YOUNG PEOPLE'S USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON ISSUES OF CYBERBULLYING AND SUITABLE INTERVENTIONS

FINAL REPORT

April 2016

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings from a research study carried out across two secondary schools and a youth organisation in Sussex between June 2014 and July 2015. The study, carried out in two stages, responds to concerns raised by colleagues in each organisation about their perceived increase in cyberbullying incidents on prominent social networking sites (sns).

The first stage of the study, carried out between July and September 2014, was a quantitative exploration designed to help create a basic outline of young people's socialising and relationship building practices on eight prominent sns. The second stage, carried out between June and July 2015, used a series of semi-structured focus groups and scenario analyses to explore young people's communications in a range of behaviours and relationships on the eight sns. This stage also explored the most appropriate interventions, which the young people thought would support them when issues arise, which might otherwise be placed under the umbrella term of cyberbullying by teachers and other adults.

The findings show that the use of sns provides young people with the opportunity to simultaneously manage different categories of relationships within the sns available. Issues, which might be viewed as cyberbullying on the sns by adults, primarily support or protect those with whom relationships have been carefully established as part of their self-identities.

Furthermore, central to the young people's behaviours on these sns is a sense of self-governance; that is, where each young person is responsible for a) maintaining their self-narrative; b) ensuring their actions either do not restrict a peer's attaining this goal; and c) ensuring their peers' actions do not restrict others attaining this goal.

The findings challenge current trends towards increased online surveillance and zero tolerance policies in favour of creating safe spaces with trusted adults with whom the young people can resolve their relationship issues face to face. We recommend further research is carried out, which works with young people to develop a more supportive, collaborative range of interventions, which enable young people to manage their own relationships on sns.

Contents

Introduction

The study, led by Dr Simon Edwards (Education) and Dr Victoria Wang (Criminology) from the University of Portsmouth, responded to discussions in January 2014 between the lead youth worker at Electric Storm Youth, PC Caroline Ross (school liaison officer), and Simon Edwards. Concerns were raised regarding the growing number of incidents involving young people on social networking sites; in particular Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Instagram. These incidents were interpreted by adults as cyberbullying. Funding was made available by Sussex Police and Electric Storm Youth for a research study to understand how young people interpreted their behaviours and communications on these social networking sites, particularly when relationships break down. Ultimately, we expect that our findings would lead to the development of a filtering app, which would help creating a safer online socialising environment for young people.

However, when considering a suitable research approach, it was recognised that although there has been significant research into online social networking, this research has tended to focus on the negative and dangerous. Subsequently, many interventions developed from these research studies tend to focus primarily on the concepts of victim and perpetrator, as well as deliberate intent to harm. The concept of cyberbullying is, therefore, necessarily signified and acted upon within the limitations of these assumptions and interpretations. Therefore, interpreting issues young people face on digital social media is problematic, particularly when it is also recognised that school sites are an unnatural context for developing relationships and leads to the formation of social hierarchies (Ortega-Ruiz and Nunez 2012; Davies 2009).

Therefore, a sociological study was needed to explore young people's social practices on social networking sites within and outside the school environment. This study primarily focused on their perspectives on issues they encountered on these sites. Subsequently, drawing upon Edwards' youth work experience, the study took an approach, which primarily took into account young people's perspectives on their socialising practices and explored how they manage and develop a range of relationships on these social networking sites. The study then explored how they manage relationships when these break down and how they might want adults to support them when they encounter difficulties.

Overview

The first stage of this study, carried out between July and September 2014, was a quantitative exploration designed to help create a basic outline of young people's socialising and relationship building practices on social networking sites. The study bridged the gap in current research that was created by the overwhelming focus on the fixed internet and thus, a total lack of attention to mobile technologies (Olafsson, Livingstone and Haddon, 2014). Head teachers and youth leaders, who were involved in discussions at the beginning of this project, identified eight popular social networking sites used by young people. These were (i) Facebook, (ii) Texting, (iii) Instagram, (iv) WhatsApp, (v) Snapchat, (vi) Email, (vii) Twitter, and (viii) Google Hangouts. In Wang et al. (2011), these social networking sites were argued to belong to a category of phatic technology – a concept originating in the social linguistics notion of 'phatic communion' (Malinowski, 1923). The primary purpose of a phatic technology was argued to be to establish, develop and maintain human relationships. Phatic technology, therefore, is a subset of communications technology, where 'the essence of communication is relationship building not information exchanging' (Wang, Tucker, and Rihll 2011, p. 45).

The full findings of this stage of research have been published and are available for view on the following link: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2016.1154933 or via email simon.edwards@port.ac.uk

Aims, methods and research questions

The aim of this stage was to explore some functional dimensions of young people's social practices within and outside of the school environment using these eight popular social networking sites. Quantitative empirical data was gathered by way of an online survey in which 543 questionnaires were completed. The survey was guided by the overarching research question:

> *How are young people's social behaviours, interactions and relationships managed across a range of social networking sites?*

The subsidiary questions informing the questionnaires were:

1. *What is the frequency of use of the eight of social networking sites by our respondents?*
2. *To what extent does our data indicate gender differences in usage of social networking site?*
3. *To what extent can specific association between social networking sites and particular relationship types be identified?*
4. *Can correlations between behaviour types and relationship categories be identified?*

A set of six behaviour categories were used to help understand the behaviours carried out by the young people on these social networking sites. The behaviour categories were identified in Edwards' doctoral study (2013) (see: appendix 1), which explored 300 young people's social practices in a youth centre on a secondary school site.

Participant profiles

Age of participants

11	4.08%			
12	13.85%	Female	52.77%	
13	38.19%	Male	47.23%	
14	29.74%			
15	12.54%			
16	1.60%			

Findings

Three key findings emerged from the analysis of empirical data in this stage of research:

1) The primary use of nearly all social networking sites is to manage and re-construct positive relationship building behaviours within already existing relationships. This coincides with claims that young people are managing existing relationships with a close circle of friends and re-establishing these offline relationships online. This results in a re- construction of their offline relationship management strategies across a range of social networking sites (e.g., Livingstone, Mascheroni and Murru, 2011).

2) Learning how to manage relationships across a range of social networking sites also provides opportunities for young people to gain a better understanding of their self-identities. In the physical world, young people may congregate on one site – behaviours, such as *Building*, *Maintaining* and *Welcoming* could all be managed within the spatial and observable boundaries of that given space/time framework. However, online time/space frameworks are criss-crossed simultaneously. There is often (i) a time delay in responses, and (ii) opportunity to see another person's reactions before making a further statement. Therefore, using various social networking sites to manage different behaviours requires an ability to multi-task in order to simultaneously manage the whole relationship management strategy across these sites.

3) Young people are strategically managing risks and potential harms on various social networking sites. Risks and harms on these sites are mostly associated with exposure to unknown adults and its consequent victimisation (Byron 2008; Walrave and Hiermann, 2011; Livingstone, Mascheroni and Murru 2011). These social networking sites are used less frequently in high risk behaviours, such as *Exploring* new relationships and *Protecting* people. Only 16% of our participants would explore relationships with new people.

Conclusions – stage one

We found that our participants' relationship building strategies on the range of social networking sites reflect similar behavioural categories used offline. The use of social networking sites, it seems, provides young people with an opportunity to simultaneously manage different categories of relationship within a range of options available.

The findings also challenge the widely held belief that young people expose themselves to risks on social networking sites because they indiscriminately befriend strangers. Our data shows no evidence of 'unjustified' intent to harm others. Rather intent is to primarily support or protect those with whom relationships have been carefully established as part of their self-identities.

Technologies and social networking sites are here to stay, and any attempt at managing such a highly complex relationship system must, therefore, be encouraged and protected in order to provide young people with a challenging ground to practice relationship management strategies.

II.   **Stage two**

Overview

The first stage of the study mapped young people's use of some social networking sites. The themes that emerged helped direct the second stage of the study, which explored how young people maintain and construct their self-narratives on these social networking sites. Rather than exploring notions of bullying, victimisation and perpetration, following the findings from the first stage of the study, it was proposed that activities, commonly interpreted as cyberbullying by adults, are in fact carried out by young people in order to protect and maintain their carefully constructed self-narratives on these sites.

Aims, methods and research questions

Therefore, rather than accepting an assumption that the Internet and its associated technologies create criminogenic environments, the second stage of the study addressed the question:

> *How can social networking sites be used to establish, build and maintain better social relationships?*

A qualitative study was carried out between June and July 2015 via a series of semi-structured focus groups and scenario analyses to explore young people's communications in a range of behaviours and relationships on the eight social networking sites identified in the 1st stage of this study. This stage also explored the most appropriate interventions, which our participants thought might support them when issues arise, which might otherwise be placed under the umbrella term of cyberbullying by teachers and other adults. The following subsidiary questions informed the focus group questions and scenarios:

1. *How is language used to manage different behavioural and relationship categories and to inform self-identity?*
2. *How are relationships managed when you encounter issues online?*
3. *How can schools and communities support young peoples' relationship building practices in this range of social networking sites?*

Participant profiles

Number of focus groups carried out in each organisation

Electric Storm Youth 2

Priory school 4   Total number of focus groups 9

Chailey school 3

Key stage 3 (years 8-9)

Male 8

Female 19

Key stage 4 (years 10-11)   Total number of participants 42

Male 8

Female 7

Summary of findings

The findings and key themes emerging from this stage of the study are summarised below. Findings are presented in categories under each of the key subsidiary questions. Each of the key questions were explored using further sub-questions.

1. How is language used to manage different behaviours and relationships and develop self-identity?

The young people were asked why they thought it was important for them to maintain friendships and communicate with people online and what they talked about.

The young people said they use these social networking sites in order to reduce time/space distance and primarily *maintain* and *build* relationships established offline. Online socialising does not substantially replace offline socialising, but rather extends opportunities to keep the relationship going when not in face to face contact.

Furthermore, when talking with friends and family on social networking sites, the young people said they generally talk about low importance issues such as school, general chat, joking with friends, small talk, meeting up, opinions, recent events, casual things, random things like films, and things you can summarise on four words.

Some young people said they meet new people online, but it is not to socialise and these people are carefully selected. New people are mainly met on gaming sites and forums to discuss politics, forum issues and gaming tactics. However, the young people said they are very careful about who they meet online, and if someone sends a friend request who they don't know, they will check their Facebook page before accepting the request. They also said that they know how to stay safe and that teachers' and parents' fears are unnecessary.

The young people were then asked about the language they use online to build and maintain relationships with family and friends.

Some young people said they used full sentences with family members and some young people said they used abbreviations. Other young people said they used short sentences without abbreviations. Generally, abbreviations were not a preferred option with family members because this was seen as too informal and they thought their family members, particularly adults, might see this as rude. Abbreviations were only used with family members when the member used abbreviations or when time was short and a quick message was needed.

This stood in contrast to the language the young people said they used when communicating on social networking sites with close, established friends. Here, the language used was more *tacit* and *condensed* but personalised, using a range of mutually agreed abbreviations and puns. Jokes were also frequently used to maintain relationships online. The young people also said they use abbreviations according to their availability on each social networking site within these relationships. These also varied according to the time available to communicate.

The young people were then asked when they would use abbreviations with someone who was not a close friend.

Most of the young people said they also used longer, fuller sentences with people they did not know very well or with people they didn't know at all. When using longer sentences in these relationships they said their language was *explicit* and *elaborated* and jokes were not normally used in order to convey a message clearly.

However, some young people said they would use abbreviations with someone they didn't know well if they didn't like them but wanted to make them go away. Language in this situation would be abbreviated but not personalised (i.e. no emoticons or jokes). Language is *explicit* but *condensed*.

There was little evidence of young people using personalised language to talk with people who were not close friends. *Explicit* language maintained relational distance and was key to *protecting* the self-narrative.

The young people were then asked how they know when someone has become a close friend rather than just someone they know. They were asked to explain how their language changed as they became closer friends.

The young people said they would start using more *tacit*, *condensed* expressions such as emojis and kisses (mainly females) and joke a lot more or be rude to one another (private jokes). They said they would also start texting and talking online more frequently about more intimate issues and topics as well as meeting up in person more. They also said they knew when someone was becoming a close friend when that person could be trusted with confidential information and it wouldn't be shared with others. The young people also said they would also start remembering things like birthdays and important life events related to the other person.

2. a) Using scenario analysis, the following series of questions explored how the young people managed relationships online and offline if they fell out or disagreed with someone in a range of relationships.

The young people were asked how they communicate to close friends / family online when they have fallen out and what social networking sites they use to communicate in this situation.

There was little difference between how males and females in all age ranges responded to this scenario. The young people generally said they would not use social networking sites to resolve an issue with family members but they would use these sites to resolve issues with close friends. The KS3 and KS4 young people said they would send short sentences but _without_ emoticons to the person to try and ask them to meet offline and talk through the issue. Emoticons are largely not used because the person is normally angry and the closeness, signified by emoticons / tacit abbreviations, has been momentarily lost. It was evident that the young people used carefully selected words to ensure the relationship didn't deteriorate further. The following extract is from a discussion with a group of KS3 young people:

> *Girl 5 "let's not make this any worse. I feel like we are misinterpreting each other's messages, why don't we chat about this another time if you feel you want to"*
>
> *Boy 1 Why have you been mean, to me why do I deserve this*
>
> *Boy 2 It would depend on the situation but either it's not my fault/it wasn't me or an apology along the lines of im sorry…happened but …*
>
> *Boy 3 What's up. Wanna play a game or something.*

However, the KS4 young people said that although they would use short sentences, they would also use longer paragraphs if they were unable to meet up to discuss the issue.

If messages aren't responded to some young people said they would keep sending Snapchat messages until a response was given in order to re-establish the relationship:

> *She says "Never talk to me again." I don't, then she starts something else and I'm like you told me to leave you alone and then she says "talk to me." And I'm like "You told me not to." And then I just leave it for ages and then we talk and then she comes up to me and hugs me.*

There was a difference in responses between KS4 young people and KS3 young people. The older young people were more confident to talk face to face with the person they had fallen out with. They also said meeting face to face reduces the risk of misinterpretation of what is said because they can see each other's non-verbal expressions. Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, text messaging and WhatsApp were the most commonly used social networking sites when trying to re-build relationships. The most frequently used social networking site for KS4 for males and females was Snapchat and Facebook. Instagram and texting were also used by KS3 young people. KS3 young people said that they also used a wider range of social networking sites to try to address issues.

The young people were then asked how they communicate or talk online to someone who is not so close when they fall out.

Almost unanimously, the young people in KS3 and in KS4 said they would either meet face to face to deal with issues or ignore the person if the person was not a close friend.

However, they said they preferred to block or ignore them online. Furthermore, many of the KS3 young people said that when communicating with this person online they would become defensive and aggressive:

> *Girl 5 I'd choose not to, I would block any way of them accessing me to talk to nor get more personal information*

> *Boy 1 It would depend what we were talking about. "I'm right, you are wrong." "you are a being ridiculous."*

> *Boy 2 Probably just a lot of swearing at them*

KS3 females were more willing to apologise and be less aggressive than the males online when falling out with someone they didn't know well online. It appears the females would take a more tactical rather than confrontational approach. They also said they would be less forgiving online with someone they didn't know well but the language used online in this situation would be similar to that used with close friends and family who they have fallen out with – it becomes explicit and more 12ormalized or elaborated. However, the KS4 males and females said they would use formal language to show the person they were serious but would also attempt to build the relationship slowly and carefully offline by going up to the person face to face and talking through the issues. The males also said they sometimes use harsh jokes as a means of breaking the ice in order to build the relationship online.

2. b) Using scenario analysis, the following series of questions explored how young people intervened online and offline with *other* people's relationship issues.

The young people were asked how they would respond to a person who has sent a hurtful message to a close friend or family member and which social networking sites they would use to do this.

The young people said they would primarily meet the person face to face and ask them why they sent the message. Some young people said they would also check the content and their understanding of the message with their friend or family member first to ensure they understood the issues before confronting the perpetrator. Many of the young people said they understood that there would always be two sides to the story.

However, the KS3 young people mainly said they would be less keen to get involved if they didn't know the person who had upset their friend or family member. The KS4 young people, although unwilling to talk to a person they didn't know, said they would meet them face to face in the same way they would a person they did know. This was only done if they felt the person's actions were morally unjustified. All the young people said they preferred to meet the person face to face to talk to them calmly about the issue but once they had attempted to resolve the issue amicably and this was no longer an option they would start sending messages on social networking sites to the person because this person's actions were then seen as bullying and unacceptable. Online communication would become aggressive and confrontational where KS3 boys in particular said they would lash out and swear online at the person. KS4 males and females' interventions were far more measured, when the only option to deal with an issue was online:

Boy 2 The same as face to face – I'd think out the message before sending it though, just to make sure that I'm not being unfair.

Girl 1 How dare you talk to… the way you did, what did they ever do to you. You can ***** off if you think I am going to talk to you ever again.

For KS3 and KS4 males and females, the primary social networking sites used to intervene, when meeting face to face is not an option, are Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and texting, as these offer instant messaging options.

The young people were then asked how they would communicate or say things differently to a person who had sent a hurtful message to someone who was not so close.

Here the KS3 young people were generally less likely to get involved by _protecting_ and _supporting_ the young person who was receiving hurtful messages or who was having rumours spread about them. They said they would try to offer the person advice or would stand up for them as they would a family member.

The KS4 young people said they would get involved but would use formal language online to carefully negotiate on behalf of the person being upset. This was because a) they were unsure of the risks associated with being aggressive to the person and b) they felt it was not their place to interfere with other people's lives.

3. The final series of questions explored the following key question - How can schools and communities support young peoples' relationship building practices in this range of social networking sites?

The young people were asked how they thought the school interprets their actions when they fall out with friends or people they know then send messages online trying to sort out the problem. They were also asked what they thought of the school's current responses to these issues.

Most of the young people in KS3 and KS4, whether male or female, said that adults in the school often see their interventions in the above scenarios as either bullying or cyberbullying. The young people in KS3 said the adults often misinterpret what has happened:

Girl 4 I think the school doesn't think it will get sorted out that way, but a lot of the time it does. I don't think they really understand how people communicate on social media and they don't just go around saying horrible things to people on social media.

The KS4 young people mostly saw school interventions as overreacting and making the situation worse when they got involved:

Girl 1 I think schools make things more serious than they are, definitely because they say they are just looking out for you and they probably are but it could probably be just a really petty thing that someone is making into a huge thing that they don't actually need to get involved with.

Boy 1 the school in all fairness make it worse

The young people explained they felt school involvement made the situation worse because the responsibility for intervention was no longer located within their relationship building strategies. This is seen as unhelpful by their peers:

> *Boy 1 They normally kind of make it like you can't repair it afterwards because once you get an argument and it goes to like the school level where you have to be talked to by a teacher, normally you can't fix but once it's just on-line then it's off-line then you fix yourselves, normally it's fine.*

The young people were then asked how they thought adults can support young people with issues they encounter online.

The overwhelming response to this question was that the young people had no idea how the teachers ought to respond to issues they encounter online. The young people had no positive intervention model to base their response on and kept drawing negatively on current punitive, zero tolerance policies and approaches, which they claimed separated and interviewed young people about issues in isolation from each other:

> *Girl 1 In my experience they just take me into a room, they've had a chat with me and they say OK we will get something done and then they never actually do anything and it's like it's all talk and no action… I don't know what happens on the other side, all I know is like they come and talk to me, I don't know what they do regarding the other person.*

The question was then re-phrased and focused and the young people were asked how they thought adults might help young people build positive relationships online.

The young people's responses were more positive and focused on supporting self-governance rather than adult intervention based on assumptions of unjustified actions motivated by a desire to de-construct rather than construct relationships:

> *Girl 1 They should listen to both sides of the story entirely.*

> *Girl 2 And they should get other people backing up apart from their opinion because their opinion could be wrong.*

> *Boy 2 Maybe give them space. Maybe give them time to sort it out and stuff and then maybe like adults could suggest what to do, instead of taking students' issues into their own hands, let the student do it and just ask "is this going OK, have you sorted it out yet?" And ask "do you want us to get involved?"*

Moreover, the KS4 young people said they only wanted adults to support them when the issue becomes too serious for the young people to deal with:

> *Girl 1 I think it's kind of don't really get involved but kind of just be there if they need someone to turn to and talk to, they are there but don't try and get involved and like stop it because if they try and stop it, it's not going to work.*

> *Girl 2 But then it should be your choice if you want to involve them.*

Stage two analysis of key themes

Three key themes emerge, which provides some understanding of how young people perceive their behaviours and language used within their relationship building strategies on the range of social networking sites. These themes correspond with findings from stage one and represent strategically managed behaviours within a network of carefully managed relationships. Language it seems signifies intent and regulates transitions between these behaviours in order to maintain a collaboratively produced and reflexive self-narrative.

Theme 1

As relationships develop (whether offline or online) the young people become significant within each other's narratives; that is, they become important to the young person and their carefully constructed social frameworks or, as Giddens (1991) suggests - their daily routines within which they construct their identity. The level of relationship managed between each person is signified by a) the language used (tacit, personalised and abbreviated / condensed); b) level of personal disclosure; and c) frequency of communications managed online and offline. Social networking sites then become an essential means of maintaining the continuity of the relationship by weaving it into each person's daily lives. Offline relationships are re-constructed and extended online in order to maintain continuity of the relationship over time and space.

Theme 2

Communications on social networking sites are carefully managed within a range of key behaviours. Language signifies each behaviour, which in turn orientates each young person within their narrative self-projects and the relationship being managed. Conversations and behaviours acted out online constitute what Deleuze (cited in Colebrook 2002) calls scenes within the narrative story. Scenes are regulated by the language used, which signifies intent and subsequent transitions between behaviours.

The young people recognise the limitations of online communications, and meeting face to face is a preferred option but where not possible interventions are carefully negotiated and thought through.

Behavioural responses to issues encountered online are shaped by four criteria:

1) The importance and status of the relationship in which issues occur in relation to the self-narrative i.e. protecting a person who is close or a family member, supporting someone who is not close or protecting and re-establishing the self-narrative;

2) Unjustified moral action, which requires some form of intervention (where justification is based on an individual's freedom to build relationships and maintain their narrative without harming others – essentially Mill's harm principle is invoked);

3) The impact of prior attempts to resolve the issue; and

4) The age and level of social competence of the young person dealing with the issue.

Theme 3

Central to the young people's interventions and practices motivated by the above criteria is a sense of self-governance; that is, where each young person is responsible for a) maintaining their self-narrative; b) ensuring their actions either do not restrict a peer's attaining this goal; and c) ensuring their peer's actions do not restrict other peer's attaining this goal. Self-responsibility and determinism has been replaced by collective notions of responsibility self-governance and determinism but based on underlying liberal democratic principles of positive freedom.

Conclusions

The findings challenge current trends in policy and educational practice when dealing with issues falling under the umbrella term cyberbullying, which largely reject face to face interventions based on pastoral care and restorative relational approaches within schools in favour of increased censorship, surveillance and punishment of young people's online practices. Approaches which, according to the findings risk damaging the relationships these responses attempt to support.

The findings also show that young people's communications on a range of social networking sites are not unjustified with intent to harm but rather managed within a complex range of behaviours and relationships, which need careful support. Current responses, the young people claim, place the managing of these relationships at further risk by formalising the relationship building processes being employed.

Rather than punitive and individualising approaches to issues young people encounter online a more supportive a collaborative range of interventions might be employed, which enable the young people to manage their own relationships. Any intervention by adults needs to be guided by the following:

- The age and social skills of the young people sending the message
- The status of relationship in which issues occur (this can be explored by analysing the language used)
- The behaviour, which is being signified by the language (i.e. building, re-establishing/maintaining, protecting, supporting relationships)
- Prior actions, which have attempted to resolve the issue offline (this helps locate the behaviour as a scene within the overall narrative story)
- The moral justification for actions of the other person which has led to aggressive or defensive communications (i.e. who is being protected or supported?)

Recommendations

We recommend a further study with the young people, which explores a more relational and collaborative approach to resolving issues that they encounter online. Drawing on the findings from this study we propose a final stage might work with young people in each organisation to develop interventions, which ask:

How can adults support young people's self-governance and development of suitable skills to negotiate and construct viable selves?

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Acknowledgements

Appendix 1. Behaviour categories (Edwards 2013).

Building	Two or more students pulling together to overcome a situation or complete a task. Tasks as vehicles for achieving goals where immediate gestures indicated calm, focused attention with little mutual eye contact. Joking a significant part of this behaviour between peers; short sentences but mainly full sentences used.
Maintaining	Free expression of peers within a group of friends where body language is presented as open and relaxed working towards a common goal. Immediate gestures; open, relaxed postures with eye contact. Medium volume chatter focusing on social activities. Full sentences primarily.
Protecting	Assertive claiming of social space by a person or persons towards peers such that they affirm themselves and their identity. Medium volume short statements with arm waving and exaggerated gestures used to make peers aware of danger. Walking away from threat or turning towards each other.
Supporting	Extending support to a peer or peers to help them be themselves. An action depicting the words 'I accept you.' Calm and relaxed, consistent eye contact or maintaining spatial position in relation to peers. Words of encouragement to peers using full sentences.
Exploring	Conscious decision to wait (in social space) until you feel safe and ready to move into another vacant social space or mingle with another crowd of peers. High volume and excitable statements but slow and deliberate actions.
Welcoming	Negotiated invite to peers to join a group or individual creating a sense of wellbeing ('thumbs up') Huddling together or close contact within personal space. High volume statements and jokes towards one another with some full sentences.