



Exploring the impact of Mentoring Relationships in Adolescent Empathy: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Secondary Data Analysis



Big Brothers Big Sisters of
Ireland Evaluation Study
(Dolan et al., 2010)

- Randomised control trial (n=64)
- 9 qualitative case studies

Research Overview

Why empathy and mentoring



Enhance helping, cooperation and generous behaviour (Rumble et al., 2010)



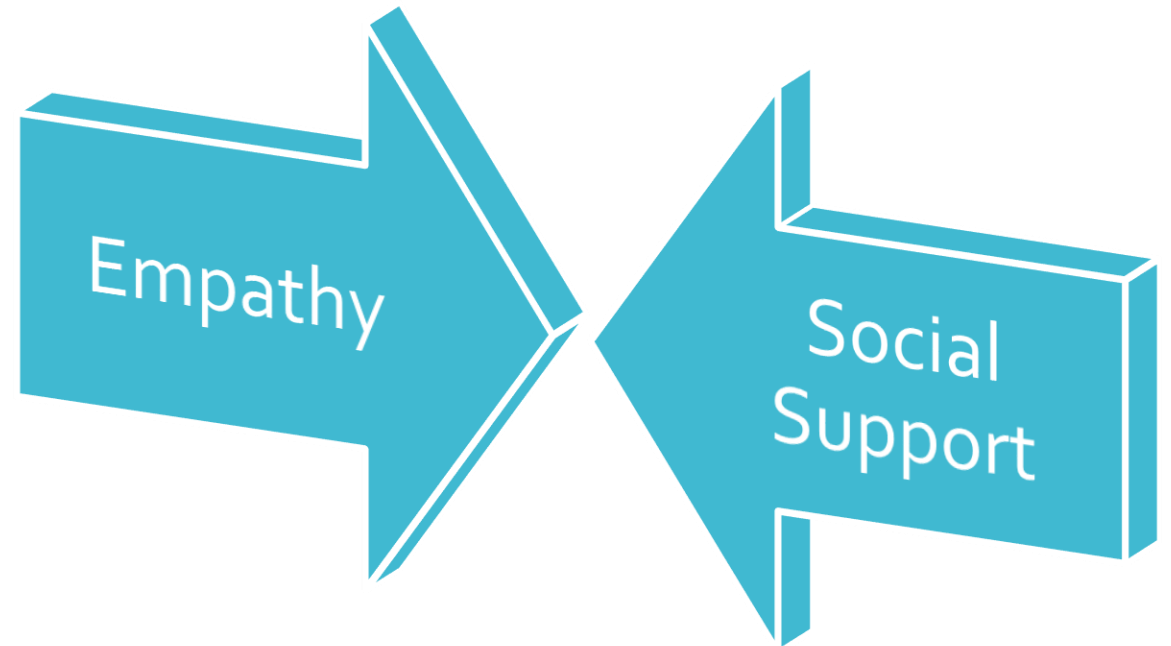
Higher levels of empathy = higher levels of interpersonal competence, less aggressiveness, friendships (Block-Lerner et al., 2007 & Laible et al. 2004)



Empathy is essential for mentoring relationships to promote positive developmental outcomes for yp (Rhodes et al. 2006 & Spencer, 2006)



- **Empathy:**
- Understanding others' thoughts, feelings, desires, beliefs, situation, perspective or experiences (Pamukcu and Meydan, 2010)
- **Social Support:**
- Acts that demonstrate responsiveness to others' needs (Cutrona, 1996)



Objectives

Impact	Impact of mentoring relationships on perceived social support
Explore	Explore the role of empathy in the experiences of youth mentoring relationships
Disseminate	Disseminate findings -video with young people in mentoring programme



Quantitative

Selected subsample

Social Support: parents, siblings,
friends, other adults

Mentoring relationships

Longitudinal (Time 2 to 4)

Standardised measures

Fixed-effect model

Qualitative

Content analysis
(Elo and Kyngas, 2008)

9 case studies: Littles, Bigs, mothers,
case workers

Active and Passive empathy

Findings: Bigs



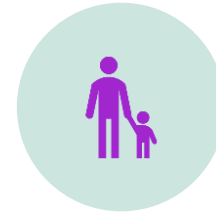
Pre-conceived ideas



I thought at the start, Oh God, he'll have troubles. I think people do have an idea that it's for troubled kids, I kind of had that idea at the start, and I think people are asking me is he disadvantaged or whatever, you know.



Getting to know the young person- talents and strengths



I like to reinforce his positive aspects [...] I just try not to judge him on it.



Identify with difficulties of young person



I would have been aware of it when I was younger too, and I suppose because of my background and my upbringing and problems in my childhood, it would have been a lovely thing for me to have somebody that you could just spend a bit of one-to-one time with, away from your home and away from your school and away from all the other influences in your life.

Bigs (continued)



Differences in values and beliefs



I try to encourage her about the reading, things I think are important, but then again that's what I think is important. I kind of have to take a step back. I'm thinking in terms of my own.



Change and adaption needed for the match



Provide support, stability, encouragement and friendship



Some kids out there do need the extra, like, help, you know what I mean, and I think with [young person] just kind of needed just a bit more support with her, and I think that's what you're giving her.



Horizontal relationships

Littles



Motivation-
perceived benefits



Build the 'friendship'
over time



*'He's like one of my mates,
like, get on normal with
him. He's a normal guy;
he's like dead sound.'*

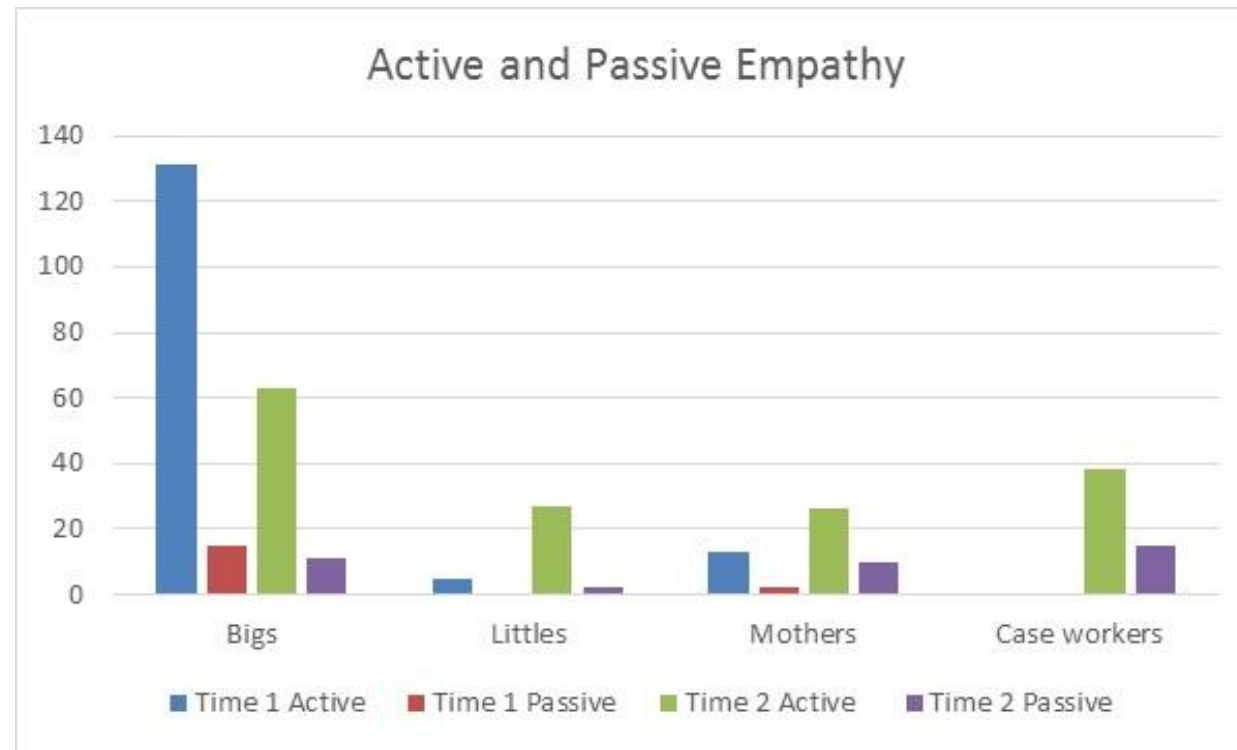


Bigs have their own
lives and
responsibilities.



'I don't know what days
are suitable, like, her
husband works and she
has to mind her kid.'





Passive and active empathy

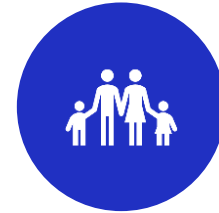
Social support	Coefficient β	Standard Error	P value	95% Confidence Interval
Mentoring relationships	0.517	0.1144	0.000	0.29 to 0.743
Time	0.006	0.043	0.885	-0.08 to 0.093

Quantitative Findings

Implications for Practice



Mentoring can support vulnerable young people- prevention early intervention



Ripple effect on family members



Impact on the community



Role of practitioners is crucial 'bridge'



Mentoring screening is crucial for success



Matching based on compatibility and shared interests



Relationships require time to develop



Empathy develops over time

Recommendations for Practice