



Supporting children in 'accommodating' parental separation and divorce

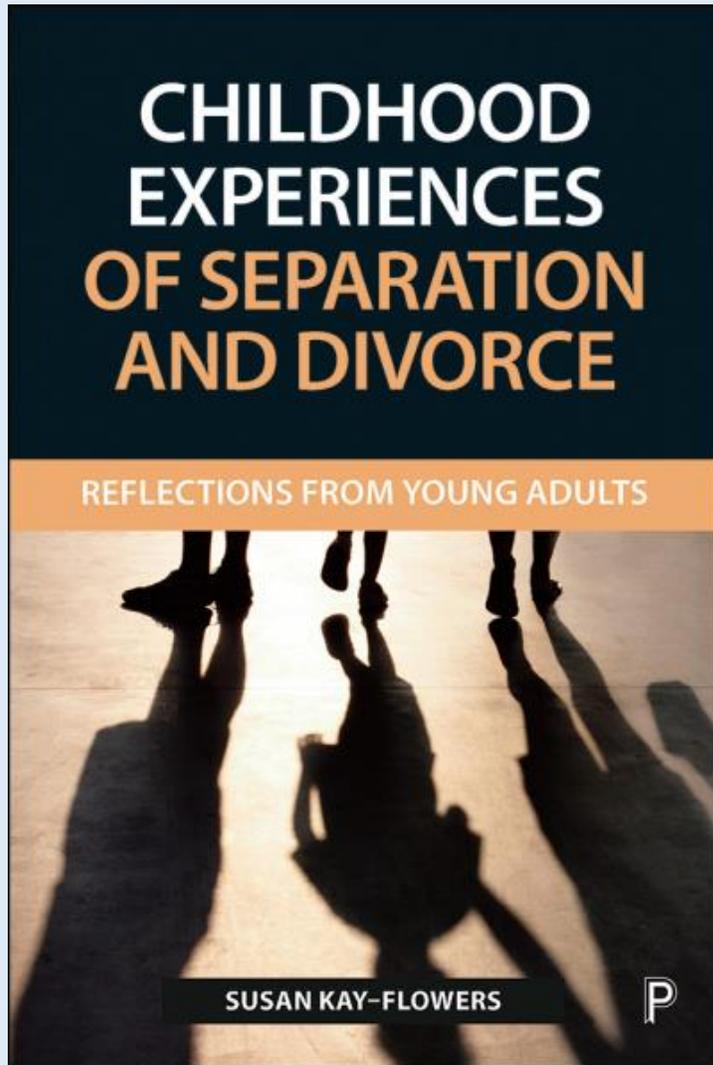
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- Registered Social Worker
- Academic since 2002
- Research interest children's rights and participation
- Current role: Senior Lecturer





Also might be interested in:

The Conversation:

Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) Here's what young people say helped them get through their parents' divorce, *The Conversation*, 04.10.19.

Blog:

Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) Understanding children's 'accommodation' of parental separation and divorce, *Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR)*, 07.10.19.

An estimated 1 in 3 children in the
UK will experience their parents'
separation or divorce before the age
of 16

(Layard and Dunn, 2009; Fortin et al, 2012)

Why is this an issue?

DfE identifies:

- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence
- Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care of adopted)

as risk factors associated with mental health outcomes

Recognises **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** that may have an impact on children include
‘Loss or separation – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce.....family conflict or breakdown that results in the child having to live elsewhere, being taken into care or adopted, deployment of parents in armed force families’ (p.18)

From: DfE (2018) Mental health and behaviour in schools

Issues for children

- Often feel isolated, tend to avoid crowded places, prefer sitting alone
- May experience: low mood, depression, mood swings or display an aggressive attitude
- Feel insecure, unsupported by mother or father with issues they face

In school

- May lack motivation, engage less in class, become withdrawn
- Impact on academic performance
- Their mood/behaviour may impact on relationships with staff and children

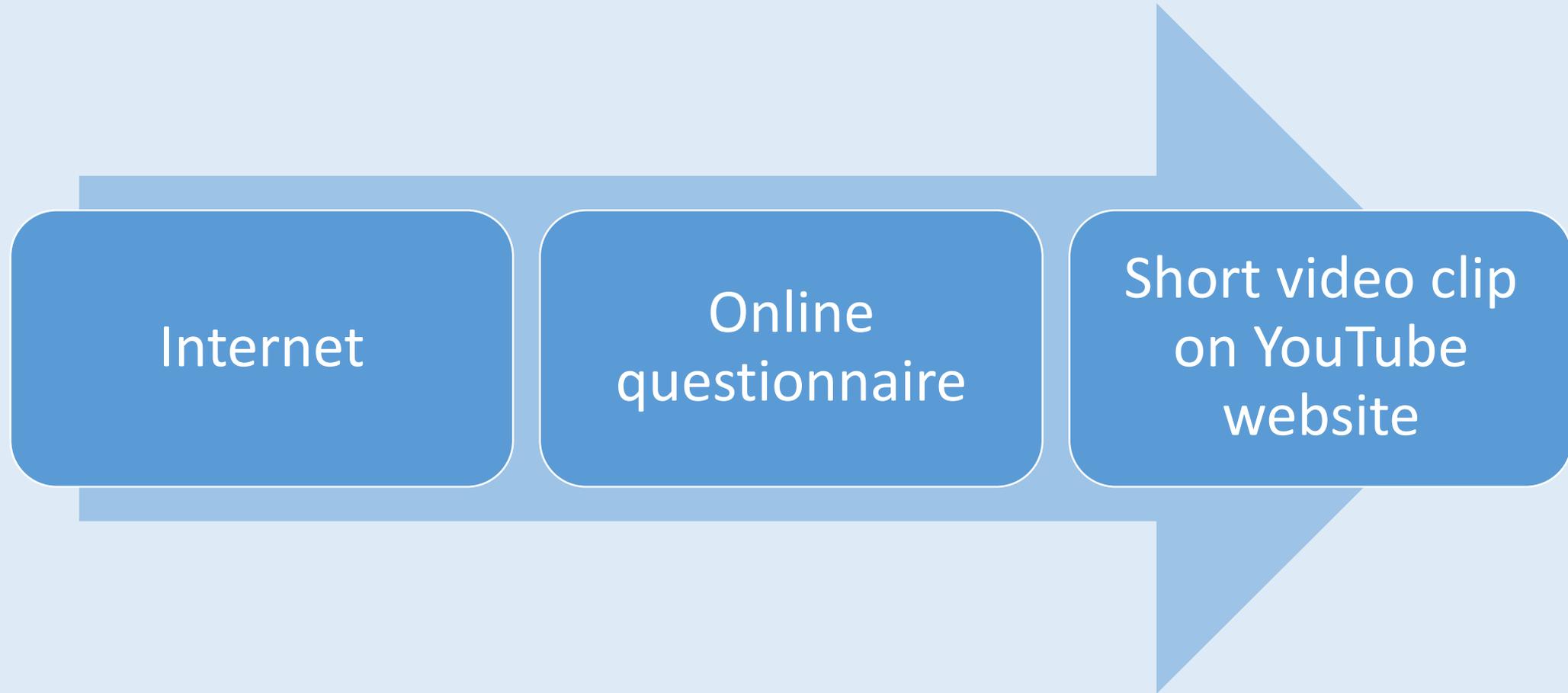
My research study

Focus: giving 'voice' to young adults' everyday childhood experiences of parental separation and divorce

Research Design: determined through focus group discussions *with* young people

Sample: young adults aged 18-30 who had experienced parental separation in childhood

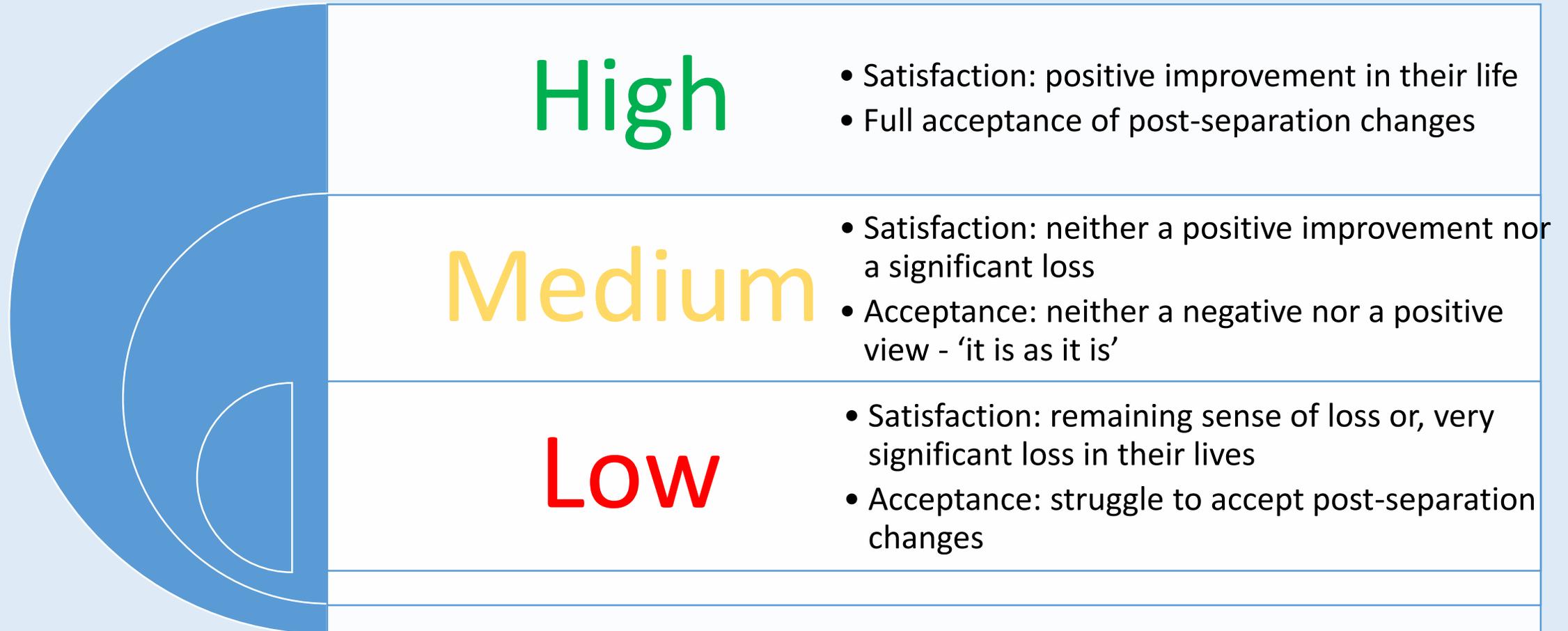
Research design: focus group decisions



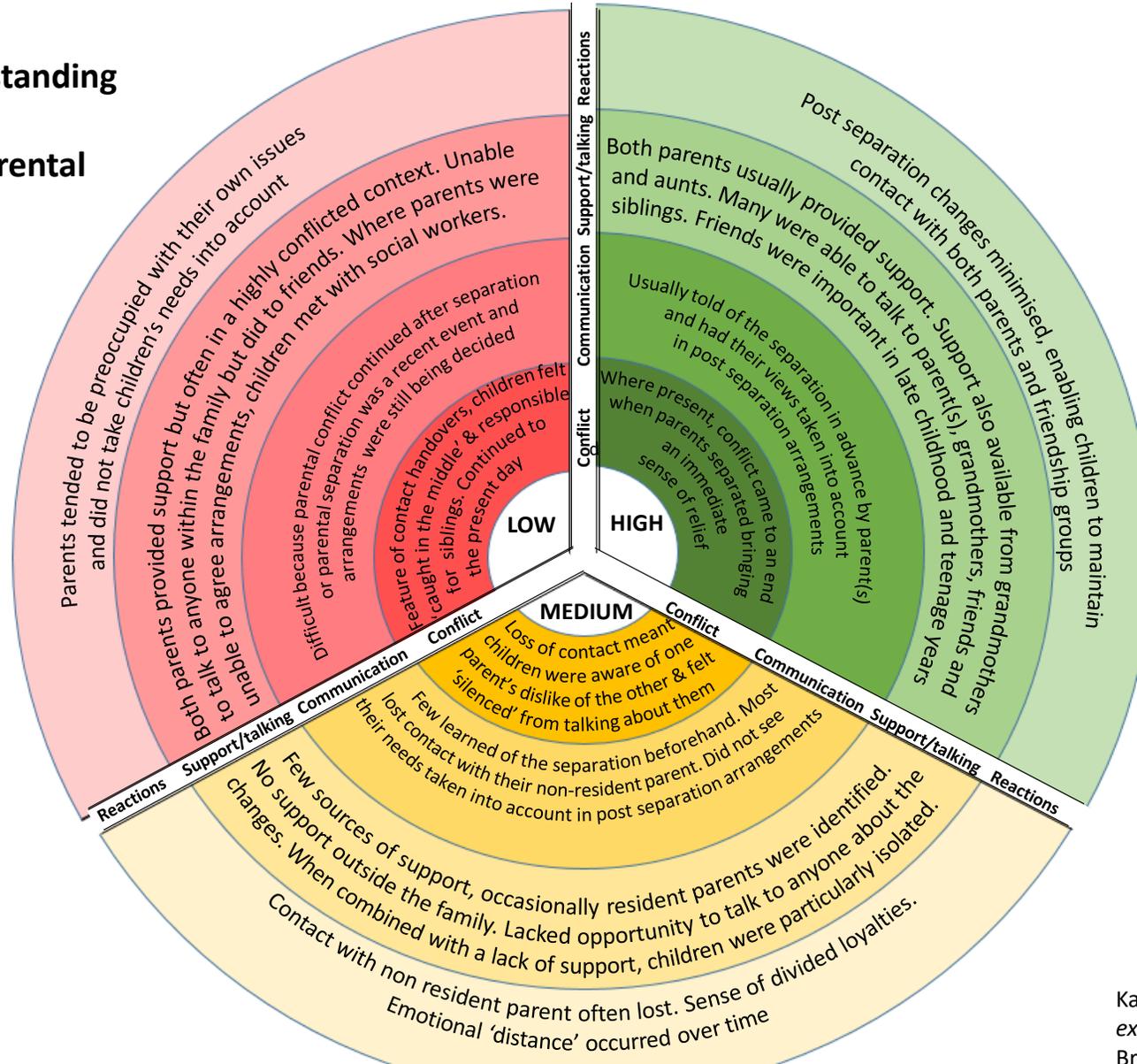
Accommodation

Attachment Research Community (ARC) Annual Conference,
Birmingham Conference and Events Centre, 21.11.19

Levels of accommodation



Framework for understanding children's accommodation of parental separation



Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) *Childhood experiences of separation and divorce*, Bristol: Policy Press (forthcoming)

Use in schools

Early indication of need
for additional support

Home-school
partnerships

Special Educational
Needs Co-ordinators
(SENCOs), Pastoral staff
and multi-agency
interventions

Therapeutic use with
child/ren

Forthcoming
Relationships education
curriculum

How might this be used in schools?

Coping with Separation and Divorce

A resource pack for use with young people

The pack will help you to support young people dealing with these issues and your support for them will be invaluable at this time in their lives.

It gives the young person the:

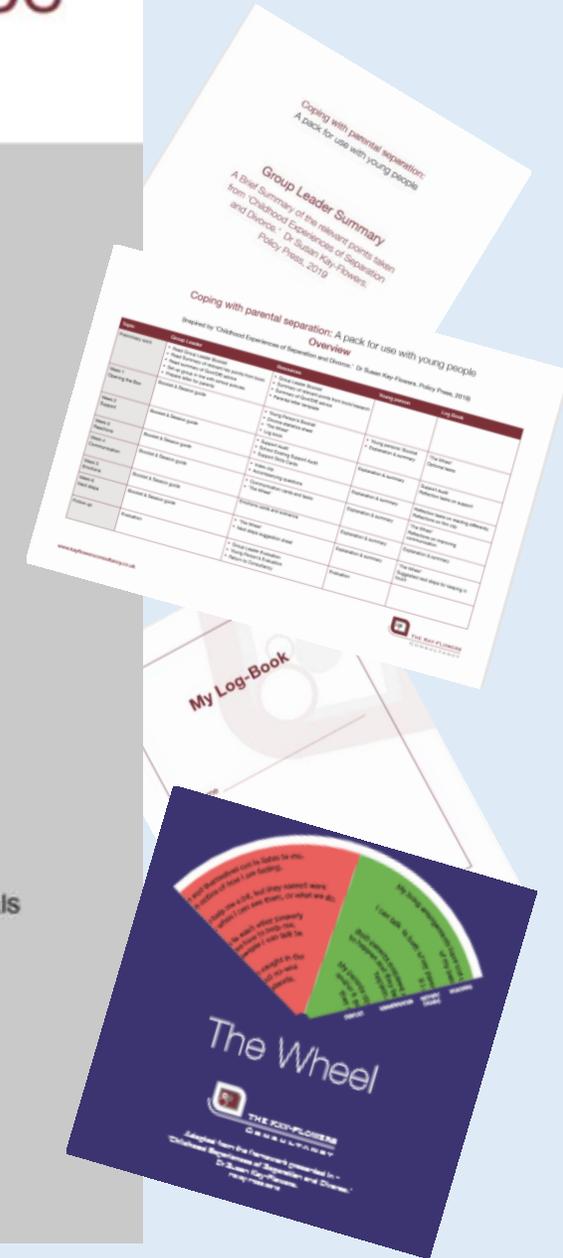
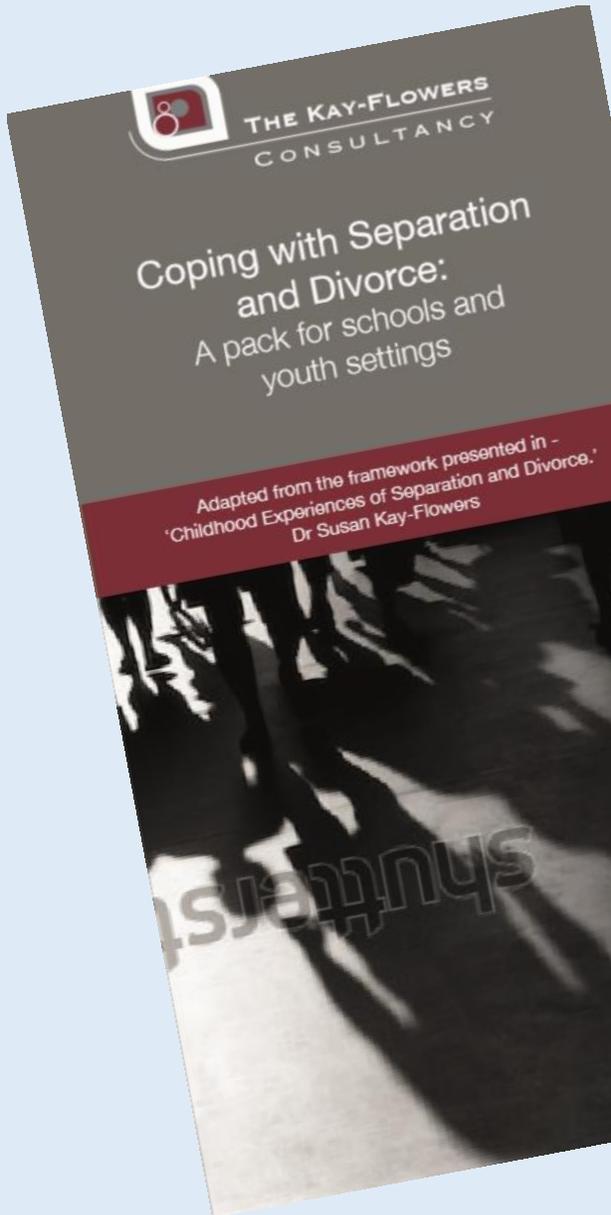
- Opportunity to reflect and explore issues which are causing them concern
- Opportunity to develop skills and techniques to support them in their situation
- Opportunity to develop confidence to deal with their changing circumstances
- Opportunity to meet with other young people in a safe, supportive and semi-structured setting

For the teacher/group leader, this pack:

- Can be picked up and used immediately
- Can be followed minute by minute with minimal preparation but significant impact
- Is easily afforded
- Is tailored to the needs of the group
- Provides a complete guide- everything you need to set up and run the group

The pack includes:

- A rationale
- A copy of the book
- Step by step instructions
- Draft letter to parents
- DfE links
- Audits of support
- Young person's log-book
- Evaluation and impact materials
- Optional training
- Online support
- And much more...



Any questions?

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References

- Department for Education (DfE) (2018) *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2> (Accessed 09.05.19)
- Fortin, J., Hunt, J. & Scanlan, L. (2012) *'Taking a longer view of contact: The perspectives of young adults who experienced parental separation in their youth'*, Sussex: Sussex Law School, University of Sussex.
- Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) *Childhood Experiences of Separation and Divorce: Reflections from Young Adults*, Bristol: Policy Press
- Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) Here's what young people say helped them get through their parents' divorce, *The Conversation*, 04.10.19. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/heres-what-young-people-say-helped-them-get-through-their-parents-divorce-121907>
- Kay-Flowers, S. (2019) Understanding children's 'accommodation' of parental separation and divorce, *Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR)*, 07.10.19. Available at: <http://crfrblog.blogspot.com/2019/10/understanding-childrens-accommodation.html>
- Layard, R. & Dunn, J. (2009) *'A Good Childhood'*, London: Penguin