, frequency and type of sexual violence experienced; it involves the sexualisation of women online and understanding online predatory behaviour. Participants report a negative personal and professional impact on victims, ranging from feelings of shame and fear of exposure to being prevented from pursuing professional goals. Service provision is viewed as inconsistent and problematic.

This study considers the findings in the context of theories of shame, the embodiment of harm online and the construction of identity in relation to technology. It also considers the changing landscape of sexual violence against women in relation to technology within the wider context of violence against women.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, I begin with a statement of the issues surrounding the use of technology to sexually victimise, abuse, harass and exploit women. I then set out the purpose of the study and its aims and objectives. I discuss a number of issues pertaining to the use of concepts and definitions used throughout the study and the rationale for this approach. The structure of the study and the accompanying chapters will then be outlined. The latter part of the section focuses on the background to the study, with a brief overview of the pilot study, which I undertook in 2015. Finally, I set out where I am located in this study and how the use of reflexivity has impacted the study throughout.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The consequences of sexual violence are immense and its pervasive impact on women's mental health is well recognised, creating areas of distress in all domains of their lives. The impact of sexual violence can be understood in the context of complex and multiple traumas, with long-lasting emotional and psychological consequences: post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, generalised anxiety, substance misuse, interpersonal difficulties and self-harming are just some of the potential effects (Marx 2005; Campbell et al., 2009; World Health Organisation 2013).

Statistics continue to portray a sombre picture of the extent of sexual violence, with An Overview of Sexual Offending in England & Wales (2013) setting out the figures for rape alone at 85,000 women and 12, 000 men every year, with nearly half a million adults being sexually assaulted each year. When we consider gender, one in five women aged 16 – 59 have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16. Approximately 90% of those who are raped knew the perpetrator prior to the offence, but only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence choose to report it to the police. Globally, the experiences of women are concerning, with research from the World Health Organisation (WHO) stating that:

- ❖ Overall, 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.
- ❖ Globally, 7% of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner (WHO 2013: 2).

Acts of sexual violence can be perpetrated in many different ways, circumstances and settings (WHO 2012). While statistics can go some way towards understanding prevalence, it has been feminist analysis which has challenged and changed how women's experiences of sexual violence are understood (Brownmiller 1975), highlighting poor outcomes for women in the criminal justice system for rape (Brown et al. 2010). Several concepts have been formed to explain the way in which sexual violence continues, such as 'cultural scaffolding of rape' (Payne et al. 1999, Gavey 2005) and 'rape myths', which it is argued have four broad functions: to blame the victim; to express disbelief; to exonerate the perpetrator; or to imply that only certain types of women are raped. These rape myths are then integrated and upheld throughout the criminal justice system and the media, supporting attitudes and beliefs towards rape. Authors such as Kelly (1988), who developed influential theories on the continuum of sexual violence, argue that women's experiences need to be considered in much broader terms than is set out in legal definitions.

While issues of gender have been critical, gender is not the only concern, as emphasised by Hill (1990) and hooks (1984):

The idea of "common oppression" was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality. Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices (hooks 1984: 44).

hooks, in her work, points to the historical experiences of oppression for black women. This is important in understanding the context of women's experiences. If we consider the experiences of black and minority ethnic (BME) women, a recent study (Thiara et al. 2016) indicates that there is still a need for training. One of the

points that the study sets out is the continuing hidden nature of sexual violence against BME women, asserting that the needs of BME women are met only by those services that have considered what those needs are.

Within psychotherapy, Herman (1992) put forward a way in which trauma, including the effects of a range of symptoms of disempowerment and disconnection, impacted how models of recovery were understood. Herman's work has been powerful in understanding and considering the full impact and symptoms of the trauma resulting from experiences of sexual violence.

Emerging technologies impacts on every aspect of contemporary life, and are regarded by some as the most significant technological change of modern times, impacting personal, social and cultural lives, as well as global economies and societal structures (Castell 1996, 1998). Statistics show that technology usage has consistently increased over the past decade, with figures from the Office for National Statistics (2017: p. 2) illustrating that the internet was used on a daily basis between January and March 2017 by 89% of adults in the UK, amounting to 45.9 million people, compared with 35% in 2006. The largest group of users is those aged between 16 and 34 years, of whom 99% are recent internet users, with men more likely to use the internet than women. The proportion of men who had recently used the internet was 90% in 2017, compared with women at 88% (Ibid. p. 4).

Social media and networks create a complex landscape within which individuals and organisations, including the media and political parties, communicate (Fusch et al. 2012). The impact of social media on culture and on how individuals communicate and organise their lives is immense (Van Dijck 2013). At the beginning of 2017, the total number of social media users in the UK had reached over 39 million. Figures also show that 84% of adults in the UK use social media, with YouTube and Facebook being the most popular (Brandwatch 2016). Whilst internet use is only one facet of technology use, this data does indicate the great influence of the internet and social media platforms, with one study suggesting that the internet has 3.17 billion users worldwide, with 2.3 billion active social media users and platforms

such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp handling approximately 60 billion messages a day (Brandwatch 2016).

While technologies continue to provide innovation and opportunities for individuals, groups and organisations to come together, there is also growing concern about the use of technology to sexually exploit, harass and abuse individuals. Current research focuses largely on the experiences of children and young people (Martellozzo 2012; Seto 2013; Livingston and Mason 2015).

Setting parameters on the range of harms has been a challenge for this study, as this is not an area which has a cohesive set of concepts within which I am guided. Since the late 1990s, Hughes (2000) and Maltzahn (2006) have been pointing to the way in which women are being sexually exploited for the purposes of trafficking and prostitution, highlighting the use of live streaming, greater interactivity among users, file transferring protocols, marketing and advertising (Miller 2014) with traffickers' use of chat rooms and classified sites to recruit and promote victims to potential buyers (Baker 2016). The internet is also used to advertise the services of escorting and strip clubs for the sexual services of women who have been trafficked (Farley et al. 2014).

The internet is used for a range of sexual behaviours, one of which is online pornography. This research is not a study in pornography, but the large-scale availability of pornography, coupled with the enhanced capabilities of technology, now means that the lines between professional and amateur pornography are becoming blurred (Paasonen 2010), raising concern about the widespread availability of violent pornography (Dines 2010; Hald and Malamuth 2013). Furthermore, the depiction of rape and degrading practices within pornography has been cited as another concern (Gossett and Byrne 2002).

A number of experiences of sexual victimisation and harassment have arisen through the development of technology and primarily in online spaces (Jane 2014). Since 2010, the phenomenon of 'revenge pornography' has emerged (Stroud 2014). This phenomenon does affect men; however, women remain disproportionately

impacted (Richardson 2012). Revenge pornography has a number of definitions, but can be summed up as follows:

Revenge pornography is a category of online pornography that includes amateur images or videos that were self-produced or manufactured with the consent of those depicted, but then distributed without their consent. This is typically done in 'revenge' following the breakdown of a relationship (Salter 2013:1).

Images can and often do give the women's personal details, such as their names, addresses and links to social media profiles, often resulting in further harassment by others who may view these images. Within the UK, the response of policy makers has been a change in the law. In April 2015, it was made a criminal offence to *'disclose a private sexual photograph or film if the disclosure is made (a) without the consent of the individual who appears, and (b) with the intention of causing that person distress'* in s33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, carrying a prison sentence of up to two years. The Crown Prosecution Service reported that there were 465 cases starting prosecution in 2016–17 for the criminal offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films without the consent of an individual who appears in them, with intent to cause that individual distress: this was a rise from 205 in 2015–16.

The term 'revenge pornography' is used throughout the literature. I do, however, also use and prefer the terms 'non-consensual images' or 'non-consensual pornography', as the term 'revenge pornography' can pathologise women's experience and fails to focus on the perpetrators. This also follows arguments set out by McGlynn et al. (2017), who argue that the dissemination of non-consensual images needs to be considered within the wider continuum of violence against women.

Lastly, as social media sites have grown in popularity and use, women are subjected to a high level of aggressive misogyny and abuse (Jane 2017). Online abuse is not limited to women in the public eye and who may use social media as part of their

professional roles, but also affects other women, including women who are targeted as deserving to be raped.

When we consider incidents of harassment in online spaces, a study by Demos in 2016, which followed up a study conducted two years previously of 1.5 million tweets over a 23-day period, found the following:

- ❖ Over half (54%) were advertising pornography.
- ❖ 213,000 tweets contained aggressive uses of the words 'slut' or 'whore'. This represents over 9,000 aggressively misogynistic tweets sent per day worldwide during this period, with 80,000 Twitter users targeted by this trolling.
- ❖ 10,500 aggressive tweets, targeted at 6,500 unique users, could be algorithmically located in the UK; this means that there are at least 450 tweets posted containing aggressively misogynistic language in the UK every day. Demos (2016) notes that this should be considered to be a conservative estimate

While the explanation above sets out some of the concerns in relation to technology and its intersection with sexual violence, there is a lack of conceptual and theoretical frameworks that I could utilise to underpin the research.

1.2 Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of the study is to explore, describe and explain the ways in which practitioners working within sexual violence support services construct meaning in relation to technology-facilitated sexual violence against adult women.

The research aims are to:

- ❖ Explore ways in which practitioners working within sexual violence services construct meaning in relation to technology-facilitated sexual violence against adult women.
- ❖ Describe how advocates, advice workers, psychotherapists and counsellors work in relation to this issue.

- ❖ Evaluate critically the ways in which practitioners working in sexual violence support services respond to women's experiences.
- ❖ Describe the impact this may have in their practice.

The broader aims of the research are to:

- ❖ Contribute an enhanced awareness of the ways in which technology is used to sexually victimise adult women within sexual violence support services and the field of counselling and psychotherapy.
- ❖ Contribute to the growing debate in this field of research.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The Introduction chapter sets out the landscape of the concerns in relation to technology and sexual violence within a number of different contexts. It also raises the lack of cohesive concepts to underpin the study. This is reflected in the broad aims that the study seeks to address. This study is exploratory in nature, as I am not seeking to formulate a theory but rather to explore and describe this area of concern.

The latter part of the Introduction sets out the background to the research, starting with the pilot study, which was carried out in 2015. I have provided an overview of the pilot study because it investigated the intersection of technology and sexual violence from the perspective of women who had been victimised. This formed a key part of the rationale and basis for this current study. Finally, I set out where I am located in this research and the ways in which I have sought to integrate reflexivity throughout the process.

The literature review in Chapter Two sets out the key developments to technology and the subsequent impact and changes to the ways in which it is used. This is not a study of technology, but it is important to set out changes such as user-generated content (UGC) and the impacts of Web 2.0. The literature review provides a brief overview of the ways in which the internet is used for sexual behaviours and the

conceptualisations for this area, explaining the contrasting views within research of those who raise concern over the increasing availability of violent sexual material online. It also highlights the gaps in the literature when we consider the impact and harms through the use of technology and sexual violence. I conclude the chapter with an evaluation of the findings from the literature.

Chapter Three sets out the methodology and method that underpin this study and key epistemological and ontological concerns, including feminist analysis and theories of intersectionality. The use of narrative inquiry and thematic analysis is explored and some of the tensions in the use of narrative inquiry are discussed (Riessman 2005). I then set out the ways in which I collated the data, the rationale for the use of thematic analysis to analyse the data and some of the challenges and processes I undertook. I then discuss ethical concerns, some of which are related to undertaking research in relation to technology and ways in which this may impact on the literature review. I finish with a reflexive view of the process.

The research findings are presented in Chapter Four in relation to the research question. Within this chapter, I describe the findings and the four primary themes that emerge, including the way in which participants use so-called off line violence in order to understand technology and sexual violence, and furthermore the way the behaviour of predators is viewed in the cyber-world, and notions of consent. Another theme that emerged was the impact of harm on the survivors and the consequence of this harm for both their personal and professional lives. I did not include a reflexive paragraph within this chapter, as I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants were given primacy.

Chapter Five presents the discussion of the findings, linking them to the literature, and sets out the implications of this research. It explores how the self is experienced when victimised in cyberspace, relating this to theories of shame. The context of women's experiences of technology facilitated sexual violence is placed in the wider understanding of the violence against women and girls. The way in which the behaviour of predators is viewed is also considered. I turn then to explore how we can start to consider the embodiment of harm when it is

experienced through the medium of technology and when the impact is intensely felt by survivors. The last of the four themes is the services and support afforded to survivors and the interventions by the participants, how they relate to current debates on regulation of the internet, and the silencing effect of the lack of a cohesive response.

Within this chapter, I also explore the gaps between the research findings and the literature, centring this discussion on Webcamming and women who are trafficked or involved in prostitution. It is important to highlight these gaps, as there is still little that is known about Webcamming, which has grown as a result of the internet. For women trafficked and forced into prostitution, the consequences and scale of harm can be catastrophic. The latter part of the section discusses some of the strengths and limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Six sets out the contribution to knowledge and practice, the ways in which I have disseminated findings from the research and how I intend to continue to build on the work of this study and my concluding comments. I complete this chapter with a personal reflection on the doctoral research journey.

1.4 Definition and Concepts

Given the distinct areas of the research – technology and sexual violence – I have set out the definitions I have used, and draw attention to some of the challenges and drawbacks to these. While the definitions below are used for clarity, it is also recommended that experiences of sexual violence that involve the use of technology should not be defined separately from the sexual violence that women experience in so-called offline spaces (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017).

Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence

The terminology used in this research, ‘technology-facilitated sexual violence’ (TFSV), has been used as a way to conceptualise and define a range of sexual

violence, harassment and harms committed against women through the use of emerging technologies (Henry & Powell 2015a). It can be defined as:

‘the diverse ways in which criminal, civil or otherwise harmful sexually aggressive and harassing behaviours are being perpetrated with the aid or use of digital communication technologies.’ (Henry & Powell 2017: 5)

Researchers Henry and Powell (2017) go on to further explore the dimensions of TFSV, which they set out as ranging from the enabling of rape and sexual assault to non-consensual use of images and harassment online. While this has been a useful definition, as the study sets out, there are experiences and a lack of language for survivors’ experiences that may not fall within this definition.

Sexual Violence

Below is a definition which sets out a broader framework within which to understand sexual violence.

Sexual violence has been defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as:

‘Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.’ (2012:2)

Victim or Survivor

The use of terminology for women who have been victimised through experiences of sexual violence is often debated within feminist discussion. The use of the word ‘survivor’ is often preferred, as it places an emphasis on the agency and efficacy of the individual, whereas the term ‘victim’ carries implications of a more passive acceptance (Rock 2002). The word ‘victim’ is used in the literature and within the criminal justice system and police services: the terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ are therefore used interchangeably throughout this study.

1.5 Background: The Pilot Study

To understand the background to this study, it is important to examine the pilot study which I completed in 2015 as part of the doctoral research programme. The area of investigation for the pilot study was also TFSV. However, the pilot study focused on the experiences of three survivors. Its aims were to explore and describe the participants' experiences of the intersection between sexual violence and emerging technologies and to describe the subsequent impact of these experiences. Utilising a qualitative methodological approach – narrative inquiry – two primary themes emerged: the first was related to the ways in which participants viewed the involvement of technology in their experiences and the second reflected the personal and emotional impacts of their experiences.

The research findings from the pilot study generated some data which set out the complexity of the participants' experiences and how bewildered they were left, expressing profound feelings of shock, confusion and anxiety and feeling that there had been a lack of support and that there was nowhere for them to turn. The experiences the women reported ranged from using the internet to engage and then sexually exploit them to distributing sexually explicit images without consent and filming and distributing images of sexual assault and rape to multiple perpetrators. The range of experiences that the three participants divulged during our time together was an important factor in designing the current study to be exploratory in nature: the literature review in 2015 and the review from the last two years has continued to grow, and to explore and question the links between technology and sexual violence.

A second impact was around issues of ethics, which created a dynamic that I had not foreseen. Engaging with the participants through the use of narrative inquiry allowed us to explore their experiences in depth, but for me this engagement created an uncomfortable sense that a parallel process was being created in which, through the conversations and subsequent write-up and distribution of findings, I was exposing the participants to further scrutiny.

All three participants reported that taking part in the study had been a positive experience for them. I initially considered undertaking the second and final study with survivors, but was aware that I might then be replicating the pilot. Furthermore, engaging with survivors requires a great deal of ethical sensitivity and I did not want to disturb any future participants only to replicate research that had already been undertaken. The decision to engage with practitioners was made because I felt it would bring value to those services that support survivors and ultimately help and support survivors in a way that is meaningful for them.

However, when I compare some aspects of the pilot with this final study, one of the key differences was the recruitment of participants. During the pilot study, I was very quickly approached by five women who wanted to take part. Two of the women were discounted from the study. This was a difficult decision; however, one participant presented as depressed and low and was clearly struggling to cope with daily life, and I did not feel that it would be in her interest to take part at this point. A second woman, while robust and able to tolerate the process, was also involved in a convoluted dispute with the courts and her family, and her motivation to take part was in part driven by a desire for recorded evidence that her experiences of circulating sexually explicit material had not been consensual. This did not feel to me like a safe space within which to undertake research, and details of support services were given.

Recruitment of participants for this final study was far more challenging: I received few responses and no responses at all in the first few months from counsellors or psychotherapists. This was a cause for concern, which I have explored in more detail in Chapter Three. The feedback was centred on practitioners' concerns that they would not have enough material to contribute. I reflected on this considerably and considered whether this final study was a viable and useful undertaking. This was in contrast to the literature on TFSV, which supported researching this area. I revised the process for recruitment; however, only one participant is from the field of psychotherapy.

1.6 Locating Myself in the Research

This research is a natural progression from my position as a senior practitioner and clinical manager within a rape crisis setting, a service which is part of the Women and Girls Network (WGN), a pan-London charitable organisation established in 1987, which provides holistic services to women and girls who have experienced gendered violence and abuse.

I have spent over fifteen years working in the sector concerned with ending violence against women and girls. For the last seven years I have specialised in working with women's and girls' experiences of sexual violence, working with a range of concerns from recent to historical experiences, including childhood sexual abuse, trafficking, rape, and women who have experienced sexual violence and exploitation.

Working in this sector requires a high level of personal commitment, and it carries with it an ethos and belief set about the causes of violence and why it continues to happen. Coupled with this, working in a not-for-profit organisation will mean working at a local community level and often with women who are marginalised, not just by their experiences of violence but often also by socio-economic or political factors or by their sexuality. We are often in the position of supporting women with complex presentations and competing needs.

Sexual violence services have for decades provided specialist support for women and girls, in response to the complex ways in which experiences impact on women's lives. Services such as rape crisis centres will offer a wide variety of services at community level and free at the point of access, which is crucial for women who may have no money to pay for support and those with no recourse to public funding, which can be the case for a large number of women who have been trafficked.

Furthermore, women who have been involved in sexual exploitation may be reluctant to seek help for fear of being judged. Community-based services offer a space in which women are able to seek multiple forms of support and the psycho-

educational work that is done by these services helps to highlight issues of sexual violence and the prevention work that is being done. Understanding the influence and reach of sexual violence services is an important part of the significance of this research, as issues emerging from this work and being developed across sexual violence services network will allow more women to seek support and will also provide support and training at both a practitioner and a strategic level.

It is through my work at rape crisis that my initial interest in the issue of TFSV has developed. The issue of TFSV would be mentioned by women, but very often only once they were in service. This was not their primary presentation but a part of their experiences, which ranged from taking pictures consensually only to have them circulated once the relationship broke down to believing that they had been filmed during a sexual assault or being coerced into filming sexual acts as part of other abuses they were experiencing. The level of anxiety and distress this caused was apparent, coupled with the lack of support and knowledge and I would include myself in that place of not knowing. It was for this reason that I embarked on this doctoral programme, as it felt to me at that time that this was an issue that would only get worse, but I had no basis or framework within which to understand it.

Reflexivity

I conclude this chapter with a brief reflexive overview of where I am located in this research. Being part of an organisation that works with survivors, I was challenged throughout the study as to whose voice I was presenting. As a practitioner, it is the voices of survivors that are central to my work: we seek to engage women at every turn and ensure that it is their voices that are given primacy. This was the overwhelming motivation for seeking to engage with survivors in the pilot study. Within the final study, one of the challenges I have encountered is that I felt at times that my gaze has moved away from the voices of the participants, all of whom are practitioners. I would continuously seek to 'find' the voice of survivors, feeling a sense of frustration when carrying out the data analysis. It was only when I shared the data with a critical friend and peer that they pointed to the richness of

the data from the narratives of the participants. It was a critical turning point, revealing that in staying with the experiences of the participants and exploring the ways in which they worked, I could add benefit and change for survivors of TFSV.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter will be to highlight and review the existing literature relating to sexual violence and how it intersects with emerging technology. The literature has some distinct features: this is not a direct examination of technology but it is integral to the topic. To reflect this and to locate the research within the broader framework of emerging technology, in the first part of this chapter I will examine the impact of and the main theories behind the broader development and integration of technology into individual lives. I then outline ways in which psychotherapy and counselling frame and understand technology and how theories of the self in technology are understood.

The sections that follow focus on the competing theories of sexual behaviour online, sexual violence, exploitation and technology, analysing previous knowledge and the key contributions. I complete this section with an evaluation of the findings and how they have influenced the research, and some of the limitations of these approaches, including the limitations and gaps identified in the literature.

As this study involves the intersection and overlapping of two very broad topics, it is necessary to begin this chapter by detailing the process that was taken to select and critically analyse the literature for this review

2.1 Approach

This review covers approximately the past 25 years, because there is little, if any, literature prior to this time frame. As this remains an evolving area of study, the terminology within the literature review is inconsistent. Additionally, for the purpose of this research, a number of terms are used interchangeably: 'emerging technologies' and 'cyberspace', defined as the progressing virtual world of computers, will be used to reflect the fluid and dynamic nature and use of technology (Liang 2001:1). This includes but is not limited to social media networks, online technology, smart phones and tablets.

As the use of emerging technologies is a critical part of the aims of this study, it was important to understand the development of technology to provide a context for the research. However, in order to ensure that the aims and objectives of the research were not lost, the overview of technology was limited to behaviour and how identity may be constructed in the digital medium.

As the review progressed, it became apparent that this area of research was being debated and researched from a number of disciplines and perspectives. The outcome of this is a literature review that encompasses the intersection of technology, gender and sexual violence and how meaning is created and constructed. In order to highlight the most up-to-date research and address controversies in the literature, I set out to critique the literature and reflect on the ways in which the findings, controversies and gaps in existing studies have changed the ways in which I have conceptualised the area of research.

The sources I searched included the World Wide Web, academic sites, journals, peer-reviewed journals, government-published documents and books. As this is still an evolving area of research, it was decided to include 'grey' literature – that is, articles and papers from governmental departments and not-for-profit groups concerned with ending violence against women. Snowball-sampling techniques were then utilised to build and extend the research: subsequently, it should be noted that in the early stages, there was an element of bias and subjectivity in the selection of literature using authors already known to the researcher.

The initial search was carried out in 2015 for the pilot study and produced only a handful of research papers. The search criteria for the literature review focused on adult women and the intersection of sexual violence and exploitation using emerging technologies. To maintain the focus of this study, research on children and adolescents was largely excluded, except where the research was considered to be of particular significance.

2.2 Emerging Technology

The evolution of information and communication technologies can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s, from mainframes to microcomputers, and the 1990s with the advent of the web (Dewing 2012 p: 2). This was in the form of media such as emails and e-bulletins, although without the graphics, digital capabilities, social media and interactive capabilities that are common today. The most significant development within this period was the World Wide Web (Keen 2007). The capability of the internet is considerable and is still constantly developing: for example, it has created online communities and provides live streaming on a number of devices, including mobile phones and webcams, all of which have contributed to powerful new ways of communicating in our personal, social and public lives (Hoffman et al., 2004). Furthermore, user-generated content has become a key component in changing the way individuals use the internet and communication technologies.

While statistics are important in contextualising the use of technology, they do not allow us to understand the impact of technology on individuals or how it changes social structures and cultures. Emerging technologies and their impact on everyday lives across the globe have led to a growing plethora of literature and research investigating how this influence puts forward new ideas and how technology has become more than just a means to communicate (Castells 1996; Van Dijck 2013). Such research has been conducted in the fields of psychotherapy, sociology, criminology and psychology in explorations of notions of the self, with the creation of identity in relationship to technology being studied in great detail and giving rise to debate about the interactions created through our use of technology (Castells 1996; Turkle 1984; Suler 2004; Seto 2013).

As a starting point for this study, a brief overview of the literature relating to the evolution of technology is important to contextualise the research.

2.2.1 Consumer to Producer

The capability of emerging technologies has rapidly altered the way in which individuals use and interact with technology, how social networking sites provide opportunities and change the way people connect and communicate, and our understanding of concepts and theories in relation to emerging technology and issues of technology-facilitated sexual violence (Levmore and Nussbaum 2010; Bartlett et al. 2014; Henry and Powell 2017). One of the key changes of the last decade has been the creation of Web 2.0 (Darwish and Lakhtaria 2011), with emerging technology being increasingly viewed as an everyday part of all areas of people's lives (Murthy 2008).

The launch of Web 2.0 allowed greater connectivity, and significantly facilitated user-generated content (UGC). This term is used to describe any form of content created by those using computers and other online systems, included but not limited to blogs, social media sites, films and posts (Cha et al. 2007). Central to participation in the Web 2.0 phenomenon of the user as publisher is the ability to post reviews, perform interactively in public, play games and broadcast, highlighting the power and influence of UGC (George and Sceri 2007).

This means that consumers of technology are no longer passive in their use and can now change and shape how Information Communication Technology is used (Cha et al. 2007), creating a world of information filtering systems, digital filming, peer-to-peer use and internet service providers (Ahmed et al. 2013). In her work, Van Dijck (2008) explores the way in which users are now regarded as active contributors to the internet, and employs the term 'user agency':

'User agency is a lot more complex than [these bipolar terms] suggest; we need to account for the multifarious roles of users in a media environment where the boundaries between commerce, content and information are currently being redrawn' (Van Dijck 2009: p.42).

The agenda for the use of technology and the landscape of its use have changed radically, with UGC representing a key turning point resulting in emerging technologies no longer being solely the remit of professional organisations such as the mass media (Jaakonmäki et al. 2017). Research into UGC reflects its far-reaching effects, which enable individuals to engage and interact across every area of their lives. Technology research has highlighted the layered ways in which UGC affects different areas of people's lives, whether these are social, professional, political or psychological (Leung 2009), and clarified the gratification gained from this change in participation. Social media is one area that has evolved rapidly and is entirely dependent on UGC: through the phenomenon of platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and apps such as Snapchat, people are incentivised to produce and engage with large quantities of data. This shift in attitude gives rise to a certain feeling of freedom but also highlights the unregulated nature of technology and, particularly, the internet (Ghosh 2011). However, while many felt, and perhaps still do, that this is an area where regulation has been ineffective (Bartow 2008), many others would argue that tensions in fact came from the technological protocols and network connections (Galloway 2004; Chun 2006). This leads to the analysis and revision of copyright policies and a wider consideration of software regulation (Gillespie 2006).

The existing literature builds a picture of the multi-layered world of technology, and while few studies have been able to provide empirical evidence, some, such as the work of Daugherty et al. (2013), who undertook an exploratory study investigating the attitudes of consumers and creators of UGC, have found a strong indication of the appeal of social functions and participatory capability in relation to UGC.

This was further highlighted in research on copyright and the impact of Web 2.0. In terms of the connection to sexual violence and technology, there has been significant research which suggests that Web 2.0 facilitates the production and distribution of pornography that can be uploaded to sites designed specifically for so-called 'home-porn' to generate an income (Paasonen 2010). It has been argued that this creates copyright issues and incentivises people to produce pornography; furthermore, Bartow (2008) asserts that it generates safety concerns, with increased vulnerability to harm, including violence, coercion and lack of consent,

pointing specifically to a lack of protection within the framework of copyright laws where participation in the creation of sexually explicit material has not been consensual.

A study by Doorn (2010) examined a sample of user-generated amateur videos on a porn site and further highlighted the 'heteronormative pornscript' and an adherence to traditional gender ideology (p. 411). Keen (2017), in his book *Cult of the Amateur*, points more broadly to the negative aspects the capability of Web 2.0 will have on users.

2.3 Counselling & Psychotherapy

The literature on psychotherapy and counselling largely focuses on the continued development and effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy online (Day and Schneider 2002; Antony and Goss 2003; Newman 2004), ranging from online counselling to avatar-based therapy, apps to track mood and computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (CBBT), which is available online to help with mental health needs and has been approved by NICE to treat depression and anxiety disorders. While researchers and practitioners state the importance of understanding the use of online tools and the power they create to communicate without the physical presence of the counsellor, they also point to the cyber-world being a culture within itself (Anthony and Nagel 2013).

Online counselling is outside of the remit of the present study; however, there are a number of studies which are beginning to explore the relevance of this field and the advancements made, which link to the ways in which people create online identities and the multiple ways in which these identities are used. Most notable over the last ten years is the development of Avatar Therapy, attributed to Professor Julian Leff in 2008 (Craig et al. 2017). It currently focuses on the treatment of patients with schizophrenia, with its use for the treatment of auditory hallucinations in these patients being trialled. Its aim is to encourage patients to create an avatar of the so-called 'persecutor' and to engage in a dialogue with this

avatar¹, to allow patients to gain control. A number of trials have been conducted (see, for example, Leff et al. 2013, 2014; Huckvale et al. 2013). The most recent study (Craig et al. 2017) involved 150 patients with schizophrenia, half of whom underwent avatar therapy while the other half received a supportive form of counselling. The group who had avatar therapy spent 10-15 minutes speaking face-to-face with the avatar, practising standing up to it, correcting any misconceptions it had about them, and taking control of the conversation, so that power shifted from the avatar to the patient.

The avatar came to recognise the patient's strengths and good qualities, and the patient's greater control and power in the relationship. Assessment at 12 and again at 24 weeks showed that in the group receiving avatar-based therapy, symptoms were rated less severe than those in the control group. Limitations in the study were noted in relation to the lack of expertise in the delivery of counselling sessions compared to those who delivered avatar-based therapy. As the continued trials and studies in avatar therapy evolve, they support the interest in research into technology and the field of psychotherapy.

2.3.2 Theories of the Self and Technology

One of the key aims of this research has been to understand and describe how the role of technology and sexual violence is understood by those working in sexual violence support services and the construction of meaning. This section explores the literature and studies on how individuals understand themselves in relation to technology.

Over the last few decades, much has been written about technology and human behaviour (Rosen 2012). This has been across many disciplines and often in relation to social media sites, gaming and other virtual worlds (Zhou 2011; Poletti and Rak 2014). The field of psychology has witnessed growth in the theory of cyber

¹ An *Avatar* is an image that is a digital representation of a person that has agency and is controlled by a person through the use of a computer (Bell 2008).

psychology, which responds to how people are affected by technology, usually computers or technologies that mediate interactions (Norman 2008). One of the main theories within cyber psychology is that there is a marked difference between how people interact online and how they may behave in person (Norman 2017).

Within the literature, two writers are dominant, the first being Turkle (1984, 2011, 2015). Her first book, *The Second Self* (1984), was considered ground-breaking for its time. Turkle was able to combine her background in psychoanalysis and technology, initially focusing on the subjective aspects of technology, the impact it has on individuals and its capacity to support people's reflecting on the self. Turkle was one of the first writers to explore the concept of technology rather than just looking at its capability and her work was important in moving discussions on technology forward. She explored questions of what was real and virtual and, crucially for psychotherapy, how the self was positioned in relation to the culture of technology.

Turkle's work is significant to this study for many reasons. Her ethnographic studies started to consider the psychology of computers and human behaviour, and highlight in detail the disadvantages of the ethnographic research in comparison to other forms of research that seek to explicitly involve the responses of those being studied. Turkle set out the subjective aspects of technology and how this shapes and reflects our values. Her early work (1984) raised issues about the boundaries between real and virtual life, because how people present themselves is linked to who they are, and although virtual realities are not real, they are connected to the real world: therefore, how people present themselves online is also linked to their identity. Turkle's initial work was highly positive about technology, which may also have reflected the perception of technology at that time, but this was over 30 years ago, and changes in technology appear to have changed her perspective. In her latter publications (2015), Turkle explores how people create new identities and lives in online spaces, and describes technological devices as currently so psychologically powerful that they change who we are and what we do, emphasising the need to develop a level of awareness about technology and about ourselves.

The second writer who features heavily in this review is also in the field of psychology and psychotherapy: John Suler, who is regarded as having led the field of cyber psychology, has developed several key concepts (2004). In 2004, Suler published *The Online Disinhibition Effect*, in which he explores issues of anonymity and the lack of responsibility that individuals feel when online and details six factors that could combine to change people's behaviour online. While at least six factors are involved, for some people just one or two of them produce the lion's share of the disinhibition effect. In most cases, however, these factors intersect and interact, supplementing each other, resulting in a more complex, amplified effect (Suler 2004)

These six factors are as follows:

- ❖ Dissociative Anonymity, where actions online cannot be attributed to the person.
- ❖ Invisibility
- ❖ Asynchronicity: actions not occurring in real time.
- ❖ Solipsistic Introjection: not being able to see the other and having to guess at intent. This is not merely a lack of social cues but rather a phenomenon whereby individuals feel a level of connection that creates a sense that their minds are merging.
- ❖ Dissociative Imagination: a form of splitting, wherein what happens online may be experienced as separate from so-called real life.
- ❖ Minimisation of status and authority.

Suler has continued to build on the theories of cyber psychology, and in his latest work (2015), he analyses human behaviour. The book, which is based on decades of work in this field, uses the writers' observations, descriptions and anecdotes and relates them to the internet and its applications. The book includes an exploration of so-called 'deviant' behaviour online, and suggests that how people behave, primarily online, involves a 'psychological space' – that is, the psychological process

of using computers and technology when communicating – and that there is a meaning that is assigned to that space. The influence and contribution of Suler's work to expanding our understanding of cyber psychology is clear; the only drawback to the book is that it is heavily populated by the writer's description and there is a lack of empirical work.

Suler's work is important to the present study, as it creates an understanding that behaviour online can be distinct from so-called real life. Once someone turns away from their smartphone or computer and returns to their so-called everyday life, the 'other' does not seem real, and there is no sense of responsibility for harm that may have been caused (2004). What this does not explain is the phenomenon of 'revenge pornography', which is discussed in greater detail later in this section. In such cases, individuals are very aware that they will cause real harm. However, these theories of disconnecting, splitting off and unconscious processes are important to psychotherapy and our understanding of how the self is experienced and how identity is created, in comparison to psychoanalytic thinking about the self, which considers personality as being constructed in layers.

Within the literature, empirical data remains sparse, with some researchers presenting reviews and setting out the concerns about the online virtual world and how individuals behave. Levmore and Nussbaum (2010), in their book, which is a collection of essays, liken the internet to villages and highlight issues of cyber-bullying and the malice that is allowed to spread on the internet. They argue against allowing anonymity on the internet in the context of the harm caused and the need to provide protection. The authors use examples from internet chat rooms, blogs and forums and consider the unregulated nature of the internet.

As set out at the start of this section, an area which is being explored in counselling and psychotherapy is that of Second-Lifers or the use of avatars. Second Life is a social virtual world where people interact on a web-based three-dimensional environment. Launched by Linden Lab in 2003, it is one of the most popular forms of social virtual world, as it allows users to create personalised virtual worlds (Zhou et al. 2011) and virtual representations of themselves, which are called avatars.

Research on avatars and virtual worlds is also being approached from other disciplines. Bessièrè et al. (2007) examined notions of identity and exploration by online players of games and the use of graphics and construction of avatars and characters. Their findings support the notion that players assigned characters more favourable attributes than those given to their own selves, and the researchers suggest that creating a so-called ideal self-online may help to increase an individual's feeling of self-worth. Technology may now be providing more innovative ways in which to engage people and facilitate recovery: there is already much work on the use of visual imagery and technology can be seen as an extension of this.

Goffman's work (1959; 1974) is regarded as being critical in the field of sociology. In his work *The Presentation of the Self* (1959), he used a framework of dramaturgical analysis of how social interactions occur: this is a term used in sociology that considers parts of human interactions to be dependent on time, place and the audience, and understands the 'self' in relation to social situations (1959: 252-253). Individuals are likened to actors, with identity being formed through their interactions with others.

A later study by Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013) discussed a contemporary representation of Goffman's work and how it applied to an analysis of identity and representation of the self in relation to ten cases of blogging and Second Life contexts. The study carried out an analysis of online identity and how individuals create a variety of ways of expressing themselves in these contexts. The findings illustrated that participants did not create or adopt a different persona online, but rather appeared to attempt to 'recreate their offline self-online' (2013: 10). While there is debate and thought about the impact of anonymity, what this research highlighted was the rather grainy and blurred adopted personas that are used in the online world. While this research was on a small scale and not in the field of psychotherapy, it does demonstrate how individuals may reconceptualise themselves in the online environment.

Studies have looked at the benign online disinhibition effect: this refers to the positive effects of personal development through online engagement (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak 2012). These studies were designed as a continuation of an earlier study, referring to a toxic online disinhibition which happens when individuals' behaviour is damaging to their own or someone else's self-image. Using a factorial design, the study of 2015 is a continuation of Lapidot-Lefler and Barak's 2012 study, which examined the effects of three online situational factors: anonymity, invisibility and lack of eye contact. Results suggested that the interaction between anonymity and invisibility had a significant effect on the revealing of emotions, the inducement of first-person words and the total self-disclosure score: this was a three-approach measure combining objective and self-reported disclosure. No significant effects were found for pro-social behaviours. A discussion of the findings with regard to previous research on toxic online disinhibition suggests that different factors play a role in the inducement of benign, as opposed to toxic, online disinhibition effects. Furthermore, the authors admit that the research is limited, as it has not yet been able to verify the effects of anonymity and visibility in real-life situations.

The literature on notions of the self and behaviour online is important to place this research in the context of how evolving technology impacts individuals and how its capability is increasing. While discussion and research on the construction of the self continue, this research highlights some of the challenges of establishing behaviour online and how this changes in offline forums. However, there is still a lack of empirical data and studies. One field in which the impact of online and offline behaviour is starting to emerge is, perhaps not surprisingly, in areas of interest relating to radicalisation and explorations of online violence leading to offline violence (Pearson 2017).

2.4 Sexual Behaviour and Technology

As set out in Chapter One, the aim of the study is to understand sexual violence and its intersection with technology. In the course of undertaking this review, the use of emerging technologies for sexual behaviour was evident through the use of the internet.

The internet allows individuals to access sexually explicit material and technology-based interactive sex, webcams, online pornography and chat rooms (Carnes 2001; Cooper & Delmonico 2000; Griffiths 2010). This is framed, in the field of sexual compulsivity, either as sexual addiction or in a polarised position as harmful and exploitative. The area in which there is the most debate is webcamming and so called cyber-sex, cybersex corresponds to the use of the Internet to engage in sexually gratifying activities. For ease of reference, the discussion of these aspects has been divided into sub-sections

Sexual Addictions and Compulsivity

Use of the internet for sexual activity has been explored from a number of different perspectives and concepts; one of these has been work on sexual addiction and compulsivity. It has been asserted that the internet is a forum that offers individuals easier access and anonymity (Cooper, 1998). Young et al. (2000) suggest that these factors open the door to sexual addiction for individuals who previously have not expressed such vulnerability, or expose the vulnerable user to chronic sexually driven compulsion.

Young (1999) put forward the concept of internet or cybersex addiction as a type of internet addiction. Cybersex is a subcategory of online sexual activities (OSA) and is defined as two or more people engaging in sexual talk while online for the purposes of sexual pleasure, which may or may not include masturbation (Daneback et al. 2012). Cooper (1998) sets out the way in which the internet impacts sexual addiction and refers to the so-called Triple A effect – *accessible, affordable and anonymous* – as being the key factors in the rise of internet use for accessing

sexually explicit material. Carnes et al (2001) asserted that there is a distinct form of sexual addiction that has emerged in connection to the accessibility of internet technology and the immediate explicit sexual materials that it provides. Young (2008) identified the interactive capability of online technology, such as the fantasy element that forms a part of understanding sexual compulsion in relation to the internet. The assertion is that there are key features that are distinct to the internet, and studies have since suggested that there may also be other factors at play, such as convenience, escape and disinhibition (Dhuffar and Griffiths 2015; Sussman and Griffiths 2011).

Other theoretical frameworks have also been developed: for example, Griffiths (2002) developed the Problematic Pornography Consumption model, carrying out a study with a sample of 772 respondents (390 females and 382 males). The model was part of a systematic review; however, in a later study, Bóthe et al. (2017) found it to be a reliable framework, although further research is needed to assess the extent of problems related to pornography use.

Three quantitative studies have provided empirical data, as set out below. One study of the use of the internet for sexual activity has produced one of the few large-scale studies on this topic, and while not specifically looking at issues of sexual violence, the research work is important in understanding the extent to which technology is used for sexual behaviours. Cooper's (1998) work focused on online sexual activity, an area that includes 'cybersex' and 'cyberporn' and the use of the internet to gain sexual gratification (Cooper 1997, 1998; Cooper & Sportolari 1997; Cooper et al. 2007). Griffiths (2010) expanded on this field of interest by further exploring sexual addiction, its intersection with online pornography, real-time sexual exchanges and the use of increasingly sophisticated software.

In one study, Cooper, Delmonico and Burg (2000) undertook empirical research using tools such as the Kalichman Sexual Compulsivity Scale to divide the participant sample into four groups, ranging from non-sexually compulsive to problematic sexually compulsive, with 17% of the participants scoring in the latter group. This study was just one of a few providing quantitative data, and its findings

emphasise the different characteristics of individuals and the impact of sexual compulsivity on interpersonal relationships.

Cooper et al. (2004) conducted an online survey of 7037 individuals. This complex survey included 15 items designed to gather information on a wide range of demographic variables and 41 items on respondents' attitudes and behaviours. These results provided descriptions of activities that could lead to problematic behaviour in three areas: obsession, compulsion, and consequences. In addition, specific results were highlighted in terms of gender differences and types of cybersex users. It expanded and refined a survey used in earlier studies of online sexual activities (Cooper et al. 1999; Cooper, Delmonico & Burg 2000).

Studies have also attempted to move away from individual cases to more empirical research to explain user characteristics and patterns of use. Daneback et al.'s (2012) study, which was based on an online questionnaire completed by 1,913 respondents about their use of the internet for sexual purposes, recorded a noted gendered difference in online usage, and differences in use where men had private access to computers: this was found to promote sexual knowledge and health for men.

Wéry (2015) carried out a systematic review, part of which aimed to explore the conceptualisation of cyber-sex and what makes it problematic. The findings concluded that the measurement of problematic cybersex is limited to online questionnaires. The author concluded that problematic use is a heterogeneous disorder, but also that no conceptualisation is available (Wéry 2015).

Cooper (2000) highlights the importance of psychotherapy and counselling in understanding the nature and complexity of interactions that take place online, and along with others in this field, is concerned with sexual behaviour online. Cooper's edited volume, *Sex and the Internet: A Guide Book for Clinicians* (2002), brings together some of the key researchers with an interest in this field, who set out different aspects of online sexual behaviours. The book is highly informative and useful, and the only gap in the literature for much of this field of work is that it is often presented from the perspective of the consumer and their behaviour, with

little focus on the impact on those who are involved in the production and supply of sexual services online. There is continued debate about sexual compulsivity and the internet (Orzack 2000; Sussman 2011; Kraus et al. 2016).

In 2009, Döring published an overview of fifteen years of research by others, which addresses the impact that the internet has on sexuality. This review is important, as it sets out six areas of online sexuality, ranging from pornography to sex work and sexual subcultures. Döring's review illustrates the normalisation of online sexual activities in the Western world. The review was neutral in terms of its moral view on internet sexuality, and instead highlighted that internet sex and sexuality is an extension of real life sex and that within those 15 years a different culture was developing and new norms were being created. The researcher also pointed to circumstances in which women may be sexually exploited, but this aspect was limited and demonstrated a lack of empirical research. Concepts of internet addiction in relation to sexual behaviour have been challenged (Griffiths 2012) and there remains a need for empirical research on this issue.

Despite the lack of empirical research, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the internet has provided an arena that offers access to sexual material, with Cooper (1998) and Young et al. (2000) suggesting that the combination of the Triple A effect of accessibility, affordability and anonymity can open the door to sexual addiction for individuals who previously may not have had this level of exposure. During the course of the literature review, a large number of academics and researchers have focused on the use of sexual material and the internet, allowing users to access online pornography, sexually explicit chat rooms, online prostitution sites, web cams and live streaming (Carnes 2001; Cooper & Delmonico 2000; Griffiths 2012).

Research in the field of sexual compulsivity focuses on the use of the internet for sexual activity; it does not address the issues or needs of those who may be harmed by such use or those who are involved in the production of sexual material online.

Webcamming

A new area mediated by emerging technology and a new way in which sex is bought and sold is webcamming (Henry and Farvid 2007). This is the practice of individuals performing sexual acts on a webcam, linked to a specific host (Bleakley 2014). The emergence of adult webcamming marks an important change in the sexual economy. Webcam modelling is part of a new, large, and diverse online market in which sex workers advertise and sell sexualized services online (Jones 2016).

Customers who wish to watch webcam models visit such websites and give out virtual 'tokens' (purchased in advance) to see specific acts, or to join the webcam model's private chat room. The tokens used are of certain monetary value and go directly into the webcam model's bank account, after the website takes a portion as their hosting fee (Bleakley 2014; Jones 2015a, 2016). Hughes (2000) also highlights the use of webcams in live streaming of women who are being sexually exploited.

Webcamming has grown in popularity since April 1996, when an American University student filmed herself and streamed this live (Bartlett 2014). In his book, Bartlett sets out the rise in the camming: at the time of his book, based on case studies and books, he estimated that there were 50,000 webcam models around the world.

Senft (2008) conducted an in-depth study of this phenomenon between 2000 and 2004. During this time, the researcher also lived as a camgirl, and her study includes interviews with camgirls and uses video analysis of footage that focuses on performance analysis of interactions between camgirls and their viewers, and the author's own personal experience. The aim of the research was 'asking what it means for feminists to speak of the personal as political in the age of networks' (2008: 115). The researcher concluded her study with generalised suggestions as to how political and social issues are realised, including urging a reflection on how we think about sex work.

Jones (2015a) takes an intersectional feminist perspective, discussing the racism prevalent in camming through the exclusion and fetishisation of camgirls of colour. A second study, also by Jones (2016), is a content analysis of online forums for

webcam models; the study sets out to explore themes of pleasure and danger. A key point for this research is that the researcher asserts that because of computer-mediated sexual exchanges, models are able to experience pleasure in the course of their work.

A more disturbing view is put forward by Bartlett (2015) in his book *The Dark Net*, which covers a number of issues in relation to the internet. He presents a case of a young woman who used webcamming not for money but rather to help improve her self-confidence. When her identity was inadvertently revealed, she was traced on social media sites and her friends and family were sent large volumes of naked pictures. The men who shared the pictures and revealed her identity continued to harass her with phone calls and saw this as a victory of what they called 'life ruin', which is celebrated as part of the humiliation.

The view of camgirls in the research literature is polarised. Attwood (2011) offers a more in-depth analysis, suggesting that webcamming does not present a clear distinction between the 'object' or 'subject' and that of the public and private self, and raises questions about women as merely sexual objects who are passively taking part (Attwood, 2011: 212). Opposing views and the problematic nature of understanding webcamming are summed up by Henry and Farvid (2017), who assert that the construction of sex work comes from the values and moralities and the cultural context of that construct.

Pornography and Rape Culture

In contrast to the focus on sexual compulsion, the literature also highlights discussions in which writers point to the availability of violent and extreme pornography, conceptualised by some researchers as a 'rape culture'. Herman (1989) defines this concept as being related to research that focuses on the scrutiny and evaluation of a mind-set and attitude and norms that are interlinked with violence against women.

In terms of its importance to this research, the literature raises concerns about exposure to violent pornography and its correlation to so-called rape-myths, which are often seen as holding the victims as culpable and as having enjoyed or deserved to be raped (Malamuth and Check 1985; Boeringer 1994).

The concerns in relation to the extreme pornography that is now available because of the internet are reflected in changes in UK law, which has tried to take steps to prevent the possession of extreme pornography. This can be seen in changes to legislation in 2008 under sections 63-67 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 (CJIA). This includes pornographic material regarded as being grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise obscene and explicitly covering four areas, namely realistically depicting life-threatening injury, serious injury to a person's anus, breasts or genitals, bestiality and necrophilia. The context of this change points to the increasing availability of violent pornography, as highlighted by authors such as Dines (2010).

However, these changes to the laws in the UK have been largely ineffective, as they exclude pornographic images of rape and the need to address users (McGlynn and Rackley 2013). This is a view shared by Nair and Griffin (2013), who argue that the regulation of extreme pornography should focus on those who produce and distribute it rather than on the recipients. Research on the links between pornography and rape produces varying and conflicting results, with a number of attitudinal studies reporting contradictory results (Kutchinsky 1973; Baron and Strauss 1989; Russell 1994). Some studies suggest that exposure to sexually explicit images has no impact on participants' attitudes to women and rape (Davies 1997). No correlations were found between the number of videos a man had rented and his attitudes toward feminism and rape. These findings suggest that callous attitudes toward women may not be generated by sexually explicit videos but are more deeply ingrained in our society.

Hald et al. (2010) undertook a meta-analysis with an aim to determine whether non-experimental studies revealed an association between men's pornography consumption and their attitudes supporting violence against women. An overall

significant positive association was found between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women in non-experimental studies. In addition, such attitudes were found to show significantly higher correlations with the use of sexually violent pornography than with the use of non-violent pornography, although the latter relationship was also found to be significant. These findings have important implications for the overall literature on pornography and aggression.

Research as far back as 2002 (Gossett and Byrne, 2002) used various search engines and coding methods to locate 31 so-called rape sites in order to establish categories and themes. The findings stated that these sites were a portal to fee-paying sites, with eight sites giving the viewer a choice of types of rape to view. The largest choice on any of these sites was a list of 100 forms of rape for viewing, with four sites purporting that the images of rape were real. On 21 sites, it was found that in addition to the use of the word 'rape', other violence-related words were also used, and there was frequent use of a range of weapons. The perpetrators remained largely invisible, in contrast to the victims. Thirty-four of the 56 images viewed were of Asian women and 24 were of white women, with ethnicity being mentioned where the victims were women of colour. The research, while carried out some years ago, is important, as it highlights the development of the internet and its capability to disseminate increasingly violent images and films of violence against women.

Subsequent comparisons have been carried out that support these findings, such as Bridges et al. (2010), who analysed 304 scenes of what were regarded as popular pornographic videos depicting aggressive and degrading sexual practices. It was found that 88.2% of these scenes contained physical aggression and 48.7% contained verbal aggression, with women largely the target of aggression.

A more recent study asserts the increased use of violence and degrading practices. Makin and Morczek (2015) assessed Google trends between 2004 and 2012 and examined rape culture and the increasing search for rape-orientated pornography. The authors used nine keywords that related to rape-orientated viewing and found

that in 28 seconds, the Google search engine generated one hundred thousand websites for the phrase 'best rape scenes' (2015: 1). This was an exploratory study to identify popular search queries relating to rape culture and to analyse trends in these queries using fourteen searches, which included rape-orientated searches and hard-core pornography. The findings highlighted the violent nature of heterosexual pornography, and further found the promotion of violent pornography and the shift to the mainstream of amateur rape-orientated films. The researchers highlighted the increasing popularity of pornography hubs and searches for hard-core pornography, which allow consumers to search for specialist interests and reduce the need to use mainstream search engines such as Google.

Within this body of research, many contributors have explored and highlighted the consumption of pornography and the public's access to erotic images and texts. Barak and Fisher's (2001) research goes further and seeks to explore the consequences of internet sex shops and, more broadly, the internet and sexuality. They suggest that the behaviours may be enhanced for those already drawn to antisocial sexual behaviours, as in paraphilia.

Throughout the literature, links are made between pornography and sexual violence, and authors such as Dines (2012) highlight how the internet allows people to become producers and consumers of pornography in a way and scale that is unprecedented. Subsequently, a clear connection could be made between online pornography and sexual violence regarding access and quantity. Dines' (2012) critique of the pornography industry sets out the negative impact of the mass distribution of pornography and the cynicism of the advancement of technology in saturating the sexuality of men and women, putting this in the context of public health issues. She argues for more awareness and resistance to the pornography industry, which has been highly proactive in exploiting and integrating new technology to expand the adult entertainment industry.

Döring (2004) reviewed two perspectives on the feminist literature on cybersex: the victimisation and the liberation perspective. The victimisation perspective views women as being victimised and harmed by heterosexual practices, and the

liberation perspective focuses instead on women who use the internet to seek out sexual pleasure. Podlas (2004) set out to assess the involvement of women in the ownership of cyberporn sites. This research had a sample of 71 cyberporn site owners, of whom 37% were interviewed to understand their motivation for operating cyberporn sites. While this may be just one study, it is important to consider the involvement of women throughout the pornography industry as producers and consumers of pornography.

2.5 Sexual Violence and Technology

Given the large volume of published work focused on sexual violence, it seemed necessary within this literature review to focus only on the intersection between sexual violence and technology. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the themes of sexual violence and gender, it is feminist analysis that provides the most comprehensive body of work in terms of the intersection between emerging technologies and sexual violence. Live streaming, greater interactivity among users, and file transfer protocols are just some of the ways in which technologies are used to sexually exploit women across the world (Hughes 2002; Maltzahn 2006). The works of Hughes and Maltzahn are discussed in detail in the following section, as they focus on women who are subject to other forms of sexual exploitation. A number of early studies suggest that the internet and technology simply facilitate individuals who would be abusive or violent in so-called real life.

In an initial literature review in 2014 for the pilot project, the view from the literature was that technology was often seen as not creating new forms of crimes against women and children, but rather as creating new ways and means for crimes to be perpetrated. However, it is also creating new ways and means for people to organise, network, campaign and bring about social actions that may not be in the interests of governments and corporations (Banks, 2001:163).

In general, briefing papers and reports highlight concerns about women's experiences, such as the posting of intimate images online or so-called 'revenge

porn' (Scottish Women's Aid 2013), but they do not necessarily offer in-depth or rigorous research (End Violence against Women Coalition 2013). The UK think tank DEMOS has highlighted the misogyny experienced by women on social media sites such as Twitter, reporting that women consistently experience more abuse online than men (Bartlett et al. 2014). Such research is limited in its scope and analysis, however, as it does not offer in-depth analysis and is also limited to the number of people accessing Twitter at one point in time.

Since 2000, the field of research has veered towards studies that are primarily focussed on the experiences and protection of children and young people (Martellozzo 2012; Seto 2013). Projects such as the European Online Grooming Project (2012) have set out key features of online grooming – how people use the internet for sexual violence and exploitation – in a deliberate and systematic way. However, in the UK, research is limited to consideration of this issue in the context of cyber-bullying or stalking (Salter & Bryden 2009; Perry 2012). Although no details are provided about the impacts on individuals, the existing literature highlights the increasingly sophisticated use of technology, anonymity, the construction of identity online, and the shortfalls of current legislation.

One study examining social networking sites and experiences of victimisation (Henson et al. 2011) has focused on issues of safety online, finding that users who engage in so-called risky behaviour online, which included connecting with strangers online or having several different accounts, had increased likelihood of victimisation. In a later study, the same researchers (2013) then looked at social networks and what they defined as online interpersonal victimisation, and sought to examine whether there were gender differences. They analysed 906 online surveys of 18-to-24-year-old undergraduates from a university in the USA. The outcome of the research was that female respondents were more likely to experience victimisation than were male respondents; however, more in-depth analysis also set out that males and females may use online networks in differing ways and this creates different pathways to victimisation.

A number of key research projects have been undertaken to study sexual violence and technology, primarily by Henry and Powell (2014; 2017). Henry and Powell have crucially sought to reframe the terminology used by moving the focus away from blaming women and towards viewing this phenomenon in the context of gender-based violence and notions of gendered power relations created through technology, establishing a foundational framework for understanding this issue and for future prevention. They use terms such as 'technology-facilitated sexual violence', which covers the different forms of sexual violence experienced by women through emerging technologies to frame women's experiences of violence involving technologies.

Specialist groups set up to address the issue of women and technologies have explored the impact of sexual violence through the use of technology on individuals. The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) drew on analysis and data from 12 national reports and international documents, conventions, and treaties (Kee 2005; Fascendini and Fialova 2011). The work of the APC is complex and seeks engagement across the world with marginalised communities, creating digital environments for women and girls to express the narrative of their experiences (2011). They have been able to identify some key features of abuse involving emerging technologies, including cases of re-victimisation through the sharing and uploading of images and videos, anonymity of abusers, and ease of propagation (Feminist Africa, 2013). The APC (2014) investigated three case studies involving various forms of sexual exploitation using technology and social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Common themes to emerge were technology compounding the abuse, the pervasive nature of violence against women involving the use of technology and the far-reaching harm it caused, including emotional harm, compounding the harm already experienced through sexual violence, and the barriers it created to women's participation in social and professional lives.

Although it was a small-scale study and therefore limited in terms of the ability to transfer the findings to women more generally, the APC's work does offer insights as to the impacts of sexual exploitation using technology, and it is related closely to the present study. The profound harm caused at personal, professional, and

psychological levels is a continuing theme throughout the literature (Citron and Franks 2014). Researchers in the field of therapy are also considering the impacts on victims of online exploitation (e.g. Whittle et al. 2013): this study was limited to the experiences of young people but did set out the cyclical nature of exploitation online.

2.5.1 Non-Consensual Images

The one area of sexual violence and technology that has received the most attention in research and from the mass media is the phenomenon of so-called 'revenge pornography'. This is the term given to situations where images or videos are self-created and produced with the participants' consent, but are then distributed without the consent of one of the participants. Researchers and academics have sought to define revenge pornography to reflect the experience, also using the terms 'cyber rape' and 'involuntary porn' (Citron and Frank 2014).

Revenge pornography is by no means a new phenomenon. The literature provides examples of user-generated films and images created and uploaded onto sites as far back as the early 2000s. This behaviour became more widespread, with high-profile cases coming to the fore, including websites created in the US. In 2010, Hunter Moore created a website called IsAnyoneUp.com, posting sexually explicit images of women sent by ex-partners seeking revenge. No consent was obtained and the women were often named, alongside contact details that deliberately targeted and encouraged ex-partners to post sexually explicit images, often including personal details that could lead to identification of the victims (Dodero 2012; Stroud 2014).

Such images or films are often distributed following the breakdown of a relationship, or released with malicious intent to humiliate and cause embarrassment (Citron and Franks 2014; Henry and Powell 2014). This points to the advances in technology and the ease with which people can create and distribute images and videos. The last decade has seen a sharp rise in the number of sites

created to encourage and support individuals in posting images of ex-partners (Burris 2014; Salter 2013).

In 2015, the UK created a new offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress ('revenge porn'): this was introduced under Section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015. Those convicted face two years in prison. The CPS reports that 206 people were prosecuted for disclosing private sexual images in the first year after the introduction of this offence (CPS 2015).

The Cyber Civil Rights initiative, based in the USA, conducts yearly surveys on revenge pornography. In 2015, from a survey of 1606 respondents from the ages of 18 to 30, it found that 61% of respondents (about 980 people) said they had taken nude photos or videos of themselves and shared them with someone else, and 23% of respondents (361 people) had been victims of revenge porn. Among revenge porn victims, 93% reported significant emotional distress, while 82% reported suffering significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. Over half (51%) of victims indicated that they had even considered committing suicide. With regard to their occupation, 55% of respondents feared that their professional reputation would be tarnished because of revenge porn, while 39% said that the crime had actually affected their professional life.

Dissemination of images can range from websites to blogs, with reported incidences of uploads including the name, address and/or link to the victim's social media sites (Citron and Franks 2014). Affected individuals experience intense fear, anxiety and distress, and the loss is not restricted to harm at a personal level: in some cases it can lead to loss of employment if employers become aware of sexually explicit images being circulated. However, until 2014, there was little recourse for those affected.

While the distribution of sexually explicit images has impacted men and also young people, some researchers have suggested that women experience more on-going abuse as a result and are likely to be subject to further abuse and humiliation (Salter and Crofts 2013, 2015; Citron and Franks 2014). The impact of revenge porn

includes public shame and humiliation, inability to find romantic partners, negative effects on mental health such as depression and anxiety, job loss or problems in securing new employment, and real-life harassment and stalking (Citron & Franks 2014). Once a photo is posted online, it is in cyberspace and is extremely hard to remove completely, which means that the harm is continuous and long-lasting (Cecil 2014). Victims often try to create new social media identities, but these can be easily discovered, and some victims are forced to completely alter their lives and routines to minimize the impact of revenge pornography.

The issue of revenge pornography can be more complex than often depicted in the media, in which reports are often sensationalised, implying that young women have been sexually promiscuous. There is little discussion of what constitutes consent or notions of coercion. Researchers have addressed this misconception by identifying a number of ways in which revenge pornography is used (Desai, 2015). There are instances where an image may be taken consensually but shared without consent, and there are also cases where images or films are taken without an individual's knowledge or consent and shared or used to victimise them. As explored in the previous section, evolving technology has created an environment where this can be done easily.

What is clear is the harm and damage that is done to women's reputations and well-being through the sharing and publication of sexually intimate images, with many seeing this as a way to humiliate and degrade women (Salter 2013, 2015; Burris 2014; Bates 2017). The phenomenon of revenge pornography presents intensely distressing examples, causing catastrophic levels of fear and distress for those affected. This is compounded by the fact that technology can then be used to upload the media to other websites, allowing them to be viewed thousands of times on multiple sites, which may be accessible to family, friends and employers.

Two recent studies have sought to provide more empirical evidence: the first of these was conducted by Henry and Powell (2017), who surveyed 3,000 Australian adults between the ages of 18 and 54. One focus of this survey was on experiences

of sexual harassment and the impact of digital harassment. Within this research, it was found that;

- 60% percent of adults have been harassed or abused online,
- Young adults aged 18 to 24 the most likely to be victims.
- Men and women were just as likely to report experiencing digital harassment and abuse.
- Women were more likely than men to report experiencing sexual harassment. Women overwhelmingly experienced digital harassment and abuse from male perpetrators.
- Men experienced digital harassment and abuse equally from males and females
- Women were significantly more likely than men to be 'very or extremely upset' by the digital harassment and abuse they experienced.
- More women than men reported that they told the person to stop, changed their online details or profile settings, left the site or turned off their device, as a result of their experience (2017)

Henry and Powell's (2017) study, which was discussed in the previous section, found significant levels of image-based sexual abuse. One in ten adults has had a nude or semi-nude picture of themselves taken without their permission. The same proportion has had a sexually explicit image of them sent to others without their permission, or had someone threaten to publicly share such an image. This study begins to set out the extent of non-consensual image use.

The second study was more widespread, focusing on not just how prevalent this practice is but also on gender, and crucially included data on those who perpetrate the sending of images without consent and their motives for doing so. A nationwide study of 3044 participants aged 18 and over, with equal responses from males and females, was carried out in the USA between November 2016 and March 2017 by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (Eaton et al. 2017). The aim of the study was to profile rates of victimisation, perpetration and deterrents to sharing non-consensual pornography (NCP) over the lifetime, the impact on victims' health, and the motives and consequences of being victimised or perpetrating the sharing of

sexually explicit images. Participants were recruited through social media platforms and completed questionnaires on their experiences of non-consensual pornography.

From the findings of this study, 12.8% of the participants reported having been victims or threatened with NCP, and 8% reported having been victims of NCP (having had a sexually explicit image of them shared without their consent). Meanwhile, 5.2% of all participants reported having perpetrated NCP (having shared a sexually explicit image of someone without their consent) at some point in their lives. Women were 1.7 times more likely to have been victimised in comparison to men.

The study also gathered data on those who perpetrated: that is, sent or threatened to send images without consent. Of the 5.2% of respondents who admitted to having done so, 9.3% (159) cited that their motivation was to share images with friends but not with the intent to harm the person. Of the 159 individuals who reported having perpetrated NCP by sharing sexually-explicit images, the most common reason for doing so was to share the images with friends, but with no intent to cause harm (79% of all self-identified perpetrators selected this option). Only 12% of perpetrators reported having committed NCP because they were upset with the victim and/or wanted to harm them. Participants were permitted to choose multiple reasons for having sent the image(s), though most chose only one.

The two studies discussed above have added some insight as to the prevalence and motivation for revenge pornography, but they do not set out the context in which these experiences took place and whether they were a part of other abuses. It is also noted that the research is based on questionnaires. Only one study to date has provided empirical data on the emotional and mental health impact of revenge pornography on adult women (Bates 2017). This was a qualitative study of 18 adult women over the period of a year, using in-depth interviews. The findings highlight the serious impact of the experiences on several domains of the women's lives, with a negative impact on women's well-being and mental health, including but not limited to feelings of anxiety, depression and symptoms of traumatic stress. The

majority of participants reported that the perpetrator was someone known and trusted by them. Under “negative coping mechanisms,” participants reported experiences of binge drinking, self-medication, denial, and obsession in response to the negative mental health effects of revenge porn. Participants moved on to more positive coping mechanisms as time moved forward. This is a key study for counselling and psychotherapy, as it not only sets out the impact of these experiences but also highlights both positive and negative coping mechanisms. This includes participants using coping mechanisms which had positive outcomes. As this is the only study on the symptoms experienced as a result of revenge pornography, it is not possible to make a comparison to other studies.

The literature in this area is crucial in furthering the debate on women’s experiences, and highlighting the attitudes and responses to these experiences, with Salter (2014) and Henry and Powell (2017) providing a gender-responsive approach to women’s experiences.

2.5.2 Misogyny Online

One area of research that is continuing to grow is emerging technology and the level of online misogyny experienced by women. The concept of technology and gender is not a new one: feminist thinking and theory has also explored technology within the framework of gender, and from this came the concept of ‘cyber feminism’. Cyber feminism was put forward by a number of activists, including Sadie Plant (1994), and is largely seen as being developed from third-wave feminism. Cyber feminism is important to this research, as it relates to theories and explorations of emerging technologies from a feminist perspective. Such theories have expanded the thinking on gender and technology (Wajcman 2004, 2006, 2009). Haraway (1985), in her essay ‘A History of Cyborgs’, takes this further by challenging the narrow identities afforded to women and emphasising the need for women to be involved in technology beyond their role as users.

There is some debate over what cyber feminism constitutes, due to the complexity of its nature. Like much of feminist thinking and theories, it avoids the use of definitions. It is not simply one single uniform set idea, but rather contributes to on-going debates about the use of technology. Paasonen, a media studies critic, describes cyber feminism as the “feminist appropriation of information and computer technology” (2011: 335) on both practical and theoretical levels. Wilding (1998) set out a number of areas in which there was general agreement and proposed further work, including the promotion of cyber feminist artists and theorists, and the publication of theories and critiques in order to disrupt gender biases. Emerging technologies are, however, more complex than mere use, as they are embedded in structures of power, and this has drawbacks for all women because of the patriarchal structure of most societies.

Cyber feminism has also expanded into other concepts, with Wajcman (1995, 2013) exploring and bringing to the forefront the ‘virtuality’ of the cyber world and viewing it as an end to what she described as an embodied basis for the sex differential for women. This may have been a somewhat overly optimistic view, which will be explored in the last section of this chapter when addressing misogyny online and the hostility faced by women online. Wajcman also introduced a different terminology, advocating a ‘technofeminist’ approach. This term conceptualises the relationship between technology and gender, perceiving technology as both a source and a consequence of gender relationships, supporting the idea that technology is socially constructed and cannot be viewed as gender neutral. More recent papers have explored cyber feminism by seeing the usage of this terminology as being impacted by the downturn in the dot.com economies in the early 2000, which added to the development of Web 2.0 (Paasonen 2011). However, it is argued that in the 21st century, women contribute in all different arenas of technology, including, but not limited to, social media sites, blogs and gaming (Gajjala & Yeon Ju Oh 2014).

With the development and advances in technology, due in part to Web 2.0, social media, gaming, second lives and avatars have been subject to increasing research, further indicating how technology has created its own cultural society (Levmore

and Nussbaum 2012), which allows groups to come together with a shared ideology and aim. In the cyber world, the creation of online communities is apparent and researchers and commentators have highlighted the issues of gender and technology. Salter (2017) explores notions of 'geek masculinity' and the rise in online abuse. This outlines a culture in technology that is invested in the abuse of women, with a focus on specific areas such as gaming and the hostility women face online. This is reflected in more than one area, with social media sites often being used to publicly troll and victimise or silence women who may be expressing their views. These women are often threatened with rape, violence and mutilation (West 2013). Trolling is a term associated with online spaces: it has no one agreed definition and its meaning has evolved, as Bishop (2014) asserts:

Trolling once meant provoking others for mutual enjoyment but now means abusing others for personal enjoyment (2014: 8)

Studies are emerging that point to the gendered nature of the hostility and aggression women face in the cyber world, leading some researchers to contextualise women's experiences as misogyny online (Jane 2014). This view is supported by Laurie (2013) in her book on cyber-sexism. She does not necessarily see the way in which women are targeted online as a structure of a networked media, but rather as part of oppression and sexist power, which makes it difficult for women to participate and contribute to social media.

Sexism is being translated to online spaces, and Laurie explores the structure of misogyny online. Laurie also examines the characteristics of what she calls 'gendered vitriol', which describes abuse, threats of violence and misogynist hate directed at women and girls online. Her work is important to this research, as she highlights the ways in which misogyny online is distinct from other forms of abuse, as it is uniquely accepted on the online forums.

Many commentators on social media have highlighted the hostility faced by women online (Bartlett 2014), with a number of writers naming this as gendered hatred (Jane 2017). There have been a number of high-profile cases involving women being trolled or subjected to rape threats, often as a result of these women

expressing their opinions. Bartow (2008) and Megary (2014) point to the level of hostility and harassment faced by women online and comment on the ineffectual nature of the protection or redress afforded to women who face hostility online. Furthermore, women are becoming targets of cyber-stalking as tech-savvy domestic violence abusers use spyware and GPS to track and control their mobility (Fascendini and Fialova 2011). They are also becoming targets of digital voyeurism, in which images of women are posted on the internet without their knowledge or consent.

The depth and breadth of misogyny online is best highlighted by the research of Jane (2017) in a key study spanning a number of decades. This is an auto-ethnographic study that began in 1998. In the course of her work as a journalist in Australia, Jane (2017) reports that after adding her email details to articles, she began to receive large numbers of threatening and misogynistic messages from male readers, and that a large number of these would suggest that she deserved to be raped. Jane's research includes eighteen years of archives of what she describes as gendered cyber-hate, and between 2015 and 2017 she undertook 52 in-depth semi-structured interviews with women who had been targets of such cyber-hate. In her book, Jane sets out a complex and innovative on-going study in which she maps and analyses the nature and manifestations of misogyny online. The research is complex and at times the sheer volume of abuse and threats of sexual abuse directed at the participants' sets out a deeply grim and violent landscape for women online, with daily threats of rape, murder and abuse, with no meaningful accountability for the perpetrators.

Jane's study is important in a number of ways. It points to a shift in the way research can be constructed in the more creative online medium, but Jane also raises a vital point for research in this field, arguing that the use of language in scholarly research fails to relay the full extent of offensive language, and in doing so, is itself part of what she argues is the 'tyranny of silence' (2014b: 553). Her arguments are compelling, and in the interest of transparency, I am in support of her stance. It is difficult to convey the levels of hatred and aggression that are expressed in the interviews with Jane (2017). She further points to the way in

which women are being silenced from online spaces; her argument is that there are broader implications of online abuse as part of a wider picture of gendered abuse against women. Jane emphasises that online spaces are no longer optional but rather form 'a non-negotiable part of contemporary life and citizenship' (2017: 117), once again pointing to the wider implications of these experiences for women online:

After all the public cybersphere isn't actually public if half the people are being told to get the fuck out (2017: 117).

A UK national study by Lewis et al. (2016) reflects the arguments set out by Jane (2014, 2017). Their study focused on women who debate feminist politics and the abuse they experience, utilising two data collection methods: an online questionnaire conducted over a five-month period in 2015, which included questions on the forms, nature and frequency of abuse experienced, the second data collection method involved 17 in-depth interviews exploring themes emerging from the survey. It is, I believe, worth noting that a number of aspects relating to identity were included beyond gender, such as sexuality, ethnicity and disability. The findings of this study revealed that abuse in online spaces is not dissimilar to that in so-called real spaces, with participants reporting multiple types of abuse on a routine basis. The research concludes that the abuse experienced in online spaces is not a series of individual acts but rather points to a course of behaviour.

Recent research highlights the implications of online abuse for women whose professions are interlinked with online media and points to the increasing acceptance of the targeting of women in the public eye. Ferrier et al. (2018) conducted a study for a group called Troll Busters, which supports women journalists who experience online harassment and sets out ways to create positive support networks. The research is based on a mixture of case studies and personal anecdotes, which are used to explore the impact of abuse through social media networks on female journalists and implications for a number of domains, primarily psychological and professional, and the wider implications for freedom of the press.

2.6 Sexual Exploitation and Technology

From the literature review, the link between sexual exploitation and technology is clear. Initially, the research centred primarily on trafficking and prostitution, but this also led to discussion of other forms of sexual exploitation, which included debates on pornography and so-called 'mail-order brides'. The most striking feature from the literature review is the transnational feature of exploitation, with the structure of services organised with pathways entrenched in the use of technology.

Trafficking and Prostitution

The trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation has been documented for decades. Internationally agreed protocols for trafficking have been established by the United Nations in the Palermo Protocols (UN General Assembly, 2000), which define trafficking as follows:

'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (2000: 2).

Transporting individuals across national and international borders has been the traditional way in which trafficking has been understood. For the purpose of this literature review, this section is limited to women's experiences of sexual exploitation. Statistics on trafficking in 2016 refer to 3805 potential victims in the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), involving 108 different nationalities, with the highest number of victims being Albanian, UK and Vietnamese nationals (National Crime Agency, 2016). This is an overarching figure for all forms of trafficking and also represents those referred to the NRM. However, these figures are an

underestimation of the extent of trafficking, as it is accepted by NGOs that many victims of trafficking will be reluctant to present themselves to statutory services for fear of reprisals by the traffickers or of being deported.

A more international picture of trafficking was explored in 2016 (Global Report on Trafficking). This detailed report set out that sexual exploitation and forced labour are the most prominent forms of trafficking. It also highlighted the other numerous forms of trafficking, including forcing victims into sham marriages and pornography. Trafficking is connected to organised crime and is estimated to generate billions of dollars (Trafficking in Persons Report 2016). Trafficking for sexual purposes is complex: it can involve criminal activity, with women in violent and abusive environments in which they can be sold or traded multiple times and suffer different forms of exploitation – poly-victimisation. The literature also highlights that many women that are trafficked into sexual exploitation will then be forced into prostitution (UNIFEM, Hughes 2000).

The Global Report on Trafficking reported that between 2012 and 2014, a total of 63,251 victims were detected in 106 countries and territories and about 23,000 of these victims were detected and reported as being trafficked for sexual exploitation (2016). Trafficking impacts all genders; however, the majority of victims are female. Women and girls often face higher levels of discrimination and are more vulnerable to being targeted by traffickers with promises of work and opportunities. This report also goes on to state the sex and age of victims and a clear majority were females – adult women and girls – comprising some 70% of the total number of detected victims. Females have made up the majority of detected victims since the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime started collecting data on trafficking in persons in 2003. Almost 21 million people worldwide are victims of forced labour – 11.4 million women and girls, and 9.5 million men and boys. Of those exploited by individuals or enterprises, 4.5 million are victims of forced sexual exploitation.

The figures for sex trafficking are alarming. They are also confusing, as figures need to account for trafficking that takes place both across international and national borders, but also for cases of commercial sexual exploitation, which includes

pornography and prostitution. There will also be women who cannot be accounted for in these numbers, such as those who work in massage parlours or strip clubs, and it is difficult to account for numbers in the UK. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is difficult to represent with exact data, although there are estimates from organisations such as the International Labour Organization and the United Nations (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2016; United Nations Global Report, 2016).

The use of technology to support human trafficking has often been highlighted by NGOs and voluntary sector services. From the late 1990s, US academic and activist Donna Hughes wrote a series of articles which highlighted ways in which the internet was being used to sexually exploit women and girls across the globe, with digital technology including, but not limited to, mobile phone and social networking sites (Hughes, 1999, 2001; Latonero, 2012). Her research and concepts are compelling and are framed within a feminist analysis. Additionally, Hughes (1998, 1999) began to highlight the use of the internet by traffickers and those involved in sexual exploitation. A large part of her work has focused on the United States, but she has also studied several other countries across the world. Her work has been influential in informing policy in the United States. Writers and activists in the field of ending violence against women and girls have highlighted in grey papers, articles and empirical research the different ways in which the internet is used, ranging from classified ads to social media sites, chat rooms and message boards used by pimps and perpetrators to recruit and advertise sexual services (POPPY Project 2009; Dixon 2013; Baker 2016). Hughes's 1999 article was written prior to Web 2.0, which has since enhanced user accessibility. A later study by Hughes (2009) used primary documents, including court and public records, to highlight how the internet is used for sex trafficking and how those that exploit women are:

The exploiters are the traffickers, pimps, pornography producers, strip club operators, and brothel owners who make up the sex industry. Pimping is sex trafficking (2009: 40).

Other research in this field has consistently concluded that new technologies are facilitating the sexual exploitation of women on a global scale. Farley et al. (2014)

examined the use of online websites both to recruit victims into prostitution and to advertise sex for sale. This paper examined a number of cases, all of which included high levels of violence and coercion, including forced drug use, and all with a link to online prostitution.

Literature such as 'Online Prostitution and Trafficking' (Farley et al. 2014), which focuses on the USA, highlights the complexity of the links between online sites and human trafficking, with the involvement of many individuals and agencies. These include national crime agencies, policymakers and internet service providers who have responded to this changing landscape in relation to the use of technology in sexual exploitation, through enhanced surveillance of the social media sites and using technology to trace traffickers, including evidence gained from their digital footprints to provide support in the prosecution of cases against them

Thakor and Boyd (2013) published a series of essays based on field notes from an ethnographic research on sex trafficking in the USA. The context for this research is important, as efforts were being made at the time to regulate websites such as Craigslist and Backpage.² Much of the data presented in this paper came from a number of sources, primarily semi-structured interviews between September 2011 and April 2012 with advocates working across the USA with anti-trafficking organisations. The researchers also attended meetings with different organisations working to combat trafficking, including law enforcement and advocacy groups. Distinct from other studies, the researchers also met with those working with agencies that were researching and designing technological solutions to address trafficking, highlighting the networked way in which technology is used to exploit individuals but also that law enforcement agencies are working to disrupt the activities of traffickers.

The use of third party websites has serious implications, as it points to the ways in which traffickers are able to avoid detection through the use of legitimate websites, the ways in which trafficking can be conducted and how problematic this can be.

² Craigslist and Backpage are online classified advertisement sites that were found to advertise the sale of human beings for sexual activities (Maras 2017).

Farrell et al. (2016) examined how third party websites are used in trafficking and online prostitution and set out how links to online trafficking are very often not based on empirical research: it is often advocacy groups who provide this data.

Technology keeps women in their exploited situations and reaches a wider audience with ease. Research on trafficking highlights how traffickers use technology in much the same way as any business, employing plans and lines of communication (Farley et al 2014). Technology is also used in many different ways to recruit victims. Traffickers prey on those who are vulnerable, offering employment and promising money for travel or visas (Hughes 2002, 2004). As explored by Dixon (2013), traffickers can make contact with women through everyday social networking sites such as Facebook. Potential victims can be groomed until a level of trust is created, or victims can be tempted with the additional offer of a better life: for example, overseas employment opportunities offered through internet advertisements show that traffickers' deliberate and integrated use of technology is not limited to the so-called Dark Net, but rather are widespread on online classified websites, with some viewing these sites as essentially brothels that operate online (Farley et al. 2014).

Traffickers also adjust to law enforcement agencies' capacity to track movements online, using passwords or advertising on third-party sites (Dank et al. 2014). Online sex ads using third-party websites such as Craigslist and Backpage.com facilitate sexual exploitation and hide offenders, who are rarely exposed to the public except by episodic targeted enforcement by police (Hughes 2009; Baker 2016). A 2013 study Roe-Sepowitz et al, estimates the population of active customers of online sex ads in 15 cities in the United States. Decoy online ads, advertising the sale of sexual services such as prostitution, were placed online on two websites in 15 U.S. cities twice in one week. The ads received 677 contacts (voicemails and texts) and 451 phone numbers of online sex ad customers were collected. On average, within the fifteen markets explored, one in every 20 males over the age of 18 in a metropolitan city area was soliciting sex from online ads.

Much of the research also highlights not just the recruitment of women but also how the internet is used as a platform to advertise: this could be through the creation of a website or through a social media outlet. Technology has changed the way in which exploitation is expanding. No longer are women solicited on the streets; this can now be done online (Hughes 2009; Farley 2005).

Furthermore, some writers highlight the intersection of trafficking with prostitution, pornography and mail order brides. In 2009, Eaves, an NGO based in the UK that had services specifically to support women trafficked into sexual exploitation, carried out research in this area (POPPY Project 2009). It surveyed in excess of 150 mail order bride (MOB) websites. The study's findings show the power imbalances within these servile marriages and the level of abuse involved, with women being left vulnerable to being further exploited into trafficking and prostitution.

However, it is not just lawmakers that consider the use of technology in exploitation: the business and technology communities have also responded. Google has researched trafficking and anti-laundering protocols to disrupt transactions, and software such as Palantir has been developed to work with data related to missing and exploited children (Lev-ram 2016). While new developments and strategies are needed, the research highlights the complex nature of the issue, the scale of the problem and the involvement of agencies working in silo, with a lack of international protocols leaving victims to the processes of the countries in which they find themselves (Chisholm-Straker and Stoklosa 2017).

The psychological and emotional impact of trafficking and sexual exploitation is catastrophic and impacts women in all domains, leading to symptoms that are aligned to complex trauma as women seek to protect themselves from their experiences. The physical effects of being trafficked into sexual exploitation leave women with long-term and serious health conditions, bearing the scars of deep wounds and distress (Kaylor 2015). This is further compounded for women who have been trafficked across international borders and face deportation and being found by traffickers, facing an ever-increasing level of hostility due to being

undocumented, with victims ultimately being left with highly uncertain futures (Zimmerman et al. 2008).

2.7 Evaluation of Findings

The literature review sets out a number of distinct areas of technology, the internet and sexual behaviours and how research is approaching TFSV against women.

A review of emerging technologies established the changing landscape and impact of technology, while the literature highlighted the advent of the World Wide Web and user-generated technology. It has not just been the widespread use of technology but rather the enhanced capability it offers, with a move to digital technology and the capacity of individuals to participate, no longer as bystanders but now with the ability to produce, participate and create data (George & Sceri 2007). Social media sites and platforms are changing the way in which we engage, communicate and create change in all aspects of our lives. This sets the context for the sections that follow, and also explains that it is the internet and online spaces that are the most frequently referred to.

Theories of the self in technology are compelling; however, the absence of mainstream psychotherapy and counselling is evident. Within the field of psychotherapy, behavioural psychology has been the focus of research, especially in the area of the so-called 'second life', a phenomenon whereby people create avatars or lives that can only be described as a virtual reality online (Anthony and Nagel 2014). Similarly, the behaviour sciences in the field of psychotherapy have also looked at the development of pornography and sexual activity online. However, the field of therapy has begun to consider the impact of online exploitation on victims, and continues to do so, with contributions such as that by Whittle et al. (2013), whose qualitative studies demonstrate the cyclical nature of grooming behaviours and identify risk factors specifically related to prior vulnerability. Psychotherapy has also begun to consider the use of technology in the delivery of psychotherapeutic services (Goss 2011). This highlights the integration of technology in the field of psychotherapy and supports the case for research in this area.

When I initially reviewed the literature for the pilot study, the use of the internet for sexual behaviours online was omitted; however to address and mitigate researcher bias and to present the context in which the internet is used for sexual behaviour (Griffiths 2010), it was important to highlight the way in which technology has impacted on the accessibility of sexually explicit material and the context of the ways in which technology is used. The literature on the excessive use of pornography was related to sexual compulsion and internet addiction, with a focus on those who are essentially consumers and engage in sexual activity. The field of sexual compulsivity and its theories on the triple 'A' effect of anonymity, accessibility and availability in relation to pornography goes some way to exploring behaviours in relation to the online world (Cooper 1998). The issue of pornography can be emotive, and this was evident from the contrasting research between sexual compulsivity, rape culture and webcamming.

There is a contrasting position in relation to the harm caused by pornography and the increasing popularity of pornography hubs and searches for hard-core pornography (Makin and Morczek 2015). The two positions are highly polarised, as the field of sexual compulsivity research has a focus on those who seek support for excessive and problematic use of pornography, with an accompanying set of theories to support and underpin this work (Carnes et al. 2001). When we explore issues of rape culture and the increasing use of pornography and the harm caused to women, there is little theory within psychotherapy that addresses these issues. This is further complicated by the phenomenon and rise of webcamming: despite the rise in webcamming, there is little research on this issue, with only three studies being found (Senft 2008; Jones 2016, Mathews 2017).

A common feature of the research on pornography is that the studies are generally based on feminist analysis; there has been little opportunity to provide a contrasting argument. One of the key gaps in the research is that within the UK, there is little comprehensive research that seeks to explore beyond issues such as 'revenge porn'. Furthermore, researchers such as Henry and Powell (2014) have highlighted the importance of formulating a language to address women's experiences and also to reflect the increasingly sophisticated way in which user-

generated content impacts individuals. This is further supported by research on misogyny online; asserting that there is a level of hatred and aggression towards women on the internet that cannot simply be explained by accessibility and anonymity (Jane 2016).

The complex nature of TFSV is reflected in the literature, as there is little agreement on the language and to date only one study that focuses on the emotional and psychological harm to victims (Bates 2017). This is an encouraging study, but much more research is needed on the impact of harm and the context in which women's experiences occur. The literature review highlights further complexities in this area, with the intersection of harm to victims, but also issues of consent and how this is negotiated online, the self-online and how we view and work with virtual realities that lead to real-life harm.

A number of the papers in this review were aimed at confronting the shortcomings within our criminal justice system in terms of addressing women's concerns or the lack of understanding of women's experience of the ways in which policymakers and the criminal justice system can provide greater redress (Citron and Franks 2014). This highlights a key concern in this area: often crimes such as non-consensual use of images are not covered under the Sexual Violence Act 2003, whose terminology does not reflect the harm to victims or the far-reaching impact for women or address the sexualised nature of harm and a suggestion that circulating non-consensual images is considered in the continuum of harm (McGlynn and Rackley 2017). The complex nature of this concern is highlighted by the research on women who are already in the sexually exploited population, trafficking and prostitution, which highlights that the use of third party websites makes detection difficult (Baker 2016).

The literature review has set out the context and research surrounding the development of technology and its intersection in the broader context of sexual behaviours, with a focus on empirical research on TFSV and how this is understood, finishing with an outline of the way in which technology is used by traffickers.

Within the next chapter, I will set out the methodology and method that I have undertaken in the course of this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology and Method

Overview

This chapter sets out a detailed account of the methodologies chosen for this study and how the research was undertaken in practice. This section will position the philosophical paradigms and theoretical framework that inform the research and the approach that I have followed. It will then detail the methodology selection process, including those methods I considered and discarded, and situate narrative inquiry as the chosen research methodology. I will then detail the method of thematic analysis which was used to examine the data, and the ethical considerations that were prioritised throughout, including a reflexive exploration of how ethical dilemmas were considered and addressed. Lastly, I will set out how I have sought quality assurance in the study, concluding with an evaluation of the methodology.

This chapter will first contextualise the methodology in the research aims by providing a brief overview of the research questions.

3.1 Research Aims

This study explores ways in which practitioners working within sexual violence support services construct meaning in relation to TFSV against adult women. This research aims to understand the ways in which practitioners interpret events and circumstances, and to give meaning to women's lived experiences on a meta-narrative and socio-cultural level. Classic theories of what is reality may not always be useful, as while the cyber-world is an integral part of everyday life, there is a

disconnect: it cannot be touched or felt, yet for women who have experienced exploitation through this medium, the impact has proved significant and very real (Bates 2017). The research question seeks to set out how practitioners describe and feel about this reality and the subsequent impact it has on their practice.

This study has emerged through my work in the field of sexual violence and a realisation of my own limited awareness and understanding as to the prevalence of TFSV and how services respond to it. It is hoped that the study will also help to expand on the language available to practitioners and to enable them to reflect and explore these issues with women.

3.2 Philosophical Paradigms and Theoretical Conceptions

3.2.1 Qualitative research

In order to support the aims of the research, a qualitative method of inquiry was undertaken. The study is exploratory in nature and seeks to understand how meaning is constructed (McLeod 2006) and to create a space within which expression of participant narratives can be explored in depth. The qualitative design and method reflect the complex set of interacting concepts that underpin the research. Qualitative design methods follow constructionist principles as opposed to a positivist approach, with principles developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This type of approach allows the researcher to explore and understand the ideas and 'interpret phenomena' in order to build upon the existing literature in this field (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 3).

Furthermore, a qualitative research method is consistent with the epistemological concerns of the study: flexibility, contextual emphasis and encouraging reflexivity (McLeod 2011).

3.2.2 Epistemological Concerns

Research into women's experiences of sexual violence gives rise to a number of epistemological concerns, and to a number of epistemological assumptions that I have adopted (Guba & Lincoln 1984; Creswell 2007). The aim of the research is to understand how practitioners construct experiences of female victims who seek support. Therefore, the way in which such experiences are described and understood, including the ideology, beliefs and values held by these practitioners, is important. A social constructionist position is underpinned by thinking that the way in which we construct reality is influenced by our environment, giving individuals their meaning of the world. Crotty (1998) sets out the importance of choosing methods that consider the philosophical stance that underpins the research. As this research takes the view that knowledge is socially situated, the way I am located in the research and the lens through which I view the world have been influenced by over a decade of working professionally to end violence against women and girls, and this has been key to the research. Additionally, this research and the application of a gendered analysis to violence against women has been influenced by my work in frontline services with so-called marginalised groups, namely women who have been disadvantaged by their experiences of violence and face other disadvantages through socio-economic, cultural and social circumstances.

The research creates for me a complex set of connections between epistemologies and the methodologies undertaken and the significance of gender and intersectionality in the analysis. This highlights the significance of how these aspects are addressed in issues of validity and researcher objectivity between the research and social justice agendas, and the fact that reflexivity plays a critical role.

There are a number of key epistemological concerns that are critical to this research, as set out in the work of Fonow and Cook (1986, 1991). The key concerns include women and gender as the focus of analysis, the critical role of consciousness-raising, placing value on participants' knowledge, the issue of who is the expert in the research, how ethics shapes the research and the ultimate goal of empowering women, challenging power relations and inequality. This research cannot be everything to all women, but in line with thinking put forward by those

such as Weston (1988), evaluation of the degree to which a research project is feminist is achieved by scrutinising the choices made by the researcher.

3.2.3 Social Constructionism

This study takes a social constructionist perspective. In striving to make sense of the world, social constructionists view knowledge as constructed: this implies that our view of the world must be seen as being both historically and culturally situated (Burr 1995; Young & Collin 2004). The aim of the research is not to seek absolutes, but to understand the meaning of participants' unique narratives: ultimately, the ways in which participants reflected upon, made sense of, discussed, described and re-constructed and narrated their meaning in the context of personal, cultural, and social values and beliefs (Gergen 1985). To this end, the broad ontological approach to the research would be social constructionism.

The theory of social constructionism places emphasis on language and considers the cultural and biological context and influences (Gergen 1985). It is not necessarily concerned with ontological issues that examine the existence of reality, but has its roots in the epistemological understanding used to explain how individuals may adapt to the realities they construct (Berger and Luckman 1991). It can be argued that there is no single way of understanding sexual violence, so when we consider it in the context of technology and its continued evolution, it is important to consider an approach that accounts for the social construction of technology and how individuals experience the cyber world and make sense of those experiences. The primary focus of constructionist research is the use of language to interpret meaning (Burr 1995; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Taking a social constructionist approach was also important in order to consider the context of my position as researcher. I specialise in working with victims of sexual violence, and interviewing practitioners who are also in this field encourages a

deconstruction of how meaning is created: in the words of McLeod, 'There is no basis on which anyone can claim a privileged position' (2011: 29).

3.2.4 Feminist Research and Practice

In keeping with the social constructionist approach, this research is influenced by feminist thinking, which supports its aim of promoting an understanding of women's experiences of sexual violence. It has been stated that feminist research is 'connected in principle to feminist struggle' (Sprague & Zimmerman 1993: 266). An example that illustrates the importance of understanding the historical and cultural influences in the context of women's experiences of sexual violence is the work of Brownmiller (1975), who researched the political aspects of the history of rape within a feminist analyst and explored theories of a culture of rape. Activists and writers working on the history of sexual violence set out the significance of the cultural aspects of masculinity, with legal concepts of rape being linked in part to men's rights to women's bodies through to modernity, which saw the evolution of understanding of sexual violence in the context of harm to the physicality and psychological impact it had on individuals (D'Cruz 1998; Kelly 1988; Walker 1998). These works point to the morals, ethics and values through which women's experiences of sexual violence are viewed and crucially its effect on recourse to support and justice for victims.

A gendered analysis of sexual violence provides a conceptual framework in which to explore the context of women's experiences (Scottish Government 2011). Authors such as Kelly (1988) assert that violence against women does not comprise isolated episodes of deviant behaviour but is normative and serves a function. While there is no one cohesive theory on what constitutes feminist research, elements of the design, data collection and analysis lend themselves to allowing the narrative of participants' experiences to unfold. Feminism is not a method of research, but rather relates to issues of methodology and epistemology (Reinharz 1992). Others

in this field have taken the stance that 'what makes feminist research feminist is less the method used, and more how it is used and what it is used for' (Kelly et al. 1992: 150).

In both the design and the methodology of the present study, feminist research and practice were considered, as they emphasise the need to understand and value women's voices and experiences, which have often been undervalued (Harding 1987). However, as this study focuses on the complex subject of women's experiences of sexual violence, a number of issues arose during the research, including that of power dynamics. Feminist thinking encourages addressing the power imbalance between researcher and participants, whereby the researcher retains an awareness of power dynamics during the research process (Hesse-Biber 2007).

Additionally, while some of the key principles in the research have been acknowledged, I am aware that issues around intersectionality and reflexivity can give rise to questions regarding the objectivity of research, which at its worst can undermine feminist analysis. Objectivity is generally defined as the researcher's capacity to separate themselves from the research in order to reduce bias (Harding 1987), which 'Requires the elimination of all social values and interests from the research process and the results of the research' (Harding 2001: 157). On the other hand, the position of the researcher has been well debated within the literature. For example, Denzin and Lincoln state that:

Behind all research stands the biography of the gendered researcher, who speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective. (2005: 21).

Feminist critical thought has challenged criticisms of the objectivity of feminist analysis, pointing out that objectivity may also be achieved by acknowledging one's power as the researcher and by contesting privilege and deconstructing knowledge. Haraway (1988) points out that this requires more than self-critical partiality. According to Haraway, 'feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledge' (1988: 581). Harding (2004b) suggested that strong objectivity is generated by

placing the subject of knowledge on the same causal plane as the object of knowledge. In the case of this study, the participants were viewed as partners within the process of understanding social phenomena, rather than passive participants or “subjects” to be examined. This was also reflected in maintaining contact with the participants after our meetings and sharing copies of transcripts. Women’s movements need knowledge that is for women (Harding 2004a). Harding goes on to explore the ways in which women have been objects of inquiry rather than creating knowledge about themselves. It is hoped that the methodology and method of the present study will improve knowledge and awareness of TFSV and ultimately improve the services and support women receive when accessing help.

As a researcher, I concur with Harding’s belief that not all social values and interests have negative and distorting effects upon research results. Harding (2004a) goes on to explain her view that democracy-advancing values may actually generate less bias than others, by actively examining how and by whom knowledge is constructed.

3.2.5 Intersectionality

As discussed previously, a gendered analysis is crucial to this research; however, gender alone is not able to account for the experience of all women. For women of colour, gender is not the only cause of oppression (hooks 1984). The theory of black feminism provides a wider perspective within which to explore and understand the experiences of women. Norma Alarcón writes about the focus on gender as being a reductionist approach:

With gender as the central concept in feminist thinking, epistemology is flattened out in such a way that we lose sight of the complex and multiple ways in which the subject and object of possible experience are constituted...There’s no inquiry into the knowing subject beyond the fact of being a “woman.” (Alarcón 1990: 361).

While the term 'intersectionality' has been in existence for many years, it is largely the work of American professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) that has extended its thinking and encouraged a wider discussion and exploration. The concept of intersectionality is important to this research, as it expands on feminist thinking and considers the experiences of women of colour. Intersectionality is defined as:

The view that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society. Examples of this include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity (Crenshaw 1989: 139).

Crenshaw's work is multi-layered and seeks to explore the experiences of women of colour in relation to domestic violence and rape, examining not only individual experiences but also the structural and political spaces occupied by women of colour and the subsequent impact. Intersectionality provides a framework within which to understand the context of experiences of women of colour, the harm and impact on individuals who may access services and the resources available to them.

Theories on intersectionality have been crucial to my work in the field of sexual violence and to my perception of women from ethnic minority communities and the various ways in which women can be marginalised. Experiences of sexual violence are shown to be catastrophic for all women and are associated with negative health outcomes (Herman 1982). The experiences of the women from black and ethnic minority (BME) backgrounds continue to be under-researched, yet these women are also regarded as being amongst the most marginalised (Thiara et al. 2015).

In her influential paper, Crenshaw (1989) refers to both anti-racist politics and feminist theory, arguing that simply including Black women into existing structures does not fully consider the extent of racism and sexism. Crenshaw is clear that research that does not account for issues of intersectionality will not then account for the particular ways in which Black women experience oppression and subordination. Building on this work, Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) also

uses the concept of intersectionality, analysing how issues of 'race, gender or sexuality and nation' come together and create injustices. Collins further expands the concept of intersectionality by adding the theory of 'matrix of dominations' to this formulation:

In contrast, the matrix of dominations refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression (1990: 221-238).

While her immediate focus was on the intersections of race and gender, Crenshaw (1990) asserts that focusing on intersectionality further highlights the need to give an account of the multiple ways in which identity is constructed.

According to Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007), the assumption of a commonality based simply on gender identity can only prove detrimental and would fail to fully explore power and the ways in which knowledge is created. Consequently, issues of intersectionality were a key part of my work at every juncture, from the recruitment of participants to my engagement with participants and the analysis of the data and findings. As emphasised by Collins and Harding (1990, 2004a), it is not enough merely to note difference: instead, it is necessary to explore why this difference is significant within not only the data analysis but also the literature review, to ensure that issues of intersectionality are woven into the research. Subsequently, following the pilot study, there was an uncomfortable period of time during which it was clear that within my reflection on the experiences of the participants, the influences went beyond their gender, and that issues of race and power were evident, impacting the ways in which the participants (all victims of TFSV) recovered, the support services they accessed and how they made sense of their experiences.

This was also influenced by my own experiences as a woman of South Asian origin, working in the field of sexual violence with women who are marginalised not just by their experiences of violence, but also by its intersection with issues of ethnicity and culture, in which experiences of sexual violence hold women culpable for their

victimisation or justify harmful cultural practices, or where political status or religious practices prevent victims from accessing justice and redress. This creates a powerful narrative and an intense set of experiences, and failure to recognise these aspects means that the experiences of BME women remain invisible.

3.2.6 Researcher Reflexivity

Qualitative research methodologies require reflexivity to show how, as the researcher, I have reflected on my involvement in the research and how I may have impacted on its outcome, as well as how I have contributed to quality assurance (Creswell 2007; Bryman 2012). Embedding reflexivity involves not only relaying the facts but also exploring the research as the researcher's interpretation of the participants' experiences (Hertz 1995). In the field of psychotherapy, Etherington (2004) emphasises that reflexivity is integral to research at every part of the process. Etherington states that reflexivity in research presents with transparency and ways in which we discover knowledge. This points to issues of power and ethics in research and how they are addressed.

A qualitative approach with epistemological concerns of social constructionism and feminist analysis supports a reflexive approach, as stated by Etherington:

Reflexive feminist research encourages us to display in our writing the full interaction between ourselves and our participants so that our work can be understood, not only in terms of *what* we have discovered but *how* we have discovered it (2004: 32).

Throughout the research, I have followed a reflexive process in a variety of ways. From the start of the research process, I have kept a reflexive journal, completing a log at every point, with memos before and after each of the interviews. This was to support me in establishing my role in the interpretive process, and at times it helped me to clarify and re-visit thoughts, feelings and responses and take ownership of not knowing. The reflexive journal also helped me to focus and not rush from meeting one participant to another. Just as crucially, I was able to

process and work through feelings of transference that occurred throughout my engagement with participants.

Furthermore, I used supervision to explore and work through my responses to the interactions with the participants and the impact of their narratives, following notions of self-reflection and theories set out by Finlay and Gough (2003: 6) of 'reflexivity as introspection', and the challenges of using introspection to form a way to come to broader insights. My own background and experiences were transparent, and more critically, I was transparent in taking ownership of the lens through which I viewed the work. This was perhaps most important when I analysed the data. Such an approach, as set out by Finlay and Gough (2003), encourages critical self-reflection of how the researcher's positioning and background impacts on the research process. Journaling, notes and memos represented a key process and lent transparency when considering issues of validity. Lastly, a sub-section on reflexivity is included within each chapter. However, it is not enough just to reflect on my own thoughts and feelings: subsequently, I also consulted critical friends and discussed my thinking and thoughts with participants and peers.

Throughout the study, I have made decisions at each juncture. The aim was to make clear my biases, illuminate issues of ethics and examine how I was positioned in relation to the research and the subject matter. As stated by Etherington, (2004), the issue of power in the research process is connected to the ways in which data is shared with the participants. The works of Etherington and Finlay have both impacted on my understanding of integrating reflexivity into the research: the latter focuses on a relational-centred approach and explores the co-creation of meaning, stating that:

We pay close attention to the other with curiosity, empathy and compassion. When we intertwine with another in an encounter, we may well find ourselves surprised and touched by the connection we make and the transferences/counter-transferences we experience...(Finlay 2011: 166).

3.3 Methodology

This research builds on the findings from the pilot study, which explored the experiences of adult women and sexual exploitation through the use of technologies. While the final project seeks to engage with practitioners, the focus remains on the experiences of adult women. Below I set out the process and rationale for the methodology.

3.3.1 Narrative Inquiry

The chosen methodology for this research was narrative inquiry with the use of thematic analysis to analyse the data. Thematic analysis and its intersection with narrative enquiry are explored in section 3.4. Choosing the methodology for this study involved a series of complex and interactive competing ideas. I initially considered choosing phenomenological methodology, which shares some overlapping themes with narrative inquiry. However, on deliberation, as I was more interested in the way the experience was constructed rather than the experience itself, and in how participants make sense of the experience through the use of narrative that explores it in depth, I discounted phenomenology, as it is generally concerned with exploring and understanding the lived experiences of a specified phenomenon (Smith 2003).

In the pilot study, as set out in the introduction, narrative inquiry was used to provide insight and knowledge of the experiences of women who had been victims of TFSV and also the absence of the points of reference for those experiences, which was a key decision in engaging practitioners.

Using narrative inquiry highlights how people account for their experiences; these include the contradictions and ambiguous nature of accounts (Riessman 2008). When researching the area of sexual violence, the context of those experiences is critical: particularly how events are restricted and accounted for and the background and cultural contexts of the participants' lives. Narrative inquiry

examines how experiences are narrated and re-told: they do not stay fixed in time or provide an exact representation of the past. Riessman, building on the work of Creek (2004: 62-64), points out that:

There is of course a complicated relationship between narrative, time and memory, for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present (2008: 8).

In my meetings with the participants, they relayed and narrated their experiences in the context of their professional and personal lives. The research is not seeking to create theory but rather to explore and describe the ways in which participants talk about TFSV. The use of narrative inquiry in psychotherapy is explored by Riessman and Speedy (2007) and the use of text as narrative to demonstrate the construction of knowledge supported my decision. I chose narrative inquiry to capture the rich and complex ways in which practitioners understand their work and its subsequent impact. As already explored in the literature review, the field of psychotherapy has little research that explores the experiences of adult women and sexual violence through the use of technology.

Subsequently, I wanted a methodology that allowed participants to talk in depth about their experiences, following an approach such as the one set out by Chase (2005), which allows data to be generated from the complex nature of participants' lived experiences and the meaning that is attributed to such experiences. While it is difficult to achieve one agreed definition of what constitutes narrative inquiry, I have followed the commonly used definition below:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.
(Connelly & Clanadinin 2006: 375)

Adapting this methodology to the research has allowed me to apply it to this small-scale study (Creswell 2007). The narratives set out the way in which participants

understood sexual violence in the context of the cyber-world and how they expressed this understanding, but also how they constructed it.

Narrative inquiry encourages the exploration of meaning (Chase 2005). The narrative that emerged from my conversations with the participants enabled me to understand where those experiences were situated and encompassed both the lived experience of the participants and the ways in which they interact with the external world and the subject matter. This methodology best fits the design of the research and recognises the researcher's stance (Harding 1987). Furthermore, it suits a constructionist and post-modern context (Riessman 1993, 2008; McLeod 1997; Chase 2005). The key feature set out by social constructionist thinking is the social nature of how we make meaning: how reality is constructed is the result of how meaning-making activities take place in our relationships, not just with others but also with our cultural and environmental context.

As I am a practitioner and researcher working in the field of sexual violence, the lens through which I view this phenomenon cannot be discounted. Researchers such as Etherington (2004) put forward narrative inquiry for use in practice-based research and encourage the researcher to consider the relationship between an individual's experience and the cultural context within which it occurs. This is an important point: when working as a psychotherapist with survivors of sexual violence, understanding the context of women's experiences is key. Violence does not happen in a vacuum: there is always a context and backdrop, a set of circumstances that is relayed and has an impact.

A qualitative approach with narrative inquiry encourages the exploration of meaning (Chase 2005) and better supports a feminist epistemology – a key consideration for this study (Hesse-Biber 2007). Reinharz (1992) points out that the emergence of the feminist approaches to research addresses the balance of power between researcher and participant by recognising the researcher's stance (Harding 1987b). Furthermore, narrative inquiry encourages a reflexive approach, and in this way the reader is also aware of the role of the researcher and the attitudes, beliefs and lens through which this work is carried out. It was for these reasons that this

approach was chosen, as opposed to a similar research methodology such as phenomenology.

The approach to the analysis of the data is set out in section 3.4.5, below. I considered narrative analysis, but did not feel that there would be sufficient space in a small-scale research project to undertake true narrative analysis; however, I considered thematic analysis, underpinned by the theory set out by Braun and Clarke (2006), to be more suitable for this study. The primary consideration in choosing thematic analysis was that this is still a new area of study and thematic analysis supports its aim of presenting commonalities.

In summary, I believe that using narrative inquiry for data collection, combined with thematic analysis to analyse the data, supports the research questions and aims of the research, as it is interpretive and intersects well with a post-modern framework. It allows data to be generated from the complex nature of the lived experience in this small-scale study. It is a relational approach and encourages reflexivity: as asserted by Etherington (2004), a commitment to reflexivity and transparency encourages the researcher to set out the values and beliefs that have informed the process.

As I have set out in Chapter One, my location in this research, working with survivors of sexual violence and from a feminist perspective, has influenced the decisions I have made at each stage of this study. Use of narrative inquiry further supports the application of thematic analysis to analyse the data (Riessman 2008). Furthermore, it allows for cultural and social differences, hopefully capturing the experiences of the participants and representing the meaning they create from these experiences.

3.3.2 Research Design

In this section, I set out the research design for the study, detailing the criteria used to select and recruit participants. This is followed by a detailed account of how the

data was collected and the process of analysis. Finally, I will give details on how I addressed issues of quality assurance, ethics and evaluation of the data.

3.3.3 Participants and Sampling

The research aim was to explore the ways in which practitioners within specialist sexual violence support services work with adult women, aged 18 years and over, who have experienced technology-facilitated sexual violence or exploitation. The sampling was purposive and used snowballing techniques in order to gather the data: subsequently, the inclusion criteria were that practitioners must be working directly with adult women who have experienced technology-facilitated sexual violence and work within sexual violence service provision.

Participants were recruited from various forums linked to sexual violence services across the UK. An information sheet was drawn up and disseminated to Rape Crisis England and Wales and across key organisations that worked with women who had experienced sexual violence (Appendix B).

Recruitment of participants proved far more challenging than I had experienced when carrying out the pilot study. Feedback from these services was that members of staff found the subject matter interesting but were not clear about what I was seeking from their input. Similarly, I received a number of queries from organisations who were keen to participate, but who did not meet the inclusion criteria, as they worked with girls under the age of 18. Recruitment of participants was one of the most challenging aspects of this study.

After the first few months, I had received only two responses. I then made the decision to recruit participants in a more targeted way using contacts within the organisation where I work and wider contacts in the ending violence against women sector. I sent the information and a letter of introduction to specialist sexual violence services, rather than just sending generic emails to bigger organisations.

This second round of recruitment drew better results and I was contacted by a number of practitioners who were interested in taking part. Only one participant was from the field of psychotherapy; the other four were advocates and advice workers who support women who have experienced sexual violence. The advocates and advice workers who contacted me reported that they were seeing an increasing number of cases involving the use of technology. The feedback from counsellors and psychotherapists was centred around feeling that they had not considered the presentations of sexual violence and technology in their work with clients or that these women were often more involved with advocacy services, with a number of therapists feeding back that they found the subject matter interesting but were worried that they did not have enough knowledge about technology, or that they had not addressed the role of technology in the course of their therapeutic work with clients.

The total number of participants recruited was five. While this is a small number of participants, there is no set limit or agreement on sample size amongst researchers in qualitative research (Patton 2002). The limitations that this small sample creates for the study are explored in a later section.

3.3.4 Background to the Participants

Figure 1. Chart of Participants

Participant	Role	Organisation	Age Range	Ethnicity
Ava	Advice Worker	Voluntary Sector	20s	South Asian
Grace	Psychotherapist	National Health Service (NHS)	30s	White British
Leah	Advice Worker	Voluntary Sector	50s	White British
Tamara	Advocate	Voluntary Sector	40s	Black Caribbean
Yasmin	Advocate	Voluntary Sector	20s	White British

The participants all worked in sexual violence support services. Four of the five participants worked in services that supported women only within not-for-profit groups and one worked in the NHS. In terms of their experiences, two of the participants worked as Advocates, supporting women through the criminal justice system or providing input and support for women who were contemplating reporting sexual violence they had experienced, including historical experiences. Two were Advice Workers supporting women involved in all forms of sexual violence and exploitation, such as childhood sexual abuse, rape, trafficking, exiting prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. The purpose of their work was to provide safeguarding and advice on a range of concerns, ranging from civil intervention to ensuring that women were linked with the appropriate support. One participant worked as a psychotherapist within an NHS setting, working with women and men who had experienced sexual violence.

Participants were recruited from across the UK: three were from London, one from the North West and one from East Sussex. All five participants were women, with their ages ranging from their twenties to their fifties. I will also mention the ethnicity of the participants to highlight their diversity. Three of the women identified as being White British, one as South Asian and one as Black African Caribbean. All had between four and ten years' work expertise in the field of sexual violence.

3.3.5 Quality Control

Qualitative research, in contrast to a more objectivist and positivist position, is interested in how people view, interpret and make meaning of their experiences. Therefore, the research cannot claim to have definite conclusions in relation to women's experiences of sexual violence through the use of technologies. Given the interpretive nature of the research, quality control was practiced at each stage, including the design of the research, data collection and transparency as to how conclusions were reached.

The criteria for quality control were based on theories such as those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1994) for assessing the quality of a qualitative study – primarily ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’. This was achieved in various ways, the first of which was participant consultation. All participants were sent copies of the transcripts of the initial and subsequent meetings and invited to check that they provided an accurate account of our conversations. Once the initial tentative themes had been drawn up, these were sent to all participants, who were invited to comment and reflect on the transcripts and themes. I received feedback from three of the participants, all of whom were positive, with no changes requested. The themes were regarded as resonating with their experiences. Two participants responded only to say that they did not have any issues with the material. This is perhaps a reflection of my use of narrative inquiry, in which I met with all the participants on a number of occasions.

Additionally, representation of the findings was consistently supported with direct quotes by participants. This allowed for accurate representations of the participants’ perspectives and the meanings they assigned to their experiences (Morrow 2005). This addressed issues of respondent validation and credibility, as the conceptualisation of the data was drawn from the participants’ original transcripts (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Stiles 1993). As previously discussed in this chapter, critical reflexivity was also embedded in the research design and practice.

Quality control was enhanced throughout the process and followed guidance such as that set out by Spencer et al. (2003). Some of the key ways in which this was embedded include my keeping of detailed notes before and after the interviews with the participants, recording and transcribing the meetings, checking for accuracy and sharing the full interview scripts with the participants. Finally, the analysis of the data, in terms of the categories and themes covered, was conducted so that no relevant data was excluded and the findings were a fair representation of the participants’ experiences and viewpoints.

In addition to sharing data with the participants, I have at each part of this process shared chapters with my allocated academic advisor and with two academic

consultants, one of whom is involved in the sexual violence sector at a senior level and the other who was able to provide support and input on the methodology and findings. In addition to this, I also worked with a number of critical friends: these were a small group of senior practitioners who read drafts and provided commentary and input at each stage of the process.

3.3.5 Limitations

While a qualitative research methodology and method was the best fit for this research, there remained a number of inherent limitations. Firstly, the sample size was small, although in qualitative research there is no consensus as to sample size (Bryman 2012: 197). Narrative inquiry focuses on the depth of engagement and the production of powerful narratives. However, in order to transfer findings and to work towards a conceptual framework for these issues, a larger sample size will be needed in future research. Furthermore, if this research is to engage with mainstream psychotherapy, then the sample of participants needs to be able to engage with therapists.

The research set out to understand and describe the experiences of practitioners based in sexual violence support services, but this further limited the pool of possible participants. With a number of organisations and not-for-profit groups often working from a gendered analysis of violence against women, this excluded competing views of sexual violence and its intersection with technology. From my own position as a researcher who is also based in a sexual violence support service, I was aware that this had the potential to create a dynamic in my interaction with participants, engaging with women and issues of bias.

I have addressed these limitations in a number of ways, some of which I have already discussed in my approach to quality assurance. While I was aware of the limitations, they were outweighed by the benefits of researching this area: the in-depth exploration of an emerging area of research, with complex questions, allowing the formation of new ideas and thinking. The use of reflexivity countered issues of researcher bias.

3.4 Methods

This section sets out the way in which data has been collected and analysed, setting out the process of coding and creating themes. The latter part of the section focuses on issues of confidentiality and ethics, some of the ethical dilemmas that arose in this study and how they were addressed.

3.4.1 Data Collection

Once contact had been made with the participants, the next stage was to draw up a timetable for meetings with them, which took place over six months. The meetings happened over such a long time frame because this included the second meetings and the time it took to transcribe the discussions and return these transcripts to the participants.

Participants were given the choice of where to meet, either travelling to meet at a location suitable for them or at my office at work, and I ensured that a private space in which to meet was available. Information and consent sheets (Appendices B and C) were provided to all participants in advance of our meetings, and included details of support that I would be able to provide should our conversation give rise to any difficult feelings.

Data was collected through the use of narrative interviewing, which involved a series of unstructured conversations with the participants with an occasional prompt. These prompts were limited to encouraging the participants, as I felt that anything more would be taking me away from the methodology and I wished to avoid being drawn into the question–response schema that characterises interviews.

There were no set questions; rather, I allowed participants to narrate, but using prompt questions. The style of interaction with the participants was based on everyday communication of storytelling and listening. However, there were some

drawbacks to this approach: while engaging with the participants in depth generated rich data, there were a number of occasions when participants felt somewhat at a loss, or were concerned that they were perhaps not giving me the responses I was looking for.

The process of being in conversation is explored by Etherington (2004), who talks about questions emerging as the researcher seeks to understand participants' descriptions. Etherington (2004) also states that:

It is important that the voices of researcher and researched are not merged and reported as one story – which is actually the researcher's interpretation. By reporting each part and showing how the different roles and voices are separate, difference and problems in encounters are discussed rather than ignored (2004: 83).

Narrative interviewing worked well in relation to the research aims. As the literature review has highlighted, there remains little research into the experiences of adult women in this field of work and each participant was able to relay their unique perspective, which might not have been the case if a more structured interviewing methodology had been followed.

I met and made contact with the participants on several occasions, in person and by email and telephone, with initial meetings lasting between 35 minutes and an hour. The meetings in person were digitally recorded. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy. During the interviews, I sought to engage with the women, striving for reciprocity with the aim of establishing a non-hierarchical relationship with each of the women (Oakley 2000). The ways in which this was addressed was to be clear with the participants about my aims and motivations for carrying out the research, to allow them time and space to consider whether they wished to take part. On the days when we met, a relational approach was undertaken, with time to reflect on their experience.

3.4.2 Transcribing

All meetings were carried out between March and August 2016 and all conversations were digitally recorded. The digital recordings were then transcribed onto a Word document and stored on the researcher's computer. Each file was password protected and stored during the transcribing. Each of the participants were sent a copy of the transcript to review and agreed that it was an accurate account of our conversation. An example of a partial transcript is given in Appendix D. There was often a gap of a number of weeks between interviews, and this afforded me the opportunity to transcribe each account myself. While at times this felt like an arduous task and took weeks of work, it did have a number of advantages. Primarily it bought me closer to the data and provided a rich interaction with each of the participants, as well as maintaining the security of the data.

3.4.5 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis informed by the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). I used thematic coding, grouping themes and exploring the links between them, with the aim to provide a description of the entire data set to draw out the primary themes and the resulting sub-themes. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke as follows:

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. (2006: 6)

The methodology for the study is narrative inquiry, and the use of the thematic analysis can support this approach. However, I was aware of the debates surrounding the use of thematic analysis with narrative inquiry, as many regard thematic analysis as a blunt way of analysing data that may reduce meaning and does not allow for ambiguities in narrative. However, this approach allowed me to discover patterns across a small data-set in a relatively under-researched area.

Furthermore, I referred to Braun and Clarke's (2006) option of choosing to focus on 'latent' or semantic/surface themes. This option justified the choice of thematic analysis, as this study embraces both: that is, studying both what people narrate and how they do it. In this study, thematic analysis was used from a social constructionist position, underpinned by the importance of the use of language and how individuals construct phenomena in the world around them.

The data was analysed broadly following the six key phases put forward by Braun and Clarke (2006). These range from the initial stages of interviewing and transcribing to data extraction and immersion in the data, followed by the identification of themes and sub-themes; coding, reviewing, and defining the themes; and lastly, presenting the findings. Within thematic analysis, the coding and identification of themes reflects the explorative depth of the discussion, which is recognised as useful when researching an area that is developing and seeking to understand participants' views in this area (Braun and Clarke 2006).

An inductive approach was used with codes generated from the narrative data: literal, interpretive and reflexive coding was generated. In the initial stages of listening and subsequently transcribing data, patterns began to emerge. Throughout this process, I kept notes and memos, read transcribed narratives several times, made notes in the margins and highlighted with coloured markers to label segments and to begin to formulate codes. This approach primarily used segments, in order to avoid dividing the data and codes too much and thus risking losing the context (Saldana 2009). Decisions on themes revolved around their prevalence both in the individuals' transcripts and across the entire data set.

However, while the use of thematic analysis allowed me to move away from a theoretical framework, this did at times create tension between the gathering of the data and the analysis. In presenting the findings, I have sought to also show that, as the researcher, I was not a passive observer, simply collecting data: my own engagement with the data was critical.

The primary theoretical influence on the analysis of the data was the approach of qualitative research (McLeod 2006) and narrative inquiry with thematic analysis (Chase 2005; Creswell 2007; Braun and Clarke 2006).

3.4.6 Organising Data and Creating Themes

Organising the data and producing the themes was the most time-consuming stage of the research. The starting point of the data analysis was very much about immersion in the data, which was read and reread several times. However, with so much data, it was initially difficult to make sense of it all and move on to make decisions about organising the data and developing the themes and analysis.

The initial data comprised incoherent memos, notes, initial feelings, and processing notes, which all required organising. This may have been a weakness in the initial design of the study. At this stage, the aims of the study felt vague, and this may have been reflected in the data organisation. The aim was to explore the meanings that participants assigned to their experiences using narrative inquiry. To move forward, it was decided to return to the initial transcriptions, to connect again with the participants narratives, to hear their expressions, responses and those parts where they expressed feelings of distress, anger and their hopes. It was grounding to be reminded of the main purpose of the research. From this immersion, the themes were tentatively identified; some of these themes had emerged in the individual interviews and then began to be perceived as overlapping themes among all the participants.

The accumulation of immersion and organisation of the data led to the production of the codes. The data was processed several times, allowing the identification of recurring themes and concepts. In those initial steps, some words were clustered together from written notes and memos; post-it notes were used, with a coding framework based on the theoretical propositions to support a thorough and systematic coding of the textual data and to break this down into meaningful

phrases. The full data sets was coded manually and then onto a word document and highlighters were used to indicate segments of text representing the different initial codes from the coding framework (Appendix D).

As the coding progressed, clusters of themes were organised, taking into account the varied ways in which they appeared and how frequently they did so, which led to the creation of initial codes and themes. In parallel to this process was the noting of where codes related to one another to form a theme (Appendix E). This was critical when searching for theme categories (Ryan and Bernard 2003), particularly where there was repetition of an issue that was relevant to the aims of the study, metaphors used and themes that were more theory-related. While there were key similarities and overlaps between all of the participants, there were also key differences in terms of the impact on their sense of identity; this was, however, problematic to present in tables and categories, and often occurred in notes and memos from the transcriptions. Eventually, themes were refined under conceptual headings to present the key themes and findings (Figure 2).

Themes were then reviewed and refined, and then further reviewed. This allowed me to set out themes which were specific enough to be discrete and sufficiently broad to include a set of ideas in several segments (Attride-Stirling 2001: 392). Segments of the text represented by each of the themes were then revisited to clearly summarise the text and the full data set was reviewed to check whether any further data needed to be coded within any of the themes. Themes representing a similar issue or meaning were grouped together.

The validity of the codes was checked in a number of ways. First, data was presented verbatim: this also allowed me to check for new codes and to ensure that the codes were not distorted by researcher bias. Secondly, the themes and codes were also checked by an external researcher whose support I enlisted once I had completed the initial codes. This allowed cross-referencing of the codes with someone not connected to the research. An organising theme was identified for each of the clusters to represent the overarching essence of what the group of

basic themes represented. All organising themes were then reviewed and grouped together as master themes with sub-themes (Figure 1).

3.4.3 Ethics

It is a key part of the responsibility of the researcher to have integrity, which is crucial to the quality of knowledge and the soundness of ethical decisions in qualitative inquiry (Kvale 2009: 74).

Given the level of in-depth interaction with the participants and the nature of the issue under investigation, ethical guidelines have been critical. I adhered throughout to the ethical guidelines set out by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Furthermore, ethical approval was gained from the Metanoia Institute and Middlesex University (Appendix A).

During the pilot study, I was aware of the impact that discussion of sexual violence might have on individuals. Part of my motivation for recruiting practitioners in this field was because of the sensitive nature of the work, as the process of interviewing women who had experienced sexual exploitation has the potential to create a parallel process. In contrast to the pilot study, I was engaging with practitioners rather than clients: while this afforded some safety for the participants, they were each recalling distressing cases they had worked on and the impact this had on the women involved. In order to mitigate the potential for harm, all participants were offered de-briefing or access to a short counselling contract should they need it. One of the points raised by the ethics committee referred to ways in which I would be taking care of myself during this process, as I too work in a sexual violence setting and the impact of researching this field of work had the potential to cause

harm. In order to address this, I have undertaken external supervision throughout this study, which has allowed me space in which to reflect and consider the research.

Throughout the research, I retained a journal, notes and memos on each part of the process, which became a vital part of the work, helping me to note the challenges, frustrations and observations that arose throughout the study. It became an outlet for reflexive practice, particularly at points where much of the work was done in isolation. Additionally, the journal gave me context when interacting with participants both before and during the interviews.

Informed Consent

Prior to our meetings, individuals were e-mailed the Participant Information Sheet to read (see Appendix B). This outlines the aims and rationale for the study, the interview format, reasons for tape recording, details of anonymity and the risks and benefits of their participation. Once this information had been read, I then met individuals face to face to enable them to ask any questions about the study. Individuals were informed of the possibility of the results of the study being published, but assured that their details would be kept anonymous and they would be non-identifiable. I also highlighted to each of them that they were able to withdraw consent at any point during this process.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was maintained in a number of ways in accordance with the principles set out in the fair processing code of the Data Protection Act 1998. All information collected about the participants has been anonymised, including names and locations, so that individuals cannot be identified. Digitally recorded interviews were stored securely and transcripts of the interviews were held on my computer, which is password protected and can be accessed only by me. Additionally, digitally recorded interviews and participants' details were stored separately. Once interviews had been transcribed, copies were made available to the participants to

read. The files were only stored for as long as they were in use. Further attention needs to be given when engaging with practitioners who might introduce examples of case work: in such cases, their clients would not have been part of the process of consent, so it was important to ensure that participants explored their experiences without compromising their own ethical boundaries. This was addressed on both the information sheet and at the start of my meetings with the participants about not divulging clients' protected information.

Insider Research

Insider researcher can happen in a number of ways. In relation to this study, it relates to having in-depth or prior knowledge of the experience you are seeking to research (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2013). As a senior practitioner working in a specialist sexual violence service, I was seeking to engage with other practitioners from within this field of work. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2013) highlight the ethical dilemmas this may create and set out a number of strategies to address them. Working in this field, I was able to access organisations and practitioners. I was also aware of the ethical dilemmas this could create: for example, in one of the interviews, a practitioner expressed feeling nervous in case she was not, as she put it, 'as experienced or knowledgeable as she needed to be', admitting that this arose from her awareness of my position as a clinical lead. I addressed this in a number of ways, striving to be transparent with participants about my role and about the fact that I was seeking mutuality, and attempting to address any issues of power imbalances that might be created. In the case of the participant who expressed her nervousness, we were able to talk and reflect on this and revisit any fears she might have during the process. Furthermore, when analysing the data and reviewing the literature, I needed to bracket my own assumptions and knowledge and to maintain the integrity of the analysis and review.

Emerging technologies and Ethics

Researching an area such as emerging technology can be problematic when reviewing literature. While there are a growing number of academic studies, this is also an area of concern that has attracted a large amount of commentary in the form of online blogs, newspaper responses, social media and the mass media and has raised extensive comments. A number of these reports and articles are highly sensationalised and a great deal of coverage is given to the actions of the victims. Subsequently, a study in emerging technologies and the cyber world brings with it a high level of responsibility on the part of the researcher to ensure that I am not adding to the traffic of articles which name and focus on victims, many of whom would not have consented to this intrusion.

A study by NatCen Social Research explored the ethical principles of consent, anonymity and avoiding undue harm in relation to the issues participants raised about conducting research online (Beninger et al. 2014) and emphasised the need to be ethically rigorous and to consider these issues when undertaking research around emerging technologies.

3.5 Reflexive Statement

In accounting for the ways in which I have undertaken this research, I was aware of the conflicting sense of frustration and anxiety that I felt for much of this process. In the initial conception of the study, I had felt enthusiastic and clear about wanting to research this area. While the pilot study had proved challenging, it was a small-scale study. Moving from working with survivors to practitioners had initially felt a more manageable situation, but the frustration of finding participants made me wonder if the area I was seeking to research was a valid one. Once the meetings with the participants were underway, my interactions were tinged with mixed emotions. My first meeting with one of the participants was difficult: I was concerned at her hesitation and unsure as to whose voices were being heard in the research. When engaging with practitioners, I felt my focus shifting from their

narratives at times and could feel myself impatient to get to the survivors. This was again present when immersing myself in the transcripts: I felt a sense of frustration that I was not hearing enough about women who had been victimised through the use of TFSV.

As a practitioner working with victims of sexual violence, my focus has always been on survivors, so conducting research with practitioners was a shift for me. It also impacted on my view of the data in those initial weeks following the meetings. I recall comparing this data set to the data from the pilot study and a sense that perhaps I had made an error in the design. Eventually I was able to explore this within my research peer group, who had a different perspective, pointing out that in seeking to find the voice of survivors, I was perhaps failing to engage with the voices of the participants, all of whom had so much to add in relaying their views, feelings and ways of working. This was an important turning point but perhaps also a process that I needed to experience before I was able to immerse myself in the data collected: something I kept in mind throughout the process of creating themes and analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 Findings

This study is based upon interviews with five participants who work within specialist sexual violence support services. In order to explore how participants construct meaning in relation to TFSV against adult women, how they describe this and what the impact upon them is, the study utilised a qualitative methodological approach in the form of narrative inquiry. This allowed for a flexible approach to the collection of data: subsequently, the interactions with the participants were unstructured. I met with each participant on an average of two occasions and maintained contact throughout the research. During our meetings, the participants were invited to discuss this area of work and their thoughts and feelings: this unscripted interview style allowed for an organic process of data collection. The data was then examined using thematic analysis, which identified four primary themes and thirteen sub-themes.

This chapter will present the findings of the research in the form of these themes, utilising the participants' own words to directly illustrate their views and experiences, with my own overarching commentary. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of all participants.

Four primary themes were identified from the data set in relation to the research question, and within each of these primary themes, I isolated subsequent sub-themes (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Primary Themes and Sub Themes

Primary Theme	Sub-theme
1 Construction of Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context of Frequency and Type of sexual violence disclosed. ❖ The Offline and the Online Self ❖ Digitised and Sexualised
2. Perpetrators in the Cyber-World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Predatory Behaviour ❖ Coercion and Consent
3. Embodied and Disembodied Harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Shame and Guilt of Exposure ❖ Negative emotional & psychological impact ❖ Impact on Survivors' Professional lives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Vicarious Impact on Participants
4. Practice and Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support and Validation ❖ Complexity of the Cyber-world ❖ Seeking Redress ❖ Gaps in knowledge

4.1 Primary Theme One: Constructing Meaning

The first primary theme reflects the ways in which participants understand and create meaning in relation to the intersection of sexual violence and emerging technologies. The theme incorporates three sub-themes: the frequency and type of the sexual violence clients disclosed the ways in which participants understood and responded to the cyber-world and notions of an online and offline self; and lastly sexualisation of women online.

4.1.1 Context of Frequency and Type and of Sexual Violence Disclosed

The reference point for the way in which participants understand and describe the experiences of TFSV is linked to the context of the survivors presentation with two primary factors firstly, the number of women with whom the participants had come into contact through their services and the frequency of the presentation; and secondly, the types of sexual violence and abuse they experienced. While this is one sub-theme, I have addressed it in separate sections for clarity. The context of the women’s experience is integrated in both sub-sections.

Frequency of presentation

All five participants talked about the frequency of the presentation of TFSV. Two of the participants, Yasmin and Grace, initially felt that it impacted only a few clients with whom they had worked. Grace did, however, towards the end of our first meeting and in subsequent contact, talk of not realising just how many of her clients had been affected by TFSV.

I've had a couple of people referred to the service who met people via online dating sites and on the first date have gone home with that person and then that's involved an incident of rape on both occasions. (Yasmin)

Yasmin, an advocate working within a small voluntary sector organisation based at a local family justice centre, admitted that while this might not be a large number of clients, of the last seventeen referrals she had received, two had involved online dating. She felt that this represented a significant increase. Grace, a psychotherapist based in the north of England, worked within the NHS with victims of sexual violence, both male and female. She expressed concerns about participating at the very start, saying that she only had one client who had suffered TFSV. This client stood out for her because of the sheer volume of sexual images and films of the client that were posted across adult entertainment sites, but towards the end of our first meeting and in our second meeting, she expressed surprise, realising that there were a number of cases in both her professional and her private life that she had not previously explored.

Yeah, I think it's so interesting, because before we started the interview I was thinking 'I've only got one person', but as we're talking it's like in a different context it's really alive. (Grace)

Three of the participants felt that the use of technology in sexual violence was much more prevalent and talked about seeing it more often. These three participants – Ava, Leah and Tamara – who all worked as advice and advocacy workers in different organisations, felt that this was happening frequently to women. The frequency of TFSV was discussed by all the participants but their views

about its prevalence differed. Grace and Yasmin talked at a micro level, in contrast to Leah, who would often refer to wider issues and instances when abuse became more intense and widespread

...my observations were that women were under direct attack from a large group of online abusers, harassers and misogynists. (Leah)

What Leah saw as the misogyny that women experienced, often through online mediums and primarily platforms such as Twitter, was for her a logical consequence of societal inequalities. Leah was the only one of the participants to talk about groups of people coming together online to harass and abuse women. This sense of women being under constant attack caused her a great deal of distress throughout our meetings. Tamara and Ava too felt that this experience was not uncommon. Tamara, who worked as an Advocate, reported that she often had queries on their information line from women who were being threatened by ex-partners around the sharing of sexually explicit images. Her experience of the work was in many ways similar to that of Ava, who worked in a large voluntary sector organisation across London.

I think for me it became more apparent as a lot of the women that I did come into contact with would feel a sense that they didn't have no choice because there was images of them somewhere or they agreed to be videoed but now they were being blackmailed. (Ava)

The participants often linked the abuse disclosed by survivors to the context and circumstances of their lives, including their relationship to the abuser and the wider social and cultural issues. Abuse within the context of intimate partner relationships was cited by three of the participants, either as a trigger for threatening to post sexually explicit images or films online or as part of other abuses perpetrated within that relationship.

She had already found stuff online that he had already posted. You know, he would take pictures and film it, posted a lot of it on to these websites,

created web pages, you know: she was all over the internet would be an understatement. (Grace)

Ava expressed a lot of anxiety and anger about this subject, talking about how taking and sharing images is expected in relationships nowadays, and that while this is normalised, there is a sense of luring women into a sense of safety only to use this against them if things go wrong:

...a client was in a relationship with someone for at least a year..... they took intimate images together; it came out that he was actually married and she ended the relationship but he didn't want it to end so he started threatening her. (Ava)

Tamara too expressed feeling anxious about the situations that the women were in, feeling that for some women the consequences would be far-reaching. Two of the five participants talked about the experiences of South Asian women. Tamara, in both our first and subsequent meeting, would talk about South Asian women being subjected to threats, as highlighted in her extract below.

I have noticed that within the BME sector, especially with South Asian women that I've come across, there can be lots of threats of revealing pictures of women over the internet; social media sites. (Tamara)

Her anger around these experiences was clear, and through her reflections, she went on to process her understanding, feeling that culture and tradition played an important role for women from South Asian communities, meaning that women who have sexual relationships outside of marriage, which are often kept secret, are more vulnerable to threats of being exposed to their families and communities, in addition to sexually explicit images being circulated. Tamara felt that this would lead to other forms of violence against this cohort of women from within their communities.

There can also be things associated with that where women may feel a sense of shame, especially round their culture, and things that could tie into that, like honour-based issues. (Tamara)

Ava too referred to the impact that culture might have on women's experience. In our early discussion and in the context of subsequent experiences of TFSV being compounded, Ava's own sense of shock about the women's experience was apparent.

In her culture as being an Asian woman it was like a big 'Oh my gosh: that cannot happen!' (Ava)

One participant, Leah, talked about ethnicity in relation to wider concerns of women who may be marginalised for a number of reasons, as she explained when talking about women being targeted with online abuse:

If you're a women of colour or a lesbian or disabled, then you're sent racist abuse on top of the misogynist abuse as well, full of all the hate that goes along with that. (Leah)

The other participants did not specify the cultural aspects of the women they worked with. In addition to the frequency of presentations of TFSV, the participants also explored the types of sexual violence with which clients presented, as explored in the following section.

Types of TFSV

All five participants talked not just about the frequency of these experiences but also to the type of violence women experienced. They presented a complex set of experiences that, as discussed in section 4.1.1, were linked to the context of women's lives, and ranged from abuse within intimate partner relationships to women being targeted online through dating sites, resulting in rape, incidents of rape being filmed or audio recordings taken, sexually explicit images being taken to humiliate and degrade women and shared with other perpetrators online, or large-scale harassment, threats and trolling through a range of social media platforms.

Three of the participants focused on cases which involved the circulating of sexually explicit images. Tamara and Ava referred several times to pictures and images being shared as the most common type of case they encountered. This could be in the context of intimate partner relationships or images taken without consent and shared through social media platforms, or threats to share.

Tamara and Ava were the two participants who referred the most to sexually explicit images. The most common type of scenario was:

...they took intimate images together, it came out that he was actually married and she ended the relationship, but he didn't want it to end so he started threatening her. (Tamara)

Ava also often focused on the posting of images or being filmed, linking this to an expectation for women to share intimate images, and for these two participants it was the most obvious example of how to understand TFSV.

I also find a lot that these days partners or if you're in a relationship they will ask you to send me a photo, let me see how you look now, what are you wearing, you know? (Ava)

Both Tamara and Ava talked about the threats and abuses that women experienced as a result of this, feeling that the abuse simply continued. Tamara described how complicated the experiences became for women, talking about one case which had stayed with her. She had worked with this case some months ago but still thought about it:

she wanted help to get back photos that he took of her; a few weeks after, she told me there were other things films he might have had on his phone, but she had been drinking and smoking stuff and wasn't sure. There was so much going on, not just the pictures. (Tamara)

Leah explored other kinds of abuse, namely women being targeted and trolled online:

...there are lots of women that I know personally who have an awful lot to say and an awful lot to contribute [but] who do not engage in online debates or any form of social media because they are aware of the levels of abuse.

(Leah)

From her experiences, Leah often talked about women she knew personally, not just clients she supported, going on to talk about the way in which women were effectively being silenced, either through being targeted online or just by the threat of vast amounts of sexual violence and abuse. Two of the participants reported rape in cases that involved women meeting men on dating sites and subsequently meeting offline. Both separate cases led to the women being raped on the first meeting.

For Yasmin, use of online apps was so commonplace that it did not make the women suspicious or worried about meeting men online and exchanging information. Indeed, in many ways it gave the women involved a sense of safety, as this was all being done in the safety of their homes and online. Grace, in her work as a psychotherapist, talked of three different incidents. One case involved a client who experienced years of sexual violence from her now ex-partner, often including being forced to have sex with other men, with hundreds of sexually explicit images being taken, which were then uploaded to amateur pornography sites and across up to a hundred different sites online. Two cases involved women who had been raped at a party, with the perpetrator filming the rape and playing this footage back to them. Grace was the only one of the participants who also worked with men, and while she talked about work where women were being victimised, she also pointed out the wider nature of this issue. Grace explored how she saw a consistent presentation of sexual violence that involved the use of technology:

I had one client....the guy spiked her with LSD, she was quite vulnerable, and then recorded, audio recorded him raping her. When she looked online, she saw that he was kind of grooming quite a few girls very similar to her so that there was a certain demographic. (Grace)

There were several cases in which the perpetrator had been ‘grooming’ a number of women using the internet in order to sexually assault them and film such attacks. Grace talked about clients being targeted through online dating sites and apps, reflecting that the internet created this platform in which people might meet up in situations that were not safe.

We see so much sexual violence that comes out of internet dating, social media, to people that meet up with people in situations that aren’t safe, so they are exploited, that may lay down boundaries of what they don’t want to do but get coerced into doing stuff by someone appearing to be nice. (Grace)

To Grace too, the use of social media and online forums was normalised and did not feel unusual, as it was such an everyday event. She highlighted the complex nature of this work and how technology use can very rapidly become a part of everyday life and quickly escalate until it becomes problematic, at which point it may be too late.

What arose from our meetings was the context of the frequency and types of TFSV presented by victims, with the participants setting out the complex nature of this presentation, the range of ways in which TFSV was being perpetrated and the extent to which technology was integrated into all aspects of women’s lives.

4.1.2 The Offline and the Online Self

At some point in our meetings, all five participants made comparisons between TFSV and offline sexual violence and used their understanding of so-called real life in order to understand TFSV. This section sets out the ways in which the participants utilised their experiences of working with sexual violence, likening the cyber-world to so-called real life. In particular, they spoke about how meeting someone online – either on social media or through the use of apps – was in some ways similar to so-called real life situations, but there was also some confusion and contradiction from the participants.

Yasmin felt that in principle, meeting someone socially online was the same as meeting someone offline, seeing online dating as being similar to meeting someone in a bar or a club. She went on to qualify this by explaining that the principle was the same for the women, but that if someone goes online with the intention to target another person, there is no way of knowing beforehand. Additionally, online activity does not utilise the conventional social cues that we have in our offline lives: she admitted when exploring this that she felt there was a difference, but that she was not entirely sure what this difference was, although she did somewhat tentatively go on to say:

Let me think of the difference. Maybe the difference is that online you can kind of write to somebody and gain trust through writing in a non-threatening way, you know? (Yasmin)

Yasmin related this to personal experiences: she often wrote blogs about her work, and writing for her was a way in which she could express and share her thoughts and feelings and hope to make a difference, so this medium of communication was important to her. Leah was clearer about her position, feeling that what happened online and offline should not be viewed any differently:

There shouldn't be this arbitrary distinction that what happens online isn't real and there is a real life and the online life, behaviour does not mirror offline slash what some would say is real life. (Leah)

These conversations about the difference between online and offline activity instigated discussions about the distinctions between online and offline perpetrators of sexual violence. Leah and Yasmin went on to make the point that those who use the anonymity of technology could not be discounted as harmless or just as a few social misfits.

All five of the participants also stated that social media facilitates hidden identities: online, people can be anybody they want to be, meaning that there is the possibility that predators could be more calculating in their actions, and that the safety checks that many women do within such interactions may become more relaxed when

people are communicating online. There was no agreement amongst the participants as to whether this had increased the level of sexual violence and harassment. Both Ava and Leah raised this point and Leah explored this phenomenon, feeling that it was a falsehood. However, there was agreement among participants in relation to anonymity online:

I would argue that you are not a perfectly nice reasonable person offline and then you turn into a complete misogynist, racist, violent person online. I just refuse to accept that, while there is a disinhibition effect online because many are protected by anonymity and many are protected by mob mentality.
(Leah)

Leah was clear that there was a reason why this happens and continues to flourish, pointing out that when she refers to a 'mob mentality' she is referring to groups of – in this case – abusive men who are able to very quickly connect to others who share and validate their views of women. Therefore, in many ways, technology is the perfect platform on which misogyny against women can flourish. Ava also had a cautious approach and admitted that this had affected her at a personal level.

I need to see who I am speaking to and anyone on the web site can say anything about who they are and what they do: it does not give me any comfort whatsoever. (Ava)

Grace too felt that while one might make contact with someone online, they could really be anyone. She felt conflicted but also resigned that people were making choices online that could and often did lead to unsafe situations. This was a common theme throughout all my meetings with the participants: they all, in some ways, grappled with trying to understand the issue of technology and sexual violence, relaying a sense of unreality that was felt by both the clients and themselves as practitioners. Leah felt that this was related to feelings of disinhibition that can be created online:

...what happens online isn't real, and there is real life and the online life behaviour does not mirror off line slash what some would say is real life.

(Leah)

Two of the participants – Yasmin and Grace – talked about the ways in which technology created a dynamic in which people may feel a sense of safety. Tamara did not feel any such sense of safety. From the outset, the online world was frightening for her: she talked about not knowing who you were interacting with and the consequences of this, feeling that many people go online in order to harm or exploit.

What stands out for me is that it could be anyone, whatever it can start out with messages or just conversations, but that can turn into something else and become overwhelming. (Tamara)

Of all the participants, it was Leah and Grace who explored this in the most detail. While Leah focused on a more widespread abuse of women, as discussed earlier, Grace explored how she felt in relation to her client work. She summed this up by reflecting on how it felt to work with clients who presented with such issues:

It feels like it's almost intangible and almost like you're in a horror film, you know: real but not real...I guess it feels unreal but very real at the same time.

(Grace)

By her own admission, this sense of unreality was something that was difficult for Grace to work with. She talked about how she felt disconnected from some of the experiences, yet she related to the anxiety and fear felt by victims. This created for Grace the sense of knowing and seeing the images but not being able to completely relate them to reality. She went on to explore how she had worked with a client who had been drugged and then raped: there have been instances where such experiences have been filmed and the clients have seen the film.

Grace talked about the client feeling disconnected from the experience even though she had seen the film. She expressed her own parallel process of confusion and the transference that presented itself in the work. In the extract below, Grace

speaks about how she became a part of the quest to connect to the client's experience:

I remember how shocking it was and it was weird actually because there's also this kind of like there's an intrigue, and I think that's part of the unrealness of it.....A disconnect because obviously we know he's done it that has actually happened but because there is a lack of trace you know you almost want to kind of see, it feels like it makes it real. It's bizarre because of course I know it's real but that's the unrealness to it. (Grace)

Participants highlighted the elusive and perplexing nature of these experiences. Confusion and ambiguity also have an impact: as Tamara pointed out, women go through a process of minimising their experiences and only when sharing these experiences did they start to feel realness to them, although Tamara did not explore why that was the case.

The interviews illustrated that the use of technology created confusion and a sense of being disconnected from the experiences of sexual violence for both the practitioners and the women they worked with. The confusion that participants talked about was in relation to technology, the internet and the online environment, rather than the resulting sexual violence that victims reported.

4.1.3 Digitised and sexualised

The use of sexually explicit images was explored by all the participants, and they related this to the primary theme of constructing meaning in relation to TFSV through shifting cultural norms that involve how we use technology and the normalised way of women being more sexualised through this medium. While in the two previous sub-themes the participants explored individual cases, this theme highlighted the ways in which participants felt that social media supported and encouraged women to assert themselves online as sexual beings.

As discussed in the extract below, Yasmin felt that the ways in which women are represented in technology are no longer limited to a working environment, but that they are shaping our social identities in some ways:

The whole culture around it: I'm not sure I like it personally because it's all social media. It's presenting yourself in the best light and it's exaggerating things, having to make yourself into this perfect person, like that person is a commodity. Everyone becomes that same perfect person. (Yasmin).

Ava also mentioned this cultural normalisation, but she felt that there was another layer to it, setting out examples of sex tapes made by 'celebrities' and feeling that it is accepted that this is how women assert their sexuality. For Ava, the point is that:

it's almost like they view this as they know what they are doing: it's their choice to take these images and send it. Think it's about sexuality; think it's also about being famous for whatever reason, like the Kim Kardashian sex tapes. On that level, they think that's the way to be famous and make money, sexuality, attention: it could be grooming, it could be fitting in with the rest of the crowd. (Ava)

Leah and Tamara also followed this theme, but focused more on the imagery and visual aspect of sexually explicit images being shared and posted online.

Practitioners relayed how they felt that this imagery is causing harm. They referred several times to the visual aspect, but were not able to fully say what it was about this aspect that was disturbing for them. Of all the participants, it was Tamara who mentioned this most often, relaying the lasting impact it would have on the women and the level of exposure that could ensue. For Tamara, there was something about the aspect of imagery that made it distinct from other forms of sexual violence:

...that picture sends so much. With an image, it's visual, in that it can cause so much trauma, because for perpetrators that gratification of a sexual nature, but for women it's like their identity, their pride, everything is in that picture, and that really is overwhelming: what can go on for one woman in just that one image. (Tamara)

Both Tamara and Ava talked about the visual effect of the imagery, often repeating this point throughout our meetings. They were also the two participants who saw this most often. At times, they were not sure why the visual aspect of images was fundamental to understanding the impact on the victims. Tamara went some way to explain, talking about how one client said that she was nothing more than her 'boobs' really, and didn't think the perpetrator really saw her as a person.

Participants struggled to find the language to understand and explain this, but were very aware of the implications for victims. This was highlighted most starkly when participants talked about imagery, the expression of language and the process of women being manipulated in digitised form, and the far-reaching and long-lasting implications of such images being disseminated:

because as soon as it's taken from one site it could have easily been like screenshot and shared with many different people and I think that's the hardest thing to live with, knowing that you could be walking down the street and somebody has seen that image and you don't even know that they've seen that image but they're aware that your image has been circulated onto the internet. I think that the hardest thing for women to be able to come to terms with: that they don't know who's seen it. (Ava)

In her narrative, Ava places emphasis on the intersection of the impact of the visual image on women coupled with the far-reaching implications of the circulation of such images. This lack of control over the widespread dissemination of sexually explicit images was also brought up by other participants. As Ava pointed out:

...images aren't just seen in the UK: it can go global so, so quickly.....unless you go through each and every site that you can possibly think that image (pause).... there can still be images left or out there. (Ava)

Yasmin talked about sexually explicit material and also felt that there was a normalisation of sexual material that was readily available on the internet:

I think it's amplified and exaggerated a lot of things in terms of sexual violence, like pornography is now really accessible to everyone (Yasmin).

Grace felt that it was not just about sending images of oneself but the ways in which people felt it was okay to share, as she points out:

If I was on a dating site and a guy sent me a picture of his penis, which I know is quite common, that's like flashing, how is that allowed....no one would do that in public. (Grace)

The participants explored the way in which sexual images of women were being used as a means of humiliation and retaliation, but also mentioned the level of normalisation of the sexualised images of women. This theme of construction of meaning sets out the complex set of ways in which participants understand TFSV. This ranges from the context and frequency of TFSV to the range of abuses that occur through the use of technology, and to the difference between online abuses and those that involve offline contact. Finally, the use of user-generated content to post sexually explicit material is normalised through the medium of images and can easily be disseminated.

This leads to the next theme, which focused on the way in which online predators and perpetrators were perceived by the participants.

4.2 Primary Theme Two: Perpetrators in the Cyber-world

This section sets out the participants' opinions of those who perpetrate TFSV. The participants explored a range of issues, such as anonymity and the availability and impact of cyber-pornography. They talked about the online disinhibition effect and the supposedly anonymous use of the internet to abuse, groom and harass women, and about technology and the internet as a platform for already abusive individuals. The behaviour was seen as predatory, with a level of premeditation.

During my conversations with participants, one of the themes that arose was how they strove to understand the experiences of women who accessed services and how they perceived the motivations of perpetrators. Some common themes to emerge revolved around issues of pornography and how participants linked this to TFSV, notions of coercion and consent and grappling with language to describe adult-specific TFSV, and the opportunities that technology presents for predatory behaviour and grooming.

4.2.1 Predatory Behaviour

Participants talked about how they felt that clients were being deliberately manipulated and targeted, both in instances where sexual violence started online and led to offline or so called real-life violence and where the perpetrator and victim had already met and in some instances were in relationships, with the participants feeling a sense that it has all been premeditated.

I think it does give a platform to people who are predatory and who do have those emotions, kind or premeditated intentions, to kind of, I don't know, to strategize a bit. I feel like it's a different platform perhaps to strategize on but I do think that people can do that anyway. (Yasmin)

Three participants felt that experiences of TFSV do not happen without a level of planning and a deliberate intent to cause harm. Yasmin went on to explore how, from her experience of supporting women, in sexual violence that is instigated online there has to be an element of perpetrators building trust and a relationship with the women, talking online and gathering information which the women felt comfortable about sharing through the disconnected online world. However, within these relationships, Yasmin identified that there tended to be little disclosure on the man's part: in her view, this was not coincidental:

...details she gave me about what he said, it could have been her anxiety and sort of really thinking about and trying to find meaning in what he's said leading up to the event; it could also be quite predatory. (Yasmin)

Yasmin felt that this behaviour was deliberate, planned and targeted, and that it was facilitated by the internet. She expressed the feeling that there was a sinister side to the internet and its accessible nature which allows people who might not otherwise engage in predatory behaviour to do so. This was in contrast to Leah, who felt that harassment and abuse online did not occur simply because there was more opportunity, but rather that there would have to be a pre-existing motivation to do so, as set out in the extract below;

In the online world, if somebody is being abusive and threatening, you don't just suddenly jump in there and go 'I might try my hand at this', so my argument would be that you already have that mind-set in the first place and the conditions such as abuse happens online and you've got this mass mob attacks, the mind-set of male entitlement and objectification of women.
(Leah)

Leah made the point that online abuse is able to flourish. This was linked to her work and activism, as she would often align with groups who challenged online abuse and trolling that targeted women. In her experience, the way in which groups of men get together to target and abuse women validated this behaviour and made it somehow more acceptable, but that the motivation for it would already be there. Leah felt that social media platforms validated their behaviour, which would not have happened in the past. Tamara to some extent took a similar position, feeling that some men planned to abuse and hurt the women involved:

It's like he knew he could target her. She had a lot of struggles even before they met: she was young in a way, I don't think she would stand up for herself. He was horrible really and it just got to the point she was overwhelmed and went along with it all, but some of things he made her do, it was too much. (Tamara)

In contrast to this, Yasmin felt that accessibility caused people to behave in a way they otherwise might not:

...accessibility, the dark side has always existed. This has kind of made it bigger and made potentially perhaps more people engage in it who wouldn't otherwise have had access to it. (Yasmin)

Two participants – Ava and Grace – also felt that the anonymity of being online was a motivating factor. For Ava, this was one of the key issues in relation to technology as a whole: people could be whoever they wanted. Grace felt that technology lent itself to being an anonymous forum.

Yeah but there is something about it like it being permission, given the anonymity of being online. (Grace)

Where there was some agreement in relation to the availability and accessibility of pornography online, three of the participants – Grace, Leah and Yasmin – talked about the availability of pornography and sexually explicit material online and clients disclosing that they felt the use of pornography had played a part in their experience. Leah talked about feeling that use of pornography fuels the violence, with victims talking of the degrading and violent nature of pornography available. Grace also spoke of the huge availability of pornography online. Yasmin expressed a similar view and expanded on her concerns about the use of pornography:

I think it's amplified and exaggerated a lot of things in terms of sexual violence, like pornography is now really easily accessible to everybody, really violent forms of pornography. I don't agree with pornography itself in the first place, but then there is violent pornography, there's like possibility of exploitation: it makes it much more easy to interlink the dark side. This is kind of made it bigger and made potentially perhaps more people engage in it who wouldn't otherwise, who wouldn't have had access to it; think it would have played out in a more interpersonal one-to-one level. (Yasmin)

Yasmin was the only participant to link pornography to wider issues of sexual exploitation, relating this to her work in the past with women who had been trafficked. In addition to predatory behaviour, the second sub-theme to arise in

relation to the perpetration of violence online was related to issues of coercion and consent, which are explored in the next section.

4.2.2 Coercion and consent

In addition to the motivation for perpetrators' behaviour, four of the participants talked about the coercion involved in clients' experiences, with victims often being left feeling that they had consented. Grace, who works in a counselling setting, set out the sinister nature of consent:

...there was a lot of coercion, a lot of sexual coercion in the relationship. He talked her into doing lots of things she didn't want to do, like with other men, you know. He would take pictures and film it and she was never, I would say she never fully consented, and she was coerced into doing it and then he posted a lot of it onto these websites, created web pages, you know? She was all over the internet would be an understatement. (Grace)

Grace also pointed to the autonomy and control that is taken away from these women when the images and films are posted. This leaves no time for women to come into the service and explore distressing thoughts and feelings, as they often need to deal with the most imminent issues of trying to contain images and films from being further circulated. Tamara and Ava also highlighted the point that sexual coercion was involved in taking sexually explicit images, but also went on to highlight that once images are taken, this leads to further threats or actual violence:

...the women I've come across, there can be lots of threats and further violence can be perpetrated against women, with the threat, you know, of revealing pictures of women over the internet. (Tamara)

Ava and Tamara both raised the serious implications for women. Even where images or films were not shared, the threat of such sharing kept women in already abusive and violent relationships, as set out by Ava:

I think for me it became more apparent as a lot of the women that I did come into contact with, I would feel a sense that they didn't have no choice because there was images held of them somewhere or they agreed to be videoed but now they were being blackmailed. (Ava)

Tamara and Ava both went on to explore the way victims felt that they could not report these threats to the police, as they felt that they were culpable. In part, for Ava, this was because there has been such normalisation of the sharing of intimate images that women were left feeling responsible.

They just get away with it: it's a cycle. They just keep doing it because a lot of women don't want to report and also when they do report it's almost like they don't get taken seriously because it's that balance around consent – 'you must have consented'...it's victim blaming. (Tamara)

Yasmin spent some time grappling with what went on for women, understanding the confusion that victims felt and why women think they have consented but don't think about the coercion involved. She went on to say:

So it's kind of perhaps, that with a mixture of what her expectations are – 'I did this. I agreed to it, was okay for him to do that' – so it's how it gets constructed and what she believes her part in this is. (Yasmin)

Three of the participants relayed difficulties in finding the language to describe how women are coerced by perpetrators online, using words such as 'grooming' or 'trolling' to describe ways in which perpetrators behave online to sexually exploit women. Leah admitted that she felt conflicted by some of the language used to describe women's experiences of sexual violence online, but felt that it was important to highlight issues of power and control, as well as the significance of being able to offer women a rationale and explanation for their experiences that places responsibility for the abuse with the perpetrator.

...it's also about challenging the language that is used, which is a really important part of feminist discourse, it always has been, so for example using the word 'troll' just really irritates me. It's really inappropriate, really minimising and trivialising of the impact of the language a lot of these online abusers use, which is very graphic, and it's frequently a form of sexual violence that is being used to try and silence women, particularly feminists.
(Leah)

There was also a sense of frustration that there was an absence of language to describe the behaviour. Grace went on to explore how these incidents left her feeling conflicted about some of the language used around these experiences:

I think that any of those kinds of words and I feel it's okay for me to use it, 'grooming', because I know what it means, but not for others, but it takes away from the real pain, definitely it's like the dark side. (Grace)

Grace felt very strongly about this point: when we met for the second time, she again raised the use of the word 'grooming' and her discomfort around its use by lay people or those not working in sexual violence support services, feeling that in some way it diminished the impact of women's experiences. Yasmin also talked of the steps she had taken to find ways to adequately describe clients' experiences:

I was always looking for research for evidence on grooming of adults to prove because, you know, when I was disputing decisions by the Home Office, I would want to say grooming, it's all children but it's not just children.
(Yasmin)

This section highlights the way in which participants viewed predatory behaviour either by targeting women online or using technology to sexually abuse or exploit women, and the struggle to find the language to adequately describe ways of challenging consent, framing this in the context of coercion.

4.3 Primary Theme Three: Embodied and Disembodied Harms

A third primary theme was the impact that TFSV has on victims that participants observed and worked with; this ranged from emotional and psychological to the professional lives of survivors. This section sets out the different ways in which the women they worked with were affected, ranging from intense feelings of shame to a loss of trust, damage to mental health and wellbeing, the impact on the professional lives of victims and the subsequent impact of this work on the participants.

4.3.1 Shame and Guilt of Exposure

Participants reported that the women they supported presented with a range of emotions and feelings. The construction of these women's experiences was situated in the context of public shame and culpability, which four of the practitioners noted led to internal and external feelings of exposure and subsequent feelings of shock, disbelief and an internal confusion about being held morally responsible for their victimisation.

Three of the participants talked about the impact of the use of images and films. They saw social media sites as the most problematic, as the sharing and posting of images to these sites was solely for the purpose of maximum humiliation of the women involved. At times this was indiscriminate, with footage being uploaded onto pornography sites and images being shared with family, friends and colleagues. There seemed to be no area of women's lives that remained protected. Grace summed up the public and private aspects of TFSV that she had observed in her work:

It was difficult for her, like a total loss of control and a public humiliation, with the impact of this being, it had a lasting effect and became part of future relationships, so again there's a public private effect'. (Grace)

The context in which these experiences happened was important to the participants in terms of understanding their impact. Two of the participants recounted the experience of South Asian women, with visual images being shared with family and the wider community, talking of the initial shock and fear but also

the victimisation and ostracising that occurred in the aftermath. Tamara felt that for some women the sense of shame was overwhelming, feeling that issues of 'culture' were critical in understanding, working with and supporting clients who presented with concerns around issues of honour. She talked about feelings of shame being linked to women's cultural experiences:

Women may feel a sense of shame, especially around their culture, and things that could tie into that, like honour-based issues.....I think because South Asians are a very tight-knit community, the culture and tradition plays a lot of part. (Tamara)

Tamara went on to explore how difficult it became for women and the longer-term implications of this, referring to one client:

...she felt completely humiliated, but scared too, of her family finding out that there were so many pictures. Even when she told me, she felt really embarrassed and kept saying how stupid she was. She got really depressed: I had to ask her to go to the GP, you know: she was getting worse. (Tamara)

Furthermore, Ava highlighted how the visual aspect of the images, in particular, left a lasting impact, as once seen, they could not be easily forgotten:

...they took intimate pictures together; it came out that he was actually married and she ended the relationship but he didn't want it to end, so started threatening her to send the pictures to her son. In her culture, being an Asian woman..... she got begging him and he was like 'Get back with me', and in the end he actually did send the images. (Ava)

This topic led four of the participants to talk about the manner in which women who are sexually exploited through technology do not have the option to retain anonymity, in direct contrast to the perpetrators. Grace talked about the loss of control, in relation to not being able to stop images and films from being circulated and having to live with not knowing where these images were and who they might go to. Ava discussed the way in which social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook compound the difficulty of keeping one's life private, which can leave

women fearful of further victimisation. Leah summed this up in the following statement:

It's also very different to offline sexual violence: it's incredibly public, which adds to the humiliation factor. It's publicly putting somebody in the stocks, as it were. (Leah)

Three of the participants talked about the impact of this on survivors, leading to a chronic and paralysing sense of fear, as witnessed when these women seek help. Many survivors are left in a state of constant uncertainty: Ava referred to this aspect as one of the hardest parts of this experience to work with. Clients would talk about not feeling able to trust their own judgement, which was often linked to narratives of self-blame, shame and guilt: if they had not taken or shared their photos, this would not have happened. Such feelings were reinforced by not knowing who was viewing or sharing the images:

I think that's the hardest thing to live with: knowing that you could be walking down the street and somebody has seen that image and you don't even know that they've seen that image but they are aware that the image has been circulated onto the internet. I think that's the hardest thing for women to be able to come to terms with: that they don't know who's seen it (Ava).

Counteracting clients' sense of culpability becomes an important part of the practitioners' work. Notably, the participants who worked as advocates were pragmatic and realistic in their approach, believing that it was unlikely that all of the images and films could be removed, and tended to focus instead on supporting the women with coming to terms with this. On the other hand, through her therapeutic work, Grace felt that the 'taboo' nature of sexualised images of women and the lack of a reference point for these experiences results in a higher level of public exposure and an intense sense of isolation, as well as a chronic sense of shame and culpability. She talked about one client going to extraordinary lengths to hide her identity when accessing services, including using a different name and changing her physical appearance. Grace spoke about the client's chronic feelings of shame, loss of control over her life and paranoia at being exposed in public.

Grace explored within her interview the lasting impact that these experiences had on women, and spoke about this becoming a part of future relationships and the impact of something private having a public effect. Similarly, Tamara also talked about the deep impact that TFSV had on women:

But it's never forgotten: it just gets rooted deeper and deeper and they learn a way to cope, but for some women they are just stuck; they are never able to get through it.....A lot of women feel ashamed; they feel that they are constantly going to be judged, what other people will think, but I think it's what they feel about themselves. (Tamara)

In addition to feelings of guilt and shame and fear of exposure, the participants also talked about other impacts on women, which are set out in the next sub-theme.

4.3.2 Negative emotional and psychological impact

When speaking about the symptoms and impact of TFSV on the women that they supported, four of the participants made reference to the negative impacts on women's psychological well-being. These included anxiety, panic attacks, flashbacks, nightmares, changing their external lives to gain a sense of control, social withdrawal, including closing social media accounts, secrecy, uncertainty as to what happened and if it was sexual violence or illegal, feelings of isolation and feelings of culpability.

Yasmin talked about the way women tried to cope and the impact it had on the women she worked with:

She started having nightmares, panic attacks, she was getting flashbacks, she started to feel like oh maybe something had happened.....The first time I saw her she hadn't really talked to anyone. (Yasmin)

For Leah, there was a sense that online sexual violence is distinct from other forms of sexual violence, and that this was partly due to the high level of exposure that the women experienced and the re-victimisation effect that this had. Other

practitioners, such as Ava and Tamara, explored the cultural context of women's lives: both worked from an advocacy perspective and focused on the effect that this had on safety planning.

Some of the participants noted that this type of narrative was often expressed by clients through feelings of guilt, and Grace made the point that this kind of abuse can go on for months, with both emotional and psychological symptoms becoming more entrenched, leading to high levels of anxiety and negative health impacts:

...she was like extremely anxious, she had a lot of anxiety all the time. It was getting OCD kind of behaviours, lots of door checking, kind of obsessively checking, she had a new partner as well and he would look and sort of find things and get really upset about it. (Grace)

Overall, it was the long-term impact of these experiences on women that most concerned the participants. A number of the participants admitted that the anxiety presented by the women they worked with became overwhelming at times and talked of not feeling entirely sure about how to counteract these feelings. Leah admitted that she had worked with women for whom the symptoms of trauma had simply escalated, resulting in clients isolating themselves and feeling crippled by feelings of fear and despair.

...these women felt, and I'm using their words, felt really dirty. A lot of them felt loathing even for themselves. It was humiliating and isolating, that impact was lasting. (Leah)

Leah linked this sense of fear at some level to the anonymity of the perpetrator, with the women simply not knowing what was going to happen next. This point was also raised by Tamara, who went on to say;

it's like this fear factor that resides inside you, where you think what's going to happen to the image, or the perpetrator could maliciously blackmail you, well if you don't do this, I'm going to put this in every post box or I'm going to put this in the newspaper or I'm going to send this to your family. (Tamara)

Going on to talk about a sense of women feeling stuck, Tamara and Ava also spoke about working with women to help them learn how to cope, whilst admitting that a part of them felt hopeless in relation to their clients' recovery and healing:

the women I've worked with, their confidence is gone. They are always wondering if their colleague or the person they are sitting next to have seen any images; they are always thinking about it.....it creates a paranoia. It can take one person six months but another years. (Ava)

The participants who explored the impact on the victims were all working with women who accessed their services whilst the abuse was still on-going. Often this was when images had been circulated for which there would not be an immediate resolution.

4.3.3 Impact on survivors' professional lives

A theme to emerge and an issue that four participants talked about was the detrimental impact of TFSV on the professional lives of the clients they supported and on the lives of women generally. This issue was raised in relation to the use of sexually explicit images and films being circulated across social media sites or uploaded onto amateur pornography sites. Yasmin cited examples of working with women who had changed not just their online habits but also the course of their lives in some ways, which seemed to be linked to a desire for an enhanced sense of safety. Grace and Leah also raised the issue of the impact of TFSV on survivors' professional lives:

...she felt like she had to protect her identity, but she had done the same at work: she was a researcher, she was quite sort of heavyweight, researcher doing important research, and there was all this dilemmas around her working life and not wanting to be exposed in any way to what might be posted online. (Grace)

Grace expressed both frustration and sadness that women felt that they were being prevented from taking up opportunities in their professional lives because of explicit material on the internet, as they had no idea when or where that material might show up.

The consequences for survivors were far-reaching, with the participants raising examples of how women would re-consider certain jobs or areas of work for fear of images or websites with sexually explicit materials being linked to them. Tamara raised the point that it is no longer unusual for employers to check on social media sites and digital footprints when recruiting:

She was worried about the perpetrator showing her images over social media. She was going through a process of going back to work and the employers when she would go to interviews would say or speak to HR as part of the application process they check people's Facebook identities just to get an idea of socially what they are like. I think she had applied for a PR marketing role. (Tamara)

Yasmin and Grace also explored the limitations that these experiences can place on women's choices:

You don't know what happens to it could influence her career. She works in entertainment: she is never going to do anything that is going to put her in the public eye, though that is where her talents are.....they feel that what they may want to do with their lives may be limited because of this material that is out there. (Grace)

Participants explored the long-lasting impact of their experiences in all areas of their lives. Leah was the most vocal in relation to the professional lives of women, feeling strongly that many women she knows, both personally and professionally, do not engage in online debates or use social media because of high-profile cases of online trolling and online abuse experienced by women. Leah went on to point out that for many careers, it is critical that individuals have an online presence, which

enhances the detrimental impact of online abuse, as women become deterred from online activity because of the negative experiences of a minority of women.

There are a large number of women who need to have social media profiles, because that's how they get their work. They might be journalists, look at MPs, for example. MPs are actively encouraged by their parties to have a social media presence. (Leah)

Additionally, Leah expressed in her interview that she felt that there was a clear gendered nature to the abuse: women were being threatened with sexual violence and in a number of cases threats were also made to attack members of their family. For Leah, the explanation for the ease of this type of abuse was the unregulated nature of the internet, where even serious threats of violence can be made anonymously, with targets being unable to determine which threats are real, further heightening their sense of fear and distress.

You could get incredibly paranoid....all our data is actually out there and is accessible if someone knows how to access it. (Leah)

The impact and anxiety this created was also noted by Yasmin, who talked of a client feeling so fearful and anxious that she made life-changing decisions:

....then she moved her entire self from the small city she was living in to London because she was worried because it was quite small he might find her there....she has taken down all her social media accounts: she's very worried. (Yasmin)

Leah considered the context of women's lives: for women who may be marginalised because of their ethnicity, sexuality or disability, the hate and harassment they face could be on a number of levels. This leaves women feeling, in her experience, reluctant to 'put their head above the parapet'. In Leah's experience, this is a far broader issue and is not restricted to one group, but affects all women:

It means that we are effectively being silenced: excluded from the online world unless we take ridiculous precautions to protect ourselves. (Leah)

The discussion with Leah explored how what she viewed as online misogyny impacted on all women, and not just those who may identify as feminist. Additionally, she explored how technology is critical for women with disabilities, caring responsibilities, women with mental health needs and those for whom going out is difficult. However, in Leah's experience, these are the women who are being forced to limit how they engage online as a direct result of the prevalence of online abuse.

4.3.4 Vicarious Impact on Participants

While all of the participants expressed some feelings of fear and anger in relation to TFSV, this was not just on behalf of their clients. The anger that they felt had another element to it: all the women who participated spoke of the impact that this type of work had on how they viewed or engaged with technology. This revolved around issues of control, fear of having a presence on social media and their own sense of safety in relation to technology, fear of exposure and the need to protect themselves. Ava felt that her work clearly impacted on how she lived:

That's why I am the way I am; that's why I always say to them 'do not post anything of me unless you've got my consent'. I don't want no pictures of me – and it's not even indecent photos, it's just like a photo of me – because anybody could do what they want. (Ava)

The discussion led Ava to talk about the need to keep control and about feelings of fear in her personal life, which have led her to establish safeguards. She gave the example of a photo of her being posted on Facebook and the anxiety this created, demonstrating the lack of consent that operates in the cyber-world. Ava admitted that her anxiety was driven by a sense that perhaps someone would manipulate her image into something more sexualised. While she was unable to say who she feared might do this, it was more a general worry that an image might get into the wrong hands.

Leah talked about how she had also become a target of online threats, raising similar issues to those discussed by her clients, which resulted in feelings of fear for both her own safety and that of her family:

Well I had to take my name off 192.com, I've had to remove my name off the electoral register so that people can't find out my address, because I did have to make a report to the police a couple of years ago. (Leah)

At some level, she was able to put this into the wider context of online abuse that all women experience. She admitted to feeling anger and frustration, but also felt that she had a certain level of resilience against this, although she expressed that it had left her feeling vulnerable, particularly because she had children and felt worried about some of the threats she had received:

I'm really worried about that, you know, my name's going to get out and I'll be subject to rape and death threats: will there be people turning up on my doorstep?...Yeah definitely more so for my children, I'm frightened for them. (Leah)

In fact, Leah spoke about having to change her social media presence and enhance security options, as protecting her identity was the only way to try and keep herself safe. Her account illustrated the deep and lasting effect that this had on her private life: she expressed that she remains vigilant today and admitted to wariness about being involved in more high-profile work which might attract attention.

This sentiment was expressed by a number of the participants, who feared for their own safety and that of family and friends. Within the transcripts, it is obvious that technology is seen by the participants not as something positive or life-enhancing for women: instead, the cyber-world, and specifically the internet, was viewed with suspicion and regarded as a place in which women were being victimised. The participants also talked about wanting to educate other women in their families and to warn them of what they perceived as 'danger':

somebody like my mum: if she was to join Facebook, she wouldn't have a clue. She would post pictures of herself, and what is interesting, someone

that I know: somebody had stolen her picture. She was on holiday in a dress and it was so clever what the person did, so you just saw her face and boobs without anything. How do people do that? (Tamara)

On our second meeting, Tamara disclosed that she was feeling highly distressed since our first meeting a couple of weeks previously. She relayed that a friend of hers had been in a relationship with a man and when she tried to end the relationship, he had circulated images of her. Her friend took her own life. She was in her twenties. Tamara felt very distressed about this. She was not sure whether it was just the sharing of the images that had led to her friend's suicide, but felt that this had been a contributing factor, as her friend came from a conservative family and sexual intimacy of any kind, outside of marriage, was forbidden in their culture, and such experiences were outside their understanding. Tamara expressed a sense of how terrible and unpleasant technology was, and that it was something to be feared:

I think that I have changed. Once you put an image on to any sort of internet, that's it: it's open to the world, and I have also become aware through doing this work that when you share something, regardless of even if it's in an email, it's shared.....I do advise and encourage women to be very careful, as some women's phones are tracked, hacked and retrieved data and stuff, it's a really nasty world. (Tamara)

During this interview, it was obvious that Tamara still felt raw and was trying to make sense of her friend's experiences. She also expressed frustration and anger that so much effort is put into keeping computers safe from viruses, yet little attention is given to the safety of the users. She admitted to feeling fearful and unsafe, and unsure whether such protection would be possible.

This view was shared by Ava, who, on our second meeting, talked about her reflections on our discussions and admitted that she had also left feeling nervous, not just about the client work but also about her own feelings. She had a sense of not being safe, and that there was a lack of safety for women. Her feelings were so strong that she had raised the issue with members of her family and would

regularly ask friends and family members to take down her picture from their social media accounts.

I don't let anyone post anything on Facebook. You don't know where these images end up: of course, these are the thoughts going through my head – if it was my niece, my sister, how would I feel? If somebody had done that, how would you feel. Just invaded – that's how I feel. (Ava)

Yasmin explored and reflected on why the idea of technology created feelings akin to paranoia, that somehow data would get out and be accessible to anyone looking for it. This left her feeling that she could relate to the anxiety that women experience; the unknown quality and capability of technology was discomforting for her.

This sense of paranoia extended beyond fearing for participants' own safety: particularly for those practitioners with children, these feelings spread to family and friends. Grace spoke about how her work had amplified her fears. She admitted to feeling highly vigilant where her children were concerned and believed that many parents were living in denial about the dangers of technology.

It ends up becoming really personal, you know? It's up to that person to, you know, to reassess their position of safety in the world, and you know the level of anxiety they feel, and is it up to them to work on. (Grace)

In these conversations, participants talked about the empathetic enmeshment they were feeling, and at times, a sense of almost vicarious traumatisation. There were parallel processes happening, with the practitioners recognising that they were not immune to the impact of technology in their personal lives and that this created within each of them a feeling of vulnerability.

4.4 Primary Theme Four: Practice and Service Provision

This section sets out the theme that relates to responses to the experiences of survivors and how participants from within sexual violence support services

respond to survivors' experiences. The way in which the police and criminal justice system respond was examined, and lastly, the participants highlighted what they saw as gaps in the knowledge and skill set in relation to TFSV.

4.4.1 Support and Validation

When it came to exploring how the participants worked in practice and what interventions they used, it was perhaps not surprising that themes such as support and validation were mentioned by all five participants. The advocates and advice workers saw their roles as providing information in relation to the criminal justice system:

I'm glad that people do come to me without actually necessarily have the intention of reporting to the police. They want to find out more information about what happens if you do report to the police or just wanting to know if that experience was an offence. (Yasmin)

The advocates in the study addressed practical issues. This involved giving women the information they need to start to make choices around what they want to do, but also reassuring women that they were right to seek help, whilst addressing concerns that they had been victims. They gave women the space to consider their experiences and validating their experiences without the pressure of having to report.

Think you have to think about everything – the bigger picture in her life – but really they don't know what to do think sometimes, they want someone to talk to, that is separate from their...it's really sad: you speak to them once or twice and they might not come back. (Tamara)

The support provided was not just that of a practical nature: all the participants, regardless of their roles, gave a lot of emotional support and worked from a place of empathy. Consequently, there was nothing about their actions that was different when it came to supporting clients who presented with TFSV:

I think my main thought about it is making sure that that women knows she's not at fault in any way shape or form: that the perpetrator is the one responsible, because she trusted him. She never thought it was going to get to that point, that whole guilt and shame thing. It's just trying to make her aware to understand that actually it's not her fault: it could happen to anyone. (Ava)

Some participants mentioned that technology was recognised as being a distinct experience and how they work to address this:

I always tell women how common this is and how often it's happening. Sometimes I just listen and reassure. It's an isolating experience and incredibly frightening: I see it all the time. (Leah)

When we talked about their work, the advocates and advice workers, of whom there were four in total, demonstrated much clearer language and expression in terms of the service they were able to offer and their position regarding how they viewed women's experiences. The one psychotherapist who participated in the study felt that the emotional impact of sexual violence was so vast that in short-term contracts it was necessary to focus on the most pressing concern.

4.4.2 Complexity of the cyber world

For Yasmin and Leah, the whole issue of technology went further than the police or the CJS, pointing to issues such as the accessibility of violent pornography, which normalises sexual violence. Ava also explained how she struggled with the work, and difficulty of containing material being posted online. She cited the example that if something is posted on the internet, it could in some cases end up on several hundred sites, which highlights the impossible task of knowing which sites to look up and having to approach the hosts of individual sites in order to get the content taken down. Additionally, she spoke of the multiple layers of exposure, as someone could take a screenshot of the online post and share it with others, making it

impossible for the advocates to eradicate the images from the public view, and raised the question of how to support women through this:

It's quite difficult, especially if it's posted on the internet: it could have gone up to several hundred sites and you have to trawl through each and every site or approach the site host to take that image down.....As soon as it's taken down from one site, it could easily have been screen shot and shared with many different people. (Ava)

Ava admitted that at times her approach was to micro-manage the situation; however, this approach had its limitations, and she pointed out that there were occasions when sexually explicit material would have been sent to sites, including social media sites, that are based outside of the UK and may have no legal redress for women even when they do report such abuse.

Both Tamara and Ava emphasised that the work can be painstaking and there is no easy fix, especially when this is coupled with a client's reluctance to disclose information or to report their experiences to the police. Some officers can be helpful and work to address the removal of images; however, there are also issues of consent and evidence:

A lot of it boils down to evidence that you have and the facts as well, so it all boils down to proving that at the time those images were taken, that they were meant between you and that person: that they were consensual. (Ava)

Grace raised a different issue, feeling that when she has worked with this issue, the videos and images are still being circulated, so there are people in service who do not have the chance or space to recover or look forward. She felt that often it was just about trying to manage the client's anxiety, admitting that it could be really frustrating at times, as she was only able to offer short-term counselling contracts and might never know what the end result was.

4.4.3 Seeking Redress

Together with the uncertainty felt by the participants regarding how practitioners should approach clients who have experienced TFSV, redress and outcomes were often felt to be inconsistent.

Police

Four of the participants talked about the police. Yasmin believed that issues around the use of technology and sexual abuse for women are on the increase, and that the organisations supporting these issues will have to adapt. She wanted to see the police being more proactive.

Because the police are linked in to the kind of ways of monitoring and accessing technology, if someone's got a pattern of doing that through different sites, they might be able to catch them in a different way. (Yasmin)

Tamara and Ava both expressed a lack of confidence in the police.

...many don't report it to the police because the police can't do anything: there's nothing they can do. I think it depends on the police officer and which police force: some will take it seriously and investigate, but I think some just think 'Oh well – just stop using your computer.' (Tamara)

Ava too expressed scepticism and felt that outcomes for survivors are dependent on the willingness of police officers to recognise that this is a serious offence and to support women by looking for images that might be online. However, she admitted that while there is some good work being done, the police response remains patchy.

Leah and Tamara both felt that the gendered nature of these offences often results in police officers responding with the suggestion that the women stop using social media, representing another way in which women are blamed and excluded from online activity. They felt that this can go further into victim-blaming, with the argument that women need to be more aware of the abuses that they can suffer through images being shared and that being female means being more likely to be

targeted. Leah felt that it this is not simply about seeking support and redress but also about challenging language. She cited the response when women do complain:

...often the response from friends and family, although it's well-intentioned, it's 'well, just don't get on Twitter' or 'don't go on Facebook' or 'don't write about these things' or 'don't discuss these things', which is the equivalent of telling women not to go out of the house. (Leah)

Leah also stated that while there were small groups that were highly active in challenging abuse involving the use of technology, this work was being done in silo and there had been no high-profile initiatives. However, she also admitted that over the last few years, social media sites had done more to address such issues, although she felt that this area of abuse was a massive problem and resulted in few, if any, custodial sentences:

There's still room for improvement. The police, I think it largely depends on individual police forces and individual officers, whether they take a complaint seriously or not. (Leah)

Again, it was left to organisations and practitioners to organise their work in order for it to be effective for clients, and working in a therapeutic setting means putting women in touch with advocacy services and the police:

....and so with her consent, we wrote down all this social media names and all the names he was using and sent it as anonymous intelligence to the police. (Grace)

This type of anonymous reporting was seen as a positive option for survivors:

We can also give feedback to the police: anonymous intelligence. If they think there is a serious danger to the public and they aren't going to be able to get any charges any other way, then they can come back and that person has to make a statement, so when you're giving anonymous intelligence, the

person has to understand the terms of that: there is a small chance that they may be required to give evidence. (Grace).

In Grace's experience, this presentation was also a serious risk to the wider public and needed to be addressed, highlighting the view expressed by other participants that many women were reluctant to report TFSV to the police.

Criminal justice system

Three of the participants, who were often involved with supporting women through reporting and going to court, talked about the criminal justice system (CJS). All three were negative about the outcomes for women, pointing out that the role of technology was part of other abuses the clients had experienced. During both my meetings with Yasmin, she had been involved in supporting women in court and expressed her general frustration at the lack of support offered, feeling that when it came to TFSV, there would not be consequences for perpetrators:

There are no consequences for perpetrators: we are just sending women the message that neither the legal system nor society is holding people to account. (Yasmin)

Tamara also held a similarly pessimistic view, feeling that the CJS does not take the issue of TFSV seriously. She went on to talk about how invisible this issue was in the CJS, and stated that in her experience, no clients had gone to court unless it involved rape: other offences just fell under the radar. Leah also pointed to the low rates of prosecutions around sexual violence online, and expressed that she did not believe that any had to date resulted in a custodial sentence. Leah felt that this is a far wider issue than people realised and connected reasons why this might be to the way in which legal offences were defined.

I also think that it's inappropriate to have it under the criminal justice bill: it should be under sexual offence. Again, it's gendered: it's largely women who experience this and they're not protected with anonymity, which they would

be under the Sexual Offences Act, the so-called Revenge Porn. I'm not sure how well integrated that is into the rest of the sector: it still seems to be a fringe area, as it were, of acknowledgement or support provided. (Leah)

Of the three participants, only Leah reflected on TFSV in relation to the CJS. The two other participants spoke about the CJS in relation to other forms of sexual violence.

How TFSV is viewed and Evidence

The lack of protection, inconsistent responses and the convoluted policy responses frustrated the participants, who felt that often they were as confused as the women they were supporting. Some of the participants felt that while they had anecdotal evidence and were collecting intelligence at a local level, this was not enough for the police to respond to:

We have had intelligence from a handful of online abusers and harassers that they were offending offline as well and they had sexual offences records, and that was shared with us privately, so to say for example, often you'll hear the response as I've said earlier, it's probably some saddo who's sitting in his mum's kitchen or something, some sad and inadequate, blah, blah, blah: there is nothing to suggest that is the case whatsoever. (Leah)

For those such as Leah, the outcome of this meant that online abusers were allowed to continue. She argued that simply being online did not turn anyone into a misogynist or a violent person, and although she felt that there might be something in the theories of online disinhibition, she believed that it was more to do with feeling anonymous. As I set out in the earlier section on perpetrators, her argument is that:

you already have that mind-set in the first place and the conditions such as abuse happens online and you've got this mass mob attacks, the mind-set of male entitlement and objectification of women. (Leah)

When practitioners spoke about the outcomes for survivors, there was a consensus that women's experiences were often not considered as part of a continuum of sexual violence, resulting in a lack of cohesive response, with some of the participants admitting to feeling that social media sites and the internet were toxic environments for women.

Tamara felt that as with other forms of gendered violence experienced by women, many victims do not report incidents of TFSV:

They've disclosed it but they don't know what they want to do about it. A lot of women don't always want to go to the police, because of the fear of it then being, you know, such a formal process of the perpetrator being arrested and questioned and women feeling they're not going to be believed, that it's been made up. Women face a lot of barriers in that sense. (Tamara)

Grace felt that we all need to look at the way we are using technology, pointing to young people and even children of primary school age being given computers and mobile phones. She felt that parents did not think about the capabilities of such technology. She felt very strongly that it was irresponsible to expose young people to something that could lead to harm, but that it has become so ingrained that by the time young people get to adulthood, there is no way of pulling back: this issue is so vast and we are having to learn to deal with it when it becomes problematic.

4.4.4 Gaps in Knowledge

All five participants explored how they responded to victims of TFSV. One of the sub-themes to emerge from this was the gaps in knowledge, which participants referred to as gaps in their own skill-set and knowledge, but also in those of wider service providers.

For Ava, the priority was in relation to having in place policies and training that could support practitioners to safeguard adequately, and that the current risk assessment tools were focused on stalking and harassment. While the response of

the police and the criminal justice system is important, she also felt that in terms of advocacy and advice work, there is not enough awareness of this issue and more training is needed, as at times it can be overlooked or dependant on individual practitioners:

...at the moment we use our judgement and not everyone's always going to have that judgment, and I guess issues like this, it's quite important to also address and to safety plan around, and I guess that unless we do that piece of digging, it might not come to the forefront of the conversation. (Ava)

Ava did go on to admit that some of this was also related to her own need for reassurance that there is protection for people, admitting that since she had taken part in this research, she was even more aware of TFSV than she had been before. She talked about her family and friends, saying that it did impact women more but she felt that men and boys could also be at risk, and that everyone needed to be educated. Tamara also noted that this general lack of awareness and knowledge around how to support women who report experiences of TFSV is evident not only within specialist organisations but also within statutory services and policies for practitioners. Tamara in particular felt that while women may or may not report this type of abuse to the police, practitioners provide daily support and guidance within the field of ending violence against women:

I think once, say for example, once the images are shared, some women don't often know that organisations like Facebook or Google can be contacted to get the images withdrawn, that in itself can release a lot of pressure in a woman because she might have lots of people that are connected to her on social media. (Tamara)

The participants went on to explore how they worked and the outcomes for women. All five participants admitted that the services within which they worked did not have any policies that specifically address technology abuse and that when these issues are part of other types of abuse, they are dealt with using an adult safeguarding framework and the existing recognised risk assessment tools. When it comes to addressing the technological aspect of the abuse, the response is often

limited to advising and encouraging women to be careful and vigilant about their phones being hacked or data being stolen.

There was a sense from the interviews that the participants largely felt that perpetrators continued to get away with crimes involving TFSV, that it wasn't something that was taken seriously and that there were often difficulties in understanding consent, with an element of victim blaming. The issue of consent was more common where survivors had previously been in a relationship with the perpetrator. Additionally, where the perpetrator has used the internet, for example, to make contact with victims with the intent to rape or sexually assault them, the focus was often placed on the act of rape, and little attention is given to the level of planning the perpetrator may have done first. Leah, outside of her work, was part of a group of women who had come together to challenge online abuse.

I think I think it's down to a lack of awareness and knowledge. How are we supposed to support survivors to get those opportunities to redress when people at statutory level have an awareness of the laws but don't know how to implement them into daily practices or are reluctant to challenge for fear of being targeted. (Leah)

Grace explored the complex nature of working with women within a therapeutic setting and the frustrations she has experienced where the police have delayed action, and the subsequent impact this has had on her clients. She stated that often this had led to symptoms of trauma becoming further entrenched, with women being left in a state of hyper-vigilance, with intense feelings of anxiety and some constantly checking the internet for any new material that might have been posted. Grace also made the point that the women she had worked with had very often not sought help from services, including the police, but even those who had done so still found it difficult to move forward. In her experience, it was left to the women and their families and friends to try to trace some of the material and contact sites to get it removed.

Grace expressed her frustration and anger around these circumstances and what she felt was a strong sense of injustice. The focus of the therapeutic work was on those parts of the women's lives over which they had no control, and Grace admitted that she often had a sense that since the material might be circulated in some form indefinitely, it was something that was never going to go away.

While all the practitioners talked about the outcomes for women and women's help-seeking behaviour, it was Ava and Grace who referred specifically to the impacts that TFSV might have that are perhaps not encountered in relation to other forms of sexual violence. They talked about the sense of it not feeling real, with Grace making the point that this can affect how practitioners work:

I guess that's interesting for practitioners: that urge to look, you know, because actually there is a desire to look. Obviously that would be really unsound and guess that's the danger zone, isn't it, around working with this material: that you could go round and do that, but would be totally unethical. There would be very little protecting you or your client from that, just like there was nothing protecting the client, so, you know, some sort of parallel process. (Grace)

In the extract above, Grace raised the ethical dilemmas that this area of practice creates, and in her narrative, she admitted to nervousness about this. In a similar way, Ava too talked about images being out there and available, and while there was no suggestion that either of them would download the images, it unsettled both practitioners.

This chapter has set out the ways in which the five participants have described, reflected on and responded to TFSV. The narratives capture their descriptions and the context in which they have striven to construct and understand women's experiences of TFSV.

In the next chapter, I will present a discussion of the findings and how they may be linked to the literature and will consider the implications of this research.

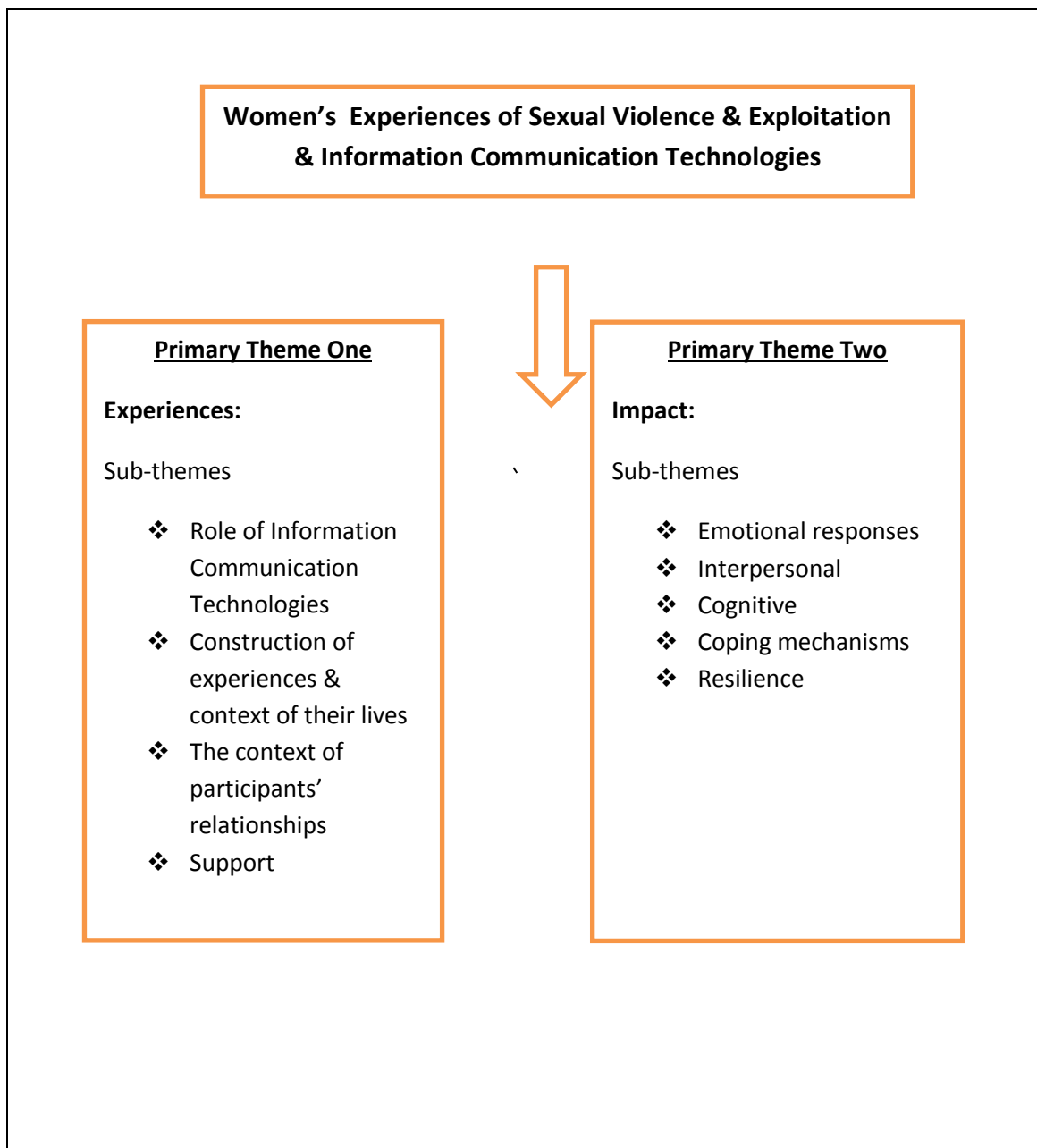
5. Discussion

This chapter focuses on a discussion of the findings, which will be examined in relation to the research question and the existing knowledge base as set out in the literature review. The latter part of the chapter discusses gaps in the research and the relevance of the research. The limitations and strengths of the study are discussed, including recommendations for future research.

5.1 The Pilot Study

In both the pilot study and the final research, the questions were broad and exploratory in nature. The participants of the pilot study had been victims of TFSV, and this perspective directed me in identifying some of the overlapping themes (Figure 3 below sets out the overarching findings and themes of the pilot study). The pilot study informed my decision to carry out the final study on the issue of TFSV. Additionally, there were similarities found between the pilot and final studies when exploring the range of experiences and the impact of TFSV on the participants. In combination, the two studies set out the challenging and complex ways in which sexual violence and exploitation become normalised and integrated into the everyday fabric of technologies.

Figure 3: Pilot Study Findings



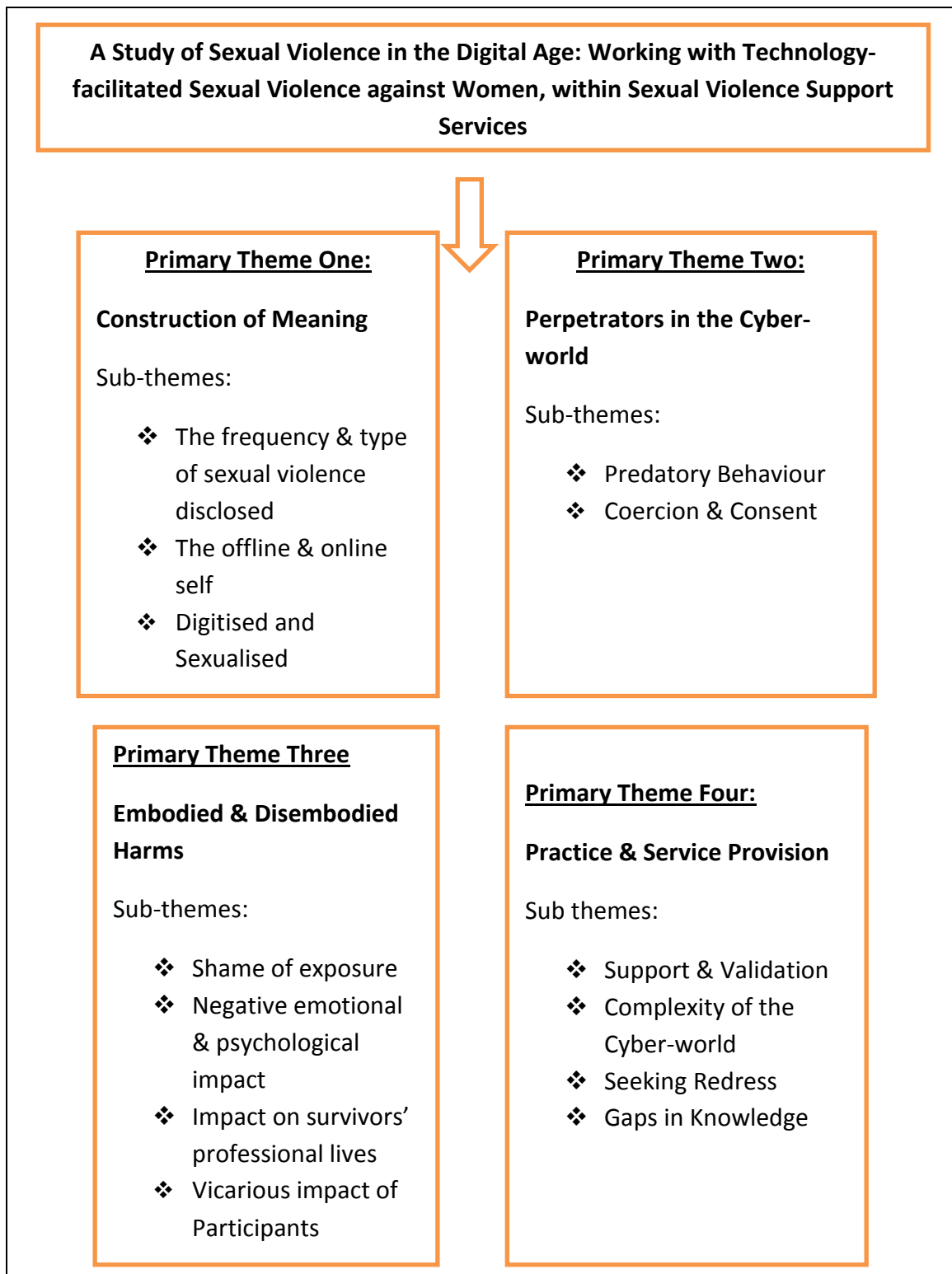
The key finding of the pilot project was the extent of the harm caused to the women who had experienced Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV). This harm extended beyond interpersonal, emotional and psychological distress. The women in the pilot study talked about a deep sense of humiliation, shame and exposure, but they also spoke about how their sense of self felt altered, leaving a deep-rooted sense of exposure. Furthermore, the impact of harm was not solely felt on a personal level; TFSV has the capacity to ensure that images, films and

digital records can also impinge on women's family and professional lives. The emotional impact on each of the women was at times difficult to convey during the write-up, with one participant expressing that technology had been the cause of her victimisation and the two other women feeling that became an integral part of the abuse they had experienced and furthermore compounded the harm they incurred. In two cases, it meant that the women were vulnerable to further victimisation and threats. This included images of sexual violence being shared indiscriminately. The pilot study was a small-scale qualitative study but was crucial in understanding some aspects of the harm and impact that TFSV has on women and an important addition to this final study.

5.2 Final Study

In order to build on the findings from the pilot study, which explores women's direct experiences of TFSV, the final study examines the same subject from the perspective of practitioners by utilising participants who work in specialist sexual violence support services. The findings of the final study emphasised the layered ways in which practitioners understand and engage with women's experiences, and how they describe, narrate, relay and make sense of these issues. Additionally, they highlighted the implications that this may have for broader issues of violence against women. Utilising the findings coupled with the literature review, certain themes emerged, including the ways in which attitudes to the sexualisation of women in digital spaces have developed and are viewed, the disconnected way in which individuals behave in online spaces and ultimately the nature and impact that modern technologies have on women's experiences of sexual violence. Figure 4 illustrates the key overarching themes and subthemes that emerged.

Figure 4: Findings from the Final Study



5.3 Construction of Meaning and TFSV

One of the primary aims of the study was to explore the way in which practitioners working in sexual violence support services construct meaning in relation to TFSV. Construction of meaning unfolded as a primary theme and three sub-themes. This section will explore the findings related to the construction of meaning in conjunction with the findings of the literature review. The section is set out in two parts. I start with the construction of identity online for women who are victimised by TFSV. The latter part sets out the context of emerging technologies and its subsequent effect on the sexualisation of women.

As a starting point, Figure 5 overleaf sets out the range and type of experiences of TFSV, as found in the literature review and research findings.

Figure 5: Research Findings and Literature Identification of TFSV

Use of social media sites	Incidents of Sexual Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sexual harassment and cyber-stalking ❖ Online Misogyny ❖ Trolling ❖ Threats of rape and mutilation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Distribution of sexually explicit material ❖ Sent to family and friends ❖ Sent to employers ❖ Uploaded to pornography sites ❖ Shared over social media networks ❖ Indiscriminately circulated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Live streaming of sexual activity without consent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Online prostitution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ So-called rape sites on pornography hubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use of technology in the context of trafficking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Uploading and sharing of explicitly violent sexual material through file transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Unsolicited pornography.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Creating and distributing incidences of sexual assault - going 'viral' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Posting details of women and encouraging others to rape them.

5.3.1 Offline and Online Self

How meaning is constructed and described was a complex set of processes which involved distinct features of the participants' experiences of working with sexual violence, coupled with views and use of technology, often referring to offline or so-called 'real' life. The distinction between the online and the offline self feels important. It was not limited to just primary sub-theme one: the intersection of technology was also critical when looking at the behaviour of perpetrators and when considering the impact on victims. I will start with a discussion of the online self and a conceptual framework within which to understand the experiences of those victimised by TFSV. I start at this point because ultimately I undertook this study from the perspective of psychotherapy.

Technology is a challenging area for psychotherapy, which relies on the relational: how the self is understood and conceptualised in online spaces can only continue to grow as a field of inquiry. The literature has established compelling theories, namely the field of cyber psychology (Suler 2015). Suler sets out the intersection of processes to explain behaviours online. The online self has been debated for decades: for example, Stone (1996), in 'The War of Desire and Technology', argues that in the wake of the shift from the mechanical age to the virtual age, we are witnessing a radical rewriting of our conception of the self. Millions of people worldwide interact as second lifers and use web-based games with avatars.

From the research findings, the participants used the offline world in order to understand the self in relation to technology, at times lurching between trying to understand the behaviours of predators and expressions of confusion when considering how this impacted on the clients they worked with. It was at times difficult for participants to relate to the technology and they often framed this as creating an outcome, for example, in terms of loss, when relaying clients' experiences of TFSV: loss of autonomy, control and identity.

The research findings highlighted the contradictory and confusing nature of the self in relation to technology for the survivors. An example of this is Grace talking of feeling 'connected but oddly disconnected': this seemed to imply that while the

participants could relate to and understand the experiences that survivors relayed to them, they found it harder to relate to the effect or impact the technology had. Language was an issue here: four of the participants found it difficult to convey their thoughts. Within the literature, Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013) highlight the complex nature of exploring the construction of identities and the self-online and adoption of parts of the offline persona in virtual spaces.

Such research is useful in understanding those who are engaged online under their own terms. When we consider women who have been victimised by TFSV, the literature does not offer an in-depth explanation of the impact on women who have not sought to be depicted in the virtual world through victimisation, losing their identities and self. The level of exposure in relation to technology and the self is in some ways co-constructed by the judgement of others: the 'other' here being anyone who views or shares sexually explicit images or individuals or groups of people who troll and harass women online. The notion of mind–body dualism and TFSV is explored in the recent work of Henry and Powell (2017), from which the definition of TFSV is drawn. While the subsequent sections of this chapter explore impact in relation to primary theme three, it was important to also include aspects of this discussion here in relation to the self, victimisation and technology.

From the findings, one of the impacts on survivors was a feeling of shame and fear of exposure, described as a consequence of TFSV. This correlation was cited more frequently in instances where images and films of women were circulated, often indiscriminately and with the intention to humiliate and shame the women involved.

In his book about people who have been 'publicly shamed' through social media, Jon Ronson (2015) paints a frightening picture of people whose lives have been destroyed, who have lost their jobs and faced death threats. His work is helpful, as he seeks to understand what he calls 'mass shaming's' – 'shamings' that unite vast disparate groups (2015: 273). Ronson's work is not gender-specific; however, he does highlight the crippling nature of the experiences of being trolled and targeted online and the overwhelming nature of these experiences, which can lead to

individuals losing their jobs and having to hide their identities and take themselves offline. The goal of sharing sexually explicit images of ex-partners is often fuelled by a desire to shame and humiliate (Stroud 2014). The research highlights the ways in which women were shamed on a scale that involves family, friends, colleagues and strangers.

Shame has been discussed in psychotherapy. In relation to this study, the following resonates with the description of its impact on survivors:

Shame is like a subatomic particle. One's knowledge of shame is often limited to the trace it leaves. (Lewis, 1992: 34)

Shame in relation to TFSV brings a two-fold impact: first, women who had been victimised expressed internal feelings of shame often linked to a sense of loss of control, humiliation and guilt. Second, they expressed external shame through the circulation of images or public harassment, often involving large groups of people, that occurs over a long period of time. To bring this example back to the findings, four of the participants cited examples of either the use of non-consensual imagery or being trolled. In all the cases cited, the events involved a number of perpetrators and in one case carried on for over a year. Gilbert (2007) sets out the role of external and internal shame in relation to external environments, exploring the impact of the process of evaluation and fear of being exposed with the resulting negative impact on the self.

In cases of the circulation of non-consensual images, the findings highlight the intersection with feelings of guilt. The participants pointed to the sense that victims felt they had in some cases consented to the taking of explicit images. The terms 'shame' and 'guilt' are often used interchangeably: however, Lewis (1971), in her psychoanalytical analysis of shame, states that:

'The experience of shame is directly about the self, which is the focus of evaluation. In guilt, the self is not the central object of negative evaluation but rather the thing done or undone is the focus' (1971: 30).

In experiences of TFSV, both the external guilt and the internal sense of shame provoked by victims' experiences can be immense (Citron and Frank 2014). Shame, therefore, is about the global self, whereas guilt is about a specific behaviour. However, they are closely associated and frequently felt at the same time. Shame is often considered the more painful emotion, as it involves the core self as opposed to one's behaviour, but Tangney et al. (2007) point to the violation of moral codes that can be linked to feelings of guilt. Shame and guilt were expressed by four of the participants, reporting their crippling effect on survivors and the extent to which they worked to hide their identity.

The impact of TFSV was set out in both the pilot study and the final research, with participants in both studies reporting on the profound impact on survivors at both a personal and a professional level. Shame and guilt emerged as a clear theme from the findings of the present study. While this was an impact felt by the victims, it was also a way in which the participants in the study made sense of and understood survivors' experiences.

In experiences of TFSV, shame is extended over a long period of time, as women will report not knowing who has seen their pictures or films, and even when those pictures are removed from circulation it is difficult for women to feel reassured that they are not being stored and come to terms with this uncertainty. Within psychotherapy, shame has been linked to a number of symptoms, such as depression (Gilbert et al. 1994), and its links with symptoms of post-traumatic stress are being increasingly recognised (Grey et al. 2001).

Using concepts and theories of shame also offers practitioners a framework to understand victims' experiences and to consider interventions that can help to counteract intense feelings of public shame.

5.3.2 Frequency and Type of Sexual Violence

This section continues to discuss the way in which participants constructed meaning, moving away from the individual to the broader context of experiences of TFSV and the ways in which this was understood.

As the research findings have set out, and as supported by the literature, which I have captured in Figure 5 page 147, the participants' narratives relayed how they understand the abuse of the clients who access their services. The context of these experiences was explored by all five participants throughout our meetings: this set out the layered and complex ways in which sexual violence, harassment and the threat and actuality of sexual violence are woven into private and public spaces. The difference between the narratives of the participants and the literature was that the literature set out a larger number of experiences than were relayed in the findings.

One explanation for this could be that women who are victimised may not always see themselves as victims of sexual violence. If we consider the case of revenge pornography, it is not uncommon for victims to feel culpable, and the literature too discusses difficulties in understanding consent and coercion, and images taken without consent. There is also a level of victim blaming.

The present findings and the published research concur in suggesting that abuse will escalate once a relationship breaks down (Salter 2013) and in describing ways in which participants felt that women were being shut down in online spaces through actual or feared abuse (Jane 2017)

From the findings, it is notable that the ways in which the culture of technologies is layered. It is an integral part of modern life, as documented in both the research and the literature review (Castells 1997; van Dijck 2013). While these individual types of TFSV may appear unrelated, a number of commonalities are present: experiences of TFSV were often a part of other forms of violence, intimidation and threats that the victims experienced. In all the cases, the participants reported that victims experienced more than one incident, and all five participants reported that

clients experienced TFSV over a lengthy period of time and the victimisation was often on-going, even after clients sought support. This has implications for psychotherapy and counselling when we consider how we may facilitate recovery.

While there were differences in the frequency and type of TFSV cited, there were also differences in the participants' narratives. Only two of the participants talked in depth about the experiences of women from black and ethnic minority (BME) communities, citing that the impact and outcome of TFSV for BME women may be different, such as leading to further violence from their families and communities. This point is highlighted because both these participants were from BME communities and perhaps had a heightened awareness of these issues.

This is perhaps a reflection of wider issues in the lack of recognition of experiences of BME women. Thiara et al. (2015) conducted an exploratory study which sought to assess service responses to BME women experiencing sexual violence. While this is a first step and part of an on-going study, it highlights some of the gaps faced by BME women. As noted in Chapter two, the study's methodology is far-reaching, undertaking a multi-method approach including in-depth interviews with ten key professionals from a number of sectors with expertise in sexual violence and with up to 38 respondents to a survey. This study is important when considering the way in which the experiences of BME women are described and understood in services. Only two of the participants referred to the cultural issues faced by women, as in keeping with this study; the needs of BME women continue to be only partially fulfilled:

Two-thirds of organisations could only partly meet the needs of BME women and girls. Around a quarter said they can fully meet these needs. (Thiara et al. 2015:3)

When we consider experiences of TFSV in relation to gender, feminist analysis is of great significance in helping to understand and conceptualise technologies and the online environment. For an analytical lens, two concepts stand out: the continuum of violence (Kelly 1988) and conducive context (Kelly 2007). The continuum of violence is a concept proposed in relation to sexual violence and has been critical in

providing the gap between legal definitions of sexual violence and the understanding of those involved in work addressing women's experiences, the legal focus of which is on the act of the violence. Kelly, however, provided a broader definition of sexual violence:

any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as threat, invasion or assault that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact. (Kelly 1998:41)

The definition would also take into account the different forms of TFSV, such as non-consensual pornography and misogyny online. The findings highlight the ways in which the participants struggled at times to describe women's experience. One of the participants, Leah, put forward the need for the definition of so-called revenge pornography to be considered in the context of sexual violence.

Within the literature, McGlynn et al. (2017) make the point that the use of image-based abuse needs to be recognised in the wider context of gendered abuse against women, pointing to the nature of the abuse, which can also be part of other abuses. Furthermore, a concept such as the continuum of violence reflects the nature of the offences and their impact on survivors (2017).

From the discussions set out above, women's experiences of TFSV do not happen in a vacuum, and it is important to understand the broader context in which they occur and to respond to both the external and internal impacts.

Applying this to the present research, the use of technology has increased and supported the possibilities and ways in which violence can be perpetrated in an online environment. The key facet of technology that allows individuals to perpetrate abuse and violence online is anonymity, and little account is made of the fact that this is an environment which is in some regards normalising abusive and harmful behaviour.

5.3.3 Digitised and Sexualised

The research findings set out that the construction of meaning contributes to the normalisation of the ways in which women are sexualised online. The most commonly cited form of TFSV among the participants and the literature has been the use of non-consensual sexually explicit images. From the research findings, the sharing of sexually explicit images has become a culturally normalised part of women's lives. This was also the most common form of TFSV cited in the literature. Imagery is a powerful tool, and once it has been released or shared online, it can be shared on many hundreds of sites or circulated through mobile phones. While services supporting victims take this seriously, sexual images do not always evoke sympathy or support.

One of the most widely cited examples of this is that in August 2014, hackers accessed a number of celebrities' iCloud accounts and leaked hundreds of sexually explicit images onto sites such as 4chan and Reddit. Numerous celebrities were involved, including Jennifer Lawrence, who described her experiences as follows:

It is not a scandal. It is a sex crime. (Jennifer Lawrence in Vanity Fair 2014).

The majority of celebrities targeted were women (Massanari 2017; Lawson 2017). The incident was often referred to as 'The Fappening': a term used to refer to masturbation and the word "happening" (Benigno 2014: 1).

The Fappening focused on women and the leak of sexually explicit images, and the focus of interest was on the explicit images and the celebrity status of the victims. Benigo (2014) also points to the way in which men were able to manipulate and use technology in order to violate privacy, with young and attractive women as victims (Flores 2014).

It has been widely discussed in recent weeks that the Internet is not a safe place for women. As in the case of the leaked photographs, young men gained status among their peers by using the most violent, sexually explicit, and demeaning language possible to abuse these women. (Eric Michael Johnson, cited in Flores 2014)

The concern about such incidents points to a phenomenon on a broader scale. Gay (2014) explores the interest in the exposure of women and goes on to make the link to revenge pornography, pointing to a culture of hatred of women. In the present study, the participants commented on technology and the normalisation of sexual identity, such as sharing intimate pictures as part of a relationship. The level of women's exposure is noticeable, with one commentator noting, similar to the comments of Gay (2014), that the Fappening is a reflection of women's subordinate position not only in society, but also online, where they are reduced to 'fetishized, digitized objects' (Flores 2014:17). The abuse that is directed at women once images are released is cited in the research findings. The personal and professional impact can be catastrophic, with women being left in a constant state of hyper vigilance, in continuous fear of exposure.

Within the findings, the understanding of this sexualised environment was linked to a cultural effect – the so-called 'selfie' culture – and for three of the participants it was linked to pornography. Within the literature, debates on pornography continue in polarised ways. As to the impact and harm it caused, discussion around pornography raised a mixture of disgust and despair. The participants saw the accessible nature of pornography as problematic and harmful to women and expressed that in their opinion it was linked to women's experiences of violence, and were opposed to it.

This literature on sexual compulsion to some extent ignores those who are involved in the production or the impact of pornography. The issue of pornography online often gives rise to debates about the rights of individuals in relation to the online world and a resistance to curb rights in cyberspace. It is estimated that in 2017, billions of people accessed pornography online through one hub site, namely Pornhub: this equates to 81 million people per day, and on a daily basis there are an estimated 50,000 searches per minute (Silver 2018). The literature on the accessible nature of pornography has highlighted the concerns raised about access to increasingly violent sexual material (Dines 2012).

The harassment of women, be they famous or just women going about their daily lives, is explored by Levmore and Nussbaum (2010), who point to theories of sexual objectification online. Theories of objectification are not new and feminists have long fought against the sexual objectification of women: this can be defined as when a woman's 'sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and she is reduced to the status of mere instruments' (Bartky 1990: 26). Nussbaum (1995) set out seven features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object: these include issues of denial of autonomy, lack of agency and ownership. Levmore and Nussbaum (2010) point to the treatment of high-profile women, which then moves to other women. While theories of objectification may be one concept, it is also important to consider alternative discourses such as those encouraged by Cahill (2011), who explores the concept of 'derivatization', defined as follows:

To derivatize is to portray, render, understand, or approach a being solely or primarily as the reflection, projection, or expression of another being's identity, desires, fear etc. The derivatised subject becomes reducible in all relevant ways to the derivatizing subject's existence. (2011: 31)

I present this notion because Cahill widens the debate on understanding women and the harms that are caused to them without denying the pleasure that is acceptable. I have presented this tentatively, as fuller discussion of objectification and derivatization as presented by Cahill is complex when we strive to understand female sexuality, sexual violence against women and the impact of technology.

Technology has created an environment in which pornography, rape culture, revenge pornography and misogyny online are a growing concern (Laurie 2013; Makin and Morczek 2015; Henry and Powell 2017). While issues of pornography and the availability of aggressive sexual material online remain a continuing point of debate, this section has examined the ways in which the assertion of female sexuality through the medium of technology and the culture of women is being highly sexualised. Furthermore, it highlights the normalisation of this phenomenon

in social media and on online platforms, and not just those within the adult entertainment industry.

This section has set out the complex and multi-layered way in which meaning is constructed in striving to understand and work with TFSV, the macro principles put forward by feminist thinking to understand sexual violence and the distinct features of technology. I argue for the need to understand TFSV in the context of a continuum of violence against women, and to recognise the emerging normalisation of the use of technology to assert abuse against women.

5.4 Perpetrators in the Digital Age

From the research findings, the online predatory behaviour is viewed and understood as being deliberate and supported by the anonymity and accessibility; however, this was not seen as the only explanation. The complex nature of this behaviour is reflected in the research literature, including the work of Suler (2004), who has explored some of the explanations for online behaviours. The literature highlights the lack of research on online offending adult-to-adult, although I was not able to locate literature that was comparable to the work of Seto (2013), who comprehensively explores this concern, and this is a key gap in the research. Research on the experiences of those who are victimised is important, but predatory behaviour online must also be considered beyond issues of anonymity and accessibility.

From the research findings of the description of the experiences of victims, a number of critical points are highlighted. One is the relationship between perpetrator and victim. In the majority of cases, the perpetrators were known to the victims: they had either been in a relationship or were known either as friends or colleagues. In a number of cases the abuse escalated once the relationship had broken down. As one of the participants highlighted, in two cases both victims continued to have sexually explicit material shared indiscriminately, with far-reaching consequences for both their wellbeing and their professional lives.

A number of key points emerge from the research findings. When participants referred to deliberate behaviours, all the incidents involved repeat victimisation, as technology allowed perpetrators to continuously upload images and to disseminate filming of sexual abuse without detection. The level of terror and fear they were able to perpetrate was at times difficult for the participants to express. The indiscriminate nature of the abuse was frightening for the victims, who were left living in an on-going state of hyper-vigilance, waiting for the next threat or image to come through, but practitioners too felt fearful for their own safety.

Technology in these cases allowed the perpetrator to remain anonymous and the victim highly visible and exposed. However, while the participants talked about perpetrators being anonymous, their identities were often known to victims. Rather, they remained hidden from detection: when images begin to be circulated, for example, the number of perpetrators increases and the anonymity is heightened. From the research findings, there was a lack of curiosity on the part of the police or the criminal justice system as to who the perpetrators were.

There are many gaps in the literature regarding the behaviour of online sexual predators, and much of the research focuses on predatory behaviour towards children and young people. Martellozzo (2012) has addressed the characterisation of online groomers: while she has identified that there is not a typical model of an online groomer, she was able to note some common characteristics. She sets out a range of grooming types, include the 'hyper-confident groomer' and on the other side of the spectrum the 'hyper-cautious groomer'. Similarly, Seto (2013) explores the specifics of internet offending and sets out two overarching views of online groomers: the view that the internet is an extension of offending offline, and the opposing view that the internet's distinct features result in online predators who would not have been involved in predatory behaviour if it were not for the internet. The focus of the present study is not on young people and there is not the scope to present in depth the work of Martellozzo (2012) and Seto (2103); however, this work is of significance to understand the behaviour of online predators.

Two of the participants in the current study talked about 'grooming'; however, both expressed frustration that they did not have the language to adequately describe the manipulation and building of trust, and they seemed hesitant to use the word 'grooming' because this is a term that is often used in relation to children. Such conversations were had in relation to people meeting online, in chat rooms or on dating sites, and victims feeling a sense of safety and security, and perhaps a sense of control because the initial contact was not offline. Such cases led to online meetings, resulting in sexual violence, including rape.

The lack of language to adequately address the experiences is further problematic, as the research highlighted the confusion experienced when discussing notions of consent, preventing victims from seeking support and leaving them with a sense that they were culpable. Participants were keen to emphasise the level of coercion that was often involved. Issues of consent and how victims understand them is critical to seeking help. This was highlighted in the research: all but one of the victims that participants talked about during the course of the research had reported their experiences to the police, and the participants all presented an average of between two and four victims known to them.

The findings have highlighted the confusion of negotiating and understanding consent in the digital world, and this is an important discussion. The issue of consent is key when we look at experiences of sexual violence (McGregor 2005) and especially when considering how consent is negotiated in the digital world. This requires further exploration when we consider the level of information that is shared on a daily basis in this technological era with social media platforms that allow users to share photos and videos with the click of a button.

Over the past few years in the UK, the USA and Australia, there has been a number of cases in which the sexually explicit images and films of women have been released over the internet (Bloom 2014; Bothamley and Tully 2018). With those such as that of Hunter Brooks who created a site for ex-partners to post sexually explicit images (McGlynn et al. 2017), encouraging the trolling and mocking of women, as one of the participants described as the equivalent of 'putting women in

stocks', given the public nature of this exposure and the humiliation that follows. The response from many commentators to the posting of sexually explicit images has been to focus on the victims and the narrative that if they wanted to avoid harm, then they shouldn't share images (Bloom 2014). This attitude is not that far from telling women not go out and drink or wear certain clothing.

From the research findings, only two of the participants talked about online misogyny and the issue of women being trolled online and facing widespread abuse and threats of rape and violence. One participant was involved with services which also supported and challenged the abuse faced by women in online spaces, particularly social media, and she herself had seen and experienced such abuse. She admitted that she found the experiences of the women that she worked with had really made her think of her own safety online. All five participants said they had curtailed their use of social media: only one used Twitter, and that only with enhanced security, and none used Facebook.

The trolling and hatred faced by women online was noted in the literature review (West 2013; Bartlett et al. 2014; Salter 2017). One of the more high-profile cases, which has been widely written about, occurred in August 2014, which began what then became known as 'Gamergate'; this was essentially an online movement debating ethics in gaming. Female game developer Zoe Quinn had developed a game that she was seeking to publish, called Depression Quest, which was in part based on her own experience with depression. She had been the target of criticism from gamers but this soon turned into a focus on her sex life and gave rise to issues of gender hatred, issues of harassment, misogyny and sexism within the video games culture (Jane 2017; Salter 2017). This case went on to gain its own hash tag: #Gamergate. The starting point was the breakdown of Quinn's relationship, with her ex-partner Eron Gjoni, who was also involved in gaming, going on to write a series of blogs accusing Quinn of sleeping with several men to get her games promoted. The link was then circulated on Twitter by actor Adam Baldwin, who has 190K followers (Henry and Powell 2017). What followed was intense harassment of Quinn, extending to other women associated with her, such as Anita Sarkeesian (Salter 2017). The abuse included rape and death threats, trolling and misogynistic

and violent views across platforms such as 4chan, Reddit and Twitter, with continued harassment of Quinn and others for what the perpetrators viewed as the increasing influence of feminism on video games. I highlight this case to illustrate the broader issues of the gendered nature of the abuse of women in online spaces. Salter (2017) explores the link between *geek masculinity* and technology:

Geek masculinity thus contains a contradictory construction, in which a victimized “outsider” posture can obscure relations of dominance which are maintained through the control and assertion of technological power. (2017: 6)

The experiences of women are examined by a number of researchers: Jane (2017) portrays a picture of misogyny online as a highly abusive, degrading and brutal area, setting out what she refers to as the systematic way in which online misogyny is perpetrated. She also labels the phenomena of everyday rape threats as ‘rapeglish’. Jane (2017) goes on to make the point that the one organising factor for this abuse is gender. The sense of being attacked online was raised by two participants who felt that online spaces were not safe for women. They expressed a sense of fear, for the clients they supported but also for themselves. Within the interviews, the participants put forward a view of women’s lives online as creating a vulnerability to online harassment and violence, pointing to online spaces that allow men to come together and express hatred for women and to have those views validated.

Considering the harm caused by online activity such as trolling, the participants admitted to being affected, with one having been a direct victim of trolling herself. Phrases such as ‘trolling’ seem ineffective in describing the seemingly indiscriminate targeting, violence and intimidation towards women including those women in the public eye (Lewis et al. 2017), whose work often depends on having an online presence: journalists, bloggers, those in the media or politicians are often subjected to violent gender-related threats, including rape threats and threats towards their children.

The view of trolling and online attacks as harmless is challenged by the sheer volume of misogyny (Laurie 2013; Jane 2017). Subsequently, the language used to describe such acts, including the word 'trolling', fails in many ways to name and recognise the harm and damage done to women's lives.

A study by Buckles et al. (2014) found that trolling correlates to psychopathy and sadism. Further studies as to the motivation of those who troll have cited boredom, attention seeking, revenge and pleasure, or wanting to cause harm within the community as a motivation for trolling. This does not correlate with the view that it is a harmless and victimless crime

The fantasy and myth world of online spaces allows individuals the capacity to develop alter egos and to create a whole virtual existence. Psychotherapy has already used avatar-based therapy to good effect; however, outside of Suler's work on the online self and Cooper's (1997) triple A engine theory, which have been critical to understand behaviour in online spaces, there has not been a sufficient focus on explaining the behaviours and motivation of perpetrators of abuse and harm against adult women.

Emerging technologies and their highly interactive online capabilities engage individuals in a way that has given rise to the development of areas of knowledge and inquiry such as cyber psychology (Suler 2015). While this can be used for therapeutic purposes (Leff et al. 2013), this type of technology provides those who want to exploit, harass or groom others for sexual exploitation with the opportunity to alter their identity (Seto 2013). Gaming is one area in which we see millions of people worldwide interacting and creating other worlds and occupying virtual spaces of fantasy, as evidenced by the popularity of World of Warcraft (Kuo et al. 2016). This research is not implying that gamers and those who interact in the online world are predatory and seeking to be abusive; rather, it seeks to highlight the capability of technology and the impact it has on creating a world in which people occupy a virtual reality.

In summary, issues of the motivation of perpetrators require further research, as the findings have highlighted, and as supported by the literature, technology allows

perpetrators to re-victimise anonymously. Furthermore, online misogyny and trolling can involve large groups of people who are not known to each other but share a seemingly unifying aim of causing harm and distress to the women involved.

5.5 Embodied and Disembodied Harms

The research findings set out the impact of TFSV and the subsequent harm, delineating a range of negative impacts on the lives of women, damaging not only women's health and well-being but also their professional lives. Sexual violence has been shown to have a highly negative effect on victims, often contextualised in theories of trauma, including symptoms of traumatic stress. This harm to victims was similar to the feelings expressed in the pilot study, encompassing intense feelings of anxiety, depression, and loss of trust in themselves and others and a range of difficulties in functioning on a daily level. From the literature, I was able to highlight one study that focused on the impact of revenge pornography, reporting issues of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts as just some of the issues that ensued (Bates 2017).

From a psychotherapeutic perspective, this creates a number of challenges when working with victims of TFSV, as set out in many survivors' experiences, which leave them emotionally, socially and professionally isolated. Herman (1989) talks about the positive effect of social connections, and of building trust in order to challenge the negative sense of shame and guilt expressed by survivors of TFSV. From the findings, participants observed the fractures to several domains of survivors' lives, the negative and psychological impact, and fear of exposure, which may prevent them from seeking emotional and social connections that might help them to recover.

While the impact of harm in the context of shame and guilt has been discussed in section one, the theme of embodied and disembodied harm is becoming increasingly discussed in relation to TFSV (Henry and Powell 2017) with reference to

the notion of harm in relation to the body as it is experienced in the cyber-world. The impact of harm for women who have experienced sexual violence and the subsequent effect on the body has been established within psychotherapy (Ogden 2006; van der Kolk 2014). When such harm is caused through the medium of technology, the research highlighted that this harm was understood in a different way: in technology, the private body becomes public.

Such harm can be understood through the concept of embodiment. Within psychotherapy, this concept has been set out in the work of Merleau-Ponty (cited in van Deurzen 2010), who attempted to understand phenomenal experiences of the lived body and how the embodied being experiences the world: that is, experiencing of the self and of others as embodied beings. How harm is embodied by individuals has often been explored in relation to women's experiences of rape, with the importance of embodiment being set out by Cahill:

Rather than being marked as an essentially intellectual being, defined by the abstract and distinctly nonbodily capability of reason, who merely 'inhabits' a fleshy vessel, the embodied subject is not separate from its specific bodily form. (2001: 101-102)

The concepts as explored by Cahill (2001) may be helpful when we consider the context of women's experiences of TFSV, as the findings set out the difficulty of understanding the harm experienced by women, talking of things 'being connected yet weirdly disconnected'. One participant referred to the experiences of a woman who had been raped after being drugged, with the only experiences of this incident being the film that was taken, and in other cases, women have had sexualised images of their bodies disseminated into the cyber-world. We need to understand the extent of harm to women not only on a cognitive level, as set out by Cahill:

Embodied self is significantly affected, even constructed, in relation to others and to the actions of others. (2001: 9)

The loss of control and panic experienced as a consequence of TFSV appears to have no end point: the concept of time becomes suspended, as for many victims of

TFSV the past is always present. The potent nature of sexually explicit images and boundaries that are broken across the medium of technology can be conceptualised in the thinking of theories of the embodiment of harm, but specifically in relation to women's experiences of being sexualised.

Harm caused to women through the use of technology has not always been recognised, yet can be carried out at times on an overwhelming scale. One such example is the circulation of sexually explicit images. This can be traced back to 2010, when Hunter Moore set up what is regarded as one of the first revenge porn sites, IsAnyoneUp. During the year and a half for which it operated, this site had averaged between 150,000 and 240,000 unique page views per day (Stroud 2014: 168).

Both the present research and the literature have set out a landscape of sexualised abuse on a global scale, and the impact on the self and the disconnect experienced by the victims on an emotional level, as described by the participants in the present study, demonstrate the complex nature of TFSV. The resulting shame and humiliation are kept alive on a continuous loop by the threat of ever more images and more exposure to harm. The body becomes a thing to be hated and women are not afforded the space to recover.

When we consider how psychotherapy responds to women's experiences of sexual violence, the work of Herman (1992) has been influential. Herman sets out the importance of reconnecting to others: of rebuilding relationships and talking about the trauma of violence. Her discussion in the context of trauma may be helpful to understand TFSV, as she also talks about the relationship to the perpetrators and the impact on attachment, trust in intimate partnerships and the subsequent sense of betrayal and loss of the relationship. In relation to TFSV, loss is not limited to others, but as the findings set out, also occurs in the form of loss of trust in one's own judgement. With the usual support networks denied, including a negative impact on the professional careers of survivors, it becomes important to conceptualise and understand women's experiences to address the competing impacts of harm, and also to remove notions of shame and create a community of

support. As I have highlighted, there is little empirical research to date on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of victims of TFSV, other than the work of Bates (2017), whose research outcomes revealed that women who sought counselling following experiences of revenge pornography adapted to positive coping mechanisms.

The latter part of theme three talked about impact that extended into victims' professional lives. The participants' responses are framed within the theory of empathic enmeshment – a psychological term that describes a blurring of boundaries between people (Wilson and Lindy 1994) – as they became increasingly intertwined during the course of the discussions and meetings. This could also be explained by the fact that I sought to engage the participants by undertaking narrative inquiry. As I met and communicated with the participants, the impact this had on their lives at a personal and professional level became apparent.

Participants' constructions of meaning in relation to clients' experiences were also shaped by their own experiences as women and as practitioners in sexual violence support services.

There were a number of times when they described an experience but related to it on a personal level: the breaking of boundaries and the use of technology to create an image that would be 'out there' indefinitely was difficult for them to understand. Citron and Frank (2014) and Salter (2017) have also highlighted how gender-specific harm is caused by phenomena such as 'revenge pornography' and the permanent and enduring nature of the posting and sharing of material, which adds to the impact of harm.

The use of technology was not limited to the lives of clients: all five participants in the final study talked about the impact it had on their personal lives and all experienced some level of fatalism in relation to technology and felt fearful of the virtual space.

5.6 Practice and Service Provision

Part of the aim of this research was to understand what, if any, impacts there were in the interventions that participants used when clients presented with TFSV.

Subsequently, the ways in which services and practitioners respond to TFSV were explored across a number of different disciplines through primary theme four.

The findings from the research highlighted the confusion and ambiguity experienced by participants, who often expressed frustration in relation to wider policies and practices. Interventions and discussions often centred on the lack of service provision in relation to the police and the criminal justice system.

The interventions on the part of the participants, while highly supportive, were also at times attempts to achieve damage limitation and work with women's presentation of anxiety, managing here-and-now symptoms or enhancing personal safety. Much of the discussion focused on the complex nature of evidence and redress through the criminal justice system. The overall picture was one of frustration and an overwhelming sense that online spaces were far more powerful than any of the practitioners and the services in which they worked. This was a challenging point for participants on many different levels, both professional and personal.

The lack of support and the gap in services is a key point. Citron and Franks (2014) set out a number of reasons for the lack of legal protection for victims, which in part is due to a lack of knowledge of how far-reaching this issue is. This fits with the outcomes of the research findings that underpin this study and is evidenced by the lack of a coordinated national response or government lead. Citron and Franks (2014) further suggest that there is a lack of knowledge on the severity of the issue.

Participants' feelings of frustration and confusion were evident over ways in which women who are victimised can be supported. One aim of this research was to understand the impact on the practice and intervention of the participants in relation to TFSV. From the research findings, the participants approached TFSV in much the same way as they worked with other forms of sexual violence. The

difference for the participants was that they felt they lacked training, so it would follow that the reference point they used would be what they already know. The only exception was one participant who had more exposure to this work and was aware of the complex nature of women's experiences in relation to technology, and who was thus able to provide signposting support.

How TFSV is understood and the way in which support services understand sexual offending and those who are considered to be victims and perpetrators can have a significant impact on how women seek and gain justice and how those who perpetrate violence are dealt with (Henry and Powell 2017). Feminist theories offer a conceptualisation of sexual offending, which understands how it occurs within a complex set of interrelations between the personal and societal constructs (Lewis et al. 2017). This research uses a gendered analysis with sensitivity to the societal approach and power differentials for women who are victimised.

Four of the participants worked in organisations that identified strongly with a feminist perspective. However, the literature on emerging technologies reflects the polarised positions and the challenges faced by victims and those supporting them when sexual violence is committed in the context of a globalised power such as the internet.

The internet is not viewed by all as dangerous or harmful. It has been conceptualised by some within the framework of freedom of expression. For example, American lawyer and writer Godwin (2003) advocates preserving freedom of speech on the Internet and sets out how we can apply constitutional rights in the cyber-world. Godwin would argue that sexualisation, namely 'cyber-porn panic' (2003: 259-318), is in fact a way of enforcing censorship, and that the Internet is a way of holding the media and political institutions accountable.

The debate on the freedom of speech on the internet is a critical one and highlights the different lens through which rights and responsibilities are viewed when we consider the cyber world. In this way, we can also look at the ways in which our laws reflect these rights: for example, Article 10 (1) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. (Council of Europe 2007:6)

From the research and literature, the innovative capacity offered by the cyber world is evident in many different ways; however, as this research highlights, the lack of redress is a worrying part of the findings. Of all the survivors about whom the participants spoke, not one had received any formal redress: one who had reported the incidents was still waiting for action to be taken and none of the other survivors mentioned had reported these offences to the police. From the findings, responding to TFSV represents a challenge for sexual violence support services. The wide-ranging harms set out in the literature review and the capacity of technology to cross international borders at an amazing speed would be a challenge for any one group. When the participants explored how they worked, there was an overwhelming feeling of frustration, annoyance and anxiety.

The tensions between rights, responsibilities and freedom in the cyber world were apparent in the findings and literature, where the same debates and discussion were set out. For example, the approaches taken in psychotherapy, within the field of sexual compulsivity, focus on the consumption of online pornography and the resulting harm to those individuals. In contrast to this is the view that pornography is harmful to all women. Dines (2010) points to the move towards increasingly violent material such as 'gonzo porn', the reality of which is brutalising to the women involved. The harm caused by the depiction of women in pornography is, according to Dines, that:

they are always ready for sex and are enthusiastic to do what men want, irrespective of how painful, humiliating, or harmful the act is. The 'no' is glaringly absent from women's vocabulary. (2010: xxiii)

If we move to the experiences of women who are not involved in pornography but feel victimised, from the research findings the outcomes for women appear poor. This final theme indicates that there is a gap in awareness of responding in a way

that is meaningful for women. Thus, when the participants express their horror and anxiety at the experiences of victims, there may be an element that a different set of boundaries is being violated, and the shock and fear they expressed highlights the harm of TFSV for all women.

When the participants described and explored how they understood TFSV, they talked of how survivors had to reconsider the choices they made, even avoiding taking jobs for fear of being exposed, or shutting down social media accounts. This was true not just for survivors: all the participants in the study talked about being wary of technology. All of them had limited how much they used social media and all had negative views, although one did recognise that it could be a powerful tool for women to get their messages across and make a positive contribution.

These ideas are reflected in the literature. Jane (2017), for example, points to the way in which women are being silenced in online spaces. The way in which women are silenced even when seeking support has been discussed in relation to other forms of sexual violence against women, with Jordon (2012) who writes about rape, setting out what she terms as six key silencing agents:

- (i) The self
- (ii) Police responses
- (iii) Court and trial processes
- (iv) Formal and informal supports
- (v) Researchers and academics
- (vi) The media (2012: 254)

Jordon (2012) sets out the complex and integrated ways in which women are silenced and prevented from speaking about their experiences of rape, such as the role of rape myths and victim blaming when victims seek support or make disclosures, but also a lack of understanding of survivors' experiences. In relation

to TFSV, there are a number of issues: on one side there is the sexual harassment of women in online spaces, which serves to silence women from participating, and furthermore there are women who have experienced sexual violence through technology, which has compounded their experiences. The result amounts to women restricting their use of online spaces or not feeling safe. The findings highlight that there are no specialist services for women who have experienced TFSV.

5.7 Gaps between the findings and the literature

This section outlines the disparities between the findings from the research and the existing literature regarding TFSV, focusing on the issues of webcamming, online prostitution and trafficking. It is important to highlight these gaps, as they highlight the challenges in discourses on TFSV, how the construction of sex work is understood and where it intersects with systems such as technology.

The first issue is webcamming: I highlight this issue because it is an industry that has grown as a direct result of the internet (Henry and Farvid 2007). It has now become a widespread and accepted form of adult entertainment, and there are some areas of the world that are considered 'hubs' for the pornography industry, such as Florida (Lee 2017). This profession attracts hundreds of young women every year who are able to broadcast themselves from their own bedrooms (Bartlett 2015).

Whether on their own or working for organisations, one of the striking features of webcamming is that it attracts young women, and while for many it can be short-lived, for others it can lead to their entrance into other parts of the adult entertainment industry. For many this is seen as a quick way of making money to pay off student loans, but it also raises questions about the normalisation and acceptance of entering the adult entertainment field. There was no mention of this in the research findings, perhaps because webcamming has become so normalised, or because the debates in the research see it as involving more consent and less coercion. It is also the one area of sexual behaviour that has grown as a direct result

of the internet, attracting thousands of primarily young women as set out in the 2017 film *Hot Girl Wanted: turned on* (Lee 2017) a documentary on young adults in the United States of America exploring the intersection of pornography and technology. The discord on the area of webcamming also highlights the opposing positions. One explanation for this may be that webcamming seems to bring a level of autonomy and safety, with higher levels of consent involved, in contrast to the coercion that may be involved in revenge pornography.

However, there is research to suggest that women who are involved in webcamming may be exposed to higher levels of risk (Bartlett 2015); this can range from those who engage with the women using their personal information without consent, or in extreme cases, this type of activity can lead to stalking or harassment. Bartlett (2015) also highlights other examples of women being targeted by trolls. Other research has, however, tried to explore the changing landscape of what some researchers call internet-based sex work. Sanders et al. (2015) point to what they see as agency and control over the decisions made; however, they too highlight issues of safety in this environment with regard to the vulnerability of personal information. This is often known as 'doxing'. Doxing is a form of cyber harassment involving the public release of personal information that can be used to identify or locate an individual, such as a home address, email address, phone number, social security number, and employer or school contact information (MacAllister 2017).

While webcamming continues to rise, there is little knowledge of this practice or engagement of service providers to provide support and information to women. This can also be considered in the context of developing technology, which means that the production of sexual material online is no longer the sole remit of pornographers, but can be produced by anyone, anywhere. However, unlike the adult entertainment industry, there will be no protection when such material is created in private.

Other gaps include the lack of reference from the participants in relation to online prostitution and trafficking. One participant spoke about women who had been

trafficked, referring to the lack of evidence to show that these women had been groomed online. The literature review highlights this issue, as technology and the internet have increased the number of available avenues for buying commercial sex (Hughes 2004; Farley et al. 2014).

In a House of Commons Report (2016: 9) organisations who contributed reported that ‘the majority of people exploited through prostitution are women and girls and the majority of those who pay for sex are men’. Furthermore, it is apparent from the literature review that prostitution and trafficking are seamlessly adapting to changes in technology, but this has not been spontaneous or incidental, rather representing deliberate and targeted marketing (Farley et al. 2013). It is already recognised that soliciting on the streets and the third parties involved in the control of prostitution put women at a great deal of risk of harm and violence. In their research, Farley et al. make the point that:

You are not safer because you work indoors. Craigslist is just the “internet streets,” where the same predators and hustlers are meeting you with the same intentions except they look like straight people who go to medical school and have BlackBerrys. I consider myself in the same risk and danger zones as a street worker. (2014: 101)

Dank et al. (2011) talk about the innovative ways in which sex is being sold through commercial networks. Cyberspace is yet another resultant frontier space, like mining and rural brothels, formed from socio-spatial exclusionary practices towards sex workers.

Other research points to a wider issue: since the 1990s (Hughes 1999), feminists and academics have pointed to the ways in which the internet is used to sexually exploit women, and how the globalisation effect of the internet is changing the way in which we understand sexual exploitation. Hughes (1999) makes the point that

‘The standards and values on the internet are being set by the sex industry and its supporters and users’. (1999: 64).

Experiences of trafficking have a devastating impact on victims' lives in all domains, leading to long-term mental health needs (Kaylor 2015). The degradation involved and the level of exploitation experienced are vast (Baker 2016). There is a lack of socio-economic security for women who are trafficked, who often have a complex array of needs relating to a lack of secure housing, no recourse to public funding and their insecure immigration status. The invisibility of women who are trafficked also means that those who perpetrate this violence are not held to account (UNODC 2016). This gap in the findings is of concern and there is a need for future research to focus on this group of women, as while the statistics and papers on trafficking of women are horrifying, the voices of these women remain silent.

5.8 Summary of Discussion

From the discussion, the findings from the research are largely supported by the literature, which highlights the increasing ways in which technology is being used to sexually exploit and harass women. The discussion in this section has explored a number of theoretical concepts and frameworks within which to understand women's experiences of TFSV. These have been framed within feminist discourse and a gendered analysis (Kelly 1988; Lewis 2016; McGlynn et al. 2017). Crucially, I have also set out to frame women's experiences from the perspective of psychotherapy, focusing on notions of the self and the impact of harms.

Framing this discussion to lead on from the findings, I have set out an exploration of notions of the self in the online environment for women who have been victimised by TFSV. Theories of shame (Lewis 1992; Gilbert 2007) have been helpful in providing language and context for TFSV: shame is understood when TFSV occurs in a highly exposing way (Ronson 2015). Naming and understanding women's experiences and the emotions and psychological impact that result from them are important, and so too is the context in which these experiences occur. Placing these experiences in the context of a continuum of violence has also been crucial. I have then presented a broader discussion of the sexualisation of women through technology and its effects on how women are portrayed.

The subsequent discussion of perpetrators and the use of technology depicts the way in which technology creates a pseudo-fantasy world. There was no one profile of a 'typical' perpetrator: they ranged from ex-partners to friends or acquaintances, or in some cases large groups of anonymous people online with a shared goal of targeting an individual. Furthermore, the discussion centres on how individuals understand consent and coercion.

Section 5.2 explores the research findings in terms of impact and the harms caused. As this section highlights, technology creates a complex set of intersecting impacts, with survivors responding to the internal harm and the external exposure as they seek to deal with painful feelings of loss, anxiety and distress. At the same time, the effect on women's professional lives is also negative, with TFSV eroding the forms of support that are vital to recovery.

In this section I have set out an exploration of the responses of services and the impact on practice, setting out the way in which participants focused on the here-and-now symptoms with which women presented, the frustrations expressed and the inconsistent responses of statutory services across the police and criminal justice system. I have framed these issues in relation to the work of Jordon (2012), who explored the multi-layered and integrated way in which women are silenced, the outcome of which is to close down women's voices.

I finish this section by setting out the gaps between the findings and the literature, focusing on webcamming in direct connection with technology. There was no mention of this aspect from any of the participants. Equally, the literature reflected the challenges that webcamming presents to feminist thinking and the lack of empirical research available. Secondly, I discussed the experiences of women who are exploited into trafficking or prostitution. The literature has been focusing on the use of the internet to traffic and sexually exploit women since the 1990s (Hughes 2000). One reason why participants may not have included victims of trafficking or prostitution is that these are often women who have complex sets of needs and who are often, but not always, supported in specialist services.

5.9 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

In this section, I evaluate how I have understood some of the strengths and limitations of the study.

Strengths

A key strength of this study is that it explores a growing area of concern, as reflected in the findings and supported by the literature. Technology is no longer limited or isolated from other disciplines or parts of individuals' lives: as I have explored in earlier chapters, it has become integrated into everyday life. This includes the delivery of counselling services, which is well established.

The study was an in-depth exploration that allowed me to explore and understand the way in which TFSV is described and meaning constructed by practitioners in sexual violence support services. A qualitative methodology, namely narrative inquiry, allowed me to seek to engage with, understand and de-construct the complex issue of TFSV. From the literature, there are still only a small number of studies on women's experiences of TFSV and all three have been centred on revenge pornography. I was not able to locate studies of the way in which practitioners worked. Furthermore, there are a number disciplines from which research is being undertaken (Bates 2017; Henry and Powell 2017; Jane 2017), but input from the field of counselling and psychotherapy is minimal.

Research with participants who were involved with frontline delivery of services has been a key strength of this study. From the review of the literature, there were a number of scholarly articles and grey literature, which, while an excellent source of learning, did not always capture the voices of those who are directly involved in this work. Giving the practitioners a voice has, I hope, bought us closer to understanding the ways in which sexual violence is perpetrated and the complexities in undertaking this work.

Another key strength to the study is that in a still relatively under-researched area, the aim was not to develop a theoretical framework but rather to begin to raise awareness and discussion within the field of psychotherapy. Given the nature of

the topic, it is also hoped that the study will contribute to knowledge and awareness across a number of sectors.

Limitations

While research into a still-emerging area of concern has been a positive aspect of this study, a number of limitations are evident. Firstly, this was a small-scale study and it is therefore difficult to apply the results in a generalised way.

One of the key limitations has been the difficulty of recruiting counsellors and psychotherapist to take part despite approaching a number of organisations and widely circulating recruitment sheets. I did get some feedback from counsellors, one of whom contacted me keen to take part but only worked with young people, and was thus discounted. Two other counsellors said that they found the area of research interesting but did not feel confident that they had enough understanding of TFSV to make a meaningful contribution.

The study has given some important information to begin to contextualise the way in which practitioners construct meaning in relation to issues of TFSV. A limitation of this study is that it engages with practitioners; it is not a first-hand account of women who have been victimised. There remains a need for a more longitudinal study with victims.

The participants in this study all worked in sexual violence support services, so it was not possible to make comparisons or establish how practitioners in private practice or other services viewed TFSV in the wider context of sexual violence. This was coupled with the fact that I as the researcher also work within a specialist violence support service. Every effort was made to address my bias at every juncture: my stance on sexual violence, which is underpinned by a gendered analysis of violence, was set out from the start and a reflexive journal was utilised to understand my part in the process. However, there were times when I approached the reading of the literature and the data as a psychotherapist working

with victims rather than as a researcher. It was only through continuous supervision and sharing my work with a peer support group that I was able to address this.

Working with practitioners, I did not fully anticipate the support needs for practitioners who, from their narratives, highlighted the impact of the work on them and the ways in which their use of technology in their personal lives had altered as a result of their work. The Findings section highlighted the vicarious impact on participants, with all five participants exploring the impact of TFSV on their personal lives. One of the limitations of the study is there was no space to explore this in more detail.

The focus of this study was on women. This was not to discount the experiences of men but rather a reflection of my work in the sexual violence sector. Future research should also focus on others who may have been victimised by TFSV to gain a broader understanding of experiences.

5.10 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could consider more targeted recruitment within psychotherapy in order to explore and understand this issue in greater depth and to consider interventions that will support and help victims and facilitate recovery. As this research has focused on the personal impact on clients but also participants, future research needs to focus on the effectiveness of interventions and to consider approaches that can give clients positive opportunities for recovery.

The study provides incremental learning, raising awareness of the ways in which women may experience victimisation and the subsequent negative impact. The lack of a point of reference for TFSV among participants is an important issue that requires further exploration, and for psychotherapy and counselling, understanding the self in relation to technology is a continuing challenge.

Technology is a global aspect of life which brings many positive impacts. There have been a number of studies that focus on young people; however, to date, there are only three studies that set out the impact of TFSV on women's psychological health and well-being (APC 2014; Citron and Franks 2014; Bates 2017). This supports the need for further research into this area to build on this knowledge and to invest in studies that are able to research the long-term effects on victims and consider the effectiveness of interventions.

There is a growing wealth of information on the self in relation to technology and how individuals behave. While there is a section in this research on how the behaviour of perpetrators is perceived, more research is needed in order to effectively intervene and to hold perpetrators to account, and furthermore, to explore and understand how technology creates an environment in which large numbers of people can come together and target others. Some critical work has been carried out by Seto (2013) which affords valuable insight into the way in which predators behave in online spaces, but further research is needed; otherwise, the concern is that the focus will be on encouraging women to be safe in online spaces while perpetrators are not held accountable.

In the next chapter I describe the contribution to knowledge from the study, the ways in which I have disseminated the findings, plans for the future and concluding comment.

Chapter 6 Concluding Chapter

In this chapter, I describe the ways in which this research study has made a contribution to knowledge, how I have disseminated the research finding, plans for future work and with a concluding comment. I finish the chapter with a personal reflection on my research journey.

6.1 Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

This research study has been able to provide a positive contribution to knowledge in both counselling and psychotherapy and to the wider field of ending violence against women and girls. TFSV, it can be argued, could be seen as an advancing but still silent form of violence against women. The contribution made by this study is that it enables therapists and practitioners to recognise the wide-ranging set of harms experienced by women who are victimised and to be able to respond in a way that is meaningful for survivors.

The study has examined discussion and theories of how the self is experienced within technology where women have been victimised and have not consented to have their images and/or their lives trolled and exposed in an environment such as the cyber world. Much more research is needed on the longer-term impact. While there is now the 'right to be forgotten' on Google (Ausloos 2012), this cannot eradicate all records and victims are left to come to terms with this fact. It is hoped that this research will bring such issues and their subsequent impact into the awareness of those supporting victims and survivors of TFSV.

Furthermore, the findings from the pilot study and this final study support the conclusion that TFSV causes intense and negative harm to those who are victimised. Placing women's experiences in the continuum of violence gives a context within which we can understand women's experiences.

One of the key contributions to learning is how services may be in danger of silencing victims when they seek support. Services need to recognise this experience, to understand the complex nature of TFSV and the personal and professional harm that can be caused, and also to realise that often the abuse

happens over a long period of time, is rarely limited to a one-off event and often involves multiple perpetrators and high levels of public exposure, following which it is often the victim who is the focus of attention. Furthermore, the findings can be used for guidance when safety planning with women: for example, the participants reported that threats from ex-partners to disseminate sexually explicit images increased once a relationship had broken down. The capacity to disseminate images internationally should not deter service providers from challenging police services to respond and to seek additional support from specialist services.

While the research focused on the experiences of women, part of the contribution to knowledge is a discussion on perpetrators. It is hoped that this research will provide practitioners with a language with which to support women and to be able to unpick theories of guilt and shame, particularly in relation to how we understand consent.

This research has been able to provide incremental knowledge that builds on the current literature. A contribution is that it can provide confidence to other researchers from within counselling and psychotherapy to realise that the issue of technology can and should be an area of curiosity for their fields.

6.2 Dissemination of Findings

As a psychotherapist working in an organisation delivering frontline services, it was important not only that the research contributed to my professional and on-going development, but also that I was in a position to disseminate the findings to other organisations. I have over the past three years disseminated the findings of the research in a number of arenas, which I have set out below, describing how they have contributed to knowledge and supported the development of the study. I end this sub-section with a brief overview of future plans and my intention to build on and develop the work to date.

February 2015: TILT Magazine

I contributed to a short article in TILT magazine - *Therapeutic Innovations in Light of Technology*. The magazine is part of the Online Therapy Institute. It is an excellent resource for practitioners who are engaged in online therapies. The article was a short overview of the literature review that I undertook for the pilot study and was co-written with Dr Stephen Goss.

This was the first time I had contributed to an article in this way and it provides an excellent opportunity, primarily to present work in a focused and rigorous way. As someone new to research, it helped me to reflect on the value of this area of study.

June 2015: Research Student Summer Conference: Middlesex University

I submitted a 250-word extract that presented the research findings of the pilot study to the Middlesex University Annual Summer Conference and subsequently presented a PowerPoint presentation at the conference. This was a 30-minute presentation which included questions from the attendees.

The motivation for applying to present at this conference was in large part to test the value of carrying out a final study on TFSV in a supportive learning environment. This was a useful conference, as much of the feedback and questions centred on methodological concerns and questions on the design, and the area of study was felt to be positive. The focus on methodology and design provided helpful feedback.

November 2015: Sheffield Women's Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre

I was approached and accepted an invitation to give a presentation on TFSV, including partial research findings and the learning from the literature review, to the Sheffield Women's Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre. This was an hour's presentation which was followed by questions. It was attended by staff from across

the service working in a variety of roles. This was the first time I had presented the research to a counselling and psychotherapy service.

The focus of the presentation was on the therapeutic implications of TFSV, the impact of harm and the context of women's experiences. This was well received, with participants sharing that the work I was undertaking resonated with the group.

November 2015: Invitation to join a scholarly community

I received an invitation from Professor Donna M. Hughes to publish in Dignity: a Scholarly Community on Sexual Exploitation. This is a newly formed professional global community which has created an online, open-access peer reviewed scholarly journal on sexual exploitation. Its ethos and values are to create a forum for understanding and exploring connections among different types of gender crimes.

The journal will be published through a digital platform at the University of Rhode Island: <<http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/>>. The journal publishes exclusively online and is open-access.

When I started the research, I made contact with Professor Hughes, who was one of the first researchers to highlight the use of the internet to sexually exploit women for trafficking and prostitution. The invitation to publish is important, as it shows the value of the research and the opportunity to make contact with researchers with a commitment to ending violence against women and girls and to be a part of this online community, of which there are few others. It is my intention to publish an article in the late autumn of 2018 that focuses on the context in which TFSV occurs and how practitioners construct and understand this phenomenon.

January 2016: West London Counselling Service

I was invited to be part of a panel of speakers that focused on violence against women. This was a CPD event for the staff from the West London Counselling Service, who were all therapists working from a range of modalities, and so not surprisingly questions were centred on discussing impact and clinical outcomes.

Women and Girls Network – Sexual Violence training

WGN, where I am employed, is committed to the delivery of a two-day training course on sexual violence. The training is delivered as a two-day programme twice a year to statutory and voluntary sector practitioners and managers from a range of disciplines. Within the sexual violence training, WGN has added a section on TFSV: this is important, as it emphasises the link between TFSV and the wider context of other forms of sexual violence. The section is highly interactive and involves attendees discussing and agreeing a definition of TFSV and how they understand it. The amendment to the training pack was made in 2015 and it continues to be reviewed and is well received.

February 2016: One-day training on TFSV for Women and Girls Network (WGN)

In 2016 I delivered a one-day training session on TFSV, which was attended by eleven participants across statutory and voluntary sector services. While the training had the broader aim of locating women's experiences of TFSV in the broader context of sexual violence against women, it also had some key objectives:

- ❖ Explore definitions and the terminology of technology-facilitated violence against women;
- ❖ Consider the experiences of women in the context of a gender-based approach and from a gender-based perspective;
- ❖ Examine how emerging technology impacts on the psychological well-being of women;
- ❖ Explore clinical and service delivery dilemmas and challenges that may be present in the work;
- ❖ Consider approaches to respond to women's experiences of technology-facilitated sexual violence.

These objectives covered an exploration of the literature, theoretical frameworks on TFSV and some of the challenges in the work. This was an interactive workshop which included an exploration of the participants' values and beliefs. Participants were required to complete an outcome form and a summary of the form was copied to me from WGN: this showed a positive outcome for all attendees, who demonstrated an increase in their knowledge and a desire for further information (Appendices F and G).

This has been a highly positive experience, and with the completion of the final study, I have been able to update the training pack with a commitment to continue to delivery of this training, which can also be amended to shorter briefing seminars. This is an evolving field and practitioners are reporting that experiences of TFSV are not limited to young people, and that more awareness is needed in relation to adult women.

February 2017: Workshops for Harrow LSCB

I was approached by Harrow London Safeguarding Children's Board, which holds responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people in the London Borough of Harrow. Each workshop lasted two hours, with 21 people in each of the workshops. This was a highly interactive event and covered some of the key points of the research. The attendees also had time to ask questions, and as many of them were frontline practitioners in a range of different disciplines in statutory services, they were interested primarily in interventions.

June 2017: Metanoia Institute

In June 2017, I was invited to assist Professor Etherington at the Metanoia Institute Research Academy. In the afternoon, I presented my research to the attendees. As they were all research students, there were a lot of questions about the decisions I took on the methodology and the choice to interview practitioners rather than women who had been victimised.

Article for Counselling and Psychotherapy Research

In November 2017, I submitted an abstract for a Special Edition of the journal *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* (CPR). This has been accepted and I will be submitting the final article in August 2018. The study will include a focus on female sexuality and notions of the self in relation to technology. This is an exciting opportunity and part of my commitment to continue to follow my interest in this area, but also it is important to be able to engage in discussions with those in the counselling field who may have differing ideas.

6.3 The Way Forward

As I have set out above, I have started to work towards disseminating research findings via a number of different forums. In order to continue to integrate the research findings into the work of organisations supporting women who present with issues of violence, I will continue to undertake presentations and workshops, as they allow connection and interaction with practitioners from a range of disciplines but crucially also with psychotherapists. In addition, I am currently developing a guide that can be easily disseminated to contacts across services. The guidance will not be limited to counsellors and psychotherapists and will focus on issues of safety planning and support. The guide is being developed as a result of feedback from participants in the final study, who talked about the need for guidance and training.

Writing and articles are important to continue to build on the work to date. As I am part of an organisation which works to end violence towards women and girls, I am able to access contacts and groups within which to disseminate findings and raise awareness. Some of this process has already started, and the completion of this research will help to further support this work.

When I started out in this research, I was not sure about the direction that a possible product could take. However, as I am now at the end of this process, from the findings and literature I feel that while guidance is important, what we need for

victims of TFSV is service provision that offers a specialist understanding and skill set to respond to women's experiences. This can be part of specialist services such as rape crisis centres, which already hold the required infrastructure. In light of this research, I will approach the organisation in which I am based to explore ways in which we can begin to disseminate the findings of the research into our wider service provision.

6.4 Concluding Comment

Sexual violence against women is not new, and from the research findings of the pilot study and this final study, it is clear that TFSV is a silent yet growing form of violence. It pulls together the phenomenal opportunities that continue to be created with the development of technologies. However, it has also revealed an aspect of harm to women that can be carried out by multiple perpetrators in a global way. What TFSV is telling us is that globalisation is bringing new challenges for violence against women. The need for such complex understanding requires responses that consider and explore these experiences in depth. In the current climate, the move to dilute specialist services and to create generic support fails to recognise or acknowledge the personal and political nature of harms against women.

Psychotherapy and counselling is already aware of the capability of technology to improve the lives of clients, and now also needs to be a part of the understanding of those who are victimised and harmed through this medium and respond to these clients from a place of knowing.

Otherwise, in much the same way that women and girls are socialised from a young age to be aware of sexual assault and rape and of being harassed and victimised, so too will the internet and cyberspace become another part of that socialisation. The invisibility and lack of accountability afforded to perpetrators puts the onus of safety and avoiding victimisation on women and girls, and emphasises the inevitability of sexual assault and harassment through the use of technology.

6.5 Personal Reflections on the Study

I finish the chapter with a reflection on the research journey, to position myself reflexively in relation to the process and to provide some insight as to how the research took shape and how my own challenges, fears, moments of triumph and fear of failure were experienced in parallel (Etherington 2004).

The process of the research has brought with it a number of challenges. From the outset, I was clear of the area of study, but nonetheless the formal research proved to be a process of discovery. The preparation work to undertake the pilot study was often bewildering, and struggling to understand the methodological approach was a key aspect of this. The focus of the pilot study on victims of TFSV gave rise to many conflicting emotions and my initial enthusiasm soon turns to a sense of feeling overwhelmed. The women who take part are lovely, funny and generous but the narratives are painful: am struck by the responsibility of doing justice to their life stories. At every corner, I was confronted with sexual violence and harm to women: it often felt there was no escaping it.

After five years of immersion in technology and sexual violence, my own sense of safety and well-being has felt challenged. Undertaking the literature review was a difficult experience; the sheer volume of hate and abuse directed at women began to feel distressing. Now at the stage of finalising the thesis, I feel a more deepening sense of how much there is left to learn. The globalisation of technology and the opportunities it has afforded also highlights the ways in which new forms of violence are created and often unchallenged. The research has raised questions as to the ways in which women can seek redress and support, how services are resourced to respond and how we begin to understand the impact on those who are victimised by TFSV.

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APPENDICES AND FIGURES

Appendix A: Ethical Approval Letter Metanoia Institute

Appendix B: Information Sheet

Appendix C: Consent form

Appendix D: Partial Extract of Transcription: Grace

Appendix E: Codes and Themes

Appendix F: Training pack TFSV

Appendix G: Evaluation Summary of TFSV training

Figure 1: Chart of Participants

Figure 2 : Primary Themes and Sub-themes

Figure 3: Pilot Study Findings

Figure 4: Findings from the Final Study

Figure 5: Research Findings and Literature identification of TFSV

27th November 2015

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Dear Foziha

Thank you for presenting your Learning Agreement to the Programme Approval Panel on 26th November 2015 for formative assessment. Congratulations on passing this stage of the research journey so successfully.

Panel Feedback:

Conditions:

- That you provide the required information on Signatories and Academic Consultants.
- That you include a brief statement about access to supervision and personal therapy as required.
- Identify probable journal where publication is to appear.

Research Ethical Approval

The Departmental Research Ethics Committee have approved your Learning Agreement.

It is expected that your final version will be, in consultation with your adviser, an amended version of your draft to which you will add and/or delete parts of the existing draft to make your final version. Such changes will need to be incorporated into the document and appropriately highlighted. You will need to submit 1 hard copy and an electronic copy via email to mandy.kersey@metanoia.ac.uk of your Final Learning Agreement to the Academic Coordinator, Mandy Kersey. The email copy needs to be sent by 2 weeks of receipt of this letter.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Professor Simon du Plock FRSM, AFPsS
Head of Post Qualification Doctorates Department

Registered in England at the
above address No. 2918520
Registered Charity No. 1050175

Appendix B:

Information Sheet

Study title: A Study of Sexual Violence in the Digital Age: Working with technology- facilitated sexual violence against women within a sexual violence support service.

Over the last decade, there has been an increasing focus on the use of technology by young people and their increased vulnerability to online sexual exploitation. However, less is known about the experiences of adult women. An increasing number of adult women present with a range of experiences which involve the use of emerging technologies; this includes but is not limited to posting explicit images, sexual harassment from social media, live streaming and web cams, consensual filming of sexual intimacy and posting on pornography sites without their partners' knowledge, filming and circulating of sexual assaults and threat of exposure through technology.

The focus of the research is on women's experiences of sexual violence which have been facilitated by the use of emerging technologies; this is not a study on technology.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there

is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the research is to explore the way in which caseworkers, advocates and counsellors within sexual violence services work with adult women who have experienced technology-facilitated sexual violence or exploitation. In particular, the research aims to explore the way in which practitioners respond and construct meaning of such experiences, ascertain how they work and the subsequent impact of this on their practice and work with women.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part as you may work directly with women who have experienced technology-facilitated sexual violence or work within a sexual violence service provision.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is your choice whether you take part in this study or not. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do if I take part?

You will be asked to meet with the researcher; you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research and to address any concerns you may have. If you decide after this to take part in this research, you will be asked to take part in an interview. This will be unstructured and exploratory in nature allowing you to narrate and describe your experiences of working with this issue. The meetings can be scheduled either for one meeting or we can meet on a number of occasions should the need arise, timings for the meetings can be fixed beforehand. You will also have the opportunity to attend a debrief session two weeks after the interview, should you feel in need of additional support. The details of this support will be provided to you. All interviews will be recorded and your responses will be reported verbatim.

5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Exploring work in the field of sexual exploitation and violence can be distressing, and I will be able to provide you with details of additional support should you wish to access this.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The information from this study may help us to better understand the needs and experiences of women who experience sexual violence and exploitation from emerging technology, further to improve how services respond.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Any information about you which is used will be anonymised; your name and location changed so that you cannot be recognised from it, but your views may be used in any published work.

All information collected will be stored, analysed and reported in compliance with the Data Protection Act. All data will be stored for no longer than 12 months after the end of the study.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used to provide theory to the research's final report. They may also be used for academic/professional discussion and publication in a professional journal or equivalent and for the development of training.

9. Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been reviewed by the Metanoia Institute Research Ethics Committee and is supervised by Dr Sofie Bager-Charleson.

10. Contact for further information

For further information contact

Foziha Hamid

Email: 

Metanoia Institute

13 North Common Road

Ealing, London

W5 2QB

Appendix C

Informed Consent

Title of Project: **A Study of Sexual Violence in the Digital Age: Working with Technology-facilitated Sexual Violence against Women within a Sexual Violence Support Service.**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. If I choose to withdraw, I can decide what happens to any data provided.
3. I understand that my interview will be digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.
5. I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor.

Name of participant:

Researcher:

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date:

Appendix D: Partial Extract of Transcription – Grace

Grace: Yeah in theory they should have done but they just delayed and delayed and any action on what happened, so in terms of what it created so she left the relationship and she was safe what she then, she had already found stuff on line that he had already posted, like you know kind of wife website, I can't even remember what it was called

Moderator: Like pornographic

Grace: Yeah it was like oh that was it my slut wife. Yeah so he's posted stuff on their pictures of her

Moderator: was she aware that he had taken the pictures

Grace: Well I think that there was a lot of coercion, a lot of sexual coercion in the relationship he kind of talked her into doing lots of things she didn't want to do like with other men you know he would take pictures and film it and she was never I would say she never fully consented to and she was coerced into doing it erm and then he posted a lot of it on to these websites, created web pages you know she was all over the internet would be an understatement.

Moderator: How did she find out about it?

Grace: Erm because she found something on her home computer where he'd posted

Moderator: Oh okay

Grace: she saw his name and password and though he denied it at the time that was part of the whole relationship and he was incredibly violent as well and then when she left, that's when she started searching and looking on different websites and found like vast amounts

Moderator: So she just through just a Google search

Grace: Well I think she'd found things on his email and a few different sites that he's signed up to and yeah a lot of it she found after she left and she was also in a new relationship

Moderator: so what happened

Grace: Hmm well it felt really, even if I think about it now it feels really sinister

Moderator: (overlap) in what way

Grace: So it feels like it's almost intangible like almost like you're in a horror film you know but real but not real clearly it's there but the evidence is there but he set it up so they can't be linked to anybody, it was difficult, like a total loss of control and a public humiliation

Moderator: Were they taken down

Grace: No (pause) no

Moderator: They were just left there what happened

Grace: I remember it was really shocking and I remember how shocking it was and it was weird actually because there's also this kind of like there's an intrigue as well you kind of think part of you wants to look, and I think that's part of the unrealness and

Moderator: (overlap) and?

Grace: Yeah a disconnect because obviously we know he's done it this has actually happened but because there is lack of trace you almost want to kind of see it, it feels like it makes it real, its bizarre because of course I know it's real, but that the unrealness to it, I know all of that

Moderator: But there's an unrealness for you

Grace: Yeah and also I kind of guess it's not something that I've ever looked at or been interested in it's the unknown like how the hell does this work

Moderator: how did he go about it?

Grace: I guess yeah yeah **it all feels like mysterious** is the wrong word it's **that sort of calculated exercise**, yeah I guess it feels unreal but very real at the same time and then you kind of think so there is a kind of , and I guess **that's interesting for practitioners that urge to look you know because actually there is a desire to look , obviously that would be really unsound and guess that's the danger zone, isn't it around working with this material that you could go round and do that but would be totally unethical there would be very little protecting you or your client from that,** just like there was nothing protecting the client , so you know some sort of parallel process.

Appendix E:

Codes and Themes

How practitioners construct meaning of experiences of technology linked sexual violence

Definition of technology linked SV – what types of sexual violence the interviewees link to technology, and what and how often they encounter technology linked sexual violence within their work.

Perpetrators – practitioners' opinions on how technology affects the type and behaviour of perpetrators

Comparisons made with offline sexual violence – how interviewees construct meaning of technology linked sexual violence through comparisons with abuse considered to be unrelated to technology.

How the interviewees work with technology linked sexual violence and how this impacts on the interviewees' work

Consent

Impact – the impact that technology linked sexual violence has on clients.

Service – interviewees views on the service provided by their organisation, how the service addresses technology linked sexual violence and what the service provides the client with.

Response – the response to reporting technology linked sexual violence, including the response of the criminal justice system, the police, cyberfeminism and society.

Practitioner – how the experience of working with technology linked sexual violence impacts the interviewee on a professional, emotional and personal level.

Table of codes

Comparison	Comparing technology linked sexual violence with non-technology linked sexual violence. This includes direct comparisons, difference, similarities
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	interviewee's opinions on the unique aspect of technology linked sexual violence	
	DIFF ACCESS	Accessibility
	DIFF ANON	Anonymity
	DIFF CUES	Lack of body language/cues
	DIFF OMNI	Omnipresence
	DIFF PERP	Different types of perpetrator
	DIFF PUBLIC	Public nature of tech linked SV
	DIFF REAL	Real vs. Unrealness aspect of tech linked SV
	DIFF SAFE	Safeguarding and Safety aspect
	DIFF SERV	How services/practitioners approach tech linked SV
	DIFF SPAN	The long lasting span of tech linked SV i.e. posted content
	DIFF VISUAL	Visual vs. Physical aspect of tech linked SV
	DIFF VUL	Vulnerability of tech linked SV
	SIM CLIENT	Clients' with past experiences of non-tech linked SV
	SIM PERP	Similarities in perpetrators of tech and non-tech SV
	SIM SAFE	Similarities in safeguarding of tech and non-tech SV
	SIM SERVICE	Similarities in how service/practitioners approach tech and non-tech SV
	SIM SV	Similarities in SV abuse of tech and non-tech SV
Consent	Issues around consent, coercion and how this can impact on response, impact reporting and prosecution	
Definition	How interviewees define and construct meaning surround technology linked sexual violence	
	CATFISH	False online identities
	CONTINUUM	Continuum of technology linked SV
	FREQ	Frequency of occurrence as seen by the interviewee
	GROOM	Grooming
	MEDIA	Involving media, photography, film, manipulation of media
	NORM	Normalisation
	OA	Online abuse
	OFF CONNECT	Involving an offline connection
	ON CONNECT	Involving a direct online connection
	OPPRESS	Gendered oppression
	OTHER	Other
	POL	Political
	RELEX	Interviewee's reflection on tech linked SV due to research
	SOCIAL MEDIA	Social media
	THREAT	Involving threats
	USERPORN	Involving user-generated pornography
	WHO	Who is involved/targeted

Impact	The impact that technology linked SV has specifically on clients	
	ACT IMP	Impacts upon future and present behaviour and activity
	ANGER IMP	Feelings of anger
	CUL IMP	Cultural impact
	CULP FEEL IMP	Feelings of culpability
	FAM IMP	Impact on family
	FEAR IMP	Feelings of fear
	IDENT IMP	Impact on identity - online and offline
	ISO IMP	Feelings of isolation
	MH IMP	Mental health impacts
	PERSON IMP	Impact on personal life
	PROF IMP	Impact on professional life
	RELATE IMP	Impact on relationships
	SHAME IMP	Feelings of shame
	STUCK IMP	Feelings of being stuck
	TECH IMP	Impact on technology usage and online behaviour
	TRUST IMP	Impact on ability to trust
	UNCERTAIN IMP	Feelings of uncertainty
Perpetrators	Interviewee's opinions on how technology affects the type and behaviour of perpetrators	
	CPORN	Impact of accessibility and type of cyber pornography
	DIS	Disinhibition effect
	OFF RELATION	Technology linked SV within offline relationship
	PLAT	Technology and the internet as a platform for already a individuals
	PRED	Predatory behaviour
	PREMED	Premeditation
Practitioner	Background about the interviewee/practitioner, how the experience of work with technology linked sexual violence impacts the interviewee on a professional, personal, emotional and online level	
	BACK	Background of interviewee related to work as a practitioner
	INT IMP	Impact of tech linked SV on interviewee's personal life
	INT IMP ON	Impact of tech linked SV on interviewee's online behaviour
	INT RES	Personal response to technology linked SV
	INT TECH	Interviewee's opinions about technology
	INT UN	Interviewee's feelings of uncertainty about tech linked SV
	MOT	Interviewee's professional motivation
Response	Responses to technology linked sexual violence, including reporting, the role of the police, societal response, feminism, legislation and the Criminal Justice System	
	AWARENESS	Awareness of technology linked sexual violence
	CHANGE	Changes in how tech linked SV is responded to and the factors for change
	CYBERFEM	Cyber feminism

	EVIDENCE	Issues of evidence and the use of digital evidence
	HIDDEN	Hidden aspect of tech linked SV within society and the
	INJUST	Interviewee feelings of injustice surrounding tech linked
	LEGISLAT	Legislation and the Criminal Justice process
	POLICE	Police support
	REPORT	Reporting tech linked SV
	RES FEAR	Societal fear factor concerning tech linked SV
	STIGMA	Stigma of tech linked SV within society and the CJS
Service	Interviewee's views on the service provided by their organisations, how the service address technology linked sexual violence, what the service provide client's with and improvements that could be made	
	DIFFICULT	Difficulties involved with addressing tech linked SV with organisation
	EMO SUPPORT	Non-judgemental understanding, emotional support for clients.
	ETHICS	Ethical issues
	FRAME	Helping clients with reframing and unravelling their experiences
	NO GUIDE	Lack of specific guidelines, resources and training
	OTHER	Other
	SAFE	Safety planning
	SERVICE INFO	Practical support and information
	VALID	Validating clients experiences

Appendix F: Training Pack TFSV

Appendix G: Evaluation Summary of TFSV



Evaluation Form Summary

Course Title: Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence and Abuse (Expert Led Seminar)

Delivery date: 29th February 2016

Facilitator(s): Foziha Hamid

Number of Learners: 11

Number of completed evaluations: 11

Aim: To gain an overview of the ways in which emerging technology is used to sexually abuse and exploit women

Question 1: How much did the day's training meet your expectations? Please circle.

Answers: Fully Answered	Mostly	Partly	Not Much	Not At All	Not
62.5% (8)	37.5% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Question 2: Please tell us if you feel your levels of knowledge and awareness has increased as a result of day 1 & 2 of the training in terms of the following:

Learning Objective	Knowledge / Awareness Remained Same	Knowledge / Awareness Increased	Question Unanswered	Comment (if applicable)
Explore definitions and the terminology of technology facilitated violence against women	12.5% (1)	87.5% (10)	0% (0)	Slide towards beginning of day v helpful, I hadn't a clue about technology.
Consider the experiences of women and girls in	12.5% (1)	75% (9)	12.5% (1)	I am still learning about gender based

the context of a gender based approach & from a gender based perspective				topics so I think I am not able to tell about that. General speaking I find very useful training. Real case studies, looking at which state the woman is in to tailor support to her.
Explore the psychological emotional impact of technology facilitated violence and abuse on women and girls	12.5% (1)	87.5% (10)	0% (0)	This was key. I think that all training I have been on discusses this, maybe to go a little into depth about what to look for would make me more aware again rather than assuming that I knew what it meant in relation to the abuse.
Consider approaches to feel better resourced to respond to women and girls experiences of technology facilitated violence and abuse	25% (2)	75% (9)	0% (0)	My new knowledge will help me when working with clients now and in the future. Learnt copyright infringement can be used to take down images. I don't think I'm clear on who I could refer to but know better ways I can support.

Question 3: Please tell us 2 things that you will take from the one day of training that you feel will inform your work?

1. Law of copyright
2. Accessibility of internet makes it difficult to police abuse online
3. Information about copy rights
4. Information about legislation regularity showing formation on law
5. The impact of trauma – psychological effects
6. The wide range of impacts that technology facilitated abuse can have on young people
7. Legal options regarding copyright law
8. Demo research 2013
9. Use the tools provided to create various workshops with young women we work with, developing a prevention strategy/awareness with a psychoeducational frame
10. Definitions of trauma cycle, clearer work impacts on victims and empowering women to take action (not conform)
11. About criminal justice system, two ways of approach copyright infringement
12. Trauma intervention approach
13. The use of the term revenge porn and how that pathologised women
14. Relevant legislation to inform client's their options
15. Increased knowledge of the types of technology facilitated abuse perpetrated against women and girls
16. Copyright infringement – I didn't know about this before today and it will help new cases
17. Breakdown of women's responses – fight/flight/freeze/friend/flop – looking at what these would actual present as was very helpful!

Question 4: Any other comments about this training programme:

- ❖ The training was very good, however I would have liked to have spent more time on legislation as this is an area that I have found confusing.
- ❖ I was pleased to see this training being offered as I have never come across this. More professionals need to be trained on this topic.
- ❖ Thought provoking.
- ❖ Very informative programme. Explored in depth impact of TFV on women's lives and how they have to recognise their experience of fear, blame, paranoia felt is amplified when the abuser is online. Interesting information regarding types confident/cautious groomer. IT has revolutionised our lives in many positive ways but negatives in the types of abuse suffered.
- ❖ Very useful overview of TFSV
- ❖ Encourage to start working towards prevention, advocacy raise awareness of TFSV
- ❖ More case studies and examples would be good so that practitioners are better informed re: clients options and how best to support them.
- ❖ I think getting people to bring their own cases to discuss would be a good add on to the training.

Question 5: Women and Girls Network will be providing future training courses and expert led seminars in London Boroughs; are there specific issues on violence against women and girls that you would like further training on? If so, please provide details:

- More seminars like this.
- Practical activities for prevention workshops with young women

Figure 1. Chart of Participants

Participant	Role	Organisation	Age Range	Ethnicity
Ava	Advice Worker	Voluntary Sector	20s	South Asian
Grace	Psychotherapist	NHS	30s	White British
Leah	Advice Worker	Voluntary Sector	50s	White British
Tamara	Advocate	Voluntary Sector	40s	Black Caribbean
Yasmin	Advocate	Voluntary Sector	20s	White British

Figure 2: Primary Themes and Sub Themes

Primary Theme	Sub-theme
1 Construction of Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context of Frequency and Type of sexual violence disclosed. ❖ The Offline and the Online Self ❖ Digitised and Sexualised
2. Perpetrators in the Cyber-World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Predatory Behaviour ❖ Coercion and Consent
3. Embodied and Disembodied Harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Shame and Guilt of Exposure ❖ Negative emotional & psychological impact ❖ Impact on Survivors Professional Lives ❖ Vicarious Impact on Participants
4. Practice and Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support and Validation ❖ Complexity of the Cyber-world ❖ Seeking Redress ❖ Gaps in knowledge

Figure 3: Pilot Study Primary Themes and Sub-themes

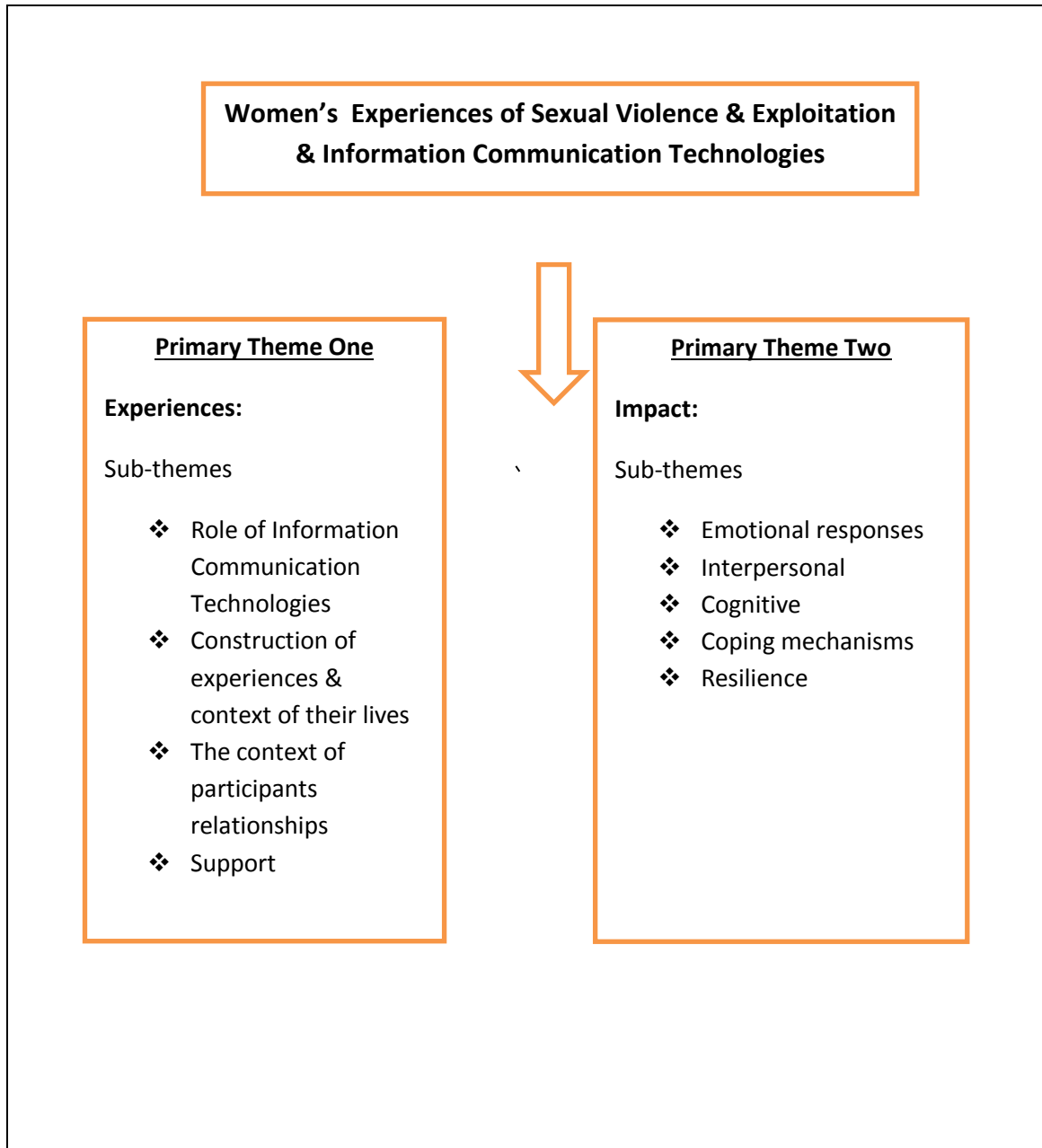


Figure 4: Findings from the Final Study

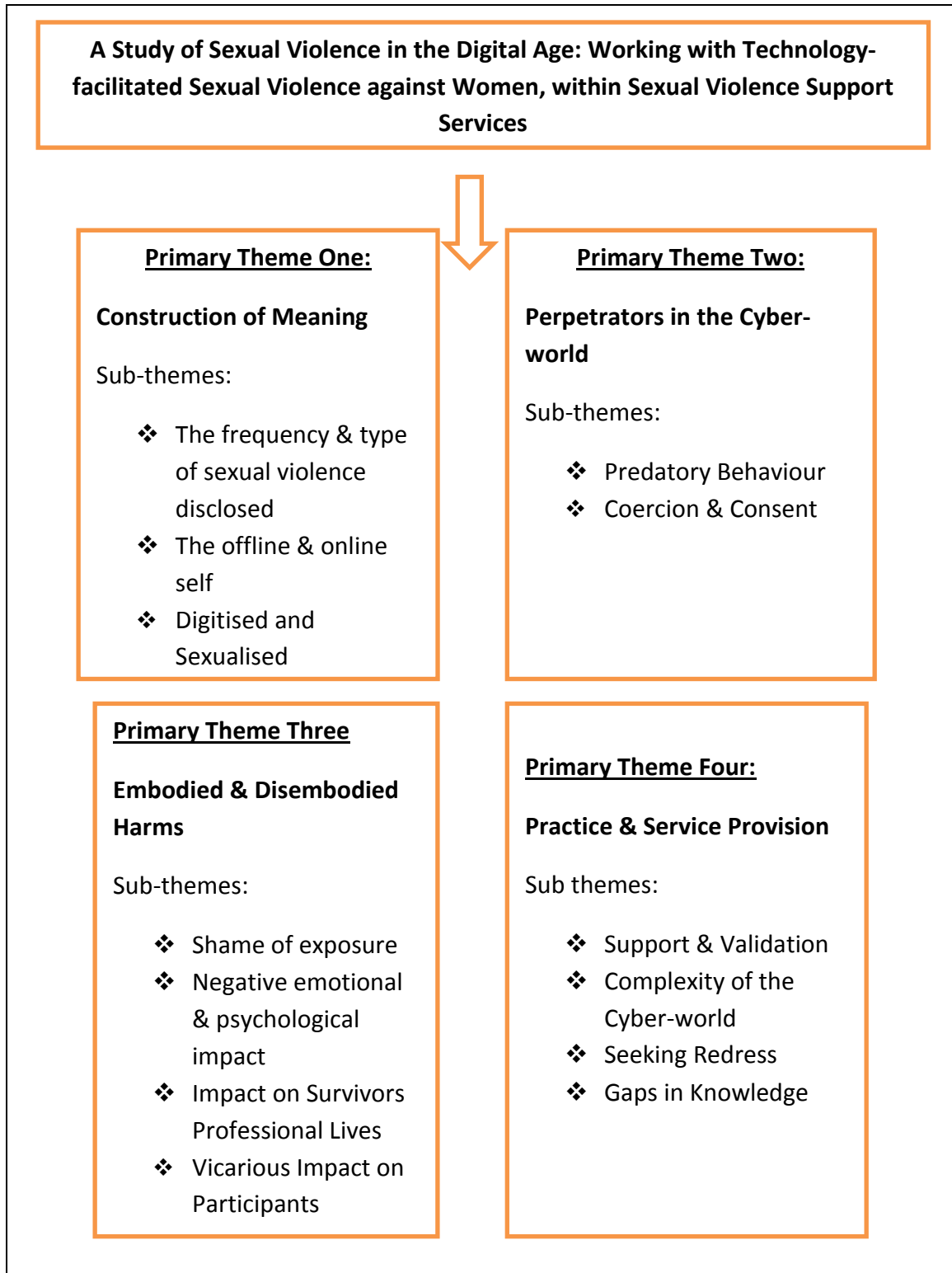


Figure 5: Research Findings and Literature Identification of TFSV

Use of social media sites	Incidents of Sexual Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sexual harassment and cyber-stalking ❖ Online Misogyny ❖ Trolling ❖ Threats of rape and mutilation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Distribution of sexually explicit material ❖ Sent to family and friends ❖ Sent to employers ❖ Uploaded to pornography sites ❖ Shared over social media networks ❖ Indiscriminately circulated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Live streaming of sexual activity without consent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Online prostitution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ So-called rape sites on pornography hubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use of technology in the context of trafficking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Uploading and sharing of explicitly violent sexual material through file transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Unsolicited pornography.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Creating and distributing incidences of sexual assault - going 'viral' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Posting details of women and encouraging others to rape them.

