Talk in mind: the analysis of calls to a mental health information line

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Talk in Mind:
The Analysis of Calls to a Mental Health Information Line

By

John Moore

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

September 2009

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of interactional practices through which the work of a mental health information line is carried out, utilising discursive psychology and conversation analysis in the analysis of a corpus of calls to MIND Infoline. The aim of MIND Infoline is to provide information on mental illness, and the services in England and Wales which support those affected by mental illness. In negotiating access to the data, the call-takers of the line were encouraged to suggest topics for analysis such that the work of this thesis would be of benefit to them. Three of these topics are the foci of the analytic chapters; how callers are asked what it is they want from the line, how courses of action are proffered to callers, and how crying callers are responded to. In the analysis of these topics, institutional restrictions are discussed as consequential for the actions engaged in by the call-takers, who are encouraged to refrain from giving advice, 'chatting' with callers, and providing emotional support.

In the analytic chapters, empirically grounded observations are made about four recurrent practices engaged in by the call-takers;

- The use of interrogatives which constrain callers' responses and make relevant a request for information
- The use of modal verbs and 'If/Then Constructions' in the proffering of courses of action to callers
- The use of 'Yes/No' interrogatives in the proffering of courses of action to callers
- Empathetic formulations which are deployed following occurrences of caller crying

The reporting of the findings back to the helpline staff and the application of these findings for their work are also discussed. The thesis as a whole contributes to the literature on the analysis of institutional interactions, particularly to the literature on the management of restricted practices in institutional settings.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis utilises discursive psychology and conversation analysis in the analysis of calls to a mental-health information line (MIND Infoline). This information line is affiliated to a large UK mental-health charity (MIND) and aims to provide information on mental illnesses, and the organisations in England and Wales which offer treatments and practical help to those affected by mental illness (see chapter two for more information). The analysis will focus on aspects of calls which were chosen by the call-taking staff of the line; dealing with explicit or implicit requests for advice, how crying callers are responded to, and how callers are asked what they want from the line. Throughout the chapters there will also be a focus on how the call-takers of this line respond to particular caller activities while managing specific institutional constraints on how they can respond to callers e.g. prohibitions on giving advice and on agreeing with complaints against services. Using the methods of discursive psychology and conversation analysis means that the analysis will explicate how these institutional constraints are managed by the call-takers, and how institutional tasks are achieved in their talk as it unfolds. We shall also see how, while managing the various constraints upon them, the call-takers can respond to various caller activities in ways which move the interactions closer to the main business of the line; providing information on illnesses and related services. Thus the analysis will show how the callers and call-takers themselves engage in various social and institutional activities through their talk.

Within social science research there is a large amount of work which analyses workplace interactions. A wide array of methodologies is used for this work, varying greatly in aspects of epistemology and ontology. Within interaction research, specifically research which utilises conversation analytic or discursive psychological approaches, the study of workplace or work related interaction represents the largest area of special interest to date. This is particularly true of conversation analysis, where researchers increasingly work on what we have come to call institutional interactions. Discursive psychological work in the area is increasing also, and in both fields the practical application of research findings is becoming a regular feature of the work. This introductory chapter aims to locate the current thesis within this existing body of work, discussing some of the major works and the studies which are most relevant to this thesis. Locating the current thesis
within this body of work will not be done in particularly temporal terms, but rather in ways which show the development of the current epistemological and methodological state of interaction research using institutional data.

This introductory chapter will thus discuss the relevant work which exists in interaction research into workplace, or institutional, interactions, and how this thesis relates to them, before moving on to a brief synopsis of the other chapters.

**The analysis of institutional interactions**

That the interactions analysed in this thesis are *institutional* in nature is not a given, nor is it solely an artefact of their having been conducted on an information line which offers a service to the public. In the first major collection of conversation-analytic research papers on institutional interactions, ‘Talk at Work’, Drew and Heritage (1992) characterise institutional interactions as talk through which lay people pursue certain goals and agendas, and where professionals or the representatives of organisations conduct their working activities. They note that according to this definition, institutional talk can be conducted in informal settings, just as ordinary or casual conversation can be conducted in a workplace setting, with the boundaries between both forms of talk being somewhat diffuse at times.

An example of this notion can be demonstrated using a sample of much earlier analysis, that of Harvey Sacks’ work on calls to a suicide prevention helpline (as ultimately published as Sacks, 1992). In the following extract, we can see how a caller to the line treats certain responses by the call-taker as institutional in nature.

Taken from Sacks (1992)


1 Caller: I can’t call any of my friends or anybody cause they’re just
gonna say oh that’s silly or that’s stupid I guess

3 Desk: Uh huh

4 Caller: I guess what you really want is someone to say yes I really
understand why you want to commit suicide I do believe you
I would too

Uh huh. Well tell me about it

Bou I a funny thing I know it’s emotionally immature

except that doesn’t help

Uh huh

I’ve got a date coming in a half hour and I ((sob))

I see

I can’t go through with it I can’t go through with the

evening I can’t ((sniffle))

Uh huh

You talk. I don’t want to talk

Uh huh

((laugh sob)) It sounds like a real professional uh huh uh

huh uh huh ((sniffle))

On lines 18 to 19 the caller offers a formulation of the call-taker’s talk, as “sounding like a real professional” and also offers the talk which is claimed as sounding professional (the call-taker’s ‘uh huhs’). It is not always such a straightforward matter to show that participants are oriented to talk as ‘professional’ or institutional, but it is in the participants’ activities and orientations that analysis must be grounded.

Arguing that “basic forms of mundane talk” (p.19) are the primary site of interaction in the social world, and the one which children are initially socialised into, Drew and Heritage claim that mundane talk or conversation sets a benchmark against which other forms of talk are seen as more formal, or institutional in nature.

As part of their discussion on what may be considered to be an institutional interaction, Drew and Heritage (1992) proffer three aspects of talk which may constitute an interaction as institutional. These are that;
1) there is an orientation to specific goals or activities related to the institution in question (these goals and activities may not always be clear to the lay participants in the interaction)

2) that there may be particular constraints placed on what contributions both participants can make to the interaction (again these may not be clear to the lay participants)

3) the talk may show an orientation to inferred frameworks relevant to the particular institution. This refers to the findings that informal conversational practices (e.g. joking) may be oriented to as inappropriate in institutional interactions, and that something such as a diagnosis may be treated as inappropriate in everyday conversation

While the characterisation of certain instances of talk as institutional is an issue of some contention (see for example Hester and Francis, 2001) this thesis accepts and works with the notion that the interactions analysed within are institutional in nature due to the goals and agendas of the participants, and the locally managed restrictions on the contributions of callers and call-takers. Indeed, Drew (2004) argues that the term ‘conversation analysis’ is somewhat of a misnomer as much of the interactions engaged in during the course of daily life would not be considered ‘conversation’ by the participants, but all forms are still subject to the same analytic process.

While ‘Talk at Work’ was the first collection of conversation analytic papers in this area, interaction research which explored the ways in which institutional activities are constituted and achieved in talk had already begun. Atkinson and Drew’s (1979) work on courtroom interaction showed (amongst other things) how the very form of interaction in this setting differed vastly from that laid out by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) for ordinary conversation, demonstrating how the institutional constraints of that setting are manifested in the interactional activities of the participants. This was achieved through showing that the order of turn taking in interaction is fixed in examinations in court settings, as is the type of turn at talk which both parties can produce. The first of these relates to how the examiner and examinee will talk in a rigid A-B-A-B type pattern, and the second refers to the constraints on contributions that either party can legitimately produce; examiners must produce questions, and examinees must produce answers (or at
least what are hearable as questions and answers). The following example shows both of these aspects of Atkinson and Drew’s (1979) analysis. The transcript is reproduced as it appears in their text.

Taken from Atkinson and Drew (1979)

(ST:91,21A)

((‘00.55’ hours referred to in the second question is an entry in a police station logbook))

C: Was there firing in Sandy Row that night?
W: Not to my knowledge
C: Will you look at 00.55 hours: ‘Automatic firing in Sandy Row’.
W: No, that is not correct.

Despite the counsel (C) having access to police documents which claim that there was ‘firing in Sandy Row’ at a certain time on a certain night, they produce a question asking the witness (W) if this is the case. The witness’ reply (“Not to my knowledge”) is produced as an answer to the question, but it is one which also carries out the work of managing his accountability, in a way in which a ‘no’ answer would not have. The document is then produced which claims that there was indeed firing. This has an effect of challenging the witness’ testimony, without directly claiming that the witness is not providing an accurate testimony. The witness in turn challenges this by claiming that the document is not correct. What we can see here in the first two turns is the constraint on turn type in action. The counsel must ask questions, not make claims, and thus a question is produced which sets the stage for an unvoiced challenge in the counsels next turn (invoking that the ‘firing’ has been documented as having occurred). We can also see that the turn order is that of the rigid A-B-A-B pattern described by Atkinson and Drew as more rigid and fixed than normal conversation due to the restraints of the institution; the counsel is to ask questions, and witnesses are only to respond to these.

Drew and Heritage (1992) point out that when analysing institutional talk, the basic approach of CA work must first be adopted before moving on to explore how “participants’ conduct and its organisation embody orientations which are specifically
institutional or which are, at the least, responsive to constraints which are institutional in character” (p.20). They discuss the “institutional fingerprint”; the unique patterns of interaction which constitute a particular institution. Arminen (2005) argues that conversation analysis aims to identify the unique ‘fingerprint’ of each institutional practice, showing how specific institutional patterns are achieved in talk, what their institutional functions are, and how they come to constitute that particular institution. Arminen also argues that in this respect, “studies of institutional interaction are very close to Sacks’ original idea of studying members’ methodical ways of accomplishing social tasks in interaction” (p.xiv). Atkinson and Drew’s (1979) work discussed above is a prime example of this, showing how the work of an institution is achieved through particular interactional practices.

At the time that “Talk at Work” was published, another collection of papers also appeared with a particular focus on institutional interactions, and which gave much attention to the debate about the relationship between context and interactional phenomena. “Text in Context” (1992) edited by Watson and Seiler focuses on both ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in terms of this debate. A contribution by Bilmes (1992) argues that in conversation analytic work, context, or order, is a product of the interactional phenomena studied, and the analyst must demonstrate how it gets to be present in the phenomena. Challenging this, a contribution by Garfinkel and Wieder (1992) argues that context is present prior to interaction, and that it is the role of ethnomethodology to document this. In introducing this volume, Watson (1992) argues that all of its contributors do agree that while linguistic resources are crucial for the production of social order, the analysis of an interaction is dependent on more than the interaction itself. This refers to the analyst’s knowledge of the environment in which interaction is produced.

Procedural Consequentiality

Shortly before “Talk at Work” was published, a collection of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic papers appeared which focussed in part on talk in institutional settings, but which also focussed on the ways in which social structures and contexts are created through talk. “Talk and Social Structure” (1991) edited by Zimmerman and Boden focussed on theory and research findings which all had the issue of social
structure or context at their core. In their introduction to the volume, Zimmerman and Boden argue that the mechanics of talk (i.e. organised practices such as turn taking) are utilised in the production of patterns and forms of interaction, which in turn are traditionally taken merely as evidence of the existence of social structure. Social structure is defined in their volume in a variety of ways, but all contributors refer to it as aspects of social life which are considered to impact upon interaction, such as race, gender, occupational role and relationships, etc. They challenged the notion that talk merely provides evidence of social structures, but that it constitutes these structures, and that speakers utilise them to invoke social structure for social interactional purposes. This concept has become a core element of the research methodologies drawn upon for this thesis (conversation analysis and discursive psychology) and is discussed further in the following chapter.

In Zimmerman and Boden’s collection, Schegloff (1991) argues that for the analyst, the issue is to demonstrate that the social structure (whatever it may be) is something which participants (those producing the talk) are oriented to, for that is to show how the social structure itself is produced in interaction. Schegloff also argues that the notion of context (such as the context in which an interaction takes place) is also to be treated as an element of social structure, in the same way as issues such as race, gender, etc. Context here is wide ranging, and includes uses such as physical context such as an office or classroom, and abstract notions such as the context of a democracy, or a relationship. It is here that Schegloff introduces the notion of “procedural consequentiality” (p.49). This is the concept that, in analysis, if any context or setting is deemed to be having an impact upon an interaction, the analysis must show how this impact is manifested in the ongoing elements of the interaction. Atkinson and Drew’s (1979) demonstration of the specific turn-taking practices in the courtroom setting (again) provides a suitable example. A further version of Schegloff’s chapter appeared in “Talk at Work”.

**Subsequent analytic work on in institutional data.**

Arminen (2005) claims that “Talk at Work” was at the forefront of what is now a well established tradition within conversation analytic work, and indeed the concepts outlined above have over time, been increasingly incorporated into a wide range of both conversation analytic and discursive psychological studies. For example, Boden’s (1994)
monograph “The Business of Talk” explored institutional talk from a range of settings, such as research group and local council meetings and telephone calls, using conversation analysis as its method. Boden devotes much space to outlining the points made above in detail, as well as the concept of talk as social action (see the following chapter for a discussion on this). Boden analyses talk recorded during business meetings, showing for example, how they can be constructed as a single conversational unit regardless of the number of participants. Boden’s book focuses mainly on sequential and turn-taking aspects of the talk, and to a lesser degree on the social action orientation of talk.

In a later monograph studying talk recorded in counselling session for people being tested for HIV/AIDS, Silverman (1997) found that advice was often delivered to clients in a form that he calls “advice as information” (p.154). This involved the counsellors proffering courses of action which were relevant to client issues in ways which made them hearable as the delivery of information. This was achieved through elements of turns such as “The recommendation is for people to...” (p.172) and “…our recommendation is...” (p.174). Silverman claims that these are hearable as information on the clinic’s advisory practices, rather than as direct advice. He also claims that the use of the institutional or passive voice helps this by avoiding turns which sound like personal recommendations from the counsellors. Silverman discusses these findings as orienting to an institutional restriction of that setting; a prohibition of giving advice to clients. Again, Silverman’s work is a clear example of Schegloff’s (1992) procedural consequentiality being demonstrated in research.

I do not wish to imply here that work which utilises the notion of procedural consequentiality appeared in a clean linear manner, although of course it has been accumulating since first theorised as such by Schegloff. For example, before Boden’s (1994) monograph, Silverman, Peräkylä, and Bor (1992) applied conversation analysis to talk recorded in HIV/AIDS counselling sessions and also studied the way that advice was delivered, and found patterns such as advice being delivered as information following the construction of a hypothetical situation. This was (as in Silverman’s 1997 work) considered to be the manifestation of a prohibition on advice giving in the sessions. Indeed, a great body of influential and respected work exists where conversation analysis has been used to examine talk in institutional settings, which cannot be covered in the space available here. This covers a wide range of institutional settings such as medical consultations (e.g. Silverman, 1987), in classrooms (e.g. McHoul, 1978), calls to
emergency services (e.g. Whalen and Zimmerman, 1987), and in news interviews (Heritage, 1985). Monographs and also chapters from edited collections appear regularly which discuss the method and approach of analysing institutional data also appear with some regularity, e.g. Heritage, 1997; ten Have, 2001; Edwards and Potter, 2001; Arminen, 2005.

Conversation analytic work on institutional talk does indeed constitute a vast field of research, and is on occasion referred to as having become a clear and separate field quite distinct from conversation analytic work which aims to document the mechanics of ordinary conversation (e.g. Heritage, 1997; ten Have, 2001). In his chapter on how to analyse talk in institutional settings using conversation analysis, ten Have claims that some researchers are utilising the methods and findings of conversation analytic work on ordinary conversation to demonstrate how the work of an institution is (to quote Heritage, 1984, p.290) “talked in to being”. Heritage (1997) goes further than this in arguing that conversation analytic work on institutional interaction has overlap with, yet is distinct in focus from other conversation analytic work. Heritage claims that there is one type of conversation analysis which “examines the institution of interaction as an entity in its own right”, and another type which examines the “management of social institutions in interaction” (p.162). This thesis draws heavily from work in the latter of these two forms of conversation analytic work, as well as from the more recently established field of discursive psychology.

**Discursive Psychological work on Institutional Data**

In discussing the use of a discursive psychological approach to institutional data, Edwards and Potter (2001) stress discursive psychology’s treatment of language as action-oriented, constructive of versions of the social world, and as created from a wide range of potential alternative terms, words, etc. The specific interest here of discursive psychology lies in the ways that psychological concepts are constructed, drawn upon, and utilised to conduct institutional business. Psychological in this sense refers to what people are constructed as knowing, thinking, feeling, understanding, and so on. Edwards and Potter argue that examples of such work have been carried out before their formal proffering of discursive psychology as an approach to research, for example in Pollner’s
(1987) work on how competing versions of ‘reality’ are resolved in hearings at traffic courts.

A prime example of such work is Locke and Edwards’ (2003) exploration of psychological terminology used by Bill Clinton in testimony to a U.S. grand jury. In this particular context, Clinton faced much questioning about his treatment of Monica Lewinsky while she was waiting to be questioned in court about their relationship. The following transcript demonstrates Clinton’s use of psychological terminology in his account of an encounter with Lewinsky. The transcript is reproduced exactly as found in Locke and Edwards’ paper.

Taken from Locke and Edwards (2003)

*Extract 7 Clinton testimony, p. 32*

1. Q: And Mrs Currie and yourself were: very i:rate
2. (.) that (0.3) Ms Lewinsky had overhea: rd (0.7)
3. uh that you were in the oval office with a
4. visitor. (.) On that day. (.) Isn't that correct
5. that you and Mrs Currie were (.) very irate
6. about that.
7. (4.5)
8. C: We'll (1.0) I don't remember (.) all that (.) uh
9. what I remember i:s that she was very um (0.7)
10. Monica was very upset= she got upset from time
11. to time,

Locke and Edwards (2003) use the above extract as a way of demonstrating how constructions of memory can be used to manage what is and is not given in testimony. Clinton claims not to remember all of what he is being asked to confirm, and uses “what I remember i:s” (line 9) to launch a description of Lewinsky. This seems to work well, and Clinton is not challenged to ‘try’ to remember, or encouraged to discuss the events as formulated by the questioner regardless of his inability to remember. The description of Lewinsky is littered with emotion terms; that “Monica was upset” and that the “got upset
from time to time" (lines 10 & 11). Locke and Edwards argue that this particular construction of Lewinsky locates the ‘upset’ in temporal terms, such that Lewinsky is portrayed as upset before having contact with Clinton, as opposed to e.g. following a meeting with him. Lewinsky is also constructed as dispositionally upset, which again is again important for managing accusations of Clinton’s accountability for Lewinsky being upset, by reducing his (causal) agency in her emotional state through constructing her as routinely or regularly upset due this ‘disposition’.

This analysis demonstrated how psychological concepts such as ‘remembering’ and ‘upset’ can be deployed in institutional settings to carry out particular rhetorical work, particularly in a setting where (as we remember from Atkinson and Drew’s 1979 work) the contributions a party can make may be restricted. Clinton must answer the questions put to him, but it is through the deployment of formulations of what he remembers that he is able to deliver an answer in his own chosen terms. More recent work by Potter (2005) has showed how very specific psychological terminology can be of use for both parties in calls to a child protection helpline. Potter found that callers would often construct themselves as having concerns about a child, in the early or even opening sequences of a call, and that for the callers, they serve as a display of their stance towards the events or issues they go on to describe. Potter also shows that these constructions of callers as concerned are perfectly fitted to allow for the collaborative unpacking of the events or issues, in an environment where ultimately the call-taker is the one who can initiate any actions. Importantly, Potter was able to show that this was an important element for these calls by showing how the call-takers would also construct the callers as concerned, in the absence of any such construction by the caller. Potter discusses this research as a new way to proceed with the study of psychology and institutions.

In a very different setting, Stokoe and Edwards (2008; in press 2009) examined the asking and answering of what they term “silly questions” (for example, “might sound a bit silly, but do you know whose window it is?”) in British police interviews with suspects. Stokoe and Edwards found that these interrogatives play a central role in formulating, for the record, a suspect’s ‘state of mind’ and in forming an environment where the police officers construct the suspects ‘intentions’ to commit the offence with which they may be charged. The suspects routinely aligned with the formulations deployed by the police, and this alignment served to produce a self-incriminating testimony. The following example illustrates these points.
Taken from Stokoe and Edwards (2008)

Case 1(b) PN-04: Smashed window

11 P:   Um: (1.4) may sound a bit silly but *uh*
12  do y’know whose window it is.
13   (0.4)
14 S:   £Yes[:£
15 P:   [Did you know whose window it is.=
16 S:   °Mm.°
17 P:   Mm.
18   (0.8)
19 P:   D'you 'ave permission to smash it basically.
20 S:   No,
21 P:   (N-) No,
22   (0.3)
23 P:   °*Okay.*°
24   (0.5)
25 P:   And whose- (0.3) take it you know it’s Mick’s
26   property.
27 S   °Yes°
28 P:   Yeh,

The officer’s question on lines 11 to 12 is prefaced as being a “silly” question. This pattern of findings, where the silly question was followed by others which lead to the suspect aligning with questions as to their ‘intent’ or ‘knowledge’ state was a strong pattern within the interviews. It may be noticeable that the questions above are all interrogatives which require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. This type of question and its use in interactional settings will be discussed in more detail in chapters four and five.
The Application of Research Findings

Wiggins and Hepburn (2007) argue that in some applied social science research, the link between research and any applications has been particularly weak, with little evidence to show the incorporation of research findings in actual working practices. Wiggins and Hepburn raise a number of issues about what exactly is to be applied to workplace settings from the range of academic spheres such as theory, knowledge, and research findings, and they provide the example of research on psychotherapy. Much work has been carried out which would aim to evaluate therapeutic practices, and this would involve pre and post testing of the clients. While this may be suitable in terms of determining therapeutic outcomes, it will not provide any information on what exactly goes on during therapy, or how the therapy unfolds during sessions. Of course, the difference in approaches would mean that in results from traditional work, results or findings are seen as the outcome of an interaction or set of interactions, rather than something which is constructed in, or for, the interactions.

Increasingly, findings from conversation analytic and discursive psychological research in institutional settings have had an applied element which does illuminate the actual work of an institution. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the conversation analytic work carried out in medical interactions. For example, Stivers (2007) found that when physicians claimed that anti-biotic medications were not necessary following the examination of a child, parental challenging of this decision would often lead to the physician prescribing antibiotics while still claiming they were unnecessary. Stivers also found however that if the physicians engaged in particular commentaries during the examinations regarding what they considered to be the medical problem, parents were less likely to challenge a decision to not prescribe antibiotics. Stivers considers this to be a clear outlining of the relationship between micro-interactional phenomena, and (macro) public health issues.

In a controlled study of physician / patient consultations, Heritage, Robinson, Elliott, Beckett, and Wilkes (2007) examined interactions between physicians and patients, where the patients had completed pre-consultation questionnaires and reported that they had more than one health concern to discuss. In a rare combination of experimental procedure and conversation analytic research, Heritage et al had encouraged one half of the physicians to use the following phrase; “Is there anything else you want to address in
the visit today?” (the ‘any’ condition), and the other half to use the phrase “Is there something else you would like to address in the visit today?” (the ‘some’ condition). This phrase would be deployed following the discussion of the patients’ first health concern. Heritage et al found that in the ‘some’ condition, over 90% of patients provided an affirmative answer and discussed a second concern. In the ‘any’ condition, only 53% of the patients provided an affirmative answer. Heritage et al claim that this is due to the preference structure built into the design of the questions, and the positive or negative loading of the words ‘some’ and ‘any’. These concepts will be discussed in more detail in the later chapters, but what I hope is clear at this point is the practical use of the results. Delaying the discussion of health concerns can have serious consequences for the individual as well as the health system they are part of. Providing clinicians with interactional tools, such as questions which are more likely to elicit the telling of medical problems, can address this issue. As with Stivers’ work, this again provides an example of the relationship between micro-practices and macro-health issues.

Such results are not confined to medical interactions, and much beneficial work has been carried out in helpline settings. Kitzinger’s work with the Birth Crisis Helpline (see details in Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2005; and an outline of the applications by Kitzinger in Silverman, 2009) has been massively successful in influencing practice on the line. Kitzinger has worked with call takers on the line to demonstrate issues such as the displaying of empathy, and the language used to describe genitalia, demonstrating for them how callers respond to the various actions engaged in by call-takers, and helping them to define ‘best-practice’. Kitzinger now runs regular feedback sessions for the call-takers, and is involved in the training of new recruits to the line. Similarly, as part of the previously mentioned work on the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, Hepburn and Potter (e.g. Hepburn & Potter, 2007) were able to demonstrate the ways in which sympathy and empathy were achieved by the call takers, but also that in the environment of caller crying, callers were more likely to stay on the line and continue discussing their issues following empathetic responses (as opposed to sympathetic responses). Again, feedback sessions demonstrating this and other issues have been well received by the staff of the line.
Position and Aims of this Thesis

The notion that institutional context is something which is made live in unfolding interaction has been developing over a number of decades. The fact that ‘context’ is used in such a variety of ways in social sciences to cover influences on, and settings for, behaviour creates difficulties in discussing the subject. This thesis takes the position that institutional context is something oriented to by participants in their talk, and indeed is brought into being through talk for social interactional purposes. Institutional issues such as (importantly for this thesis) constraints on the contributions either speaker can make, are “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984: 290). A large element of what this thesis aims to do is to show the ways in which call takers manage the various constraints of their institutional role, and the analysis does indeed utilise ethnomethodological type knowledge about the institution, mainly that some practices are restricted or prohibited, such as giving advice and aligning with complaints made by callers, or are treated by the call-takers as difficult to manage, such as supporting crying callers. It is the use of this knowledge that lies at the core of procedural consequentiality for this thesis. It is my task within this thesis to show how these prohibitions and restrictions are manifested in the talk. It is not the actual restrictions and prohibitions themselves which constitute the institution of MIND Infoline. Rather, it is the ways in which these restrictions and prohibitions are invoked, managed, and identifiable in the talk which constitute the institution of MIND Infoline.

Prelude to the remaining chapters

Following on from here are the methods chapter, four analytic chapters, and a concluding chapter. The following provides a brief synopsis of these.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter covers a wide range of issues related to the analysis of this thesis. Beginning with the search for a data source, and a discussion of the negotiation process, it will move on to describe the processes of gaining caller and call-taker consent, call recording and data management, and then to a brief discussion of data preparation and transcription.

Although we have already discussed a number of findings and applications of conversation analytic and discursive psychological work, it is in the methods chapter that
most space is devoted to outlining the theory and method of both conversation analysis and discursive psychology. Most attention is paid to the features of both which have the most relevance for the analysis of this thesis, such as turn design, and the social actions achieved in talk. Conversation analysis and discursive psychology will also be discussed for how they compare; there is much overlap in the founding influences and theoretical approaches of these methods, and space will be devoted to explicating their commonalities and the differences between them.

Chapter 3: The Business of MIND Infoline

This first analytic chapter has two main purposes. First, it will outline the main elements of a MIND Infoline call; illustrating the main types of sequence that appear, and also the macro order in which these appear in the calls in the corpus. The chapter will show how the calls typically progress from opening to closing. Special attention will be paid to the types of actions which callers initially engage in, in particular the activity which I term ‘problem delivery’ as this features heavily in the later chapters. This work will allow for easy reference to the main elements of call in the later, more focussed analytic chapters.

The second purpose is to analyse occurrences of callers being asked ‘what they want’. The call-takers asked that such occurrences be examined, claiming that callers often did not know what they wanted from the line. The analysis of these occurrences will show how the call-takers deploy interrogatives to make relevant a request for information from callers, when callers request something other than information. The analysis will also show how these interrogatives move the interaction towards the business of the line, and it will be argued that these interrogatives constitute the remit of the line through talk during calls.

Chapter 4: Proffering Courses of Action to Callers

This chapter begins the analysis of the methods used by call-takers to proffer a course of action which a caller may engage in. The giving of advice by call-takers is prohibited at MIND Infoline, yet callers often request advice however and / or discuss problematic situations they are dealing with. Thus, any potential remedial actions which are raised by the call-takers run the risk of being heard as an instance of advice giving. The analysis of chapters four and five focuses on how it is that call-takers manage the deployment of
potential courses of action which callers may engage in against the backdrop of advice prohibition.

After a discussion of previous relevant research on advice in interaction, in chapter four I first outline what is meant by 'courses of action' for callers. The analysis then focuses on two methods for proffering courses of action; the use of modal verbs and the use of if / then constructions. The modal verb form utilises turns such as "You can call the family rights group" and "you could contact private healthcare providers". The if / then construction form utilises turns such as "If you wanted to try those treatments I guess it's going to your GP", and "Our office in ((town)) if you didn't want to go to the gee pee but you'd fancied giving counselling a try they do have a counselling service."

The analysis will show that these forms have much in common with each other in terms of how they manage a prohibition on advice, and also that they have much in common with previous findings on advice management in a range of other institutional settings. Both of these forms will be shown to make a course of action hearable as information on what is available for the caller to do, while making the course of action hearable as available to anyone in a particular situation.

Chapter 5: The Use of Yes / No Interrogatives in Proffering Courses of Action

This chapter will continue from, and build upon, the work of chapter four, by explicating the ways in which interrogatives are used in the proffering of courses of action in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. It shall examine some of the research available currently on interrogatives and their uses in institutional interactions, demonstrating how they can serve a number of institutional as well as social interactional purposes. Recent work which demonstrates the use of interrogatives in the management of advice prohibition will also be discussed.

These interrogatives found in the MIND Infoline corpus fall into three distinct types, which will be examined in order of decreasing frequency. These are:

Type 1: YNIs which follow a turn designed as a description of, or information on, a service which the caller may engage in, e.g. "<obviously there's the women's ai:dl (. ) domestic violence helpline >that you< can ringl .hh >a=did you want<=their number" (48 examples in the corpus)
Type 2: YNIs which have a COA embedded within them and question the caller as to whether they want or had wanted the MW to provide contact details for organisations relevant to the COA, e.g. “.hhh ar- are you looking >for a< helpli:ne?” (36 examples in the corpus)

Type 3: YNIs with a COA embedded within them, which require the caller to confirm or disconfirm whether they have engaged in a specific COA. Example: “Ri:ght an- ‘ave you spoken to your gee >pee at the moment how< .hhh thee ps#y#hiatrist wants to sign you=↓off” (30 examples in the corpus)

These three types have much in common, but we shall explore them separately, in the order they appear above. We will see how all three forms of YNI aid in proffering a COA, in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. Those in type one follow other turns which proffer a YNI of contacting an organisation and will be seen to essentially re-proffer the COA by asking if the caller wants the number of the organisation. By making relevant the callers’ uptake or resistance of the COA, they will be seen to aid in the progression of the interaction towards the delivery of contact information of the relevant organisations, or indeed the proffering of an alternate COA. The YNIs of type two will also be shown to forward the interaction in this way, but they proffer a new COA for the first time. We will also see how both of these types seem to incorporate a form for a more tentative delivery when resistance of the COA is more strongly possible, that of using a conditional or past tense. The analysis will show how type three YNIs question callers as to whether they have engaged in a particular COA, and also help with the progression of the call by moving from a problem telling, to talk about remedial actions.

All of these types will be shown to make the COA embedded within them hearable as a normative action to engage in relative to the callers’ specific circumstances, while managing to avoid a delivery which is hearable as advice giving. The analysis will also show that all three types constrain callers’ responses in ways which promote the forward progression of the call towards the business of the line, and also that they construct a relationship between caller and MW which is quite different to the roles normally invoked by advice giving.
Chapter 6: Empathy and Institutional Business in Receipts of Caller Crying

The aim of this chapter is to examine occurrences of caller crying and the ways MWs receipt these occurrences. The MWs reported that caller crying was difficult to respond to due to their reticence to provide emotional support to callers. As mentioned in chapter two, ongoing emotional support is something not offered by the helpline, as the management feel it may promote a dependency on the line, and would also be too difficult a task for the MWs to engage in on a regular basis. Callers who may need emotional support are encouraged to contact organisations such as Samaritans. We shall see however that the MWs deploy well-fitted, empathetic responses in response to caller crying, which also serve to move the call forward towards the provision of information (or as I write repeatedly in the previous chapters, the main business of the line). This is an especially interesting phenomenon as the callers were mostly engaged in troubles telling or complaining while crying. We shall see in the analysis that this movement towards the business of the line is achieved through the ways in which the empathetic responses form a pivot between the caller crying and the proffering of a COA. We shall also see how the MWs manage another prohibited issue, that of aligning with complaints made by callers.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

This final chapter will recap briefly on the analytic findings, and will discuss them in terms of the thesis aims outlined above, and also in relation to their applications at MIND Infoline. Throughout the course of the PhD, I have been delivering regular feedback sessions to the management and call-taking staff of the line, discussing the results of various analyses and how they may be incorporated into the work of the line.

We continue now with a discussion of the research process in the methods chapter.
Chapter 2: Method

My aim in this chapter is to outline the processes involved in all stages of the research, including finding the data source, gaining consent to record, choosing the topics for analysis, and managing the data itself. I will also provide an overview of the work of MIND Infoline and some of the important elements of the daily working practices of the staff. This will be followed by a section outlining the analytic methods of conversation analysis and discursive psychology, and some notes on the transcription of the data.

About the Data

Finding a Data Source

My initial PhD proposal outlined a programme of analysis aimed at examining the ways in which suicide and suicidal actions were constructed and oriented to in talk. This was accepted and so I approached a number of support organisations and telephone helplines for the suicidal. From this search two organisations agreed to allow the recording of their interactions with clients. One of these was a support group for those bereaved by suicide. In telephone discussions the group convenor claimed that all members had agreed to be recorded during meetings for the purposes of my research, and that meetings had previously been recorded for television broadcast. I was encouraged by the convenor to attend a meeting on a particular date, and told that could I record the meeting using my own video equipment. Unfortunately the group members had actually not been told anything of the research, and they had never been recorded previously. Many of them reacted very badly to my presence, which I found understandable. This experience taught me a number of lessons such as communicating with more than one person from an organisation whenever possible, including general participants and not just convenors / leaders, and the lesson of not expecting to record when meeting a group for the first time.

The other organisation which agreed to the recording of interactions was CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) who operated a telephone support line which hoped to reduce the numbers of suicides in young men in the UK, by giving them a place to discuss their emotions, and by providing emotional support. The helpline ran from a large call-centre operation in Glasgow, and after a number of meetings with the funders
(from the NHS) and the helpline management, a date was set to begin recording in March 2007. While discussions were being held on how best to gain consent from callers, the funding for the helpline was withdrawn, and the line closed in February 2007.

As this was six months into the three-year time period for the PhD and all other suitable organisations which supported the suicidal had already declined to be involved, I began to expand the search to mental-health support agencies in the hope of finding a data source where suicide may still be discussed routinely. Soon after contacting MIND Infoline, I was invited to a meeting with the managers of the line at the call centre where the line runs from. They were interested in the proposed research and keen to be involved. When contacting organisations I had proposed the exploration of talk about suicide, and additionally exploring any topics relevant to the work of the organisation, such as closing calls or giving advice. The management of MIND Infoline were very interested in this element of the work, and agreed to discuss the issue of recording calls with the call-taking staff. Soon afterwards I was contacted by the lead team manager and told that they had agreed to record calls and be involved in the research. Note: Permission to engage in the research from Loughborough University’s ethics board had been granted based on a proposal citing the CALM helpline. Once MIND Infoline had agreed to be involved, the ethics board were informed of the change of organisation and they agreed that the ethical permission was still valid. The documents related to this permission can be found in Appendix A.

Once MIND Infoline had agreed to be involved I met with the management and call-taking staff to discuss the research. When I asked for ideas for research topics from the call-takers, it soon became clear that there were a number of aspects to their work which they found difficult to manage in interactions with callers, including dealing with requests for advice, receipting complaints, supporting crying callers, and getting to the reason for the call. These topics became the focus for the course of the PhD, and I have not yet turned to the analysis of talk about suicide. This has not been an issue, as I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the chosen topics, and it has been a great experience to apply the results to the work of the line. The call-takers have been very receptive to the results, and always keen to hear more.
Gaining caller consent, and recording and cataloguing the data

Much time was spent discussing how best to manage the issue of caller consent. At one early visit to MIND Infoline, I played some examples of consent sequences from the corpus of calls recorded at the NSPCC’s Child Protection Helpline by colleagues at Loughborough. In these calls, the child protection officers would inform the callers that research was being conducted at a point early in the call, and ask if they would give their permission to be recorded. This was considered inappropriate for MIND Infoline due to the disruption of ‘breaking into the flow’ of a call to insert the consent sequence. The line management instead preferred to record a message which would be played to callers before they were connected to a call-taker. This would state that calls were being recorded for a period of two weeks, and that if callers did not wish to be recorded, they could ring an alternate number. For the two weeks during which calls were recorded in summer 2007, the volume was one percent lower than the average weekly volume. The line management were very happy with this, and were hesitant to see this drop as a clear result of recording, as volume sometimes did drop slightly during summer months. All call-takers subsequently provided consent individually to have their calls recorded and all chose to not be informed as to when recording would take place, as they did not want to “feel recorded” and therefore seem less natural than normal in the calls. Prior to this individual calls were occasionally electronically recorded at the helpline to aid with staff training and development. All at the helpline now believe the continuous recording to have been of such benefit that all calls are now recorded as routine practice.

Recording actual calls was a very simple matter as the call centre from which MIND Infoline operates already utilised a system which allowed calls to be recorded digitally and stored as ‘.wav’ files. A randomly chosen selection of these calls was forwarded to me via email, consisting of thirty-five calls from each of the call-takers, recorded on various days throughout the two-week recording period. A number of these calls were deleted in the following weeks as I listened to them all individually. Two were deleted as they were made by a UK TV personality who was at the time experiencing mental health difficulties, and these difficulties were regularly reported in the UK media. This raised the issue that these calls were perhaps more difficult to work with in an arena where data needs to be played to audiences at research meetings, seminars, conferences etc, as the caller repeatedly mentioned their television role and the show they appeared on. Confidentiality would have been very difficult to ensure without masking large sections
of the call, and I also worried that a ‘celebrity interest element’ might increase the chances of the data being re-used without permission.

Two other calls that were deleted were ‘tests’ on the line by a manager and contained no talk, and three calls were deleted as they were by a regular caller with severe mental health problems whom the call-takers felt would not have understood (or perhaps have listened to) the consent message. They were clearly uncomfortable with his calls becoming part of the data set and so I quickly removed them. Two others were deleted as they contained no talk from a caller (as they had perhaps hung up before being connected). This left 166 calls of varying length, with the shortest being just over forty seconds, and the longest being just over forty-four minutes. Average call length appears to be about three minutes, with few going beyond five minutes.

The electronic versions of the calls were downloaded in the first instance to a password-secured laptop computer purchased for the purpose of the research, and then copied to a secure external drive as a back-up. A final copy of the files was saved to a password-secure computer in my workspace at the university. These ‘.wav’ files were easy to manage, small in size, and could be opened in various programs for listening, manipulation, and transcription purposes (such as Microsoft Media Player and Adobe Audition). Each call was automatically labelled with a large number string by the recording program at the helpline base, and the last five numbers of this string were incorporated into the cataloguing system. These last numbers are easily used to identify a particular call in the corpus, if for any reason it needed to be found and (e.g.) removed from the corpus. In the following chapters, and in research appearing elsewhere, the calls will be tagged using my initials, the five digit string, and a brief description of the main contents of the call. Resultantly, a data tag may read for example, “JM – 65779 Mother’s Housing Problems”.

**The work of MIND Infoline**

The analysis in the following chapters thus utilises a corpus of 166 calls to MIND Infoline, a UK based charitable helpline which aims to provide information on mental health issues and services available in England and Wales. Call-takers are employees of the line, and receive detailed training to enable them to provide callers with clear information on mental illness (e.g. they can explain what the symptoms of schizophrenia
may be) and also on how to access mental health services from the UK National Health Service and from independent charitable organisations (e.g. they can direct callers to local support agencies). MIND Infoline is one of a number of services running from a helpline centre in a large UK city, which operates MIND Infoline as a service for the UK charity 'MIND' (i.e. the Infoline service had been outsourced by MIND to this helpline centre). Five members of staff take calls and answer emails while a full time supervisor assists and monitors them. The staff members sit in an oval arrangement with a low partition between them, and can see each other at all times. Photographs which illustrate this close proximity can be found on the following two pages. The line supervisor will regularly 'listen in' to calls for quality assurance and staff feedback purposes, and also if they feel that the call-taker may be experiencing a challenging call and need assistance.

During the recording period, I visited MIND Infoline daily and was provided with office space to work from, in a form of a desk and personal computer located near the desks used by the staff of the line. It was the position of the management of the line that my presence would be useful in case any questions arose about the research. The call-takers were informed that I was there to gain an understanding of the work of the line, but they were not told that recording had actually begun (in line with their request to not know when they were being recorded). I spent much time discussing their daily work with them, and discussing the service which MIND had outsourced to them. This time spent at the line allowed me to gain a more thorough understanding of the work of the line than would otherwise have been possible. As well as discussing the remit and working practices of the line with the supervisors, much time was spent with the call-takers discussing what their daily working practices. On two occasions, a specific call was forwarded to me by the supervisor on duty, when a call-taker had asked me to comment on a particular aspect of the call (in one case where they had difficulty bringing the call to an end, and in another where the call-taker was interested in the ways the caller had discussed the mental health problems of a third person).

The helpline's website explains that it aims to offer "information, support, and understanding" and that it seeks to "empower people, enabling them to make informed choices". The main functions of the line then are to provide information about mental

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1 Full information can be found online at [http://www.mind.org.uk/About+Mind/Mindinfoline/](http://www.mind.org.uk/About+Mind/Mindinfoline/)
health issues, to provide information on support services that are available, and the call-takers aim to do this in a supportive and friendly manner. Callers range from mental health professionals who need contact details of services in other areas of the country, to members of the public with mental health problems, seeking explanations of their diagnoses or information on where to access help. Call-takers are trained to provide information only, and giving advice on any matter is prohibited, although callers regularly request advice and opinions from the call-takers. Aligning with complaints against other services or organisations is also prohibited. ‘Chatty’ calls are strongly discouraged by MWs, who will attempt to close the call if information is not required. Ongoing emotional support is also not offered, and callers in need of emotional support are encouraged by the call-takers to call organisations such as Samaritans.

Photograph 1
These photographs clearly show the close proximity in which the staff members sit, and also that they can see each other clearly over the low partitions separating some of the work stations. The person in the photographs is one of the line managers, who cordially agreed to have these images made and reproduced here. The work station regularly used by managers is the one in front of the windows visible in photograph three above.

Topic Choice, and Preparation for Analysis

During the negotiations with the management of MIND Infoline for access to calls for research purposes, I assured them that I would attempt to ensure some benefits for the line were the research to go ahead. We discussed other interaction research with helplines and the benefits which emerged, such as the work carried out with the Birth Crisis Helpline (see Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2007) and the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (see Hepburn & Potter, 2007). I encouraged the management to liaise with the call-taking staff of the line and to discuss any elements of their daily work which may benefit from a fine-grained interaction analysis. Both the management and call-taking staff were encouraged by this and it was not long before they had compiled a list of topics which they were keen for me to examine. Thus, the analytic foci of the following chapters are all aspects of calls which were chosen by the helpline management and call-takers; managing the prohibition on giving advice, supporting crying callers, and getting to the ‘reason’ for the call. This final topic was subject to some negotiation, as the call-takers claimed that it would be helpful for them if I could examine calls where the caller ‘did not know what they wanted’. As this was a category constructed by the call-takers (i.e. callers do not claim that they do not know what they want) and not necessarily something which could be easily searched for in a data corpus, I negotiated with them that I would explore calls where they asked callers what it was they wanted. They were happy for me to do so, and thus such questions from the call-takers became the lead for that particular strand of research.

Occurrences of all of the above phenomena were specifically sought out in the corpus, although almost all calls were incorporated in to the analysis, particularly as advice was a live issue in the majority of calls. Detailed transcripts were made of many of these calls, or sections of the calls, following the transcription conventions for conversation analysis developed by Jefferson (2004) and the extension for transcribing crying developed by Hepburn (2004). A table explaining the transcription symbols used can be found in
appendix B. The analysis worked primarily with the audio recordings, the transcripts are principally of use to aid the reader to appreciate the analytic choices involved. Speakers are identified in the transcripts and in the main chapter text as CA for Caller, and MW (MIND Infoline Worker) for call-takers. There were five different call-takers working for MIND Infoline while calls were recorded, and they are differentiated from each other using the numbers 1 - 5 (i.e. using MW1, MW2, etc).

In the individual analysis chapters, the analyses of the various interactional phenomena are laid out in detail. Although the various analyses will have incorporated all instances of the phenomena in question which appear in the corpus, only a number of illustrative examples are presented which will allow the reader to understand the findings. Numerical breakdowns are also occasionally provided which are not offered as analyses themselves, but rather as additions to descriptions of the corpus and of the analytic foci.

**Transcription**

The transcription conventions used in this thesis are those created by Gail Jefferson, which are routinely used in conversation analytic and discursive psychological work (see Jefferson, 2004, for a thorough explanation of this system and its benefits). Jeffersonian transcription makes available a level of detail far beyond what is captured by the basic ‘typists’ transcript, including pauses, gaps, prosody, and intonation. There are many advantages of this method compared to the original basic transcription method, particularly as it allows the analysis of minimal turns and gaps in the talk, and other sounds and phenomena which may be interactionally significant and incorporated into the analysis. Of course, the transcripts themselves are not worked on alone as data. All of the analysis of the following chapters is based on listening to the recordings of the calls (the data itself). The transcripts however are essential in terms of representing the data in an alternate form to sound. They are invaluable during analysis as they can be worked with in tandem with the data, and allow the analyst to focus on a particular phenomenon in a more continuous and constant way than when working with sound alone.

Transcripts are also invaluable in making results available to others. They are more easily shared than soundfiles and can be read through during a playing of the data, and unless their accuracy is in question, they can be used in place of repeated playing or attempts to play small sections of data which may be difficult or time consuming to find using
soundfile software. The analytic chapters in this thesis offer the transcripts as a way of representing the data and sharing the analytic findings. The data itself can be accessed if desired, but due to the confidential nature of the material a copy of the calls used in the thesis will need to be obtained from the thesis supervisor; Prof. C. Antaki at Loughborough University.

**Analytic Method**

The analysis in the following chapters draws upon two sources; conversation analysis and discursive psychology. These are approaches to research which incorporate both theory and analytic method. There is much overlap in the theory and method of these two approaches, and in their current forms they share more similarities than differences. This next section will provide a succinct yet clear introduction to conversation analysis and discursive psychology, paying particular attention to the facets of both fields which are most important for the current thesis. These are, after all, well established fields and the aim here is to provide a description of both which is most appropriate for the analysis of the following chapters, and which fits the limited space available here.

**Conversation Analysis (CA)**

Wooffitt (2005) describes how the early work of Harvey Sacks which formed the origins of conversation analysis, was being conducted around the same time that Austin was working on his well known ‘speech act theory’ (e.g. Austin, 1965). Initially the two fields showed some similarities; Austin’s work focussed on the ways in which a sentence could perform or initiate an action, and the CA approach holds that when people engage in conversation, it is not merely passively descriptive, but rather it is the site of a great deal of social action (Drew, 2004). Wooffitt points out that the most profound difference between the two fields was that Sacks was able to show that the work an utterance performed was tied to the sequential placement of the utterance within the larger conversation. The often used example of this comes from Sacks’ work on an excerpt of talk from a call to a suicide prevention centre, where the call taker provides his name, and the caller does not. The transcript below is reproduced as it appears in Wooffitt’s chapter.
Sacks (1992) discussed the talk above as an example of how a caller can avoid giving their name. Callers would more usually offer their own name in response to the call-takers providing theirs, but in this case, the place where the caller’s name would appear is instead occupied with “I can’t hear you”. Yet it is only through the sequential placement of it that this utterance can be seen as a way of avoiding giving a name.

Austin’s work utilised examples of sentences which were invented for the work, and not sentences produced in actual talk. Sacks argued however that the all important sequential organisation cannot be guessed or surmised by an analyst, and worked only with recordings of naturally occurring talk. Sacks’ work went on from here, in collaboration with Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, to investigate ordinary conversation, focussing on its sequential nature and the social action it achieves (Wooffitt, 2005).

Drew (2004) considers the study of conversation to be an investigation of the “actions and activities through which social life is conducted” (p.75). This refers to the way in which conversation, or indeed any style of talk, is the site of actions such as inviting, greeting, building relationships, arguing, describing, and so on. CA has an emphasis on documenting the ways in which social activities are achieved through talk and aims to explicate the practices through which these activities are carried out in interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1992). CA is concerned with identifying and explicating those practices and how they make “coherent, mutually comprehensible communication and action possible in interaction” (Drew, 2004). As an example of the conversation analytic study of activities in talk, I offer the following example discussed by Drew. The transcript is reproduced exactly as in his article.
Drew uses this excerpt to discuss what he holds to be the four basic concepts which underpin CA’s exploration of the practices engaged in by speakers. These are turn taking in talk, turn design, social action, and sequence organisation. I will use and add to Drew’s examples here as a way of providing an overview of the main analytic principles in CA, using sections of the above extract to illustrate the separate points.

**Turn Taking**

This aspect of CA work is based on the principle that speakers can deliver one “turn constructional unit” (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974 p.701) before another speaker may legitimately take a turn at talking. Speakers may engage in various activities to ensure that their turn at talk is prolonged beyond the end of any single turn constructional unit (TCU), and to ensure that they claim a turn at talk when a current speaker is hearably coming to the end of a TCU. These TCUs can be made up of lexical, clausal, sentential, or phrasal units which carry out a coherent action, e.g. requesting, telling, inviting,
apologising and so on (Ibid). Drew focuses on the following lines from the above transcript in his discussion of turn taking.

Taken from Drew (2004).

Part of Drew’s discussion examines Emma’s turn of lines 3 to 6, which is made up of two separate TCUs; “n then: “yuh thin:k we:ll d’you wanna be” (pause) ↑PA:R:T of ut. w: Wuddiyuh ↑DOin.” and then “w: Wuddiyuh ↑DOin.”. Nancy could have legitimately started a turn at talk at the end of Emma’s first TCU (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974) but Emma quickly begins her next TCU, extending her turn at talk and it is this second TCU which is responded to. Drew argues that this serves then to change the topic of the conversation. Indeed, analysing talk in terms of participants’ turn taking activities has been a fruitful area of CA research, particularly in the area of analysing how speakers manage the telling of a multi-turn story or narrative (see for example Goodwin, 1984; Lerner, 1992; and Mandelbaum, 1978).

Sacks et al (1974) outlined two rules which account for the orderliness of turn-taking in interaction. The first of these is that, if a turn is designed such that it selects a specific next speaker (which may be done through e.g. directing a question to a named recipient), then they alone have the right to take the next turn. Otherwise, the first speaker to start after the end of a turn has the right to a full turn at talk. The current speaker may continue in this scenario should no other speaker self-select. The second rule is that if this “transition relevance place” (p.703) at the end of a TCU, the current speaker is the one who continues, then the first rule will apply again at the end of this new turn, and will repeatedly apply until speakership change occurs.
Turn Design

Drew (2004) describes how CA work has shown that speakers design their turns at talk (i.e., selects what goes into them) in two ways; selecting the action which that turn is to perform, and selecting the specific verbal construction of the turn through which to accomplish the action. Thus the analysis of turn design incorporates a focus on the social action accomplished by a turn at talk, and the verbal details of the turn which allow the action to be completed. As there is always an available range of alternatives, the way in which a turn is formed is hearable as “chosen” or “motivated” (Drew and Heritage, 1992 p.36). Drew uses the following section of the larger transcript to illustrate these points.

Taken from Drew (2004)

#5 [NB:11:29]
6 Emm: ..., w-Wuddiyuh ↑DQin.
7 (0.9)
8 Nan: What’m I do'in?
9 Emm: [Cleaning?]
10 Nan: =hh hh I’m ironing wouldn’t believe ↑that.
11 Emm: Oh; bless it's [heav'ry]
12 Nan: [In f g c t t] y des I start'd ironing en b d
13 l ( ) somehow es another thing is kind of lea've me;
14 c g [ld]
15 Emm: [Ye]sh.
16 ( )
17 Nan: [Yiknow.]
18 Emm: [Wanna c'm] do wn 'av a bah:ta jnch with me!

Drew points to the ways in which Emma responds to Nancy’s descriptions of what she is doing. On line 10 Nancy says she is ironing, using the present progressive tense which would indicate that she is now, currently, ironing. Emma responds with a “sympathetic acknowledgement” (p.83) of this. When Nancy alters this by saying that she had *started* ironing (line 12), which indicates that she may not currently be ironing, Emma responds by inviting her to lunch. Drew argues that the invitation could have been delivered online, but instead delivers it in an environment where it is more likely to be accepted (i.e. in an environment where Nancy describes herself as potentially not currently busy with the chore of ironing). This is an example of how a turn at talk is designed to be fitted to the specific interactional context; to the current state of affairs in the unfolding interaction. Drew’s intention here is to demonstrate that the social action chosen to be initiated by a turn is selected *based upon* the current state of affairs within the interaction.
Specific lexical choice is also important here, and Drew discusses Emma’s choice of terms for the proposed lunch. Inviting Nancy to come for a “bah:ta lunch” invokes something casual and involving very little preparation. Drew also argues that “Wanna” (line 18) is markedly casual, compared to alternatives such as ‘Would you care to..’, and together both of these elements of the turn contribute to what he calls the impromptu quality of the invitation.

The way in which an utterance is designed can make relevant a very specific response. For example, Boyd and Heritage (2006) showed that the way a question may be designed will determine whether it projects a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ in response. Turns are typically designed such that they ‘prefer’ one particular response out of the available options (e.g. an invitation may prefer an acceptance out of the options of accepting and declining). Speakers will often engage in much work to mitigate or account for dispreferred responses, whereas preferred responses are quickly deployed and devoid of accounts. Pomerantz (1984) offers the following examples of preferred and dispreferred responses to assessments. The transcripts are reproduced as they appear in Pomerantz’s chapter.

(NB: 1.6-2)
A: ... Well, anyway, ihs-ihs not too co:ld,
C: Oh it’s warm ...

(TG:3)
A: ... You sound very far away.
(0.7)
B: I do?
A: Ymeahm.
B: mNo I’m no:t,

Pomerantz showed that the preferred response to an assessment is one which aligns with the assessment. In the first example above, the preferred, aligning response is given, and it without delay, and (as Pomerantz showed is often the case in preferred responses to assessments) offers an upgraded version of affairs. The second example shows a dispreferred response to an assessment, which is delayed by a gap and also a repair sequence (such sequences were again shown by Pomerantz to be a common feature of
dispreferred responses). Studies of the organisation of this preference structure constitute a large body of work in CA, and it is a more complex phenomenon that may be indicated here. We will return to preference organisation in chapter five when examining responses to questions. An authoritative yet concise discussion of preference structure can be found in Schegloff (2007).

A great amount of analytic work on the various aspects of turn design exists, including work on turn design in institutional interactions (as mentioned in the previous chapter) and it is clear from the existing body of work that turns at talk are designed to be as best fitting as possible to the interaction at that current point (see Heritage, 1997). It is perhaps this element of conversation analytic work which will be most heavily drawn upon for the analytic chapters of this thesis, particularly due to the focus on procedural consequentiality. The design of turns at talk will be shown in the analysis to bring into being a number of various institutional agendas and constraints.

Social Action

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, CA researches take the view that talk is a primary site for engaging in social action. In the transcript of talk between Emma and Nancy that we have been examining, we can see overt social actions such as the invitation to lunch, or the declination of this invitation. Drew (2004) however uses the following section of the transcript to discuss a social action which is more subtly achieved.

Taken from Drew (2004)

```
#9 {NB:II:2:9]  
18 Emm: Wanna c'm dwnl av [a bah:ta] lunch w/wh me?=
19 Nan: "{It's  j} (   j"
20 Emm: Ah got s'm hgr'nt stuff,
21 (0.1)
22 Nan: ↑ Wul yer ril sweet hon; uh:m
23 ( )
24 Emm: [Or d'y] o'w'v sup'n else "(   )"
```

In line 24, following Nancy’s “↑ Wul yer ril sweet hon; uh:m” and the brief pause, Emma delivers “Or d’you’av sup’n else "(   )". A great deal of social action is carried out in these turns. Nancy offers a compliment to Emma, rather than an immediate answer about
lunch. This displays an appreciation of the invite, before the eventual declination, countering any potential alternative reading of the declination (such that e.g. Nancy is ungrateful). In response to this Emma deploys a standard reason for the declination of an invitation; that the invited person has a prior engagement or activity of some kind. Nancy could thus merely agree with this, rather than overtly decline the invitation, and indeed she goes on to offer what the 'something else' is.

These actions may be discussed in terms of their overt, more surfacely available achievements (complimenting, offering an account for a potential declination) as well as more subtly achieved actions (displaying an orientation to an invitation, allowing a co-speaker to offer agreement rather than on overt declination). The term action in CA analysis will also refer to actions such as topic change, which may also be achieved quite subtly as in the example above where Emma changes topic by following one TCU very closely with another.

Sequence Organisation

The final underpinning concept in Drew's (2004) discussion of CA is that of sequence organisation, which refers to the ways in which individual turns at talk are related to one another in organised patterns or sequences. This relationship can be seen at a very basic level in the relationship between turns in an adjacency pair: pairs of actions which are treated by participants as paired with each other, such as an invitation and an acceptance / declination, question and answer, greeting and return greeting, etc. (Sacks, 1992). Once a speaker has delivered an action, the appropriate paired response becomes immediately relevant. If the co-speaker does not produce the response, it becomes noticeably missing and the speaker becomes accountable for not producing it (Schegloff, 2007). See for example the three second gap after Emma offers her invitation to Nancy in the last transcript excerpt. Such delays in producing the paired action are commonly treated as accountable, and as leading to a declination of an invitation (Davidson, 1984).

A further sequence in the transcript we have been working with here is what Drew (2004) refers to as the pre-invitation sequence of lines 6 to 10, where Emma asks Nancy what she is doing, and Nancy tells that she is ironing. The study of sequence organisation then involves studying the overall process of engaging in actions, and in this case of invitation sequences, these are often clearly organised into pre-invitation followed by a response or
enquiry, and then the invitation followed by an acceptance or a declination (Davidson, 1984). Indeed, an adjacency pair is the smallest type of sequence studied within CA work with action sequences expanding across multiple adjacency pairs (see Schegloff, 2007, for an authoritative account of sequence and sequence structure).

These four elements are not separable from each other in analysis. For example, the action that is projected by an initial utterance, such as an answer which is projected by the issuing of a question, may be delayed, delivered with some trouble, or it may not actually be produced at all. It is analysis which considers both parts (i.e. the sequence) which can provide insight into the actions oriented to by participants as being achieved in the talk, and claimed by analysts as being initiated in the talk. But CA analysts must ground their claims about action in the talk produced by the participants, and show (where possible) that they are oriented to the actions being achieved. For example, we can argue that in the extract we examined above, Emma’s turn of line 24 “Or d’yav sup’n else o( )o” displays her understanding of Nancy’s prior turn (“†Wul yer ril sweet hon; uhm”) as potentially preceding a declination of the invitation to lunch.

**Discursive Psychology (DP)**

In their book “Discursive Psychology”, Edwards and Potter (1992) introduce the field as both an approach to research and an analytic method, arguing for a reconceptualising of how conversational and textual data are dealt with. Moving away from seeing discourse as an expression of underlying cognitive and/or emotional events, they encourage analysis to examine talk and texts (which ostensibly describe such events) to examine to social actions achieved or initiated by them. Edwards and Potter encourage an appreciation for the sequential nature of talk in the analysis of conversational data, paying attention to the precedents and antecedents of any particular utterance and arguing that psychological and emotional terms are often utilised in activity sequences. They also cite the principle arising from conversation analytic work which encourages the exploration of all aspects of discourse, such as pauses, overlaps, lexical repair, etc, in the analysis of how utterances are designed and what their interactional consequences may be.

More recently, Edwards & Potter (2001) discussed three features of discourse which are taken as core principals of DP which tie together the points above. First, discourse is seen
as action-oriented; as the primary medium through which actions are carried out. For example, a factual account may be assembled in a manner through which it can perform an action such as inviting, or blaming. Second, discourse is considered to be situated. On one hand, an utterance is occasioned by previous talk, and in turn sets a preference for what sort of utterance should follow next (whether it does follow or not). In this sense talk is context renewing, as an utterance may continue with, or indeed shift, the context invoked and oriented to by participants, as discussed in the description of CA above. On the other, talk is situated rhetorically, such that discourse may be examined for what other alternatives it may serve to counter or resist. Third, discourse is constructed and constructive. It is *constructed* in the sense that it is constructed to perform specific rhetorical work from a vast range of lexical, metaphorical, phrasal etc. resources available to all speakers. Discourse is held to be *constructive* in that versions of the social world; past and current events, internal phenomena, social processes etc, are all constructed and made live in discourse.

As an example of the discursive psychological approach, I offer here a data excerpt from Edwards (1999). This extract comes from a marriage counselling session, and the talk is by a participant in the counselling who has been discussing events which happened prior to her husband leaving the marital home. The formatting of the extract is as found in the original article.

Extract 1 (DE-JF:C2:S1:4)

1 Connie: At that point, (0.6) Jimmy ha- (.) my-
2 Jimmy is extremely jealous. Ex- extremely
3 jealous per:son. Has a:1ways ↓been, from
4 the da:y we met. Y’know? An’ at that point
5 in time, there was an episo:de, with (.) a
6 bloke, (.) in a pub, y’know? And me: having
7 a few drinks and messin’. (0.8) That was it.
8 (0.4) Right? And this (0.4) got all out of
9 hand to Jimmy according to Jimmy I was
10 a:1ways doin’ it and .hhh y’know a:1ways
11 aggravating him. He was a jealous per:son
12 I: aggravated the situation. .h And he
Edwards focuses on (amongst other points) on how ‘jealousy’ is constructed as an enduring feature of Jimmy’s personality; it is dispositional and has existed from the beginning of their time together and thus prior to their current difficulties. According to the principles of discursive psychology, Connie’s ‘description’ of her husband as “extremely jealous” is analysed for what the interactional and social implications are for the use of this particular construction in this particular environment. Edwards argues that in the marriage guidance setting where the above data were recorded, such use of emotion terminology draws the focus to internal events and away from the events in the world which the emotion is directed at (in this case, towards Jimmy’s disposition and away from Connie’s behaviour). The use of psychological terminology in the management of the relationship between the subjective internal world, and the objective external world has been a long-standing theme within discursive psychological research, and we will return to this theme in chapter six when analysing responses to crying callers.

It is in this manner that DP approaches all expressions of internal states, experiences, and activities; seeing them as produced for social interaction purposes, rather than as a collection of internal ‘goings on’ which result in or which can explain a particular utterance. This is not to say that such internal experience does not occur, or that descriptions of them should be treated as untrue. Rather, the analyst should work with what is available to them and others (the discourse) and not with what is unavailable (the internal experience), and examine the discourse only in terms of its’ interactional import (Edwards and Potter, 1992). This reworking of the approach to the analysis of psychological concepts has been at the core of discursive psychology, but it is worth here discussing what Edwards (2004) describes as the main themes within discursive psychological research.

Respecification and Critique: This refers to the way in which DP respecifies concepts from cognitive and social psychology from a discursive perspective. Psychological topics such as memory (Locke and Edwards, 2003), concern (Potter and Hepburn, 2003), and attitudes (Potter, 1996) are discussed as interactional resources available to participants.
for the purposes of social action. Traditional psychological work is critiqued for ignoring the interactional work carried out when psychological concepts are deployed in talk.

The Psychological Thesaurus: The range of lexical and phrasal items referring to (what have traditionally been seen as) psychological concepts are explored for their interactional import. This incorporates psychological words such as ‘remember’, ‘angry’, ‘upset’, and also idiomatic or metaphorical terms such as ‘boiling mad’ and ‘at the end of his tether’.

The Management of Psychological Business: This refers to the study of how psychological concepts are managed in talk, and delivered in a manner which makes them (e.g.) appear real or difficult to challenge, or how they me be caused by or relate to objects in the world.

As is the case with the four elements of CA analysis discussed above, these themes within DP do not appear in the discursive psychological literature only as separate elements of analysis, but are rather carried out in tandem, and clearly lend themselves to each other.

How conversation analytic and discursive psychological research compare

I hope it is clear from the above discussion of both approaches that there is much overlap between them. As it has developed, DP has been heavily influenced by the theory and method of CA, but it also has roots in other traditions which have themselves been influenced by CA, such as discourse analysis (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and the sociology of scientific knowledge (e.g. Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984). All of these traditions, particularly CA, were influenced in their earliest conceptions by ethnomethodology (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007).

As mentioned, the discursive psychological analysis of talk shares many facets of conversation analytic work, such as an attention to the sequential order of utterances and the context-renewing nature of talk, and the attention to talk as social action. There are some clear differences between the two approaches also, one of which has been addressed in the previous chapter. DP has not typically taken such a fine-grained approach to the aspects of turn organisation and sequence structure as has been the case.
within CA (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007), and indeed this thesis goes some way in this direction.

A further difference regards the very nature of talk itself, and how it relates to the objects, events, experiences etc that it ostensibly describes. As mentioned, DP eschews the view of language as a simple representation of peoples’ internal and external worlds, and argues that researchers should not view talk as a purely descriptive medium. The issue as to whether internal cognitive and emotional occurrences exist or are being described accurately are replaced in discursive psychological work with the focus on how these occurrences are constructed in talk, and an attempt to explicate their social interactional sequelae (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007). While this somewhat constructionist approach to language is shared to a degree in some CA work, CA writers on occasion will treat talk as a window to cognitions. DP writers and some CA writers will at most say that talk is a display of what ‘may’ be. The view of language taken by DP is not essentially incompatible with that of CA, but DP writers have focussed in a more systematic way on the ways in which descriptions of cognitions and emotions are constructed, and how this relates to their interactional functions. For example, Edwards’ (1995, 1997) work on how constructions of emotions by clients in relationship counselling sessions can be utilised in the assignment of blame to the other client for the relational troubles (as in the ‘jealous’ example above), and thus nominating them as the one in need of therapy.

A further strand within DP, particularly within the early, major texts outlining the approach and method of DP (e.g. Potter, 1996; Edwards and Potter, 1992) is work which shows how talk is assembled to compete against existing or potential counter claims. Much emphasis is placed on examining utterances in terms of how they are constructed to be persuasive and also defendable against counter claims or alternate versions of the same event(s). This work is heavily influenced by the rhetorical tradition of Billig (1996) and again is not a feature of conversation analytic work (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007).

The Analysis of this Thesis

In the analytic chapters which follow, I will draw upon the principles and methods from CA and DP, and it may be clear during reading that some chapters draw upon one approach more than the other. Schegloff (1992) argues that when analysing data from institutional settings, the analyst must document the specific ways in which the
participants orient to the institutional context by outlining the ways in which this orientation impacts upon the unfolding interaction. The participants in the interactions analysed here, were not co-present, and thus the activities of each participant are conducted solely through “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff, 1987). Thus, it is the task of this thesis to produce analysis which is grounded in the data, particularly in the participants’ activities and orientations, and which shows how the phenomena I discuss are achieved in the talk.
Chapter 3: The Business of MIND Infoline

In this first analytic chapter we will see how calls to MIND Info typically progress from opening to closing. The aim here is to display and discuss the main elements which constitute these interactions; how calls are answered, what actions callers initially engage in, how the call-takers manage callers’ actions, and how calls are brought to an end. This is indeed quite a range of issues to cover in one chapter, and the analysis of some of these topics will indeed be brief; serving to illuminate the ways in which they are achieved by the speakers rather than to make very specific analytic points.

We shall however examine one element of the calls in somewhat more detail than others. One of the topics chosen by the MWs as a potential focus for analysis was, as they termed it, ‘looking at callers who don’t know what they want’. This presented an initial problem of what to search for in the corpus; callers did not routinely say that they did not know what they wanted. As ‘callers who don’t know what they want’ was a category for the MWs, it was decided to explore the occurrences of MWs asking callers what it is they wanted. This was discussed with the MWs before analysis began, and they agreed that this would be a useful way to progress. The analysis of such questioning will show how MWs constitute the remit of the line in their talk, and move calls towards the main business of the line by making relevant a request for information. These actions are achieved through what I call ‘agenda constraining interrogatives’.

Indeed, this initial chapter aims to explicate the main types of actions and interactional sequences which callers and MWs engage in, such that we can refer easily to them in the more focused analytic chapters which follow. These actions and sequences are grossly observable, recurrent features of the calls which are similar enough in content or interactional function to allow for categorisation or gloss using terms such as ‘statistics gathering’, or ‘call closing’. Through explicated these recurrent, macro-sequential elements of the calls we shall have an understanding of the context in which we find the more subtle, less common phenomena of the later chapters. This is not to say that any analysis engaged in here has been less rigorously conducted than in the following chapters, but rather that we have a broad focus here which is more descriptive in places than the work of the following chapters.
Analysis

Call Structure

Each of the three analytic chapters which follow this one will have specific, narrow areas of analytic focus, and will begin with an initial introduction to the relevant existing research in the area. As we are engaged in a very different process in this first analytic chapter, we will begin instead with a somewhat descriptive piece, which outlines the main ways in which a MIND Infoline call may proceed from beginning to end.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, MIND Infoline has a quite specific remit in terms of the service it aims to provide to callers, as well as a number of constraints which dictate what cannot be offered to callers (such as emotional support, or advice). The main remit, or the ‘target element’ of each call, is to provide information on mental health issues. This ranges from information on actual illnesses to information about services which support those affected by mental illness. Once this information has been provided, the MWs then attempt to gather (what they call) statistical information from the callers; their age, the area of the country they live in, and where they found the number for the information line.

Drew and Heritage, (1992) claim that the institutional nature of an interaction will often be a product of a routine or standard overall structure, and MIND Infoline calls tend to comprise of a standard set of sequences. All calls are answered using a standard format; the MWs opening turn is typically “Good morning / Good afternoon / Hello MIND Infoline”. Occasionally “how can I help” is added. Callers will sometimes follow this opening turn with a request for information, but very often they will engage in a telling about a problem, or in a request for something other than information such as advice, or help, or to speak with the MW for a while. The MWs then respond to these in ways which help to move the interaction towards the main remit of the line, while managing the various constraints placed upon them. Thus, the ideal structure of a call (in terms of MIND Infoline’s remit) would be one where the caller opens with a request for relevant information, which is then delivered and followed by the statistical information gathering, before the call is ended. This structure is often departed from very early in the call however due to callers engaging in something other than a request for information. In these cases, the MWs typically proffer a course of action which the callers may engage in which is relevant to the problem described (please see chapter four for more information.
on what constitutes the ‘proffering of a course of action’). If this is taken up by the callers, the MWs can then engage in the main business of the line by providing information related to the course of action, such as the address of a support agency.

The progress of a call is mainly determined by the type of action engaged in by the callers, and calls typically progress following the pathway of the ideal call discussed above. Callers may engage in rejections of the information provided (e.g. if they have already contacted a specific service), or issue further requests once some initial information has been provided. While most MIND Infoline calls are less than two minutes in length, some of the calls in the corpus exceed this greatly, with the longest lasting just under forty minutes (a call with multiple rejections of the information and courses of action proffered by the MW). The opening turn typically used by the MWs appears not to constrain callers’ first turns, which vary greatly. Indeed, the standard opening turn by the MWs (“Hello MIND Infoline”) in response to the summons of the ring, is typical of institutional call openings where the purpose of this turn is to confirm for the caller that they are through to a particular person or organisation. Caller identification is often not treated as a live issue and callers are less constrained in terms of how to begin than in ordinary conversation (Schegloff, 2002). In a few cases the callers offer some identifying information following their initial ‘Hello’, but this is rare and is typically a feature of calls where the caller offers a particular professional identity, as in the first example below..

The following transcript is from a call which follows the ideal pathway discussed above, and clearly displays the main elements of such calls. Notice that the caller delivers a subjective telling of how they are ‘wanting to speak with someone’ at a specific MIND branch, rather than issuing a more direct request for information using an interrogative (e.g. such as ‘Can you give me the number for Mansfield branch?’). Indeed, the use of interrogatives to form explicit requests for information is very rare in the corpus. MWs do orient to such turns as requiring the provision of information, and will follow them by searching for and delivering information, as in the following example.
Extract 1: JM - 65880 Eco Therapy Information

01 MW1 Hello mindinfo line?
02 (.2)
03 CA Hello=der >my name< is ((namez)) °°tk°°
04 °I' [m a ps]ychotherapist in: Mansfield
05 MW1 [Hi. ]
06 CA >for the en aitch ess< .hhh an' >I wonder
07 if I could< se- ;speak to <anyone (.) in the
08 Mansfield branch >with re<gard to (.)
09 ecotherapy
10 (.)
11 MW1 Let's >have a look< for you< .hhh I'll just
get their number hh
12 CA >Thank you<
13 (8.2)
14 MW1 °;o;k° >do you have a< pen=there?
15 (1.0)
16 CA >I have< indeed h[h]
17 MW1 [A]lright the: number
18 >for our< (. ) Mansfield office (. ) is
19 ((Number Exchange 5.5 Seconds)
20 CA <zero double four. Th[at's won]derful
21 MW1 [°yeah° ]
22 (.)
23 CA >Thank you very much.<
24 MW1 >Can I ask< ;where you >found the number for
25 the< information line today.
26 (.)
27 CA Yes: ahm (.) on thee a >website<
28 m[ind dot org ] u kay,
The caller offers a telling of an internal state; in lines 6 to 9; "I wonder if I could speak to anyone in the Mansfield branch with regards to ecotherapy". The MW treats this as sufficient to launch a search for information, displaying an orientation to it as a request in her turn of lines 11 and 12; "Let's have a look for you. I'll just get their number hh". Curl and Drew (2008) analysed occurrences of 'I wonder if' prefaced requests in both ordinary and institutional interactions, and claimed that they display an orientation to unknown contingencies regarding the granting of the request. Curl and Drew also show how such forms are used when the speaker has a low entitlement to have the request granted. There are indeed many potential issues of entitlement and contingency to the request above, such as whether anyone at Mansfield branch can discuss eco therapy, and it may be these contingencies which lead to the use of such a form of requesting.

While the caller's request if not explicitly for information about how to contact Mansfield MIND, the caller treats the MW's action of providing their contact information as sufficient (i.e. he does not request something other than the number for the branch which she has provided). A further element worth noticing here is that the MW does not ask all of the statistical questions, only the source from where the caller obtained the number. This frequently happens when the caller identifies themselves as a health professional, or as calling from an organisation. When they do not identify themselves in such a way, callers are typically asked all three questions, as can be seen in the next extract. This second extract shows a similar pattern to the first, with the caller using another indirect form of requesting, but this time the MW engages in a general search for information and when a course of action is proffered, it is rejected by the caller.
Extract 2: JM – 67595 Information on Pets

01   MW2  .hhh .) hello mind=info li:ne?

02   CA    *tk* Hi:. ahm >! I wondered if< you’ve

03       got any information on: ahm people

04     with mental health issue[s. a:]nd the

05       [tk .hh]

06   CA    benefits of their pets:¿ hh=

07   MW2    .hh right ah:m (.2)

08     tk we >don’t have anything as< specific

09    as that I’m afrai:d: .hhh ahm I’m

10   >wondering< who may be able to help you

11   MW2  this. just [>bear with me< one]

12   CA       [mm::.

13   MW2    momen[tz]

14   CA  [th]ank you.

15   (0.2)

16   ?  mm,

17   (8.6)

18   MW2  .thhhh (.>an< organisation such as

19   support an’ assistant ;dogs may >be able

20   to< help you¿ .hhh

21   (.2)

22   MW2  Ah[h]

23   CA    [R]ight #w’ll it’s:≠ >not actually<

24   ;dogs uhh £eh £eh [heh£]

25   MW2    [#ri ]ght.≠ .hhh >I

26   mean< we don’t >have any<thing like

27   that ahm (.) >you could try< rethink¿

28   <would you like their ;number¿

29   (.3)

Information request, or turn which is treated as an information request by the MWs.

Proffering a course of action

Rejection of the information / course of action

Proffering an alternative course of action
Y- yes what>who are< they?

(.)

$hth$ rethink are formally the national schizophrenia fellowship, but they deal with all severe an' enduring mental health issues, an' they may have

(okay)

something with regards to pets [t.hhhh]

(okay,)

$ttheir number i:s .hhh (.2) tk (.2)

(Number Exchange 6.9 Seconds)

$lovely

(.)

Thank[s <very much.

[>Just for our< statistics whereabouts in the< country are you?

(.)

London

$hth an' who=reco;mmended you to mind

(.4)

$a:;:m a- (.I'm- I (.5) use mind anyway 'cos I'm< mental health patient

(.)

an' >d'you mind me taking your age finally forty one.

.hh thank you >very much< take care now.

Thank you

(.)

By[e ]

;Bye}
Extract two again shows all of the main elements of a MIND Infoline call as described earlier, but in this case the initial information is rejected; “Right #w’ll it’s:# >not actually< ↑dogs uhh £heh heh heh£” (lines 23 to 24). The MW proffers an alternative on line 27; “>you could try< rethink£”. Notice that this is followed on line 28 by an interrogative (“<would you like their ↓number£”) which makes relevant a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer from the caller, constraining their response to the realm of (ostensible) uptake of this course of action. We shall discuss such interrogatives and how they themselves proffer a course of action in greater detail in chapter five. After a delay the caller issues a somewhat troubled ‘yes’ on line 30, which would provide an ideal interactional place for the MW to issue the telephone number. This is postponed however by the question issued by the caller directly after her ‘yes’; “↑what=>who are< they?”. Once an answer has been provided, the MW moves straight into the delivery of the number on line 39. As in extract one, when the caller issues a ‘thank you’ following the number exchange, the MW begins the statistical information gathering sequence which in this instance comprises of all three of the questions which the MWs are encouraged to ask. The MWs in both calls issue a pre-closing turn following their caller’s final answer to the statistical questions;

Call 1: “↑that’s lovely£ thank you very much for that.” (lines 32 to 33)

Call 2: “↑hh thank you >very much< take care now.” (line 55)

Call ending then follows these pre-closing turns in both of the examples above.

Extracts one and two respectively show the typical ways in which the calls in the corpus progress. The progression is quite similar, with the second call differing due to the rejection of the initial information delivered by the MW, and the gathering of all of the ‘statistical data’ by the MW. Both calls begin with the callers issuing requests which can feasibly be met by the line, and which the MWs appear to treat as requests they can assist the callers with.

The table below outlines the final number of calls in the corpus from each of the individual MWs. The range of call length (shortest to longest) is also shown, in seconds and minutes. The ranges are relatively similar for each of the MWs, apart from the call
taken by MW1 which extends to over 39 minutes in length. Calls of this length are very rare, and this particular call was included in the corpus as MW1 requested this.

Table outlining number of calls from each MW, and call length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIND Infoline Worker</th>
<th>Number of Calls</th>
<th>Call Length Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MW1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>00:45 – 39:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>00:43 – 18:06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>00:50 – 11:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>00:35 – 12:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>00:37 – 16:52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When calls in the corpus vary from the call structure outlined above, this tends to be when callers engage in other actions apart from making requests. Following call opening, callers will sometimes engage in the telling of a problem or trouble before the call moves on to a request for, or proffering of, information. They may also issue requests for something other than information, such as to talk with the MW for a while. As we shall see, MWs will respond to such questions in a way which makes relevant a request for information. As these are the main ways in which call content varies from the content of the calls outlined above, we shall explore them here so as to provide readers with an overview of all of the main call elements found in the corpus. Some of these elements feature again in the later analytic chapters, and thus it is helpful to spend some time on them here so they can be referred to more briefly later on.

**Callers' opening actions and MWs' agenda constraining interrogatives**

We move now to examples of call openings where callers do not issue requests for information, but rather engage in requests for something other than information, or in a problem delivery. We will also see here how the MWs attempt to set an institutionally relevant agenda for the continuing interaction, which moves the call towards the business of the line (providing information). The first extract from such a call shows a caller making a request for something other than information. This call has a different data tag from all of the others in the corpus, because the call was saved specifically by the MW who took the call and sent to me separately. The MW requested that I examine the call for her as, at over thirty-nine minutes in length the call is usually long, and she reported
having great difficulty in bringing the call to a close. The analysis here however focuses on the first minute of the call, the caller’s opening actions, and the MW’s attempt to set an appropriate agenda for the continuing interaction.

Extract 3: JM - Flagged Call 1.

01  MW1  Hello mindinfoline~ hh
02  (.)
03  ((Mechanical ‘clunk’ sound))
04  CA  .hhh oh=yeah hello .hh=
05  MW1  =>Hello<
06  CA  Ah:mm: tk (.2) oh >okay.< first o:ffs:
07  I’ll (.) jus::t=start by< saying I am a
08  (. ) I’m a mem:ber of <mind,>
09  MW1  Okay~
10  (.5)
11  CA  ehh an:d=ahm: o.hh o s:- I s’pose you’d
call me a s:ervice u:ser
12  MW1  Ri[ght,]
13  CA  [.h ]hhh (.5) AHM: hh (.5) ((squeak sound))
14  (. ) ri:ght (. ) well I ;don’t I mean >I’m I’m<
15  I’m r:in. (.8) °a°=hhh=I know<::: I wi- >I’ll
16  level< wiv you, f:v- p- par- part of the (.)
17  >reason I’m< ringin’ is >cos I’m just<
desp’ret >for someone to< talk to,
18  (.5)
19  MW1  Right, Oka[y ]
20  CA  [>ho]pe that’s< alright,
21  MW1  .hhhh[h ↑>Yeah< ]
22  CA  [>because I] don’t know anyone< else to
23  ring,
While there is a great deal which could be said about the extract above, I wish to start with the caller’s turn beginning in line 14, in which he says that he is calling ‘in part’ because he is “desperate for someone to talk to”. There are two aspects of this turn which are important for our focus here, first of all that there will be at least one ‘other part’ to the caller’s reasons for calling, and that this first reason (being desperate to talk to someone) constitutes a dilemma for the MW. As mentioned, MWs are not permitted to engage in interactions which may be considered ‘chat’, or to be ‘supporting’ a caller who needs something other than information. MWs are encouraged to provide information and bring the call to an end while remaining friendly to, and supportive of, the caller for the duration of the single call. Notice how the caller himself orients to this as potentially problematic through the use of “I’ll level with you,” (lines 16 & 17), which is a way of ‘coming clean’ about one of the reasons for the call.

The caller’s turn is met with a gap of 0.5 seconds and then the MW comes in with “Right, Okay”. Together these may be hearable as indicating some potential trouble with granting this request; a gap of this length typically indicates trouble in responding (Schegloff, 2007) and in doctor / patient interaction, receipts such as ‘okay’ are oriented to as signalling the end of client talk and the beginning of solution focussed talk by the doctor (Beach, 1995). The end of the MW’s “Right, Okay” is in overlap with the caller’s
next turn (on line 22) “>hope that’s< alright,” to which the MW responds with “.hhhhh ↑>Yeah<”. This is arguably hearable as stronger affiliation with the caller's talk, but the caller does not wait for the ‘yeah’ before coming in with what might be hearable as a reason for why he is desperate to talk with someone; “>because I don’t know anyone< else to ring,” (lines 24 and 25). After a brief gap the MW issues “>ny<o!khayh” which is again mostly delivered in overlap as again the caller comes in with an increment to his prior turn; ““in° (h)in the world .hhh . ahm: (.3) k. hhhhh” (lines 28 and 29). Thus, up to this point in the interaction the MW has aligned with the caller’s actions in her turns of lines 21 and 27, and provided tacit affiliation on line 23 with the caller’s request to speak to someone. Yet her interrogative which follows this sequence exerts constraints on the caller to issue a more institutionally relevant request; “>Wha- what were you< looking for from the information line today.” (lines 30 and 32). I argue that such interrogatives are a device frequently used by the MWs when callers do not engage in a line-appropriate request for information.

Heritage and Robinson (2006) examined similar questions in medical settings, focussing in part on “general inquiry” questions by doctors such as “What can I do for you today?” (p.89), and argued that such questions allowed for callers to present their problem in their own terms, while constraining the response by making immediately relevant a request, or a problem presentation. The interrogative deployed by the MW above performs similar work, by allowing the caller to deliver the request in their own terms (i.e. in more open terms than for example a yes / no interrogative would allow) while constraining their response in a number of ways. The first part of the interrogative (“>Wha- what were you< looking for”) indexes something specific which the caller ‘was looking for’. Of course, the MW is not aware whether there is such a specific thing, and this turn beginning serves as a display that the MW considers the caller to be looking for something particular. Misaligning with the preference structure of a question is not something which recipients generally do as it is more socially cohesive to align with the first speaker (Sacks, 1987), and so it may well be the case that such a display helps to constrain callers’ answers by encouraging them to align with the MWs displayed expectation that they want something specific.

The second part of the interrogative (“...from the information line today.”) further constrains the caller’s response by invoking the nature or remit of MIND Infoline as an ‘information line’, and making relevant a request for information. Boyd & Heritage
(2006) argue that questions imply an information gap or deficit that the recipient is required to remedy, and that they create a specific agenda to be followed by establishing particular issues as topics of inquiry. The MW's interrogative here constrains the caller's responses such that they must stay within the agenda set by the interrogative, i.e. the interrogative makes relevant the delivery of the 'thing' which the caller wanted from the information line. The caller continues by delivering a request for information about a topic within the realm mental health services, and thus aligns with the various constraints exerted by the interrogative (see lines 32 to 38).

We continue with an extract which again shows a caller delivering a request for something other than information, and another deployment of such an 'agenda constraining interrogative'.

Extract 4: JM – 63502 Body Dysmorphic Disorder

01 MW3 Good afternoon= mind Infoline can
02 I help? you
03 (. )
04 CA ah yeah eh omm hm° I do- (.8) .hh
05 ( .) ( "hang on °)
06 (1.1) ° uhh°
07 MW3 tk hell, o
08 CA Hello ohm[m.°]
09 MW3 [Hi ] >can I help< ;you,
10 (2.3)
11 CA . hhh we- >c'n you< (. ) tell me (.2)
12 ;how <you wor:k (. ) please
13 MW3 . hh okay >we're an< information service,
14 an' >we provide< information on all aspects
15 'f mental health difficulties . hhh >was
16 it< information on something specific you
17 were looking [for]
18  CA [khh] hm. hh (.6) w’ll hh (.3)
19  t.hhh >I don’t< know:
20  (.3)
21  CA hehh .hhh, (.6) what it i:s (.3) I’ve got
22  <ahm: (.3) body dysmorphic disorder.
23  (.2)
24  MW3 .h right okay:
25  CA An::d (.8)

The MW’s first turn includes a yes / no interrogative (“can I help? you”) which constrains the caller’s answer by making relevant a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (Raymond, 2003). The caller aligns with this by beginning her turn in line 4 with “ah yeah”. The caller does not continue by making a request however, and some of what is delivered sounds as though it is directed at someone who is co-present with the caller. The MW re-issues a greeting on line 7 (“tk helljo”) which is returned by the caller, and the MW then re-issues her yes / no interrogative. After a 2.3 second gap, the caller asks to be told how the line works, and the MW does a description of the line on lines 13 and 14, saying that they are an information service providing information on all aspects of mental health. Of most interest to us here is the interrogative which follows; “>was it< information on something specific you were looking for?” (lines 15 to 17).

As with the previous example, the interrogative here constructs the MW as viewing the caller as looking for information, and it again exerts a number of constraints on the caller’s answer. The question design utilises a ‘yes / no interrogative’ format which makes relevant the confirmation or disconfirmation of whether it information on ‘something specific’ (rather than that it is actually information) which is wanted. A ‘yes’ answer would make relevant the specific information request. A ‘no’ answer would merely disconfirm that ‘the information the caller wants’ is on something specific, and would still be delivered in an interactional environment where the caller has been constructed as wanting information. Thus, the question sets ‘the type of information wanted by the caller’ as the agenda for the coming turns. As the provision of information is the main function of MIND Infoline, the question examples from extracts three and four above can be said to set an agenda of the business of the line. In example four
however, the caller 'pushes back' at the constraints set by the interrogative, and issues "t.hh >I don’t < know:" (line 19) and then after a short gap moves into what is the beginning of a problem delivery about not being allowed to get a referral to a dermatologist as she has body dysmorphic disorder. This telling is encouraged by the MW through the use of ".h right okay:" (line 24).

In his work on questions in medical settings, Frankel (1995) argues that questions must not be analysed in isolation, but that their interactional importance is only analysable utilising the responses given. In extract three the caller aligns with the constraint set by the interrogative by issuing a request for information on a mental health topic, while in extract four the caller avoids providing a 'yes' or 'no' answer by issuing an 'I don’t know'. This answer pushes back against the constraints set by the interrogative, and although it does not challenge the MWs construction that she 'wants information', the caller then goes on to problem delivery and away from the agenda of information. Extract 5 demonstrates the use of an agenda constraining interrogative, and shows a caller’s non alignment with the constraints set by it by offering a further telling of her ‘thoughts’, and also that this telling is treated by the MW as a place to launch the delivery of information.

Extract 5: JM – 58970 Brother’s Alcoholism and Illness

01 MW4 .hh tk good >morning you’re through
02 to the mind< information line how >can
03 I< help. hh=
04 CA =.tkh yeah >I wondered< e-
05 >;could< I ;ahm >be able to speak to
06 somebody< regarding ;ah:m (.3) my brother,
07 (.5)
08 CA (who’s / he’s) (. ) alco<holic who I think
09 has got (. ) am mental illness as we[ll]?
10 MW4 [y:-]
11 ;yeah you can >speak ;to me about that,<
12 CA Oh (cos- i- €hyeahhh) >can I< .hhhh ah
13 >what it is< ie
((2 mins 54 seconds omitted where caller talks about her mother’s schizophrenia, her brother’s mental health history, and his current symptoms))

>so this must< be llike (. ) <how mum was

like=h, hhh (. ,) o-a-o really >bel<ievin’

things (1.0) really believin’ #th1ings#

that ahm (.6) that weren’t really ha-

<that hadn’t really happened;

(.3)

okay, .hh so:. thh (. ) w:hat >kind of

information then are you< looking

[for from me regarding this (then.)]

[w’ll because I think o-e-o I:: ] ;thin:k

that he: .hhhh t+t>lots o’times twhen he’s
gone on a bender< e- e- he swears blind

>that he< hasn’t had a drink an’ >things

like ‘at<=o- >that’s< quite a u- a- you

know an (>if you thin-) o w’ll< all

alcoholics do that (.4) tk t>but I< think

in one way:, (. ) that he might be suff’rin;

(.) from schizophrenia

(.2)

.h[hhthh (. ) y:e ]ah. .h it’s >gonna be<

[like as my mother.]

really difficult °to° tell when alcohol

is involved, cos >obviously< .hhh ahm

alcohol affec:ts .hh ahm mental health
The caller’s initial request in this extract is to speak to someone regarding her brother (lines 4 to 6). This is met with a gap of 0.5 seconds, and then the caller adds an increment to her turn which brings her request into the realm of mental illness and thus the remit of the line; “(who’s / he’s) (. ) alco<holic who I think has got (. ) am mental illness as well;”. The MW comes in slightly early following this increment with “†yeah you can >speak ↓to me about that,” (line 11). Although there is not sufficient room to demonstrate the phenomenon further here, the MWs monitor callers’ opening requests for their compatibility with the remit of the line. The call opening above demonstrates this, with the MW hesitating after the caller’s initial request to speak to someone about her brother, but then offering early alignment when the brother is described as an alcoholic who may have a mental illness.

The caller engages in a long telling about her mother who has schizophrenia, and her brother’s history of alcoholism and potential symptoms of mental illness (data not shown). Our focus here again is the agenda constraining interrogative delivered by the MW; “okay, .hh so: .thh (. ) w:hat >kind of information then are you< looking for from me regarding this (then.)” (lines 24 to 26). The interrogative again displays that the MW ostensibly treats the caller as looking for information, and makes relevant a telling of what this information is. Starting early and overlapping with much of the MW’s interrogative, the caller continues with “w’ll because I think °e_o I::\] !thin:k that he:” (lines 27 to 28) and then continues with a telling of her brother’s behaviour when drinking. She then returns to her thoughts on line 33; “†>but I< think in one way; (. ) that he might be suff rin’ (. ) from schizophrenia” and after a short gap adds the increment “like as my mother.”. This increment is delivered in overlap as the MW treats the caller’s telling of her thoughts as a place to start the delivery of information; “.hhhthh (. ) y:eah .h it’s >gonna be< really difficult “to° tell when alcohol is involved, cos >obviously<.hhh ahm alcohol affects .hh ahm mental health”. The MW continues with more information on why alcohol may make it difficult to determine whether something is a symptom of a mental illness (data not shown).

What we have seen here is that, while the interrogatives deployed by the MWs exert constraints on caller responses, a caller may (without much difficulty) still continue without issuing a direct information request. Also, we can see how an MW can orient to a caller’s telling of their thoughts on something as a place to issue information, orienting perhaps to the telling as an indirect request for information, or for confirmation that her
thoughts are justified. Our main analytic point here is how the MWs will frequently attempt to constrain a caller’s next turn when a specific, line-appropriate request for information has not been made. These attempts to constrain callers’ next turns all set the requesting of information as an agenda, and as the delivery of information is the main remit of the line, these attempts to constrain serve as a method for bringing a call around to the main business of the line. Thus, I argue that the use of these agenda constraining interrogatives is a method of constituting the remit of the line, as it is in these interrogatives that the MWs display that the action of requesting information is relevant from the caller. These interrogatives also aid in the forward progression of the call as the resultant delivery of information forms a transition from a request sequence to a more solution focussed sequence.

**Problem Delivery**

We have seen how callers’ opening turns can vary in terms of what they request, and the next two extracts show the other major early action engaged in by callers, namely problem delivery. The term problem delivery is my gloss for callers’ actions such as tellings about health problems, or troubles in their dealings with health services. Problem deliveries frequently involve a telling of the troubles of a relative or friend of the caller, as the following two extracts demonstrate.

**Extract 6: JM - 68629 Son with Mental Health and Debt Problems**

```
01 MW5 .hhhh Hello. MindinfoLine hhhh
02 CA #Oh# hello. >/m<]
03 MW5 [H ]i hh
04 CA tk .hh (h)I- I’m a parent (.). of (.)
05 of:=ahm. (.4) someone who <has a mental
06 health problem,
07 MW5 Mm hm,
08 CA .hhhh and tk .hh he g:ot himself in a mess
09 with credit c(h)ards?
10 MW5 Yeah.
```
and he's been (.5) chasing through the:=

==(yawn?)==
national debt line=the citizens advice bureau
(. ) whatever and he's ;not; sleeping at

[Yes. (.) Mm hm ]

;night cos he's ;so worried about -this,-

(.4)

.he[hhh ] he thinks the only thing he can do

[Sure.]

(1.0) is declare himself bankrupt but [ y'ne ]ed

[>right<]

three hundred and thirty pounds to do that

he [hasn't] ~got ;it~

[Mm hm;]

Y:eah.

~(ahm)~

(1.0)

.hhhhh

( .5)

~Can mihh~ .hh ~can ;mind (. ) ;help,~

(1.1)

;at ;t'all

.hhhhh[hh ]

[°or°] ~for anything you could suggest.~

(. )

;S'anybody< he could ;see to, (. )

[advise him]

[.hhhh ahm ]

( .2)

°w- w:° Well (. ) ~ahm~ (.7) ~°he-°=he's~
In lines 2 to 6 the caller continues straight on from her greeting with the beginning of what I have been terming a problem delivery; "#Oh# hello. >I'm< tk .hh (h)l- I'm a parent () of() of:=ahm. (.4) someone who <has a mental health problem,". The MW's actions here of issuing continuers and receipts (e.g. lines 7, 10, 15, 18) are typical of their actions once a caller has begun a problem delivery. The caller continues the problem delivery until line 29 where she issues a request for help, and when this is not responded to, she adds various increments on lines 31 and 33, and then begins another request on line 35; "†>S'anybody< he could ↓see to, (.) advise him↓". Although in this case the caller follows the problem delivery with questions, making relevant an answer from the MW, the MW does not answer these of these directly. Rather, he comments on the actions of the caller's son; ""w- w:-° Well () ~ahm~ (.7) ~he-°=he's~ †he has already s↓spoken to the most appropriate people regarding the f:inances." (lines 39 to 41), before asking for the son's location. Once this has been given, the MW proffers a course of action; "".hhh okay .hhhhhhhh a::hm, (1.2) he could contact our local MIND, have a chat with them," (lines 54 and 55).
Often, callers will not follow a problem delivery with a question regarding the problem, and when they are hearably finished, the MWs will come in with information delivery or with a question about the problem, or they may proffer a course of action. Both speakers orient to the end of a problem delivery as having occurred when the caller delivers what they ‘think’ about the situation, or when they have brought the problem ‘up to date’ by discussing how the situation is currently. Both speakers also orient to the end of a problem delivery as a point of transition in speakership from caller to MW. The final extract of this section demonstrates these points clearly.

**Extract 7: JM – 63564 Concern for Third Party**

01  MW2  .hh hello mind=Infoline?
02  CA  (.5)
03  MW2  Ahm y:es. good afternoon, ahm .hhh (.3)
04  CA  I’m >a bit< concerned about someb’ [dy,]
05  MW2  [.hh]hhh
06  CA  okay, w’ll (. ) >p’haps if you< tell me a
07  MW2  little >bit about the< situation I’ll see
08  CA  how we can help.=h=
09  MW2  =well (. ) ahm (. ) tk she’s
10  CA  very severe (.2) .hh >;got< ;very severe
11  CA  manic depression, [.hhh]h an’ she’s part of
12  MW2  [mmm,]
13  CA  a care program (. ) approach; hhh and ahm .hh
14  CA  they’ve just discharged her with nothing.
15  CA  (.5)
16  MW2  t.hhhhhh o[kay,  
17  CA  [and we don’t] know if that’s right
18  CA  o[r not.  
19  MW2  [w’l (. ) the clare p’ogram=approach. (. ) is (.)
20  CA  an assessment of her needs
The caller follows her return greeting with a telling of how she is "a bit concerned about someb’dy," (line 4). Potter and Hepburn (2003) showed that in calls to a UK child protection helpline, callers frequently opened with a construction of themselves as concerned about a third party. This did not constitute a complete ‘reason for the call’ in itself, and projected further unpacking by the caller. The MW encourages such an unpacking and constructs her prospective responsive actions as ‘seeing how she can help’ in lines 5 to 8. The caller begins a problem delivery on line 9, which ends on line 14 with a telling of what has ‘just’ happened (that her friend has been discharged from a care programme with ‘nothing’). Notice the turn-final intonation indicated on line 14, and the 0.5 second gap on line 15, which are typically oriented to as a speaker’s relinquishing of the floor (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974). When the MW does come in it is initially with a long inbreath “t.hhhhhh okay,” (line 16) but most of the ‘okay’ is spoken in overlap as the caller adds an increment; “and we don’t know if that’s right or not.” (line 17). The MW comes in early and overlaps with the end of this increment (possibly projecting that the increment will end after ‘right’), and begins to deliver what is hearable as information about care programmes and why the caller’s friend may not have been deemed to qualify for support (data only partially shown above for the sake of brevity).

What we can see here is how the caller orients to the hearably finished telling of a problem (at the end of line 14) as a place of speaker transition. Also, we can see that the MW orients to the ending of the increment as an appropriate place for her to begin the delivery of information, without the caller having issued a direct request for information. This delivery of information may have followed the MW’s delayed turn begun at line 16 had the caller not added her increment. This is similar to the activities shown in extract five where the MW proffers information following the caller’s telling of her thoughts on her brother’s behaviour and how it may be symptomatic of schizophrenia.

We have now covered the main types of early action engaged in by callers. As the following two chapters deal with the ways in which MWs deal with problematic requests (i.e. for advice) and the ways in which MWs proffer courses of actions for callers, we will move now to the final element of this chapter. The aim in this section is to demonstrate that MWs treat the end of an information delivery as the place for them to move the call towards the statistics gathering, and then closing.
Moving the call forward and final actions by the MWs

Moving the call forward is something which could be argued to happen at quite a number of places in the course of a MIND Infoline call. We have seen that MWs’ responses to callers’ early actions move the calls forward by entering a solution focussed sequence, such as the proffering of a course of action, or to the main business of the line itself in the delivery of information. As we saw in extract two, when information or a course of action proffered by the MWs is rejected they will typically proffer an alternative. Once the caller displays an acceptance of the information or course of action proffered, the MWs will then move directly into the gathering of the statistical information, often having to misalign with an action already begun by the caller to move to the statistics gathering. To demonstrate this clearly, let us return to extracts one and two and examine the end sections of the calls.

Extract 1(B): JM - 65880 Eco Therapy Information

18 MW1  [Alright the: number
19 >for our< (. . ) Mansfield office (. . ) is
20 ((Number Exchange 5.5 Seconds)
21 CA  <zero double four. Th[at's won]derful
22 MW1  [ *yeah° ]
23 ( .)
24 CA  >Thank you very much.<
25 MW1  >Can I ask< ;where you >found the number for
26 the< information line today.
27 ( .)
28 CA  Yes: ahm (. . ) on thee a >website<
29 m[ind dot org ] u kay,
30 ➔ MW1  [°°that's great°°]
31 ( .2)
32 ➔ MW1  °that's lovely° thank you very much for
33 that.
34 CA  .h >thank you.< [>Bye< bye]
Having accepted the number of the Mansfield MIND branch from the MW, the caller delivers “That’s wonderful” (line 21) and “>Thank you very much.” (line 24). These are what hearable as two pre-closing turns indicating imminent closure (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). The MW speaks in overlap with the first of these, although this appears to be in response to the caller receipting the final part of the telephone number. The MW does not issue any kind of projected or preferred response to the caller’s “>Thank you very much.” but rather moves into statistics gathering. Starting a new sequence here instead of issuing a ‘you’re welcome’ type turn here departs from normal closing actions in a telephone interaction (Schegloff, 1973). When the caller has provided the statistical information, the MW delivers two pre-closing turns herself, “oothat’s greatoo” (line 30) and “that’s lovelyoo thank you very much for that.” (lines 32 and 33). The first of these is delivered in overlap with the caller’s continuing turn on line 29, possibly explaining the use of two similar items (‘that’s great’ and ‘that’s lovely’).

The ending of extract two also showed this pattern of MWs starting a new action (the statistical information gathering) when a caller issues what are hearable as pre-closing turns, and how the MW deploys pre-closing turns of her own once the caller has answered the statistical questions.

Extract 2 (B): JM – 67595 Information on Pets

(Number Exchange 6.9 Seconds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>lovely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>(. )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Thank[s &lt;very much. ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>MW2</td>
<td>[&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>MW2</td>
<td>(. )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>MW2</td>
<td>.hhh an’ who=reco;mmended you to mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The turns which I argue are hearable as caller’s preclosing turns are “lovely” (line 41) and “thanks very much.” (line 43). Notice how the MW issues her turn on line 44 very early, but after enough of the caller’s ‘thanks’ has been delivered to allow it to be projectable as ‘thanks’ or ‘thank you’, ‘thanks a lot’ etc. Indeed, once the purpose of a telephone call has been achieved, speakers will typically move towards closing (Schegloff, 1973) and the early start by the MW to begin the statistical questions has a ‘catching the caller before they go’ quality to it. Again in this extract that once the information has been provided by the caller, the MW issues her own pre-closing turn “.hh thank you >very much< take care now.” (line 55). Again, the call moves into closing following this turn.

Notice how in both of the previous two extracts, the callers treat their acceptance of the information as the place to issue their pre-closing turns (i.e. the callers treat their acceptance of the information as the end of the business of the call). This is a strong phenomenon in the corpus and the MWs often have to misalign with callers’ pre-closing turns to initiate the statistical information gathering sequence.

**Discussion**

Our aims in this first analytic chapter have been to see how calls to MIND Infoline typically progress from opening to closing, and to display and discuss the main elements
which constitute MIND Infoline calls. Beginning with a depiction of the ways in which calls typically progress, we saw the four main pathways in which calls typically flow from opening to closing. The shortest call path of the diagram occurs when callers request information, which is then provided and accepted. Call length increases when callers engage in an action other than requesting information, or when they reject the information or course of action proffered by the MW. Following this we saw how callers may request information, often using a subjective telling about what they are ‘wondering’ rather than using an interrogative, and also that they may request something other than information, such as advice, or help, or to speak with someone.

This discussion of requests for something other than information moved into an exploration of how the MWs will often ask callers ‘what it is they want’ from the line. Slightly more attention was paid to this topic as it stemmed from analysis prompted by the MWs, and their request for me to explore calls where the callers ‘did not know what they wanted’. As this ‘not knowing’ was a category for the MWs, and not something often explicitly stated by callers, it was agreed with the MWs that I would examine calls where they asked callers what it was that they wanted. This type of question appeared on occasions when callers did not make a request for information, and served to exert constraints on how callers may reply by making relevant a request for appropriate information. These constraints were not always successful in prompting a request for information from callers however, and in one of our examples was followed by a caller issuing “khh hm .hh (.6) w’ll hh (.3) t.hhh >I don’t< know::” (Extract 4: Lines 8 to 9).

This is of great interest considering the impetus for studying these questions (the MWs considering that some callers do not know what they want), and further data collection may shed more light on what precedes such turns by callers and provide useful results for the MWs.

What the analysis of these ‘agenda constraining interrogatives’ did show was how they made relevant a request for information in the callers’ next turns. The MWs use of these interrogatives also displayed a view of callers as wanting information, and thus constituted the remit of the line in talk. If a request for information followed then the interrogatives will have successfully moved the interaction towards the business of the line; providing information. I have already mentioned that MWs are encouraged to engage only in the business of the line, and to not stray from this in to realms such as (e.g.) ‘chat’. In extract three, we saw how the caller oriented to being ‘desperate to talk to
someone' as something potentially problematic in the call. I argue that the agenda constraining interrogatives display an orientation by the MWs to the institutional constraint of engaging only in the business of the line. They appear in locations where callers have not requested information, or engage (or appear as though they may engage) in something else. Although the interrogatives did not always lead to a request for information, they serve to make one relevant, and keep the call within the realms of MIND Infoline’s remit.

Following this we outlined the caller practice of problem delivery, and also the MW activity of moving calls forward towards statistical information gathering, and call closing. These again were more descriptive than purposely analytic sections, in line with our aim of explicating the main types of actions and interactional sequences which callers and MWs engage in, so that we can now refer more easily to them in the following, more focused analytic chapters. Indeed, much of what we have seen in this chapter are MWs’ methods for aiding the progression of calls forward into the provision of information, statistical information gathering, or towards closing, all of which are of course worth further investigation. Having outlined these major elements of MIND Infoline calls so that they can be more easily referred to from here on, we move on now to chapters where we go into much finer detail on our analytic foci.
Chapter 4: Proffering Courses of Action to Callers

This chapter aims to outline some of the ways in which talk of courses of action, which callers may engage in, are deployed by the MWs. We will see that while the ways in which courses of action are proffered by the MWs vary greatly, these various ways typically manage the issue of advice prohibition. As mentioned in chapter two, advice giving is prohibited on the line. MWs are meant to only provide information, but any course of action raised by the MWs which callers may engage in runs the risk of being heard as advice giving. This is compounded by the way in which many calls unfold; remember from chapter three that callers typically do not form an appropriate request for information, but usually engage in troubles tellings, request advice, or ask for help. As the MWs usually respond with a course of action the caller may engage in, the avoidance of hearably giving advice is a particularly live issue in many of the calls.

Advice giving is strictly prohibited on the line, and as the MWs sit in close proximity to each other, and have their calls ‘listened in’ on occasionally by the line manager, any occurrences may well be noticed. Yet as we shall see, once a potential course of action has been proffered by the MWs and the caller has in some way aligned with it, the MWs can then engage in the delivery of contact details of relevant sources of help (again see the call flow chart in chapter two for a reminder). Thus, the deployment of a course of action provides an interactional platform from which the MWs can get to their core purpose (the delivery of information), and therefore the delivery of a course of action can be a useful resource for the MWs.

Before any analytic work had begun on the data corpus, the MWs had asked that advice be something which was covered in the analysis of their calls. Despite the prohibition on advice giving, and the advertisement of the line as an ‘information line’, they claimed to frequently feel under pressure to provide advice to callers. It also became apparent in initial hearings of the calls that the notion of advice was a delicate issue for the MWs. Callers did often explicitly ask for advice, as well as often engaging in troubles tellings, and both of these seemed to be treated by callers and MWs as requiring a response.
containing a remedial course of action for the caller to engage in. Sometimes MWs will topicalise advice as a problematic issue for the line, as in the following extract.

**Extract 1: JM - 48578 Post-Natal Depression and Talking Treatments**

1. **MW1**: Hello mind=info line?
2. **CA**: ah- mornin:=ahm, (1.1) >I don’t know where
3. **MW1**: to< start here.
4. **CA**: Oka[y.]
5. **MW1**: [A ]:hh I’ve::=ahm: (.8) I 'ave 'ad (.)
6. **CA**: post natal depression.
7. ** MW1**: Yeah.
8. **CA**: WHAT (%) tahm (%) shih (%) >what would< you:
9. **MW1**: recommend.
10. **CA**: with anybody (%) who’d got (%) post natal depression.
11. **MW1**: .hh hhhhh Well we- we can’t really give advice or recommend anythin’ here we’re <as an
12. **CA**: information service [.hhh] a:hm >I mean what< [Yeah]
13. **MW1**: do you feel (%) w:ould work >for< you?

In response to the caller’s request for the MW’s recommendation (lines 12 - 13), the MW does not directly refuse to provide one, but rather claims an inability to advise or recommend. The MW speaks from an institutional position ("we can’t.") and invokes the nature of this service as the reason for this ("as an information service"). On some occasions the MWs will encourage the callers to continue with a telling or narrative, without explicitly stating that advice cannot be given, as in extract two below.
Extract 2: JM - 65850 Father-In-Law’s Illness

1  MW2  .hhh Hello Mindinfoline?
2  CA   hhh Ah (.) hello I’m >sorry to bother you
3      I just< wondered if you could give me some
4      advice
5      (.
6  CA   I’m not sure >whether< you’ll be able
7      to (.) do=or not
8 → MW2 Okay, well p’haps if you tell me a little >bit
9      about< the situation I’ll see how we can help.

In this case the caller does not request advice directly, but rather offers a subjective account of wondering if advice can be provided (lines 3 & 4). Potentially displaying an orientation to the brief gap on line 5, the caller continues with a display of uncertainty as to whether the MW “is able to” (lines 6 & 7). The MW does not therefore have a direct request to respond to, and thus decline, but such subjective tellings are still treated in the corpus as needing a response. The MW’s turn in lines 6 and 7 begins with an ‘okay’ which performs similar functions to those discussed by Beach (1995) in medical interactions, where in turn initial position, they receipt the first speaker’s telling, and are used to launch solution focussed talk from the health professional. She then encourages the caller to tell more and formulates any subsequent actions she may perform as ‘helping’ the caller. The MW could of course still have taken up the notion of advice and accounted for why it cannot be offered, as in the previous extract. Receipting the caller’s request, encouraging her to tell more, and offering to ‘see how they can help’ is arguably more socially cohesive than claiming that the advice the caller wants cannot be provided.

Exploring the issue of advice in the corpus could potentially cover a wide range of interactional phenomena; advice requests, callers’ turns which occasion advice (whatever form the ‘advice’ may appear in), recipient design, uptake, resistance, etc. As it was just one element which the MWs requested to be studied within the course of the PhD, the analysis needed to have a focus which would fit within chapter format. As it was clear in early hearings of the calls that remedial courses of action were often provided following
callers’ descriptions of problems, it was decided to focus on how these courses of action were formed in a context where advice giving is prohibited.

**Previous relevant work in interaction research**

Most of the relevant research in the area of proffering courses of action in institutional interactions has been written about in terms of advice-giving. Jefferson and Lee (1981) discussed requests for advice and the telling of troubles as different conversational projects, and showed how advice was rejected when it followed a troubles telling. Their analysis showed that speakers accepted advice more when it was delivered after a direct request for advice, and was rejected in places where a ‘trouble’ was being described. They argued that participants describing a trouble, position their co-speaker as troubles recipient, whose correct response to the troubles telling is a troubles receipt. When advice is given in response to a troubles telling however, Jefferson and Lee claim that this repositions the speakers as advice giver (as opposed to troubles recipient) and advice recipient (as opposed to troubles teller). Jefferson and Lee showed how such occurrences led to interactional trouble, with the advice being resisted, and discussed this in terms of an “interactional asynchrony” (p.402) between the speakers. In the detailed analysis of advice giving in interactions between health visitors and first-time mothers, Heritage and Sefi (1992) also discuss the interactional roles involved in the giving, resisting, and accepting of advice, and were able to demonstrate that the ways in which the mothers treated the talk containing proposed course of action, displayed their orientation to it as advice. They show how the offering of advice marked the health visitors as knowledgeable on a particular topic, and thus in a position to offer advice. In accepting advice, the mothers were positioning themselves as having been less knowledgeable on that topic, and on occasions where they resisted the advice, this was achieved in ways which allowed the mothers to position themselves as already having some competence in the area.

In the interactions between health visitors and mothers, advice was often resisted using displays of competence in the area the health visitors were offering advice in, particularly when the advice was unwarranted and not delivered in response to a request or problem description by the mother. Similarly, Waring (2005) found that in an educational setting where graduate students were being tutored in writing skills, the students could resist advice though invoking their own competence in the area. Both Jefferson and Lee (1981)
and Heritage and Sefi (1992) discuss unwanted and unwarranted advice in interaction as massively problematic and often rejected by the recipient. A ‘stepwise’ entry to advice giving is something which has been documented in a number of institutional settings, which avoids the blunt delivery of unwarranted advice by investigating an issue through initial questioning and then following the responses with advice tailored to any reported problems. Heritage and Sefi demonstrate this in their health visitor data, as do Kinnell and Maynard (1996) in pre-test counselling sessions for HIV and AIDS.

In both studies, a five-step procedure was highlighted (Taken from Heritage and Sefi, 1992):

1 – health professional launches an initial inquiry
2 – the response from the client indicates a problem
3 – health professional focuses inquiry into the problem
4 – client responds in more detail
5 – health professional gives advice

Truncated versions of the procedure were found to occur in both settings, and often the advice was instead delivered following the construction of a potential or hypothetical problematic situation by the health visitors and the counsellors. This allowed for the delivery of general advice for anyone finding themselves in the potential/hypothetical situation. It is perhaps unsurprising that in this format, advice was sometimes resisted and marked by the recipient as irrelevant to their personal situation. Silverman, Peräkylä, and Bor (1992) also analysed advice sequences in HIV/AIDS counselling sessions, and also found that hypothetical situations were being used to deliver general advice.

Silverman (1997) found that advice was often delivered to clients in pre-test HIV counselling sessions in a form that he calls “advice as information” (p.154). This involved the counsellors proffering courses of action which were relevant to client issues in ways which made them hearable as the delivery of information. This was achieved through elements of turns such as “The recommendation is for people to...” (p.172) and “…our recommendation is...” (p.174). Silverman claims that these are hearable as information on the clinic’s advisory practices, rather than as direct advice. He also claims that the use of the institutional or passive voice helps this by avoiding turns which sound
like personal recommendations from the counsellors, and that the proffering of action in this way stabilises the interaction by avoiding the potential rejection of unwanted advice giving.

Silverman (1997), Silverman, Peräkylä, and Bor (1992), Heritage and Sefi (1992) and Kinnell and Maynard (1996) all found that advice was also delivered in some cases without any work being carried out by the health professional to build a suitable case for the delivery of advice, and without any warrant from the client. In these cases, the unwarranted advice was frequently treated as such and resisted by the client. Vehviläinen (2001) discusses unwarranted and irrelevant advice as examples of a number of “dilemmas in advice giving” (p.372). Vehviläinen found that to avoid the unwarranted and irrelevant giving of advice in an educational counselling setting, the perspective of the client was often elicited and then used as part of a stepwise format to launch relevant advice. In discussing the literature on advice, Vehviläinen claims that advice giving is potentially problematic in both ordinary conversation and institutional interactions, because of how it positions the participants asymmetrically by implying that the advisor has knowledge in an area that the recipient lacks. This is particularly so when the advice is an area where the recipient may have some competence; such as, as we have seen, health visitors giving advice to mothers on how best to look after their infants (Heritage and Sefi). Hutchby (1995) also considers advice delivery to invoke these asymmetrical knowledge or competence positions of the advice giver and the advice recipient in his work on radio phone-in interactions. Indeed, Waring (2007) claims that advice giving needs to be delicately managed as it is a “face-threatening act” (p.368).

From elements of these studies, it seems that not only does the treatment of certain sequences of talk display an orientation to it as advice, but also that orienting to talk as advice can invoke the interactional roles of the speakers involved. Advice givers are positioned as more knowledgeable as to the actions which the recipient is, or should be, engaging in. The studies also show how the delivery of advice can be interactionally problematic, particularly if delivered when unwanted, and that interactional work which paves the way for the delivery of advice can indeed help in ensuring that it is not rejected by the recipient.
Analysis

In their work on advice giving, Heritage & Sefi (1992) focussed on sequences where a health visitor “describes, recommends, or otherwise forwards a preferred course of action”. Whether a turn at talk is indeed an example of advice giving is a participants’ concern, but in research such as the work engaged in here, it is also an analyst’s concern. As there is a prohibition on advice giving at MIND Infoline, advice is potentially a live issue for MWs at any point where they discuss actions which the callers may engage in, particularly if they are relevant to the problems or troubles a caller has described. It is not the intention of the analysis here to determine whether the conversational practices examined are indeed examples of advice, but rather to explore how it is that advice prohibition is managed. As mentioned, it is common in calls for callers to engage in problem / troubles tellings, and for the MWs to then proffer a course of action which the caller may engage in. It shall become clear in this chapter that the MWs engage in regular practices which allow courses of action to be proffered while avoiding forms which may be considered as blatant advice giving.

For the purposes of this chapter, all occurrences of talk of a course of action (henceforth COA or CsOA in the plural) which callers may engage in were included in the initial exploration and analysis of the data. When deciding how to discuss the forms in which CsOA are deployed, it became clear that grouping or exploring them according to their grammatical form would be problematic. For example, assertions such as “Just being there for the person is enough to help them” and “It might be good to visit the C.A.B.” are very different in terms of how they manage the delivery of the potential COA embedded within them. Similarly, turns such as “I’m just wondering if maybe Childline?” and “Have you spoken to the G.P. today and told him how the situation is becoming increasingly worse?” are vastly different in terms of the management of delivering a COA, but may be treated similarly (as interrogatives) by callers. Importantly, aspects of these interactions such as the potential asymmetry between the MWs and callers are managed very differently within the purely grammatical categories that the CsOA are housed in.

After detailed searches of the complete data set, it became clear that there were certain methods for proffering a COA which were repeatedly used by all of the MWs. Three main methods were clear; the use of modal verbs (e.g. “You would need to go to the G.P.
and ask for a referral"), the use of ‘if / then constructions’ (e.g. “If you wanted to try those treatments then I guess it’s going to your G.P.”), and the use of interrogatives. The interrogatives format was the most common method for deploying a COA, and these fell into three distinct types which occurred with similar frequency. As there is much to be said about the ways in which interrogatives are used in the proffering of CsOA and the management of asymmetry in the calls, it was deemed appropriate to focus on these in more detail in a separate chapter. Examples of the various interrogatives are not shown here for the purposes of space, and also as they will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

The ‘Modal Verb’ Form for Proffering Courses of Action

Moving now to the forms in which courses of action are proffered by the MWs, we start with the most common form after ‘Interrogatives’, which I have called Modal Verbs. These typically take one of two similar forms; “You can / could / would / may + COA” and “What you can / could / would / may do is + COA” with the COA preceded by a modal verb in both forms. Occurrences using ‘can’ were the most frequent (51 cases), followed by ‘could’ (27), ‘would’ (14), ‘may’ (3), and ‘will’ (2). While the examples within this category varied little in terms of grammatical format and word order, the interactional work achieved did vary. Our first example comes from a call where the caller has been discussing a friend who has been trying to encourage her brother to seek treatment for a mental health problem. Just prior to where this extract begins, the MW has been outlining the procedure for having a relative’s mental health assessed against their will.

Extract 3: JM - 66423 Friend’s Brother

1    MW1 . hhhh now in regards to your friend

2    an’ ge’in her an’ her husband some

3    support . hhh (.5) they (. ) can also

4    arrange >for a< carer’s assessment

5    to take place . hh through social

6    services again
Before discussing the COA in the extract, it is worth mentioning the use of ‘In regards to’ by the MWs. This can be, as in the case here, used as pivot between two action sequences, where the second will be the proffering of a COA. Typically, as here, it allows the MWs to treat an issue which has not previously been mentioned, as being live in the interaction. Here, the MW has been explaining how the social services could assess the brother of the caller’s friend against his will. Using “.hhh now in regards to your friend an’ ge’in her an’ her husband some support” (lines 1 to 3) allows the MW to treat the notion of getting support for the friend and her husband as a live issue, which is open for her to discuss a relevant COA to address it. Although the situation of the friend and her husband has been formulated by the caller as very stressful (data not shown here), the notion of getting support for them as well as the brother, has not been previously mentioned by MW or caller. A number of studies show that advice which is launched ‘out of the blue’ is usually resisted (Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Silverman, 1997; Kinnell and Maynard, 1996). The use of ‘In regards to’ may defend against this by invoking the notion of support for the friend and her husband, before proffering the COA of asking social services for a carers’ assessment. Thus, the relevance of the COA has been invoked before the COA is delivered, which helps to make the COA less open to accusations of being irrelevant.

The course of action follows and is formed as “.hhh (.5) they () can also arrange >for a< e\grer’s assessment to take place .hh through s\ocial services again” (lines 3 to 6). In the preceding talk, the caller had indicated that she was writing down the procedure for having her friend’s brother assessed against his will, and I hear the hesitation in line 3 as orienting to this, and allowing the caller time to ‘catch up’. Once begun, the COA contains no pauses or hesitation, and the short, audible inbreath on line 6 precedes an increment to the turn containing the COA detailing that this is again done through social services.

Returning to our main focus, I argue that the use of the modal verb ‘can’ in this extract serves to make the turn containing the COA hearable as information. It is delivered as what is able to be done, what is possible to be done, and not as what should be done or is recommended by the MW as advisable done. As mentioned, Silverman (1997) notes a format for the delivery of advice in pre-test HIV counselling sessions, where the COA is tailored to the recipient but delivered in a passive voice. It is not ‘What I suggest…’ which is hearable as a personal recommendation, but is delivered as an institutionally
approved COA through turn elements such as "The recommendation is for people to..." (p.172). Reducing any agency in terms of where a COA stems from, assists in the delivery of it as information and not advice. Indeed, Silverman discusses the delivery of advice as information as an ideal way to avoid the interactional sequelae of giving advice, and in the data above, it allows the MW to deliver a future oriented COA, designed for a specific recipient following a telling of their troubles (albeit 'third-party' in the case here it is aimed specifically at the friend & her husband – "what they can do"), while avoiding the use of what may be hearable as an explicit advice format.

Similarly, the use of the modal verb 'could' in the next extract carries out similar work for a different MW. The caller here has been discussing her sister, who she believes needs to receive mental health treatment due to suffering from extreme stress. The MW has discussed treatments which can be accessed through the NHS, and the caller has said she would not want to seek help through the NHS.

Extract 4: JM - 56982 Stressed Sister

01 MW2 There is private health care obviously,
02 .hh am: (.) you can contact (.) >private
03 private healthcare providers in the< local
04 area >b- of course< she'd have to be
05 willing to access those. hhhhh (.)
06 >there's obviously< things like counselling
07 and things you can get privately as well?
08 .hh >[I mean]< (.) you >said about th-
09 CA [ mm ]
10 MW2 >over the< weekend >d'you think there's
11 something that needs to be done<
12 instantly? or (.5)
13 ((15.3 seconds omitted where CA aligns
14 by saying something does need to be done soon
15 and cites her sister's drinking as a reason))
16 MW2 I mean with regards to private healthcare
As can be seen, the COA of contacting local private healthcare providers which follows
the ‘could’ (lines 17 to 19) is a re-issue of an earlier COA delivered following a ‘can’
(lines 2 to 4). The first occurrence is hearable as information on what ‘can’ be done by
the caller, as was the case in the previous extract. This is followed by a question from the
MW as to the caller’s earlier utterance that something needed to happen that weekend
(data not shown) which the caller aligns with. The MW then follows this with “I mean
with regards to private healthcare” which brings the topic of seeking private healthcare
to the surface of the talk again, and re-deploys the COA with ‘could’ as the modal verb.
This deployment is also troubled, with “.hh ahm: (1.7)” between the ‘could’ and the COA.
Why does ‘could’ appear in the second version of the COA? Why is this version so
troubled?

Karttunen (1973) shows that ‘could’ is used instead of ‘can’ when certain conditions for
an event are not met, or when they are less likely or possible to be met. Events that are
described as ones that ‘can be done’ are generally openly possible. Events described as
ones which ‘could be done’ however are less likely, and only possible if all conditions
are met. Notice that the caller does not offer even the most unmarked uptake of the COA
at the possible “transition relevance place” (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974: 703)
on line 5, and at a further one on line 8 she offers a continuer (“mm”) which may indicate
resistance to advice (Heritage and Sefi, 1992). These may have been monitored by the
MW as resistance to the COA proffered, and thus a re-deployment using the same format
may be met with more outright resistance.

On lines 10 to 12 the MW elicits the caller’s perspective that something needs to be done
‘instantly’, and when the caller has aligned with this, the MW uses “in regards to” to
return to private healthcare (line 16) which the caller has earlier mentioned. I hear both of
these as helping the MW to not only invoke the caller’s perspective, but also to align the perspective of both speakers before deploying a COA. Such interactional work is described by Silverman (1997) in his analysis of HIV counselling sessions as setting up a place where advice will more likely be accepted by a client, and Vehviläinen (2001) also found that educational counsellors routinely invoked the perspectives of students before proffering advice which was relevant to that perspective. The MW then uses the more conditional ‘could’ form for proffering the COA. Again this receives a mere continuer, but after information on how to begin going about this (through the Yellow Pages) the caller comes in with “right” which is a stronger indication that the advice may be taken up (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). The use of ‘could’ here also allows the MW to proffer the COA as information rather than explicit advice, as does her earlier use of ‘can’. Despite the COA being future oriented and aimed at addressing a trouble that the caller has told, it is also designed as ‘what is conditionally possible’ and not what ought to be done. As for the MW’s hesitation markers, these appear before the directly repeated element of the COA “contact local healthcare providers”, and my analysis is that the hesitation orients to the difficulty in verbatim repetition of a term from lines 2 and 3.

The analysis above shows that when a COA is proffered with the use of the modal verb ‘can’, and is not met with any sign of uptake, the same COA when issued a second time is proffered using the more conditional modal verb ‘could’. In the first occasion, the COA is delivered as what is openly possible, and in the second occasion following possible resistance, it is delivered as what is conditionally possible. Thus, there seems to be a clear interactional function for alternating the modal verbs. The final modal verb form offered for analysis is the use of ‘would’ followed by a COA, and we shall see that there is also an interactional import for the use of ‘would’ over the use of ‘can’.

In the following extract, the caller has been telling that she cares for her grandchildren and that their mother (her daughter-in-law) is mentally ill. The caller says that she and the children have been getting strange calls from her daughter-in-law, who wants to come and take the children away for a while. The MW has told the caller that she has the ‘options’ of speaking to a family rights group and of calling social services to inform her daughter-in-law’s social worker of the situation. The caller had begun the call by saying she wants to “speak to someone in confidence”, and the MW has said that if the caller contacts social services, they may tell the daughter-in-law why they have become
involved and who informed them of any difficulties, but that the family rights group will treat the information as confidential. The extract starts where this is being finalised.

Extract 5: JM - 58670 Request to Speak in Confidence

01  MW4  .hhh if: if they go an' assess=her (.)
02  CA    witho[ut her con]sent .hhh ah:m (. ) they
03  CA    [ mm  hm. ]
04  MW4  s:ome times c- >have to< tell them why >they're<
05  CA    there: ? .h and sh-=who had contacted them.
06  CA    (.9)
07  CA    tk.hh y[eah.   ]
08  MW4  [ >so that<] might be an issue but >you
09  CA    c'n< speak >to the< fam'l[y rights grou]p no
10  CA    [ hm mm.   ]
11  MW4  problem .hh >d'you want their< !<telephone
12  CA    numbe[r]l
13  CA    [ y]es pleas:e.
14  CA    ((24 seconds of number & opening hours delivery))
15  MW4  >Did you want< the number >for< social services?
16  CA    t.hhh AH::M: HHH (.2) >this is<- (. ) ah (. ) <she
17  CA    lives in ((area.)) hh
18  MW4  okay. I can >get you< that number, just
19  CA    [one second]l
20  CA    [ .hhh  y]es: hhhh HHHHhh .hhhhh
21  (3.9)
22  CA    hhh
23  (4.2)
24  CA    hhh
25  (8.2)
26  CA    hhhh

82
On lines 8 to 11 the MW deploys a COA using the modal verb 'can', “>so that< might be an issue but >you c’n< speak >to the< fam’ly rights group no problem .hh”. It is clear that the MW orients to the issue of confidentiality when involving social services as problematic, formulating it as potentially being “an issue”. This is clearly contrasted with speaking to the family rights group which “can” be done with “no problem”. The MW continues with an interrogative; “>d’you want their< ↑<tel(ephone number>|EMENT|)>This is the< number that you would need to ring|.hhh it’s zero

The delivery of the number follows, and then the MW asks if the caller wants the number for social services (line 14). This is followed by a much troubled turn by the caller; “.hhh AH::M: HHH (.2) ↑this is< (. ) ah (. ) <she lives in ((area.)) hh”; there is no initial delay but much hesitation and then a pause, followed by an abandoned turn constructional unit, another pause, hesitation, and a final pause before “she lives in (area)”. These interactional phenomena generally signal trouble in replying to a prior turn, and often precede a disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984), and all of these appear as signs of advice resistance in the studies on advice mentioned above, signalling neither alignment with nor uptake of the COA proffered. Raymond (2003) found that when a yes / no interrogative such as the one on line 14 is not responded to with a yes or a no, it may signal some trouble with the terms embedded within the interrogative. My reading of the caller’s troubled turn here is that the trouble orients to the issue that the daughter-in-law lives in a different part of the UK to the mother. On lines 17 and 18 the MW says she can get that number. The caller says ‘yes’, although it is unclear whether this is response to
the search for that number, or to the request for her to wait embedded within the MW’s partially overlapped “just one second”.

When the MW has the number at hand to provide, she begins her turn with “okay yeah” as though in response to a request which is in the air, and continues with “>This is the number that you would need to ring,” (lines 33 to 34). This is again the proffering of a COA (to contact social services by telephone) delivered after the use of a modal verb, and again does COA as information. Yet this time it is in the form of what would be done; what is potentially done when certain conditions are met and not what can, or is generally possible to be done. A reason for not contacting social services (confidentiality) has already been the focus of much talk in the call, and oriented to as potentially problematic for the caller at the beginning of the extract above. When the COA of ringing the confidential service is proffered, the modal verb ‘can’ is used, and when the COA of ringing the non-confidential service is proffered, the more conditional modal verb ‘would’ is used.

Both of the previous extracts show a pragmatic difference between the use of ‘can’, and of ‘could’ and ‘would’. ‘Can’ marks a COA as openly possible and following some interactional tensions we see ‘could’ and ‘would’ being used which mark a COA as possibly done when un-named conditions are met. In calls to UK emergency services, Curl and Drew (2008) found that modal verbs such as ‘would’ were more frequently used by callers when there were increased numbers of contingencies in having their requests met. The data here seem to follow this pattern, with the MWs issuing the more conditional of the modal verbs when there is evidence that a COA may be resisted. Let us also not forget our initial focus; the deployment of CsOA in an environment where advice is prohibited. Using a modal verb in the proffering of a COA makes it hearable as information, as something which is openly possible to be done, or which is possible to be done if certain conditions are met. This allows the MWs to avoid the use of a form which may be more readily hearable as advice giving. The lack of any agency supports the hearing of CsOA as information as Silverman (1997) discussed. All of the turns analysed above which contain a COA are devoid of any agency on the MW’s part:

From extract 3:
“...they (.5) can also arrange >for a< clearer’s assessment to take place
From extract 4:
"hh am: () you can contact () >private private healthcare providers in the< local a:rea"

"I mean with regards to private healthcare you could hh ahm: (1.7) #contact private healthcare >providers in# your< local area."

From extract 5:
">you c’n< speak >to the< fam’ly rights group no problem"

“This is the< number that you would need to ring;

The nearest we get to agency is the MW’s “I mean” in the second COA from extract four, but this does not invoke recommendation or encouragement regarding the COA. Proffering these CsOA also allow the MWs to move the interaction to a point where they can provide the contact details for services, and thus engage in the main business of the line.

It is also worth drawing attention at this stage to the remedial nature of the CsOA analysed here. The sequential placement of the turns containing the CsOA is important in understanding these as remedial CsOA, as they all follow problem deliveries by callers. They are all also tailored for the particular problems which the callers have described and, if taken up, would be in the service of remedying the callers’ issues or problems. Understanding these CsOA as remedial is important here, as our focus is on the ways in which the MWs discuss CsOA which callers may engage in, in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. As mentioned earlier, the MWs claim to feel pressured to manage the issue of advice giving during calls. The analysis above appears to show the management of this ‘pressure’, with CsOA being proffered in forms which avoid being hearable as explicit advice giving. This management is also apparent in the form examined below.

The ‘If/ Then Constructions’ Form for Proffering Courses of Action

The next most common form for proffering CsOA is one where they are more explicitly marked as conditional, using an if/ then construction. This form is clearly demonstrated in the first example of the form below. The extract comes from a call where a caller with post-natal depression has asked for the MW’s recommendation for treatment, and said
that she has taking depression medication which does not work. The MW has previously said that they cannot recommend anything as “an advice service” (see extract 1 above which is from the same call) and has listed non-medication treatments which are available. The extract begins after the MW has listed a number of treatments.

**Extract 6A: JM - 48578 Post Natal Depression and Talking Treatments**

```
01  CA  .hh so what (%) what would be=t- first thing
02  CA  I- I'd do really.
03  MW1  If you wanted to try: (%) those kind of
04  CA  treatment[s .hhh]hh
05  CA  [mmmm. ]
06  MW1  If you wanted (%) those treatments through the
07  MW1  en aitch ess .hh °I guess it's #a-# it's
08  MW1  going to° your gee pee (%).hhh[hh] an' havin' a
09  CA  [rright
10  MW1  chat with them an' an:' (%) explaining that
11  MW1  you've tried medication previously (%) perhaps
12  MW1  and you'd like to try >somethin'< ;else. .hhhh
13  CA  [mm hm]
14  MW1  alternative
15  CA  Y:eah
16  MW1  .hhh (%) [(an')]]
17  CA  [ Ok ]ay then
18  CA  (.)
19  MW1  Does that sound >like the< kind of thing
20  MW1  that >could be< helpful for you.
21  CA  Yeah
22  CA  (.)
23  CA  Yeah
24  MW1  .hh °'kay°
```
On lines 1 and 2 the caller asks the MW what the first thing she would do is, following the delivery of a list of available treatments (data not shown). The MW's question which follows is hearable as a clarifying question; "If you wanted to try: (.5) those kind of treatments .hhhhhh", and the caller orients to it as such, responding with "mmmm.". This forms a repair sequence, with the question checking the MW's understanding of what it is the caller wants to do and offering her candidate understanding, and the repair solution "mmmm." confirming this. There are many potential alternative designs for the MW’s question of lines 3 and 4, such as "Do you mean to try these treatments?" or "To try these treatments?". All still treat the unsaid action of trying these treatments in the caller’s prior turn as the trouble source which led to the MW’s understanding check. The question form ultimately used by the MW ("If you wanted to try: (.5) those kind of treatments") is designed such that it fits pragmatically and grammatically with the conditional element of the prior turn which occasions it ("What would be the first thing I’d do?"), and thus it may be argued that this is the main reason for its use. As the MW’s question is the first-pair-part of an insert (repair) sequence, which is completed with the caller’s second-pair-part (repair solution) "mmmm." on line 5, the MW is now free (from line 6) to provide the second-pair-part to the caller’s initial question of what she would do. When it arrives, this too is begun with "If you wanted" (line 6).

Why does this appear again here? The preferred answer to a caller’s question as to what she would do is an answer which informs her of what she would do. In this case, the answer would thus be a COA as to what the caller would do to try certain treatments. Prefacing this with "If you wanted" now also marks the COA about to be delivered as conditional, as depending upon the callers ‘wants’. Importantly, it positions the MW as not knowing with certainty what the caller wants, and it maintains the callers ‘wants’ as still in the conditional realm. This has an important impact on how any following COA will be heard. Specifically, it is less likely that any following COA could be argued to be advice giving when the MW does not know for certain what the caller wants to do, and when the caller is treated as not having made a concrete statement on what it is she wants.

The notion that this conditional form is a ‘stand alone’ format for proffering a COA comes into question when we see that the MW continues using another form from table 4.1 above; a subjective telling. The turn continues with the COA being proffered as what the MW ‘guesses’; "If you wanted (. ) those treatments through the en aitch ess .hh °I
guess it's #a-# it's going to° your gee pee” (lines 6 to 8). Prefacing a COA with ‘I guess’ allows for it to be heard as a guess rather than as a considered, or institutionally typical piece of advice. But the conditional element of the turn is still equally important for the reasons addressed above, and is not negated as a form for proffering a COA by the appearance of another between it and the COA. To clarify, let us examine another occurrence of the conditional form which appears a few moments later in the same call.

Extract 6B: JM - 48578 Post Natal Depression and Talking Treatments

26 CA <Lot better than medication all=\-
27 [time (that’s not helpin’).]
28 MW1 [ hh 'heh heh' .hh ]h yeah .hhh >does it
29 I mean it< deals with the feelings doesn’t
30 it but (.5) >the medication doesn’t actu’llly<
31 deal with (. ) '#a#' the root of (. ) #y’know
32 what’s <what’s happening for y[ou ]
33 CA [you] see: (. )
34 MW1 I[t’s good but ]
35 CA [the thing what’]s
36 (.5)
37 CA What’’s’ putting me off: (. ) at- moment is. (.3)
38 (.4) <when I ‘ave been to- doctor’s
40 [ Yeh ]
41 MW1 Yeah
42 (.5)
43 CA >They’ve< (. ) not really been int’rested
44 (.7)
45 (>I mean you’re<) talking to somebody’d got
46 .hhh >what didn’t< know nowt about it.
47 MW1 Y:eah
48 (.7)
49 CA >Y’know whar I mean< s[o: ]:.
I’ve no confidence.

Mmm.

In ‘em whatsoever

Yeah

.hhh ‘(wl)’ where are you based in the country.

I’m ((town)) ((County.))

‘right’ tk .hh[hh ]

[>mo]re or less< (. ) ((town)) int

it.

. (.)

°ah::m°

(.)

.hhh m=1we have local mind associations I’m

>just gonna see if< (. ) what services th- (.)

>the one in< !( (town)) offers .hh <is ((town)) accessible for you.

. (. )

Yeah

. (. )

°Yeah,°

(.2)

Yeah I mean our d- th- our office in ((town))

>if you< didn’t want to go >to the< gee pee but

you’d=fancied giving counselling a try: .hh they
do have a counselling se:rvice. .hhh
We can see that after the caller has complained about doctors and claimed that she has no confidence in them, the MW asks the caller where she is in the country and says she is going to search for the services run by the nearest MIND association, and checks that it is accessible for the caller. The MW's next turn is "'Yeah I mean our d-th- our office in ((town)) >if you< didn't want to go >to the< gee pee but you'd=fancied giving counselling a try: .hh they do have a counselling service ..hh". As in the previous extract we have the 'wants' of the caller invoked using a conditional format before a COA is proffered. Notice how in both extracts, the 'wants' of the caller are things which are already 'on the table' and clearly available for the MW; in the first extract that the caller wants to 'try those therapies' and here that she 'doesn't want to go to the doctor but does fancy counselling'. Why, when the caller has claimed these things already, does the MW design her turn in this way and construct a hypothetical situation of the caller wanting something? To give the example of a potential alternative form, why does the MW not say 'As you don't want to go to the doctor, but you fancy giving counselling a try, they have a counselling service'?

My analysis is that there is an element of 'advice as information' about this form which is different from that mentioned in the use of modal verbs. The CsOA above are hearable as a generally available remedy to the conditional / hypothetical situation invoked by the conditional form used by the MW i.e. 'if you /anyone wants x, then the COA is y'. Indeed, conditional forms typically follow an if / then format, with the conditional element followed by an 'upshot' or 'resulting' element, and importantly for our analysis people orient to them as such (Kitzinger, 2008). In his analysis of advice on radio phone-in shows, Hutchby (1995) analyses advice given in if / then formats e.g. "if you are, disabled, and in touch with a society, or er .h a disablement group in your area, .h then you must put pressure on that society or group, .h to respond to the reviews" (p.230). In Hutchby's data, these occurrences of advice giving follow specific questions from live callers, but Hutchby argues that the 'you' in the advice is designed to be hearable as the
impersonal you as well as the personal form, as a way of extending the advice to others in this situation. With these points in mind, let us revisit the previous examples of a COA from our data.

Extract 6A

If you wanted (...) those treatments through the en aitch ess .hh °I guess it's #a-# it's going to° your gee pee (...) hhh[h] an' havin' a chat with them an' an'. (.4) explaining that you've tried medication previously (...) perhaps and you'd like to try >somethin'< ;else. .hhhh a[hh (.)] maybe some talking treatments >as an< alternative

Extract 6B

†Yeah I mean our d- th- our office in ((town)) if you didn't want to go >to the< gee pee but you'd fancied giving counselling a try: .hh they do have a counselling service. .hhh

The first of these extracts matches the example from Hutchby (1995) with the conditional element (if X) preceding a COA (then Y). The second example is slightly different in format, with an element of the COA (where to go) precedes the conditional element. Both examples carry out the same interactional work though of making the COA hearable as a readily available action to engage in when in this particular situation. The 'you' which is hearable as the impersonal form assists in making these CsOA hearable as general and pertaining to anyone in the situation.

The next extract in this section demonstrates a structure of this format which matches that in extract 6B, where the conditional is spoken after an element of the COA, although in
this case the COA is directed towards a third party. The caller here has been describing how she has tracked down a former work colleague who was bullied at their workplace, as she wants him to support her in a legal case she has started against their employer. The MW (a different MW than that of extract 6A and B) has asked twice in the call thus far what it is that the caller wants from MIND Infoline, as no line-appropriate request for information has been made, but much troubles telling has been done.

Extract 7: JM - 55246 Bullying at Work

01 CA     bu- >but for< somebody .hh >to be< traumatised
02       at work >to the< point where the- they’re
03       sectioned=he was picked up .hk[ hh ] by the p’lice
04 MW5    [mm hm,]
05 (. ) [because] he was so traumatised by this
06 MW5    [ yeh, ]
07 CA     :person at wor:k
08 (.3)
09 MW5    mmm.
10 (.3)
11 MW5    [ .hhh    ]
12 CA     [>It’s-< .hh] I know it sounds unbelievable ;but
13       th[is (. ) he ( )]
14 MW5    [:no it doesn’t at] all:
15 (.)
16 MW5    It doesn’t at all it does happen .h[hhh ] ahm (.6)
17 CA     [yeah]
18 -> MW5 (>there ar-<) #a-# (. ) again (awi)- (. ) >I mean
19       we have< local minds if he wanted some suppo:rt
20       with .hhh d[oi ng something about that. ]
21 CA     [Well >I don’t< need the support] now.
22 (. )
23 -> MW5 [No him.] if- if he wanted some support.
In lines 18 to 20 the MW proffers a COA for the third party using a conditional form; ">I mean we have< local minds if he wanted some support with hhh doing something about that.". Like the example in extract 6B, the conditional element of the turn (what the person may or may not want) comes in the middle of the construction, after the help source (a local MIND) and before the action to engage in (getting support). The caller appears to misunderstand this as directed at her, and rejects it. The MW addresses this directly; "No him." and adds an increment to this turn; "if- if he wanted some support." (line 23). The conditional element of the turn (if) serves as a pre-framing of the repair solution (he) in the MW’s turn, and I argue that re-issuing the conditional element of the misunderstood turn as well as the repair solution demonstrates its importance in the proffering of the COA.

Although as the ‘wants’ of the third party have not already been constructed in the call before the turn with the COA is launched, they are still hypotheticalised and thus the turn functions in similar ways to the previous examples, by proffering a COA to be followed if conditions are met. In this example though, the target recipient is a third party, referred to using the pronoun ‘he’. This does not negate the function of the conditional form however in making the COA embedded in the turn (going to a local MIND and getting support) hearable as a general, normative action to engage in when in the hypothetical situation of ‘wanting’ support.

**A negative case analysis.**

The final extract for this form comes from the same MW as the example in extract seven, and takes an interesting form. In this call, the caller has been complaining that she cannot get any information about her son who is in what she calls a ‘private rehab hospital for people with schizophrenia’. Despite calling a number of times to request information on her son’s wellbeing, and being told that someone would get back to her, she claims that she has not been contacted by anyone at the hospital. She has asked the MW why the hospital staff would withhold
information, and has then engaged in complaining about the hospital staff at the point before the
following extract begins.

Extract 8: JM - 69622 Contact with Son

01  MWS 

.hh ahm ;I'd- I don't know their reasons basic'ly.

02  =on'y th[ey (.) >c'n >tell you< (.) that (.)but. ..h)

03  CA  [no y:ou don't know (}

04  →  MWS  ;if: .hhh (.) if >you want< more contact >I mean<

05  (.) >can you< go there?

In this example, the MW begins the conditional format with “if >you want< more con'tact” but in place of the asserted CsOA we see in the previous extracts, the COA here is embedded within an interrogative “>can you> go there?” that follows the ‘if’ element of the if / then construction. This variant on the conditional form still functions in the same way as the previous examples, as the COA (going there) is presented as a normative action to engage in when the condition of wanting more information is met. We are back to the use of ‘you’, both of which are run through at speed, and which is again hearable here as either the personal or impersonal use of the term. Also, similar to extracts 6A and 6B, the caller has made it clear throughout the call that she wants to visit her son and to have more information on his progress from the staff (data not shown), yet this is hypotheticalised in the MW’s formulation of her wants; “if you want more contact...”. What is different is that the ‘then’ element is replaced with an interrogative, and the ability to engage in the COA is constructed as unknown to the MW “can you go there?”.

The turn is troubled; “↑if: .hhh (.) if >you want< more con'tact >I mean< (.) >can you< go there?” and I would like to focus on the ‘I mean’ here. In his analysis of ‘I mean’ in turns at talk, Maynard (2007) claims that when these appear mid turn, they usually indicate trouble with the turn in progress, and are followed by self repair. Notice that there is also a micro pause after the ‘I mean’ in the MW’s turn. My analysis is that the MW was headed for the standard if / then construction, to proffer the COA, but changes the trajectory as this would have sounded like a directive, or at least as advice giving. If the MW were to complete the urn using the syntax he had begun with, the turn would
have taken a form such as 'If you want more contact you can go there'. It is such a form that I argue has been abandoned here and replaced with the (grammatically odd) form which was used, as the normal if /then construction form for proffering a COA would have sounded inappropriate if used in this instance. Interestingly, the 'you' in the form used still functions as hearable as the personal or impersonal form.

Having analysed a number of examples from the ‘if /then’ construction form for proffering CsOA, it is clear that they share a number of characteristics;

- The COA proffered is marked as conditional and dependent upon the person’s wants

- When discussing a problem of the person calling, the COA is hearable as applicable to anyone in the situation described

- The COA is hearable as information on what can be done, and the design avoids a form which is hearable as a more explicit, advice giving turn

- The CsOA involved are all ones which would serve to remedy the callers’ problems

All of these points were also discussed as elements of the modal verb form for proffering CsOA above, although the use of 'can' was discussed as marking a COA as openly possible, and ‘could’ and ‘would’ as marking it as conditionally possible. Both forms have been seen to manage the issue of proffering CsOA in an environment where advice giving is prohibited in very similar ways.

**Discussion**

It is arguable that the CsOA in all of the extracts above represent advice giving – they are future oriented actions to engage in, proffered by the representative of a service, which are aimed at remedying a trouble claimed or invoked by the caller. Deciding whether or not this constitutes advice giving is not our purpose here though, and what we have seen is how both forms of deploying a COA discussed above manage the issue of offering CsOA in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. MIND Infoline calls are different from other institutional interactions studied previously for how advice is delivered, as they have an agenda to deliver information linked to the COA that the caller
may engage in. The delivery of the advice and / or it’s uptake are not the end interactional goal in the calls analysed here, but rather the delivery of the relevant information which forms the core function of the line.

In the first form described (the use of modal verbs), the CsOA are constructed as what is either possibly or conditionally able to be done by the person referred to. It is hearable as information about the COA, while proffering the COA. The form avoids explicit advice giving through it’s design of mentioning what can, could, or would be done, as opposed to what (e.g.) should be done or what is recommended. Indeed, not a single occurrence of ‘should’ being used in such a manner was found in the corpus. In the second form, the CsOA are explicitly marked as conditional, according to the recipients’ wants, but are also hearable as a COA to be engaged in by anyone on this situation. Both forms then manage to proffer a COA which is a remedy to a trouble delivered by the caller, and thus are in one sense tailored for that caller. Yet both also deliver the COA as information about what can generally be done by anyone as a remedy to that situation.

Both forms also incorporate the use of a ‘passive voice’ (Silverman, 1997) which makes the CsOA less hearable as personal ideas or recommendations from MWs, and both forms manage to avoid delivering the CsOA ‘out of the blue’, which we say at the beginning of the chapter was found to be massively problematic in institutional interactions. Constructing the callers’ situations in a hypothetical manner, invoking the callers’ perspectives, and using interactional devices such as ‘In regards to…’ are all deployed in the service of avoiding the delivery of unexpected or spurious CsOA. All of these characteristics were also seen earlier in the chapter as being found in the management of advice giving in other institutional settings, and thus the analysis here supports those findings by showing they exist in a setting where advice is prohibited, and where talk of CsOA which callers can engage in needs much delicate management.

In the existing literature on advice giving in talk-in-interaction, a common feature is the notion of an asymmetry between advice-giver and advice-recipient. This asymmetry will be outlined in more detail in the next chapter, but it is worth mentioning at this point, that the vast majority of the ways explored above in which MWs proffer courses of action also manage any potential asymmetry between them and the callers. As the MWs are not hearably giving explicit advice, but are rather proffering information about a COA, the potential asymmetrical relationship of knowledgeable advice-giver and less
knowledgeable or competent advice-recipient is not invoked. On initial examination, some of the data here would appear not to fit with Jefferson & Lee’s (1981) notion that advice cannot follow a troubles telling, as the reversal of the recipient from troubles teller to advice recipient will lead to interactional asynchrony. Perhaps it works here in that, while callers and MWs orient to the transition space following a troubles telling as a place for a COA to be delivered, the COA is delivered in ways which help it to be less hearable as advice. As mentioned, Silverman (1997) claims that advice as information is a useful device for avoiding the interactional dilemmas of advice giving. Where we have seen that COA is resisted, it is the specific COA that is rejected, and not the offering of a COA in itself.

The main difference between the two forms examined above is that the conditional form explicitly marks the COA as conditional. This is not a consistent element in the use of the modal verb form, as while ‘could’ and ‘would’ orient to the COA as conditionally done, ‘can’ simply marks the COA as generally able to be done. In the conditional form, and the ‘could’ and ‘would’ uses of the modal verb form, there is a systematic vagueness as MWs do not have to name the conditions which need to be met when a COA is marked as conditionally done. Edwards (1994) considers ‘would’ to be a scripting device which mark events or activities as expectable, or routinely done, and Palmer (2001) discusses the modality oriented to by verbs such as would as pertaining to either internal conditions (of the individual) or external conditions (of the world). The uses outlined above allow for the scripting of the CsOA such that while they are oriented to as generally done in the situation or under certain conditions, the conditions do not have to be outlined in any detail for the caller. Also, all of the things proffered here ‘can’ arguably all be done – contacting private healthcare or going to a local MIND office – so the interactional import of framing them in more conditional terms is worth further exploration. An argument was begun above which claimed that the ‘would’ and ‘could’ modal verb forms for proffering a COA may be used when there is a possibility that the COA may be rejected, and further work on a larger data set may support this further. As mentioned in chapter two, a recurrent theme in discursive psychological research is how the relationship between subjective inner experience and the objective world is managed in interaction. In the forms for proffering CsOA above we see elements of such management. In the modal verb form no indication is needed as to whether the conditions to be met are internal to the recipient of the COA or external to them. In the conditional
form, the internal ‘wants’ of the recipient of the COA are constructed by the MWs as the condition for the COA.

In the data set under analysis here callers will either request advice or engage in a troubles telling or problem description. MWs and callers treat the end of these as places where the MWs offer a course of action relevant to the callers’ predicaments. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the MWs do not to ask what the caller’s problems are unless the issue they describe is not one they can help with according to their remit. Thus MW initiated, multi-turn, stepwise advice sequences do not occur in the MIND Infoline calls, and in the vast majority of cases, the course of action is delivered in ways which are not direct advice giving, and which avoid the creation of any asymmetry between speakers. In feeding back the analysis of such calls to the MWs, they have all agreed that CsOA are delivered in the ways outlined in this chapter and the next in an attempt to avoid sounding as though they are giving advice, because of the prohibition on advice giving on the line.
Chapter 5: The Use of Yes / No Interrogatives in Proffering Courses of Action

This chapter aims to build on the concepts put forward in the previous chapter; the ways in which courses of action (COAs) are proffered in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. Here, we shall examine interrogatives used by the MWs, which follow problem deliveries by callers. These interrogatives either have a COA embedded within them, or make relevant some form of caller uptake after a COA has been proffered.

It is perhaps worth briefly revisiting here the dilemma faced by MWs when it comes to discussing COAs. Callers often ask for advice, or engage in problem deliveries which they treat as sufficient for MWs to then advise upon. MWs must respond to callers of course, but there is a prohibition on advice giving; MWs are not permitted to provide advice to callers. In responding to callers who seek advice, or make relevant some form of assistance from the MWs through the problem deliveries, the MWs face the dilemma of having to avoid giving advice, while bringing the interaction to a point where they can engage in the main business of the line; providing information or relevant contact details for services which are relevant to the callers’ concerns. As discussed in the previous chapter, advice is indeed a live issue within the calls; it is frequently requested by callers and actively avoided by the MWs. Our aim here is to examine some more of the practices engaged in by the MWs which serve to manage this issue.

A brief note on terminology; I use the term interrogatives here as the turns I will focus on follow the grammatical form of an interrogative. Many various types of turns may be treated as questions by speakers regardless of their grammatical form, but those analysed here are specifically designed as interrogatives by the MWs, and are treated by callers as such.

Previous relevant work on interrogatives in talk-in-interaction

A great amount of research exists which examines the interactional function of questions in general, and which explicates their interactional sequela. The work I will refer to here constitutes the studies relevant to the analysis offered in this chapter. Of major importance is the work on interrogatives in institutional settings, and on those whose
design requires recipients to provide a yes or no answer, as the MW activities analysed here are such ‘yes / no interrogatives’ (henceforth YNIs). Perhaps the most notable work in this area is by Raymond (2003) who analysed YNIs focussing on the actions they make relevant as a next turn, and the forms these next turns may take. Raymond noted that research had shown how, apart from constraining a recipient’s answer in terms of requiring a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’, YNIs will often also be designed to prefer one or the other in two ways; firstly the polarity of the question will be designed such that one will be preferred over the other, and secondly in that a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ will be preferred when it aligns with the action embedded within it. Raymond offers the example of such a question; “Can you give me a ride home?” which has a positive polarity preferring a ‘yes’, and also prefers a ‘yes’ in terms of aligning with the request for a ride home. Raymond compares this with an alternative question; “You can’t give me a ride home, can you?” which is negatively polarised, allowing more readily for a ‘no’ which allows the recipient to align with the first speaker’s if indeed they have to refuse. A ‘yes’ response however would align with the embedded request for a lift home. This illustrates how aligning with the framing of a YNI is not the same as aligning with the action contained within it.

In his own analysis, Raymond (2003) demonstrated how type non-conforming responses (responses which do not contain a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’) may still align with the questioner by providing a positive or negative answer, which a ‘yes’ (positive) or ‘no’ (negative) response would have achieved. Raymond also showed, importantly, that type non-conforming responses typically index a problem with the terms embedded within the question, and offered the following excerpt as an example:

HV 1C1 (HV = Health Visitor, MO = Mother) Taken from Raymond (2003)

1   HV      Mm.= Are your breasts alright.
2   MO      They’re fi:ne no:w I’ve stopped leaking

Raymond (2003) argues that a type conforming answer would have accepted the ‘either / or’ terms of the question that the mother’s breasts are “alright”. The type non-conforming response which is delivered by the mother indexes a problem with the question design, specifically that the two response options made relevant by it are not sufficient for what
the mother goes on to convey; that her breasts are fine now, but that previously they had not been. Focussing on the use of YNIs in institutional discourse, Raymond (2006) again demonstrated how these constrain recipients’ responses through forcing them to accept or reject the “definition of the situation” embedded within them (p.134), focussing particularly on courtroom interactions where lawyers almost exclusively use a YNI question format, and can have any response other than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer stricken from the court records.

A further principle of question design which recurs in work on YNIs in institutional settings (typically doctor / patient interaction) is that of optimisation, which Heritage (2001) defines as yielding questions “designed to prefer best-case, normal, or no-problem responses” (p.322). There is some overlap here with the polarity element of question design discussed above, and Boyd and Heritage (2006) claim that this preference is achieved using the grammatical structure of the question and also lexical choice. Essentially, Boyd and Heritage claim that the default preference is for recipients to align with “affirmatively framed” YNIs by using a ‘yes’, and conversely to align with “negatively framed” YNIs by using a ‘no’ (p.160). For example, in an episode of patient history-taking by a doctor (taken from Boyd & Heritage, 2006), questions such as “Is your father alive?” and “Are you married?” prefer yeses as such ‘best-case, normal, or no-problem’ answers.

This affirmative framing appears to be more frequently used in interrogative design than negative framing; Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki (1997) claim that YNIs tend to be formed in “optimistic terms” (p.286) such that an interrogative on how well a person slept will be formed as “Did you sleep well?” as opposed to “Did you not sleep well?”. Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki argue that such positively formed YNIs are the “unmarked” or “default” (my emphasis) form of YNI production, and also that they project no-problem, positive answers with recipients needing to engage in some interactional work to respond with a negative answer. The literature seems to support the notion that interrogatives typically orient to what the normal or ‘best case’ response from the caller should be.

In their analysis of the ways in which survey takers produced questionnaire items for people with learning disabilities to respond to, Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki (1997) found that the items were routinely reproduced as positively framed YNI’s, such as in the
following example. The questionnaire involved aimed to measure the respondents’
quality of life and the boxed text below represents a question as seen on the
questionnaire. The transcript extract is that of a recording of the question being delivered
in an interview.

From Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki (1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q12. Do you feel your job or other daily activity is worthwhile and relevant to either yourself or others?</th>
<th>Yes, definitely</th>
<th>Probably, I'm not sure</th>
<th>Definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(4) MT/KK/CL

I = Interviewer, R = Respondent

1  I: .hh do you *think what you do during the
day* helps other people

2  R: *mm*

3  I: d’you think it helps them a *lot* (0.8)

4  R: some (0.2) or a li- (0.2) >or not at all<

5  (2.0)

6  I: *d’you think you help other people?*

7  R: Yeah

8  I: *right o:Kay*

As can be seen, the actual survey item consists of a specific question and three candidate
answers. In lines 1 and 2 the interviewer transforms these into a positively framed YNI
which is slightly different from the positively framed YNI on the survey. Although the
initial questions on the survey are YNIs, Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki (1997) argue
that they are “redefined as a fixed-choice question” (p.301) through the emergence of the
various response options. The focus of Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki’s analysis
however is the way in which, when respondents do not state one of the candidate
answers, the interviewers re-issue the questions, but as positively framed YNIs,
in incorporates the ‘best case’ option from the three on the survey. An example of this can
be seen in their extract above on line 7. The respondent aligns with this, as the preference structure would expect, and this has the effect of creating an answer which leads towards a more positive overall score on the quality of life scale. On other occasions, the survey takers were found to reformat the initial survey item into a positively framed YNI incorporating only the positive response option. These, of course, also received ‘yes’ answers from the respondents, again raising their overall score. Although it was not a main focus of their analysis, Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki’s analysis demonstrates how the use of positively framed YNIs can aid in the forward progression of an institutional interaction. Once respondents were considered to have provided an answer, the survey takers were able to move on to the next questionnaire item, thus moving the interaction its institutional business forward.

In another analysis of survey interviews, this time between Dutch researchers and their respondents (semi-literate adults), Houtkoop-Steenstra (1997) focussed on how YNIs were deployed in the service of “being friendly” (p.591). Houtkoop-Steenstra showed how scripted questions were again transformed by survey-takers into positively framed YNIs, which displayed an “optimistic view of the respondents” (p.619). Take the following example.

From Houtkoop-Steenstra (1997)

KEA:1177     I = Interviewer, R = respondent.

1    I: do you ever do on paper additions or subtractions?
2    R: yes I do
3    (1.5)
4    I: and you manage well?
5    R ja:we:l. ((weak agreement)).

Following an affirmative answer to the question on whether the respondent does additions or subtractions on paper, the scripted follow-up question reads “How well can you do this? (Well / reasonably well / badly)”. It is these follow up questions which were found to be transformed into YNIs which preferred a no-problem answer, and which then position the respondents more positively than would the scripted version with the
negative options. Houtkoop-Steenstra (1997) argues that this avoids a 'face-threatening' scenario through offering a more-positive construction of the respondent than would the scripted versions of the questions, which invoke the respondents’ literacy problems. Houtkoop-Steenstra also suggests that this creates a friendly relationship between the speakers, and that 'being friendly' in this way may allow the survey-takers to collect more of this sensitive information.

The ways in which a relationship between speakers may be constituted through YNIs has also been discussed elsewhere. In the analysis of questions by health visitors (HVs) to newly delivered mothers Heritage (2002) explicated the ways in which questions, often YNIs, served to not only carry out the business of the visit, but also to constitute the relationship between the speakers. Heritage showed how the HVs designed their questions to display whether the issue was one discussed previously with the client or not, and thus “assert an incipient relationship” with them (p.327). Heritage offers the following example:

Taken from Heritage (2002)

1A1:20

1 HV Were you a uhm (1.5) what (1.0) uh: (.) you were a
2 nurse at the Randolph.
3 MO Ye[h
4 HV [Yea:h.

The HV restarts here turn twice, with the first two starts apparently forming interrogatives, but with the completed version of the turn taking a declarative form (still treated as requiring an answer by the mother). This shows that the HV’s preferred form for garnering the information is to display that she already has some knowledge of the mother’s previous occupation. Heritage (2002) offers the above excerpt as a way to elucidate the principle of recipient design, which he defines as leading to question forms which are “adapted to the specific circumstances of a recipient, and the state of the interaction between questioner and recipient that is current at the moment of the question.” (p.322). This principle can be seen in action above through the HV’s avoidance of the initial question design which would have treated the speakers as not
having discussed the mother's occupation before, and the subsequent adoption of a
design which indexes some previous interaction. Heritage offers a number of examples of
such design, and claims that they serve in the creation of a more familiar relationship
between the health visitors and mothers than would more open, w- prefaced questions
(such as the one avoided by the HV in the example above).

In a more detailed analysis of the roles invoked between speakers through the use of
interrogatives including YNIs, Heritage (2008) discusses the "epistemic gradient" (p.14)
created between speakers when a question is issued. This gradient is an asymmetry
between speakers created by a difference in knowledge invoked by the question, with the
questioner exhibiting a lack of knowledge (or a K- position) and the recipient as being in
a knowledgeable position (K+). Question design is crucial in terms of the "tilt" (p.15) of
the gradient, with declarative questions putting questioners on a more equal knowledge
footing than an interrogative. Heritage offers the examples of "Who were you talking to?,
Were you talking to Manny?, and You were talking to Manny weren't you?". The first
form does not display any knowledge of what the answer may be, the second offers a
tentative candidate answer and displays uncertainty, while the final version asserts some
knowledge, which is offered for confirmation. Thus, the epistemic gradient between
speakers is quite 'steep' at the first question and more level by the final form.

Institutional interactions are typically asymmetric in nature as the clients seek the help,
advice, or knowledge of the professionals (Drew and Heritage, 1992), but advice giving
itself specifically "assumes or establishes an asymmetry between participants" (Hutchby,
1995, p.221) by positioning the advice giver as more knowledgeable on the specific
issue. Thus, in talk-in-interaction, both the giving of advice and the issuing of an
interrogative can create asymmetries between speakers in terms of assumed knowledge,
with the epistemic gradients moving in opposite directions. Giving advice positions the
recipient as less knowledgeable, while issuing an interrogative can position the recipient
as more knowledgeable (depending on the design of the interrogative). This asymmetry
is, of course, managed and co-constructed in talk as it unfolds. As we have seen, speakers
can resist the terms of a YNI by issuing a type non-conforming response for example,
and as noted in the previous chapter, advice recipients can level the invoked asymmetry
by resisting the advice through (for example) displays of competence or marking the
advice as irrelevant.
Having examined some of the research available currently on YNIs and their uses in institutional interactions, it is clear that they can serve a number of institutional as well as social interactional purposes. They exert various constraints on the answers recipients can give, formulate a state of affairs for recipients to confirm or disconfirm, aid in the forward progression of an interaction, and help to construct the relationship between speakers. All of these aspects of interrogative design have recently been discussed as important elements of the use of questions in the delivery of advice in a setting where advice is prohibited; a study with focus matching that of this chapter. In their work on advice delivery in calls to a children’s helpline, Butler, Potter, Danby, Emmisson, and Hepburn (unpublished manuscript) found that a frequently used method of managing advice prohibition, was to embed a COA within an interrogative. These interrogatives alluded to a COA which, if engaged in, may remedy the callers’ issues. If callers aligned with these interrogatives, the COA may be more strongly proffered in a later turn by the call takers. The following example illustrates these points.

Taken from Butler et al (unpublished manuscript).

PC140408_2241 Amelie  Call = Caller, Cou = Helpline Counsellor

1  Cou: ↑Have you ever talked to anyone about that stuff?
2  (0.8)
3  Call: No.
4  (0.3)
5  Cou: ↑No?
6  (0.5)
7  Call: ↑You: >go tah< s: high school you were ↑saying?
8  (0.4)
9  Cou: ↑Yip.
10  (0.6)
11  Call: ↑Yeah?< .hh Do you have a counsellor or guidance officer at school?
12  (0.6)
13  Cou: Yeah see one of my friends goes (and see
him) but we hh they only get to see him:-  
(0.) once every fortnight.  
(0.2)  
19  Cou:  k.h Okay? .hh <I’m- (.) just wondering  
20  I’m- (.) obviously still happy to  
21  keep talking to you noiw b’t .hhh whether  
22  that’s the sort’v thing you think you’d  
23  li:ke tih talk to a ↑guidance officer or  
24  school counsellor about.  

Following the problem delivery by the caller, the helpline counsellor asks “↑Have you ever talked to anyone about that stuff?” (lines 1 to 2) in which a COA is embedded (talking to someone about ‘that stuff’). The following questions by the counsellor (lines 8 to 9, and 12 to 13) serve to gain confirmation that the caller is in high school, and that there is a counsellor or guidance officer at school. Butler et al discuss all of these questions as alluding to a COA of talking to the counsellor / guidance officer about the issue without actually delivering it as advice, while serving as a preliminary to a more explicit attempt at proffering the COA depending on how the caller responds. This more explicit turn can be seen above (lines 19 to 24) where the counsellor utilises a device similar to the ‘subjective’ telling, discussed in the previous chapter as often used by the MWs.

In their discussion of previous research into advice in talk-in-interaction, Butler et al (unpublished manuscript) claim that the main dimensions of advice delivery and reception appear to be the normative element of the advice (that it is a relevant COA to engage in for the specific situation; that it is a ‘best’ next action) and the asymmetry between advice giver and advice recipient (that the advice giver is in the position to know or determine what is the best COA for the recipient, and that the recipient is now ‘informed’ and should engage in this COA). Butler et al claim that this method for delivering a COA through the use of interrogatives manages the issue of advice prohibition in a number of ways. The COA which is embedded within the interrogatives is fitted to the caller’s specific issues, yet the interrogative format softens the normative or prescriptive nature of the COA, thus making it less hearable as advice. Also, the
interrogatives form a pre-sequence projecting a ‘suggestion’ of what COA to engage in which is contingent on the caller’s responses, and in seeking these responses the interrogatives also serve to privilege the caller’s epistemic authority on the matter. This results in a different epistemic gradient between counsellor and caller, than would a more explicit advice giving form where the counsellors direct callers or prescribe specific CsOA, and thus position themselves as more knowledgeable. The interrogatives also achieved another institutional goal for the counsellors in that they moved the call forward from a problem presentation sequence, to a problem resolution sequence. Butler et al have termed these interrogatives which allude to a COA “Advice Implicative Interrogatives”.

To recap, interrogatives in institutional interactions have been seen to:

1) Constrain recipients’ answers and project aligning answers
2) Create an asymmetry of knowledge between speakers, which can be steep or more level depending on the design of the interrogative
3) Constitute the relationship between speakers
4) Aid in the progression of the interaction
5) Can proffer a COA and manage the issue of advice prohibition

We shall move now to the analysis of YNIs in the MIND Infoline corpus. At the risk of being accused of ‘priming’ the reader to find the phenomenon which I argue is recurrent in the YNIs, it is perhaps worth spelling out here what the focus of the analysis will be. As in the previous chapter, the aim here is to examine recurrent practices which the MWs engage in when discussing CsOA with callers. We shall see that the YNIs examined here will proffer a COA relevant to the problem which the caller has delivered, while avoiding a form which may be hearable as advice giving. They all also aid in the progression of the interaction such that they allow the MWs to introduce relevant services or agencies which they can provide contact details for; the core institutional business of MIND Infoline. Indeed, the YNIs analysed here perform multiple functions for the MWs. As Steensig and Drew (2008) argue, “asking a question is not an innocent thing to do” (p.7).
Analysis

In the previous chapter we noted that interrogatives were the most frequently occurring form in which CsOA are proffered. These interrogatives fall into three distinct types, which are listed in order of decreasing frequency. These are:

Type 1: YNIs which follow a turn designed as a description of, or information on, a service which the caller may engage in, e.g. "<obviously there's the women's ai:di: (.) domestic violence helpline >that you< can ringi: .hh >a=did you want<=their number" (48 examples in the corpus)

Type 2: YNIs which have a COA embedded within them and question the caller as to whether they want or had wanted the MW to provide contact details for organisations relevant to the COA, e.g. "hhh ar- are you looking >for a< helpline?" (36 examples in the corpus)

Type 3: YNIs with a COA embedded within them, which require the caller to confirm or disconfirm whether they have engaged in a specific COA. Example: "Ri:ght an- 'ave you spoken to your gee >pee at the moment how< .hhh thee ps#y#chiatrist wants to sign you=↓off" (30 examples in the corpus)

These three types have much in common, but we shall explore them separately, in the order they appear above. Slight variations are found in types one and two, but only in terms of lexical choice rather than in the overall design or action formation of the turns. An interesting example of type three will be discussed where the caller clearly orients to the YNI as proffering a COA, which he actively resists.

**Type 1 Interrogatives**

As outlined above, these follow a turn with a COA embedded within it. The initial turns vary slightly, but all are hearable as a description of, or information on, a COA. Similarly, the design of the YNI which follows varies only slightly, although these variations are of interest. The first extract is one seen in the previous chapter, where we studied the ways in which modal verbs were used in proffering CsOA.
The first interrogative comes on line 11, right after the positively presented COA of calling the family rights group. This COA is targeted directly at the caller’s earlier telling that she wanted to speak to someone in confidence about her grandchildren (data not shown) and there is arguably little danger of it being turned down. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the design of the turn containing the COA of speaking to the family rights group is delivered as information about what the caller can do. An issue however is how the interaction may progress from the delivery of this ‘information’. The MW could wait to see if the caller treats it as making relevant some uptake of the COA, but instead issues the YNI “>d’you want their< ↑<telephone number>“. Now a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ is
imminently relevant, which would signal ostensible uptake of this COA by the caller and provide the MW with the perfect interactional environment to issue the telephone number. The caller comes in slightly early with “yes please.” on line 12 such that we have last-item overlap with the MW’s YNI, and indeed the MW delivers the number and opening hours of the organisation.

Before discussing the use of these YNIs any further, let us compare the YNI of line 11 with the one issued later on lines 13 and 14; “Did you want the number for social services?” The ‘option’ of calling social services has already been oriented to as problematic because this will not be confidential, and thus there is more of a chance that their number will not be taken by the caller. The design of the interrogative about this number, using the past tense, allows for a dispreferred response (a ‘no’) which would appear less troublesome to the ongoing interaction than if the YNI had been designed using the present tense. This is because, I argue, asking ‘do you want..’ marks the wanting of the object, information, etc in question as being currently live for the caller, where as asking ‘did you want…’ marks the wanting of it as something prior; something less immediate and live. Both may still project the availability or provision of the object and provide an interactional place for a confirmation which would make the delivery of the object relevant, but designing the YNI using the past tense means that a ‘no’ response is less misaligning as it is not a disconfirmation of something currently live for the caller. As the number for social services may not be something the caller wants, designing the YNI on lines 13 and 14 using the past tense may thus be more socially cohesive than using a present tense design\(^1\). The caller does indeed provide a very troubled, type non-conforming response (lines 15 to 16) but this may be due to the daughter-in-law living in a different area of the country to the caller, with the attached possibility that the MW may not have access to those numbers\(^2\). The caller does accept the number when it is provided (data not shown).

There are of course a number of similarities across both YNIs in terms of their institutional functions. Having proffered a COA in a form which does not make caller uptake immediately relevant, the YNIs above do make relevant such uptake and thus allow the interaction to progress to information delivery (the phone numbers of the organisations) or to (e.g.) a different COA should uptake be declined or resisted. Yet in designing these YNIs as questions as to what the callers themselves want (or ‘had’ wanted), the caller’s agency in engaging in the COA is invoked. This is very different to
more explicit forms of advice giving which, as we discussed in the previous chapter, treat the recipient as one who follows the COA provided by the advisor. Notice also that both YNIs above are positively framed to prefer a 'yes' response. In providing a preferred, type conforming 'yes' to a YNI as to whether they wanted the phone number, the caller marks the COA (telephoning the organisation) as something they want to engage in. The design of the YNI is also one where the epistemic gradient between caller and MW is quite steep, with the MW in a K- Position and the caller in a K+ position. This is arguably a very different relational positioning of both speakers than that of an advice giving – advice recipient relationship, which would be invoked by a more explicit advice giving form of proffering the COA.

I must be clear that I am not saying here that a K-/K+ relationship between MW and caller as invoked by the YNIs above is incompatible with an advising/receiving relationship which may also be invoked by a YNI proffering a COA, or that they could not co-exist. What is the case above however is that the caller has been constructed as wanting the number of the organisations using interrogatives which create a steep epistemic gradient favouring the caller. The relationship constructed here in the interrogative/answer sequence is not one of advisor and recipient, despite the fact that a COA of calling an organisation is proffered, and in which uptake of this is made relevant. This is important when CsOA are being proffered in an environment where advice is prohibited, as, similar to the example provided from Butler et al (2009), the interrogative softens the normative or prescriptive nature of the proffering of the COA.

The next extract shows how, when a COA has been deployed using a similar format as above (a modal verb format which makes the turn hearable as information rather than advice), and the caller appears to resist the COA, a YNI is deployed which leads to (ostensible) caller uptake. The extract is taken from a call where the caller has been discussing how difficult it is to live with her abusive husband, and how she does not want to divorce him as that would make him eligible for a share in some money she has inherited.

*Extract 2A: JM - 43804 Abusive Partner*

01 CA He wins either way.
02 (.8)
Right. I mean ☐e° (.6) >obviously< this is (.)
difficult issue. .hhh ahm bu- #a# that- (. ) that
then: (. ) >puts me >in a difficult situation
of< how to offer you help with this >I
mean [did you think you just want< sup]port then.

[ Yea:h N:o ]

. hhhh >D' [you just< wa]nt suppo:rt.

[ pa'don' ]

(.7)

because there's th- d- <obviously there's the
women's ai:d'

(. )

domestic violence helpline >that you< can ring(. ) hh

Yea:h.

(.3)

°w-°

(. )

>a=did you want<thei number

(. )

<they've >got a< free phone helpline

(. )

that deal with this all the ti:me

(.7)

Yea[h.]

[Yea[h.]

[ y]eah .hh it's (. ) zero eight zero eight;
Considering the focus of this chapter, there is much which could be said about the MW’s turn in lines 3 to 7, where she formulates her role as one of ‘helping’ and asks the caller if she ‘thinks she just wants support’. We will return to interrogatives such as this later, but for now the focus remains on the interrogative which appears on line 21; “a=did you want<=their number”. As in the previous extract, the YNI here follows the deployment of a COA using a modal verb form, which is this time prefaced with ‘obviously’ which marks what will follow as generally known and available to anyone; “<obviously there’s the women’s ai:dl (. ) domestic violence helpline >that you< can ring . hh” (lines 12 to 15). Both the use of ‘obviously’ and the modal verb form aid in making the COA hearable as information, rather than advice. The delivery if the initial COA here is different from the one in extract one due to the rising, question-like intonation at the end. In this instance, the MW does not continue with the YNI as to whether the caller wants the number, and there is a 0.5 second gap where the MW stops and before the caller comes in with “Ye:ah.” (line 17), which may display alignment without uptake (Heritage and Sefi, 1992) of the COA of ringing the helpline.

This is followed by a 0.3 second gap, and low volume “w-” from the caller (line 19). After another brief pause, the MW issues the YNI making relevant a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ as to whether the caller had wanted the number of the helpline. Notice that, as was the case where uptake of the COA of calling an organisation was less certain in extract one, the MW uses the past tense and asks ‘Did you want...” (my emphasis). This again allows the potential dispreferred ‘no’ answer to indicate a state of affairs in the past tense (i.e. ‘I did not want...’). Also, I argue again that this form softens the normative, prescriptive element of the COA by placing it in the realm of the caller’s ‘wants’ rather than what the MW wants, or advises, etc the caller to do. The positively framed YNI is not immediately responded to and the MW comes in again with what is hearable as a positive statement about the organisation; “<they’ve >got a< free phone helpline” (line 23). This is also met with a beat of silence and the MW then adds another ‘positive statement’ in an increment; “that deal with this all the ti:me” (line 25). Although this too is met with silence initially, after 0.7 seconds the caller comes in with “†Yeah. †I’ll I’ll- I’ll have th↓eir number” (line 27). The ‘Yeah’ is the preferred, type conforming response but the caller appears to ‘push back’ somewhat at the terms of the YNI by saying she ‘will have’ the number. This indexes the giving of the number to her by the MW, while moving away from notions of what she may have wanted.
In the case above, where a 'COA as information' type turn is delivered with questioning intonation, and is met with delay and potential resistance by the caller, the MW deploys a positively framed YNI whose answer would display either uptake or non-uptake of the COA. This is again not immediately forthcoming and the MW offers two turns which are ‘positive statements’ about the organisation in question. The MW then stops speaking for a much longer time and the caller moves to accept the number. The MW can then be seen to begin delivering this above (line 30). Both of the examples above show how YNIs which proffer the COA of calling an organisation, make relevant an answer which may lead to the delivery of the organisations’ telephone numbers. The YNIs are positively framed, and thus prefer a ‘yes’ answer, which as we have seen, leads to the progression of the interaction to the main business of the line. The initial turns above which precede the YNIs and also proffer a COA do not promote such a progression of the interaction, whereas the YNIs are perfectly fitted for this function. This progression is also apparent in the next interrogative type, but the YNIs in type two do not seek uptake of a previously deployed COA, but rather proffer the CsOA themselves. Let us continue with an example of this practice.

**Type 2 Interrogatives**

For the first example of this type, we return to the call above and the initial interrogative in extract two. As mentioned, the caller has been discussing her abusive husband, and says she cannot divorce him as that would allow him access to money she has recently inherited.

**Extract 2B: JM - 43804 Abusive Partner**

```
01 CA He wins either way.
02 MW4 (.8)
03 MW4 Right. I mean °e° (.6) >obviously< this is (.)
04 difficult issue. .hhh ahm bu- #a# that- (.) that
05 then: (.). >puts me >in a difficult situation
06 of< how to offer you help with this >I
07 mean [did you think you just want< sup]port then.
08 CA [ Yea:h N:o ]
```
The MW issues an empathetic receipt on lines 3 to 4 (see the next chapter for details on what constitutes an empathetic receipt) before claiming that she is in a difficult position in terms of how to help (lines 4 to 6). She continues without pause into the type two YNI; “I mean did you think you just want support then.” although very little of this is delivered in the clear due to the caller coming in on line 8. The MW continues from the first YNI without pause into the clearly audible inbreath and the second deployment of a YNI; “D’you just want support” on line 9. This is also only partially delivered in the clear due to the caller’s “pa’don” on line 10, and the MW does not reissue the YNI, but rather moves into the COA delivery examined earlier.

The type two YNIs of interest to us here are different to those of type one mainly in that they do not index or re-proffer a COA previously delivered in the talk, but rather proffer a ‘new’ COA in themselves; the COA in the type two YNIs above is one of getting or receiving support. There are many similarities though with type one in terms of how these YNIs manage the issue of proffering a COA when advice is prohibited. Once again the COA is placed in the realm of the caller’s ‘wants’, and if the YNI receives a ‘yes’ response, information on relevant organisations can be delivered next without them having hearably been the advice of the MW, with the interrogative design softening the
prescriptive nature of delivering a COA. The use of interrogative format itself again creates a steep epistemic gradient between caller and MW such that the caller’s authority is privileged, while an advice giver / recipient relationship has been avoided.

Notice that the two YNIs which are delivered successively are quite similar, and proffer the same COA;

Extract 2B (Lines 6 - 9): JM - 43804 Abusive Partner

06 MW4 >I
07 CA mean [did you think you just want< sup]port then.
08 CA { Yea:h N:i o}

The first YNI is delivered mostly in overlap, and takes a past tense form which we have seen used in places where uptake of the COA may not be forthcoming. As we can see from lines 3 to 6 above, the MW treats ‘offering help’ as potentially difficult and this may be why the past tense form is used. Indeed, the caller has been talking about an abusive husband whom she feels she cannot leave, and that “He wins either way.” (line 1), and the “then” at the end of line 7 appears to index this ‘no win’ description of the caller’s situation. The use of ‘think’ also offers the caller some room for manoeuvre (Potter, 1996) should it be the case that the COA is resisted. On line 8 the caller aligns with the MW’s telling of this difficulty, and when the MW proffers the COA again on line 9, it is with a YNI which uses a present tense design; “>D’you just< want supp:io:rt.”.

This second YNI which does not index the ‘difficulty’ invoked by the MW uses a present tense design, used in type one YNIs where there are less signs that the COA may be rejected. It may be that the aligning turn from the caller on line 8 prompts this design, but again the delivery is only partially in the clear so it is difficult to say whether the MW has heard it. After a gap of 0.7 seconds the MW continues with an increment to her turn; “because there’s th- d- <obviously there’s the women’s ai:dl-” and after a very brief gap, another increment; “domestic violence helpline >that you< can ringc”. These increments proffering a specific source of help for the caller appear to be issued after the long (0.7 seconds) gap where a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ from the caller was relevant, but not delivered.
These increments provide another TRP where the caller can take up the COA, and when this is not done the MW issues the type one YNI which was analysed earlier.

While the type of interrogative used here may be a useful way of proffering a COA in this environment, and aiding forward progression of the call should the caller take up the COA, they are clearly not a foolproof method for eliciting uptake. Indeed there may not be, for any situation, a device which elicits the desired response on every occasion. We shall examine one other example of a type two YNI here, to show a variation of the form. The extract comes from a call where the caller has been describing an attempted rape in her childhood, and how she is now starting to deal with this. She has said that she would like to know if she can still make a deposition, to which the MW replies that he does not know what that means (data not shown). The caller then begins a telling about the perpetrator of the attempted rape, and it is at the end of this telling that the extract begins.

Extract 3: JM - 55745 Making a Deposition

01 CA Ah:m: (.9) >an' then (he-) when he went< for me
02 well (ehh) I'd the (. ) I'd the ( )
03 (1.8)
04 CA an ev'rytime he came out he just went back into
05 prison again
06 (1.4)
07 CA AH:M:: (1.1)
08 MW5 .hhh ar- are you looking >for a< helpli:ne?
09 (.4)
10 MW5 [in relation t]o this?
11 CA [ ahh:: ]
12 (. )
13 MW5 or
14 (.3)
15 CA No: ah (. ) well "it's" not particularly a
16 helpline not to get through=I just >want to
17 know what< to do practic'ly
On line 7 the caller looks as though she is about to continue her telling, but pauses. After 1.1 seconds the MW comes in with our YNI of interest “.hhh ar- are you looking >for a< helpline?”. Again this proffers a new COA while serving all of the functions mentioned in the previous example; creating a steep epistemic gradient between them which privileges the caller’s epistemic authority, placing the COA in the realm of what the caller may want rather than what the MW advises, softening the prescriptive nature of the COA through the interrogative design, and aiding the forward progression of the call should the caller take up the COA. As in the previous extract, when a gap appears (line 9) the MW adds an increment which preserves the turn as a YNI (“in relation to this”) and which provides another TRP for the caller in which to respond. The example here is slightly different from most of the others in the type two YNI collection as the MW uses ‘Are you looking for...’ rather than ‘Do / Did you want...”. As we saw in the previous chapter, the use of ‘would’ appears in the proffering of a COA where uptake may be less certain, marking any uptake as conditional. As the CsOA in the two examples above are launched for the first time in these YNIs, and as it is unclear as to whether the caller will take up the CsOA, it may be that the initial launching is done in past tense or a conditional form as a way of producing a softer delivery. Past tense and conditional form offerings may be easier for callers to decline; they are able to say that they ‘did not want’, or to invoke a condition which negates uptake of the COA. In the example above, the caller claims that it is to know what to do ‘practically’ rather than phoning a helpline that she wants, but this could indeed have been delivered regardless of the form of YNI used. A larger collection of such YNIs and their responses than is available in the current MIND Infoline corpus may shed more light on how there are declined or accepted.

There is little more that could be added to a discussion of type two YNIs through the analysis of any further examples, so we move now to type three. Again these have similarities with types one and two, but they are different in that they question the caller as to whether specific actions have been or are currently being engaged in, or if they are accessing sources of potential help.

**Type 3 Interrogatives**

Our first example is from a call where the caller says she has received a letter from her psychiatrist informing her that she has been ‘taken off his books’ (data not shown). The
extract begins at a point where she has said that she has visited her G.P. to discuss this with him, and to say that she needs to see her psychiatrist soon.

**Extract 4: JM - 67571 Referral for Phobia Problems**

01 CA .hhh[hh and the ge[le pee doesn't know what to
02 MW2 [  okay:, ]
03 CA do an' I don't know what to do.
04 (.6)
05 MW2 .khh Oka[y >so (you're / your)<]
06 CA [ an- an=he's ] the only one
07 in the area .hhhh an if I le- m- I'd have to
08 mo:ve to get help=
09 MW2 =.hhhhh so the psychiatrist feels that you're
10 in no longer need of his service[es. ]
11 CA [Yeah] >but
12 he< doesn't hasn't seen me for three months
13 (.2)
14 MW2 tk Oka:y[2
15 CA an' I've got problems
16 (.)
17 CA real big (. ) phobia problems an' (e- I'm stif-) 18 (. ) due >to it I'm< starving to death.
19 (.4)
20 MW2 .khhhh okay. >I mean< c:ertain'y you've spoken
21 to your gee ;pee then, .hh[hh an' your- ]
22 CA [>Well the< gee] pee
23 referred me you see,
24 (.)
25 CA Right an- 'ave you spoken >to your< gee >pee at
26 MW2 the moment how< .hhh thee ps#y#chiatrist wants
to sign you=of
(.)

>an' how you feel that that isn't< appropriate
(.)
o- we'll I told me< gee pee an' 'e told me: (.2)
a-that I ought >to get in< touch with somebody
like you
(.)
cos he >doesn't know what< [to do]
 [.hhhh ]hh Okay well
I can >certainly see if there's any< advocacy
;services in your area, t.hhhh ahm we don't
actu'lly (.5) we can't >take up<=individual cases
he:re .hh (. ) >but an< advocate may p-=help you
( . ) go forward with thi:s

I have included in the transcript quite a number of lines of talk which lead up to the deployment of the YNI, which occurs in lines 26 to 30. We can see that the MW tries to formulate the 22-two. Each of these is met with overlapping talk from the caller, albeit very different forms of overlap, and indeed the MW encourages the caller to tell more with a continuing “tk oka:y” on line 15. In the third occurrence of the MW formulating the caller’s experience, in this instance on having spoken to her G.P., the MW’s continuing turn is curtailed by the onset of overlapping talk by the caller; “>[Well the< gee] pee referred me you see,” (lines 23 & 24). After a brief gap, the MW then deploys the YNI of interest to us; “Right an- ‘ave you spoken >to your< gee >pee at the moment how< .hhh thee ps#y#chiatrist wants to sign you=off”. After another brief gap, the MW issues an increment, which adds more detail on the COA and preserves her turn as a YNI; “>an’ how you feel that that isn't< appropriate”.

I would like to continue here by first addressing the “Right an”- at the beginning of the MW’s turn. Heritage and Sorjonen (1994) argue that ‘and’ prefacing as a feature of question design rarely occurs in ordinary conversation, but frequently occurs in
institutional interactions. They argue that and-prefaced questions typically have a “routine or agenda-based character” (p. 1), but can be linked to either the speaker’s previous turn, or the recipient’s turn immediately prior to the and-prefaced question. Considering the sequential context in which the MWs question appears above, it is my analysis that the YNI is to be heard as relating to, or continuing on from the caller’s turn “>Well the< gee pee referred me you see,” (lines 23 – 24). Examining the MW’s YNI which follows we see that in turn initial position is the “right”, which serves to acknowledge the caller’s turn. The and-prefacing of the YNI then serves to mark the YNI as continuing from the caller’s turn, and indeed helps it to be hearable as specifically occasioned by the caller’s turn. In their extensive analysis of and-prefaced questions in institutional interactions, Heritage and Sorjonen show that and-prefacing helps to mark a question as a normal or routine next action, even when the topic may be troublesome.

It is this particular quality of the YNI seen above that makes it so perfectly fitted for an environment where advice is prohibited. As we can see, the interrogatives under investigation in this chapter do not appear randomly, but rather follow problem presentations by callers and precede the MWs delivery of the contact information for relevant services. We can see from the talk preceding the YNI just above that it is already established that the caller has spoken to her G.P. about her problem, and so the pertinent issue is whether the caller has specifically said particular things. This is the COA that I argue is embedded with the question (telling the GP about the psychiatrist ‘signing her off’ and that it is not appropriate), and I also argue that it is hearable as a relevant COA for this caller. I argue that asking a caller if they have engaged in a COA pertinent to their problem, particularly using ‘and’ to preface the interrogative, serves to reinforce this COA as a normative thing to do in their current situation, but manages to avoid an explicitly prescriptive and advising delivery. Indeed, the caller claims that this is something she has done, although her turn is type non-conforming, and well-prefaced; “o- >we’ll I told me< gee pee an’ ‘e told me: (.2) a-that I ought >to get in< touch with somebody like you” (lines 32 – 34). Thus, she has aligned with the MW by confirming that she has ‘told the G.P.’, yet her turn may index some trouble with the terms of the MW’s YNI as Raymond (2003) suggests.

Following the caller’s problem delivery, and the attempts to formulate the caller’s experience, the MW issues her YNI as to whether the caller has said specific things to her G.P. regarding the issue. Were the caller to reply with a type conforming ‘yes’ it may
have made relevant an account of what the upshot of this was. If the caller were to offer a type conforming ‘no’ it may have led to the MW sticking with telling the G.P. these things as a COA. In the type-non conforming turn delivered, the caller claims that she has told the G.P. but also that he has directed her towards “someone like” the MW. This may be a trouble indexed by the caller in her type non-conforming response to the YNI; that she has indeed said these things to her G.P. but he has directed her to the MW. The MW treats this as bringing the issue back to her for dealing with, as indeed she does in the following turns by proffering an advocacy service.

The following extract demonstrates a similar pattern, with the MW embedding quite a specific COA into a YNI following a problem presentation by a caller. The caller here has claimed that although an ambulance was called that morning to take her father-in-law to hospital (on the advice of the NHS Direct service) the ambulance staff did not take him away, saying that if they were to take him away to hospital, he would just sit in casualty for a few hours (data not shown). The caller has said that the family’s G.P. has forwarded the case as a referral to local mental health services, but that the family had not heard anything further about this.

Extract 5: JM - 65850 Father In-Law’s Illness

01 MW2 .hh >so< the gee pee has ref:>erred him to
02 the< psychiatric >services, .hhh >but have<
03 yet (0.4) >you-< (.2) to- e- >have< yet >to
04 receive the< <referral:al. is that right.>
05 CA =Y:eah .thhh ahm >the< ambulance said
06 what the gee pee (. ) needs >to< do is (. )
07 a:hm (0.5) ad- °m-° (0.8) you know. arrange.
08 >for a< ward to take him at the ‘ospital=
09 MW2 =Mm hm.
10 (0.3)
11 CA Ahm >but the< gee pee >is not< †doing that.
(0.4)

12

13 ➔ MW2  hhh >and have you< spoken >to the< gee pee
day an’ expressed how <how this is
developing, and how-. hhhhh (0.3) >the
situation’s becoming< increasingly worse.

14 CA  Yeah ahm whatchahm (. ) his partner’s: (. )

15  iphoned the gee pee today.

16 (. )

17 CA  ahm and ‘is’ receptionist said ah well. the two

18 gee pees whos >dealt with it aren’t< here today

19 >will it do tomorrow and she< said no:: :

Following the MW’s formulation of an element of the situation and her tag question (is that ri:ght.) which offers the formulation for verification (lines 1-4), the caller begins with “y:eah” which is latched to the MW’s turn (and incidentally offers a prime example of an aligning, type conforming answer to an affirmatively framed YNI). The caller continues with a description of what the ambulance staff claimed that the G.P. needs to do, and the MW issues a continuer following this on line 9. After a gap of 0.3 seconds the caller says “Ahm >but the< gee pee >is not< ↑doing that.” (line 11). This is followed by a gap of 0.4 seconds.

The caller’s telling about the actions of the ambulance staff brings her problem ‘up to date’, as she has said previously that the ambulance staff had recently left (notice also the turn final intonation). Following the 0.4 second gap on line 12, the MW issues a compound YNI in lines 13 to 16. As with the previous example, this YNI makes relevant a confirmation or disconfirmation as to whether the caller has engaged in a specific COA which is pertinent to their problem. The YNI is again and-prefaced, which combined with the sequential placement of the YNI makes the COA hearable as a normative COA to engage in, in relation to the caller’s problem. The actions embedded in this example are speaking to the doctor today, expressing how the situation is developing, and also that it’s becoming increasingly worse. The caller offers a preferred response on line 19 (“yeah”) and continues with an explanation of what has been done that morning. The caller
continues by saying that they are now waiting for a visit from a locum G.P. and the MW moves from there to (again) discussing an advocate as an option for the caller (data not shown).

The form of the type three YNIs is perhaps clear at this point; following problem presentations by callers, the MWs ask callers if they have engaged in specific actions which address the problem. Local design features such as the sequential placement of the interrogative, and the ‘and- prefacing’ mark these CsOA as normative for the callers’ situations. The interrogative format avoids a more explicit advice giving delivery and the resulting knowledge relationship, and softens the prescriptive element to proffering a COA. As the questions do not embody any knowledge on the MWs’ parts, they form a steep epistemic gradient which privileges the callers’ knowledge. The two type three questions above are quite similar in that they are elaborate questions as to whether a COA of saying particular things to a G.P. has been engaged in. A final example of this type of YNI shows a more simple format, and also quite a strong misalignment of caller and MW following the delivery of the YNI, which demonstrates clearly that the caller treats the YNI as proffering a COA. The extract comes from a call where the caller has been discussing his girlfriend, whom he believes to be experiencing mental health problems.

Extract 6: JM - 47243 Girlfriend’s Problems

01 CA we been going out< for (.1) ahm (. ) about a year
02 and a ha:lf. .hhh a[:h]m (.1) and (. ) she has (.1)
03 [Hm]
04 CA ahm <problems with >things=like< jealousy and things
05 like that .hhh[hh ahm] (. ) "which" (. ) make her
06 [ Okay ]
07 CA become it’s li- >it’s like there’s< two different
08 people basic’"ly"=>I mean we’ve ;just< (. ) it’s
09 <it’s got quite bad an’ we’ve just bought a flat
10 together. .hh[hhh ] ahm (. ) an’ an’ it >sort of<
11 [Righ]t
12 CA (. ) >things are becoming< like quite intolerable.
ahm: (.7) tk. hh hh hh= 

= ("an' she") I d’know >it's like there's <

two people there basic'ly.

right. Is [she a]ware of=of thee (. ) difficulties 
[ an ]

that this is crea[ting.]

[ Sh:] e (.3) well <well she is yeah

I think she’s (. ) I think she’s aware of them.

(. )

But ah[m]

[R]ight okay, ’as she=actu’[lly: >t]ried to 
[ahm hh]

get any< form of support to: .hhh (. ) address::

>any issues< that >sh[e< feels] she may may 
[ Y:eah ]

Well [(it's as if it) I mean]

[.hhh want to address]s: hh

(.3)

I (jus-) yeah. >I mean< I- tk .hh I kind of need

support for me >cos I< don't (.6) >y'know I don't<

want [ to split up w]ith her.

[!;That's fair enough]

Our target turn here is the MW's type three YNI on lines 26 to 31; "'as she=actu’lly:
>tried to get any< form of support to: .hhh (. ) address:: >any issues< that >she< feels she 
may may .hhh want to address: hh". Much of this is delivered in overlap with talk form 
the caller as he makes incursions into the MW's turn on lines 26, 29, and 30. The YNI 
follows the same pattern outlined above, of proffering a COA (getting support for issues) 
following a problem presentation by a caller, in a way which manages the prohibition on
advice. At this point I would encourage a close listening of the ‘yeah’ which the caller delivers on line 29 and also the one on line 33. Although the design of the MW’s turn makes a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer from the caller relevant, it is difficult to hear these ‘yeahs’ as answers to the interrogative. There is a quality to them which makes them hearable as perhaps aligning with the MW, but not answering the question, which is difficult to capture in transcription. The caller continues from line 33 with a claim that he needs support for him “really” because he does not want to split up with his girlfriend. The intonation is stressed on the “me” (line 34) and the caller then gives an account for why he needs this support. Any progression to more focussed talk on remedying the girlfriend’s issues has been blocked, and the call moves on to sources of support for the caller (data not shown).

In the above extract, when a caller tells of a problem that his girlfriend has experienced, and the MW issues a YNI which questions whether the girlfriend has engaged in a COA, the caller appears to treat this YNI as bringing the interaction into a focus on remedying the girlfriend’s problems. He then engages in some interactional work to shift the focus onto getting support for him. The YNI has all of the properties of two previous type three YNIs which serve to avoid the COA as hearably giving advice.

Discussion

We have seen above the ways in which three forms of YNI aid in proffering a COA, in an environment where advice giving is prohibited. Those in type one follow other turns which proffer a YNI of contacting an organisation and essentially re-proffer the COA by asking if the caller wants the number of the organisation. By making relevant the callers’ uptake or resistance of the COA, they aid in the progression of the interaction towards the delivery of contact information of the relevant organisations, or indeed the proffering of an alternate COA. The YNIs of type two also forward the interaction in this way, but they proffer a new COA for the first time. Both of these types seem to incorporate a form for a more tentative delivery when resistance of the COA is more strongly possible, that of using a conditional or past tense, but further data collection would be necessary to speak with more certainty about this. The type three YNIs examined above question callers as to whether they have engaged in a particular COA. These may be relatively vague such as asking if support has been sought, or highly specified, such as asking if particular
things have been said to particular people. These also help with the progression of the call by moving from a problem telling, to talk about remedial actions.

All of these types make the COA embedded within them hearable as a normative action to engage in relative to the callers' specific circumstances. While aspects of turn design such as and-prefacing help in this, the sequential positions of the YNIs themselves also mark the CsOA as normative action to engage in. Notice that when callers tell of their problems, the MWs typically proffer one just COA, rather than (e.g.) listing a number CsOA as options. It is only when a COA has been rejected that a different one is proffered, and thus the CsOA have a 'targeted' element to them as they are a single COA aimed at remedying the problem at hand. But the design of these turns as YNIs also contributes to the normativity of the CsOA. Raymond (2003) argues that when professionals use Y/N interrogatives in institutional settings, they proffer what they may consider to be a preferred state of affairs through the design of the interrogative. For example, Raymond uses a question by a doctor who asks a patient about their marital status using the Y/N interrogative “Are you married?” (p.961), which is designed to prefer a ‘yes’ in response. As Raymond claims, “the normative organisation embodied in the grammatical form of the YNI operates alongside the constraints set by the FPP type and the preferences set in motion by it” (p.963). Thus, when an MW responds to a problem delivery by asking whether a caller wants a number or has said something specific to their doctor, using a positive frame that expects a ‘yes’ response, these CsOA are hearable as the ‘preferred state of affairs’. As we have seen in examples four and six above, aligning with this element of the Y/N interrogatives examined here is a live concern for callers, and type non-conforming answers are given when the COA is being challenged or blocked in some way.

Proffering such ‘targeted’ remedial CsOA has much in common with what could be termed advice giving, but all of the YNIs above manage to avoid a delivery which is hearable as advice giving. Although they utilise various elements which manage the prohibition of advice while proffering a COA, all of these elements stem from the design of the relevant turns as interrogatives. Most important perhaps is the relational positioning of the speakers which is invoked by the YNIs. As was discussed previously, advice giving positions the recipient as less knowledgeable than the giver. In the YNIs discussed here, the callers’ knowledge is privileged, creating an epistemic gradient which is the opposite of that invoked by more explicit advice giving forms, while still managing
to proffer a COA. By reversing this asymmetry the YNIs here move away from a traditional advising relationship, and as the implied lack of knowledge in advice giving is what typically lies behind advice resistance (Hutchby, 1995), the COA may be more likely taken up by callers. As Heritage and Sefi (1992) point out, advice giving positions the advisor as more knowledgeable than the recipient on the issue at hand. Creating an epistemic gradient where the caller is privileged may be an ideal way of ‘not doing’ advice, simply by positioning the speakers in a way that is so different to that normally found in advice giving. Butler et al (unpublished manuscript) claim that there has been a dearth of research into the ways in which normativity and asymmetry in advice are achieved and how they may be related. The current chapter is a further step in redressing this gap in the literature.

I would like to finish here by arguing that the YNIs above are a crucial element in achieving many of the core elements of MIND Infoline practice. As we saw in chapter three, the aim of the line is to provide information on mental illnesses and treatments, and the contact information of services or agencies which provide support for those affected by mental illness. Callers however do not often deliver line-appropriate, well formed requests for this information, but rather engage in problem deliveries. The MWs are restricted in how they can respond to these; they cannot align with complaints, cannot provide ongoing emotional support, and cannot engage in interactions which will not result in information being passed to callers (i.e. they cannot ‘chat’). The YNIs above form a perfect bridge between the delivery of problems and the delivery of relevant information (caller alignment permitting) while managing the restrictions placed on them, and are perfectly fitted to this position in the interaction.

Much of this work is achieved as YNIs above allow the MWs to deploy the COA into the interaction while constraining the callers’ response, and thus the MWs can then continue to unpack the COA in their ‘soon-to-follow’ next turn if needed or go straight to contact information of services. Commenting on un-published lecturing notes by Sacks, Frankel (1995) discusses Sacks’ “chain maxim” (p.242) which holds that when asked a question, the recipient must provide the relevant answer and then relinquish the floor. This can lead to continuing question / answer sequences. Mishler (1984) argued that when doctors use questions, including closed-ending questions such as YNIs, they establish the dominance of the medical agenda in interactions with patients. Open ended questions which allowed patients to respond in their own terms encouraged longer, more narrative answers which
were considered to detract from the medical agenda by incorporating the patients’ own experiences and concerns into the interaction. The use of the YNIs by MWs analysed above carries out a similar function; e.g. patients are not asked why they have not engaged in a COA, or what they think of it, but merely to confirm or disconfirm whether are or have yet engaged in it, or want the information which would allow them to engage in it. This allows MWs to keep a focus on the institutional business at hand, and achieve their core aim; the delivery of information.

Chapter End notes:

1. This more socially cohesive design is achieved through the MW’s interrogative proffering their ‘best guess’ as to what the caller wants. ‘Do you...’ may seem a more certain guess, while ‘Did you...’ may display a less certain guess. Non-aligning with a less certain guess would be more socially cohesive than non-alignment with a more certain guess. This speculation is based on a talk given by John Heritage at the University of Manchester, summer 1998, where doctors’ interrogatives such as ‘Are you married?’ were described as embodying their ‘best guess’ at the patient’s status.

2. Callers will often display an uncertainty as to which geographical areas are covered by MIND Infoline, and whether numbers from differing areas to their own, or to where the line may be based, can be obtained.
Chapter 6: Empathy and Institutional Business in Receipts of Caller Crying

As was the case in the analysis of the previous chapters, specific interactional phenomena (occurrences of caller crying in the corpus) were specifically sought out for the analysis of this chapter. Again, the topic arose during discussions with the staff at MIND Infoline about how the research could be helpful for them, and access to the data came at a time when the first detailed work on crying in interaction was being published by others in my department. It was for these reasons that receipts of caller crying was chosen as the subject for an analytic chapter.

The aim of this chapter is to examine occurrences of caller crying and the ways MWs receipt these occurrences. The MWs reported that caller crying was difficult to respond to due to their reticence to provide emotional support to callers. As mentioned in chapter two, ongoing emotional support is something not offered by the helpline; the management feel it may promote a dependency on the line, and that it would also be too difficult a task for the MWs to engage in on a regular basis. Callers who may need emotional support are encouraged to contact organisations such as Samaritans. We shall see however that the MWs deploy well-fitted, empathetic responses in response to caller crying, which also serve to move the call forward towards the provision of information (or as I write repeatedly in the previous chapters, the main business of the line). This is an especially interesting phenomenon as the callers were mostly engaged in troubles telling or complaining either before or during the occurrence of crying. We shall see in the analysis that this movement towards the business of the line is achieved through the ways in which the empathetic responses form a pivot between the caller crying and the proffering of a COA. We shall also see how the MWs manage another prohibited issue, that of aligning with complaints made by callers.

Previous Work on Crying Receipts in Interaction Research

In the last few years a small but growing body of work on the interactional organization of crying and responses to crying has been produced (Hepburn 2004, Hepburn & Potter
2007). This has built upon a more extensive field of work on responses to displays of emotions (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000) and to troubles telling (e.g. Jefferson & Lee, 1981; Jefferson 1988), and has emerged alongside a small body of more recent work on the ways in which empathy is achieved in talk-in-interaction (Beach & Dixson, 2001; Ruusuvuori, 2005; Wynn & Wynn, 2006).

In sum this work has attempted to show the ways in which troubles and emotions are organised and oriented to in talk, and how empathy may be achieved through talk in response to crying. Jefferson (1988) described the ways in which talk about troubles were entered into, worked up and maintained, and then closed down, while Jefferson and Lee (1981) showed that in an institutional setting, advice was rejected when it followed a troubles telling. Jefferson and Lee argued that this was because requests for advice and the telling of troubles are different conversational projects. They demonstrated that speakers engaged in troubles telling treated responses which demonstrated emotional reciprocity as appropriate, while responses which embodied advice were not. Beach & Dixson (2001) found that when problematic or difficult issues were revealed in medical history interviews, interviewers used formulations of the prior talk to demonstrate an understanding of the situation before changing topic or selecting specific issues for discussion. Displaying an understanding through formulations of the patient’s various issues, which are grounded in the patient’s own talk (“You said.....”) is described by Beach & Dixson as a way of displaying empathy while interviewing. Interestingly, Ruusuvuori (2005) argued that finishing patient sentences during medical consultations was a method for displaying empathy, as this collaborative telling of the patients’ situations also demonstrated an understanding of the situation. Ruusuvuori also argued that maintaining an emphasis of the patients’ experiences was crucial to the production of empathy, as opposed to interviewers demonstrating understanding through telling personal stories of their own experiences. Although Beach and Dixson do not discuss such a focus on patient experience it is arguable that their data also demonstrates this, with interviewers grounding their understanding in the patient’s talk rather than e.g. in disclosures of personal experiences.

Some work exists where researchers claim to show empathy being achieved in interaction in response to crying by their interlocutors. Manzo, Heath, and Blonder (1998) interviewed survivors of stroke and their spouses using interview schedules designed to elicit displays of upset, and cite conversation analysis as their analytic method. While this
may have resulted in less naturalistic data than most conversation analytic studies, Manzo et al. fail to incorporate the crying into their data transcripts, preferring to state that crying occurred. The following is an example from their paper, which demonstrates the lack of detail in their transcripts.

Taken from Manzo et al (1998). I = Interviewer, P = Patient, S = Patient's Spouse

EXCERPT 1
Patient 13
1 I: Tell me a little bit, if you can, about your marital relationship. How has the stroke affected it?
2 P: Different.
3 I: Different for you?
4 P: Uh huh. ((starts to cry))
5 I: It's different. Okay.
6 S: And that's probably why he don't want to talk about it.

In their analysis, Manzo et al. claim that empathy had been achieved interactionally, yet they do not show how this empathy is achieved nor do they ground their analysis firmly in the participants' talk. Wynn and Wynn (2006) also claim to demonstrate empathy in talk in interaction using conversation analysis, in talk between psychotherapists and their patients. Unlike other interaction research into empathy, the authors argue that a turn at talk can only be claimed to achieve empathy if the co-interlocutor can be seen to orient to it as such. Wynn and Wynn fail to provide a clearly detailed and sound analysis of the data however, and also do not incorporate crying into their data when it occurs, again choosing to simply state that it does occur.

In order to capture various features of crying for transcription and analytic purposes, Hepburn (2004) developed an extension of Gail Jefferson’s transcription system to encompass audible elements of crying. She documented seven features of crying using data from a UK based child protection helpline: whispering (where talk is extremely quiet), sniffing, tremulous voiced vocalisations (where the voice starts to break or wobble), high pitch vocalisations, aspiration (a breathiness in talk perhaps due to an attempt to keep talking while sobbing), sobbing, and silence (usually due to an inability to talk, and/or the recipient allowing time for the crying speaker to recover). Hepburn’s analysis of crying in interaction also noted that crying appeared similar to laughter in transcripts, but that it is oriented to differently by recipients. Crying was not something to
be shared in, was disruptive and allowed for through silence, and was responded to with sympathetic receipts, or empathetic receipts which acknowledged that crying may be a display of internal upset. Hepburn and Potter (2007) also studied these child protection calls and found that call-takers employed regular practices when callers cried. Once features of crying appeared (whether these were speech disturbances such as quiet or high pitch, or full scale sobbing) call-takers typically responded with two elements. They offered a formulation of the caller's psychological or emotional state, and they also offered further features of talk that attended to the complex mixture of epistemic rights involved when providing such formulations. Hepburn and Potter refer to these two-element constructions as "empathetic receipts" (p.89). These receipts were used to acknowledge the caller's state and worked to guide the caller out of crying. The following is an example of what Hepburn and Potter call an empathetic receipt following an occurrence of crying. The transcript is reproduced directly from their paper.

Taken from Hepburn and Potter (2007). CPO = Child Protection Officer

**Extract 8: JX Self-harming friend**

1. Hh because there's lots of things that
2. could be done to help your friend,
3. (0.5)
4. CPO: .hhh Because obviously she'll- (0.2) she's
5. had a really difficult time hasn't she.
6. (0.7)
7. Caller: Yeah.
8. (.)
9. CPO: "Yeh. You sound as though you're very upset
10. about it.
11. Caller: Shih -yeh I am.

The empathetic receipt is the turn of lines 9 and 10 where the CPO formulates the caller as 'sounding upset', and prefaces this with "You sound" which acknowledges the caller's
epistemic right to formulate their state over that of the CPO. Hepburn and Potter (2007) state that empathy is typically defined in the literature as “the imaginative sharing of someone else’s experiences” (p.99), while the understanding of another person’s situation often falls under definitions of sympathy. Hepburn and Potter do acknowledge though that there is much overlap in the various academic definitions of sympathy and empathy, and quote the model of empathetic communication by Schumann et al (1997, as cited in Hepburn & Potter, 2007) as one of the most influential recent approaches to empathy from an interactional perspective. This model stresses the importance of an accurate understanding of the other person’s situation, and the effective communication of this understanding back to the person, when displaying empathy.

As well as illustrating DP’s recent focus on the use of psychological terms in institutional discourse, the preceding examples also address two of its more long-standing concerns; how subjective internal experience is managed and deployed in discourse, and how the relationship between the objective world and subjective experience is managed. This latter aspect focuses on how the relationship between facts, events, and objects in the world, and private and internal experiences, is dealt with and oriented to in talk. For example, in saying that the caller sounds “very upset about it”, the CPO manages the relationship between the caller’s ‘upset’ and ‘it’ in a very specific way. Using the term “about it” as opposed to e.g. ‘because of it’ marks out a specific relationship between the caller and the problem they are discussing. Being upset about something is ongoing (Hepburn & Potter, 2007).

The following analysis of MIND Infoline calls will demonstrate how empathy is achieved in MW responses to occurrences of caller crying, and how the responses carry out particular institutional work. It will also show how these responses treat callers as having displayed emotion of some kind, while also positioning MWs as having receipted this display. It will become clear that the responses which display empathy discussed here have much in common with those discussed by Hepburn and Potter (2007) in the child protection helpline calls, but also that there is some overlap with other work on empathy as the call-takers display an understanding of the callers’ situations. While it is not uncommon for MIND Infoline callers to display emotion in some way, the analysis here focuses on the six calls in the corpus where callers cry; that is where they produced two or more of the audible elements of crying documented by Hepburn (2004). The analysis focuses on the interactional environment of the crying, and centres in particular
on the MWs’ responses. The analysis will also build on DP’s work on the relationship between the subjective and objective worlds, and how this is managed in the MWs’ responses to occurrences of crying.

**Analysis**

We begin the analysis section with a study of the ways in which MWs respond to crying. The following extract comes from a call where the caller has asked for the telephone number of her local MIND branch and also the number of MIND’s national press office, so she that can complain to them about two organisations she had been receiving assistance from. The MW has provided the both numbers. BG in the transcript refers to a person in the caller’s background, and much of BG’s talk was not loud enough to be captured for the transcript, and this is represented below as blank space surrounded by parentheses.

**Extract 1: JM - 65252 Benefits Problems**

1. MW4: Yeah. but you= you do have a
   right to make a complaint to
   whichever organisation you wish:.
   .hh so >if you [ wan ]t< to make a
   ["yeh"]
   complaint against >the< ((organisation))
   or ((organisation)), you can do, (.)
   you >just need to do it< through
   them directly.
   (.3)
2. CA: O:kay=then. =
3. BG: ={ [ ] }
4. MW4: [>A'right< ;just before you go<]
5. BG: >Threaten and< stop their money [( ] )
6. CA: [y: eah]
7. MW4: "kh .hhh coh< Can I ask where you
found this number from. >did you say
the yellow< pages.

CA
[We're without] our money
(( ))

MW4
[Okay. Thank]s: very much then.
good luck with that. [yeah]

CA
[Because it's] not >that [y's]ee
we've got trouble with< money an' these
(.2) [writ-] [have< threaten'd to stop] it.

BG
(( ))

(,)

BG
Yea:h, that’s us (( ))

MW4
[Who's threa-]

BG
[who's threaten'd to stop it.]
(( ))

CA
= 'oh' '~SOCIAL?:-

BG
(1.3)

CA
>Right so d'you need< some indep[endent
advice then.

(,)

CA
' mm' WELL I DON'T< know,

CA
[' ~Mmm.~ ']

MW4
[ .hh ] yeah. .h I know it’s difficult
=obviously it’s frustrating if: if
somebody’s threatening to stop
your benefits an' it’s worrying you.

137
give advice in that area. hh but the
local mind might be a really good place
to s[start, because] they do offer
[ okay then. ]

benefits advice an’ they’re not connected. hhhh [ a:hh ]

[Okay then]
yeah I’ll deal with ‘em,

The caller begins a new project in overlap with the MW’s pre-closing turns on line 24. While the delivery of the new project is somewhat troubled, the caller is clearly saying that there is ‘trouble with money’ and that there has been a ‘threat to stop it’. When the MW then comes in on line 30 it is with a question as to the source of this threat. The caller’s response is delivered with a number of features typical of crying (Hepburn, 2004); a high-pitch squeak sound (OOjoOO), high-pitch delivery of the lexical item (↑↑~SOCIAL:?~), and with tremulous or crying vocalisation. The turn itself is also grammatically incomplete, and the silence of 1.9 seconds which follows may be in part due to the MW expecting more information to come (e.g. what the caller means by ‘social’), as Hepburn’s analysis of episodes of crying shows that they often contain silences which allow for delays in callers’ talk. The MW’s following turn “>Right so d’you need< some independent advice then.” specifically indexes organisations not affiliated with social services, and thus candidate sources of solution. This is a move towards the helpline’s core practice of providing contact details of relevant services, as uptake of this by the caller would allow for the MW to then offer the contact details of relevant organisations which offer this ‘independent advice’. The crying itself or any upset it may be displaying is not responded to.

The caller’s slightly delayed reply in line 39 “>WELL I DON’T< ~know~.” is prefaced by a quiet whimper (°°†mm°°), and a long delay is left before both speakers come in again. This delay may again be due to the MW expecting delay in the caller’s talk. When both speakers come in together, the caller’s turn is a whimper, and the MW begins with “.hh yeah.” which is hearable as an acknowledgement following the caller’s ‘I don’t know’. The MW continues with “.h I- I know it’s difficult” (line 42) which carries out a
number of functions for the MW. It is hearable as the MW formulating the caller’s perspective, and importantly, allows the MW to remain neutral on the issue of the complaint against social services, while still aligning with the caller that something is difficult. This is carried out by referencing the general situation as difficult, rather than, for example, referencing an organisation as causing the difficulty.

Latched to this is the rest of the formulation, “=obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to: to stop your benefits an’ it’s worrying you.”. Note that in the analysis here, I use the term formulations in the sense outlined by Heritage and Watson (1979) where formulations are considered to be a version of events directly following their initial description by another speaker. In the data above, the term ‘obviously’ grounds the formulation in the caller’s previous talk and crying, and also addressing the callers rights to provide the principal description of their situation (their “epistemic authority” (Heritage & Raymond, 2005: p.15)) in a way that “I know it’s difficult” does not. The use of “it’s frustrating” (rather than e.g. ‘you’re frustrated’ or ‘you’re feeling frustrated’) is hearable as describing the general situation; a move which typically allows the speaker to avoid assigning characteristics to individuals (Edwards & Potter, 1993). Thus it avoids any direct description of the caller while still displaying empathy by providing a candidate emotion that the caller may be experiencing; in this case ‘frustration’. Although there is a “transition relevance place” (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974: 703) in line 45 at the end of the formulation, the caller does not come in at that point. Indeed the structure of the formulation is such that it does not project or require further talk. The formulation is then followed by a second move towards the business of the line in terms of moving the caller towards an organisation that can provide help; “.hhhh ah but unfortun’y cos we can’t give advice in that area. .hh but the local mind might be a really good place to start”. A specific organisation (the local MIND) is described as potentially being a good next option for the caller, and as the contact details of that organisation have already been given, the call is then moved towards closing once again.

I argue that empathy is done by the MW here through the ways in which the caller and MW are positioned in the interaction by the formulation. The MW claims an understanding of the caller’s situation by marking the resulting internal state as obvious to her (“obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to: to stop your benefits and it’s worrying you’”). Also, the proffering of a candidate emotional state together with
an epistemic marker follows the pattern of empathetic responses outlined by Hepburn and Potter (2007).

I also argue here that claiming that it the situation is ‘obviously frustrating’ positions the caller as having displayed frustration, and the MW as having acknowledged this frustration. However, there is an alternative reading of this data which should be acknowledged. It is possible to hear the MW’s turn “obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to stop your benefits and it’s worrying you” as speaking about a generalised situation, rather than about the specific personal situation of the caller. Indeed, the formulation does still perform some of the same interactional work when/if heard in this manner, but I argue that the formulation addresses the caller’s specific situation due to the addition of ‘and it’s worrying you’. The MW had previously constructed the caller as worried earlier in the call, and thus the notion of worry here is hearable as more person specific than generalised. The specific instructions which follow are also tailored to the caller’s specific situation, rather than being an option for anyone in a general situation of having their benefits stopped, because they address this caller’s concerns of links to organisations she has already dealt with.

The above analysis shows that in response to caller crying during the delivery of a complaint, the MW deploys a formulation of the caller’s experience. This formulation is hearable as describing the general situation, and allows the MW display empathy and to align with the notion of ‘difficulty’, while remaining neutral on the cause of the difficulty. This formulation, which does not require or project further talk, provides a space within the interaction to move towards the business of the line. The formulation is only delivered after the caller cries rather than after any of her other complaining turns throughout the call (data not shown here), and this marks the crying as quite different, and as requiring a more specialised response.

The next extract is taken from a call where the caller has been describing her father-in-law’s illness, and the treatment he has been receiving from health services. Before this point in the call, the caller has been describing a series of times when various services or health workers have chosen to postpone or delay treatments. We join the call at a point where the caller is discussing very recent events, where an ambulance has been called to take her father-in-law to hospital.
They said he needs sorting out. hhhh

The ambulance turned up (.) and
said well (0.3) if we take him he'll
just end up sat in casualty for five hours. =

T. hhh

. hhhh So they haven't took him.

Mm hm.

Khhhhho (.) . hhhhhh [I thought that-]

[Sounds like an ex]tremely

°e-° (0.1) frustrating an- and upsetting
situation ce:rtainly.

It really (.) I mean I'm - I 'm 'sort'f at
#a-# a loss (.) of who to -co- who who

do you get- to so(h)rt t(h)HIS out(4 you

[kn¡ow I] mean

[Mm hm.]

nobody seems to want to take the . hhhhhh
the sort of responsibility for it. =

°h. okay°. hh >mn certainly sounds

lik<- extremely difficult situation . hh

especially if you feel that he needs the

support immediately.

Yeah

and obviously his physical health has to

be looked into as well

[Yeah it's all ( )]

[. hhh and they're saying] that (.3)

they're saying >they're not going to

look at his physical health 'til his<
mental health. [.hhh] and

Yeah

obviously >there’s probably a< sense

doing urgency with his physical health as well:

Yeah

(0.6)

Ahm (0.9) we’re not (.8) medically

qualified here obviously .hhh

The caller’s description of the encounter with the ambulance crew contains much subtle work which marks the crew’s actions as complainable. She begins with an actively voiced turn from the ambulance staff in which they claim that taking the father-in-law to hospital would be of no benefit (“well (0.3) if we take him he’ll just end up sat in casualty for five hours.”). The call-taker’s turn which is latched here is a short in-breath, with a ‘t’ sound at the beginning (“T.hhh”). While in the transcript this turn may resemble a ‘tsk’ type sound which would indicate alignment (Potter & Hepburn, in press) the sound is describable as only possibly, slightly aligning with the caller’s project of complaining. After leaving a further 0.7 seconds the caller makes an explicit description of the actions of the ambulance staff (“So they haven’t took him.”) to which the MW responds with an acknowledgement token only (“Mm hm.”), treating the caller’s project as still in progress (Schegloff, 1982). The actively voiced turn, and the juxtaposition of the physical presence of the ambulance (“the arrival of help”) which declines to then take the person to hospital, are hearable as a complaint against this service, yet it is not oriented to as such, or indeed as news-worthy in any way, by the MW.

I would describe the caller’s pronounced, heavy out-breath which follows in line 8 as a display of frustration, and it is notable that the caller’s display follows this mere continuing “Mm hm” from the MW. When both speakers then speak in overlap, the MW holds the floor with her formulation of the caller’s situation; “Sounds like an extremely e-o (0.1) frustrating an- and upsetting situation certainly”. The MW deploys this formulation only after the caller’s breathy display, rather than after the descriptions of the complainable issues where a continuer (“Mm hm”) was used. This marks the display as to be responded to rather than any of the turns containing the complaint itself. The use of
“sounds like” in the formulation grounds the formulation in the caller’s previous display and talk, and respecting the caller’s epistemic rights over full description of the situation. The use of the extreme case formulation ‘extremely’ aligns with the caller’s display of emotion as it serves as a display of the MW’s stance on the issue; that she understands the situation as an extremely frustrating and upsetting one (see Edwards, 2000, on how extreme case formulations are used to display a speaker’s stance). As in the first extract above, the turn is designed as an empathetic response. It positions the caller as having described or displayed herself as frustrated and upset (and reflexively positions the MW as receipting this), while also serving to align with the caller, and avoid any explicit affiliation with potential complaints against services.

When the caller comes in again on line 12 it is with what seems to be the beginning of an agreement (“It really”) yet this project is dropped in favour of further display of emotion. This is done in lexical terms (“I’m ↑↑sorta at #a:# loss”), and also through the crying features in her turn. The MW provides a slightly different form of her formulation which replaces ‘frustrating and upsetting’ with ‘difficult’. Both formulations describe the “situation” rather than the caller, and the second formulation is expanded with the “if you feel” indexing the caller and a more specific candidate internal state of hers (line 21). This is a substantial addition to the earlier delivery of the formulation alone (which was responded to with a further display of emotion), and the MW continues with a number of aligning and empathising turns. However, the move to a point where a COA can be preferred has not yet been made, and where the call continues below, another version of the MW’s formulation is used.

Extract 2A: JM 65850 - Father-in-Law’s Illness

36 MW2 Ahm (0.9) w:we’re not (.8) medically
37 CA qualified here [obviously] .hhh
38 MW2 [Ri:ght ] >I mean we cover< the whole of England
39 CA and Wales .hhh >we’re a< general
40 MW2 information service. [.hhh ] ahm tk it
41 CA [Mm hm]
42 MW2 does sound like- extremely difficult
situation, .hhh so the G.P. has referred him to the psychiatric services, .hhh but have yet (0.5) y-to- >have< yet to receive the referral. =is that ri:ght.=

CA =Y:eah .hhhh ahm the ambulance said what the G.P. needs to do is (.) ahm (0.5) ad- °m-° (0.9) you know arrange for a ward to take him at the hospital=

MW2 =Mm hm

CA (0.3)

Ahm but the G.P. is not >doing that.

MW2 (0.4)

.hhh and have you spoken to the G.P. toda:y and expressed how how this is developing, and how- .hhhhh (0.3) >the situation's becoming< increasingly worse.

As the MW moves into a description of the line, the version of the formulation which appeared in lines 19 to 20 above is recycled on lines 41 to 44 ("it does sound like-extremely difficult situation,"). The MW then gathers further information about the immediate state of the home situation before delivering an interrogative which embodies a COA in lines 57 to 60 (see previous chapter). The recycled formulation thus serves as a kind of place-holder between the move from describing the line and the move towards solutions after gathering necessary information. As with all of the formulations examined so far, it delivers an empathetic and aligning turn while remaining neutral on the cause of the displayed emotion, it contains an epistemic marker ("it does sound like") whichgrounds the formulation in the caller's talk, and moves the interaction towards a space where the business of the line can be conducted (in this case directing the caller to their G.P.).
The next extract is taken from a call where the caller has been complaining about how a relative has been treated by the local mental health services, and has displayed some upset throughout the call. Just before the extract begins, the caller has asked the MW why they have chosen to work at the helpline.

**Extract 3: JM 70203 - Young Caller**

1. MW1  tk _;because:e ah:m-_ eh=>y'know<=it’s
2. int’resting an- and=it’s (.) y’know
3. (. ) it’s t- #a# it’s something
4. that .hh mi:nd as an organisation .hh
5. (. ) are doing to ;try an y’know
6. (. ) impr;ove people’s (. ) knowledge
7. of: (.4) mental health. As >you
8. were saying< earlier there isn’t
9. .hhh a lot of people (.4) #that-#
10. that know about it (. ) so
11. >we’re trying< to [ kind of]
12. CA [.So you’re] ;saying
13. that (.1) you actually ca:re about it.
14. ( .4)
15. CA ‘cos -#;everyone doesn’t care.#-
16. (1.0)
17. MW1 my;eah.
18. (2.1)
19. → MW1 tk I- it ;is incredibl’ ;frustrating
20. and I do understand how upsetting it
21. must ;be for you.
22. (.2)
23. MW1 .hshhhhhhhhh
24. CA *shih* thuh -*bas like- (. ) can’t
Line 15 above contains another occurrence of crying during the delivery of a complainable (“~#everyone doesn’t care.#~”). The MW agrees with this in line 17 (“my†eh.”) after a long gap, and then after a further, longer gap of 2.1 seconds, offers a formulation similar to those in the previous calls. Unlike the formulations in the previous calls, the one beginning on line 19 above is occasioned by a complaint about other people in general rather than about service providers or organisations, and the MW initially uses a different emotional / psychological term (“tk I- it †is incredibl’ ↓ frustrating”). As it follows an agreement with the caller’s description of un-named others, this formulation affiliates with a specific complaint. The MW is hearable as acknowledging that it is indeed the case that ‘everyone doesn’t care’ and as describing this as something
frustrating. While this is the clearest agreement with a caller's complaint in the above extracts, it is, in institutional terms, the easiest for the MW to agree with as it does not refer to any specific individuals or services, or to any specific instances. A display of stance on the complainable is also in operation here again through the use of the ECF 'incredibly', and again the caller does not offer agreement or disagreement with the assessment element of the formulation.

The MW continues her turn with "and I do understand how upsetting it must be for you." This directly claims an understanding of the caller's situation, although again the epistemic rights of the caller to ultimately describe their situation are acknowledged through the use of 'must be for you' on line 21 (e.g. compared to alternatives also available to the MW such as 'how upsetting it is for you'). The caller then comes in with more talk delivered while crying on lines 24 to 25; "shih" thuh ~#(†bas like- (.) can't even live li†:fe)#~. This is followed by a number of sniffs and crying sobs with lengthy gaps between them from lines 26 to 31. On line 33 the MW comes in with "†O †kay.", and after a pause of one second, offers another formulation; ".hhh it's=it- clearly very upsetting for you". Once again this type of formulation appears after an occurrence of crying, and performs the same work as those in the previous extracts. Also as before, the MW's stance is displayed with the help of 'very', and the formulation provides an interactional way into the business of the line, as immediately after the formulation the MW invokes a candidate source of support for the caller (Childline). The caller's 'upset' has been invoked and the potential remedy of support from Childline leads seamlessly on from this.

The extract below begins just before the same caller's most overt display of emotion, with the MW offering a formulation of the caller's complaint.

Extract 3A: JM 70203 - Young Caller

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>MW1</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>MW1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.hhhh †ah::m=hhhhh. I mean it</td>
<td>[.hh] I'm [ jus ]t a -kid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>sh- it- <em>it</em>=sounds like they're</td>
<td>[I thi-]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>kind'f passing one to the over=isn't</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>it †an (.) .h[hh ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The occurrence of crying here again follows a complaint sequence; we see the MW reformulating the caller’s complaint in the first three lines, and much of the caller’s turn in lines 5 and 7 is delivered in a crying / tremulous voice (“.hh I’m just a ~ kid. I #don’t know what to do:~”). The MW responds here after a short gap, and then first with a reduced volume “Okay” (line 9) but then continues with a question as to the caller’s age. This is an important element of the MW’s work here, as the age of callers will determine which types of services the MWs offer the details of. Indeed, as we shall see below, the MW in this call offer the details for a helpline dedicated to young people. Answering the MW’s question is problematic for the caller, who orients to the incongruity between the category ‘kid’ and the age ‘eighteen’ in her turn at line 17 (“~I know that’s not a kid. #­ #but,~”). There is much delay between the question in line 9 and the caller’s answer in line 15, which typically indicated trouble in responding (See Schegloff, 2007 p:19-21),
but in this case it is difficult to say whether it is due to the caller’s crying or the trouble with the category (it may indeed be both).

"-I kn†ow that’s not a kid.#- (. )#but,#" is also delivered mostly in crying / tremulous voice. The MW’s turn which follows from line 18 begins with "hh ‘It’s irrelevant’ which addresses the category referred to by the caller, and continues with "’I mean< it’s obviously ↓ very upsetting for you.”. The use of ‘I mean’ here links the formulation which follows to the previous ‘It’s irrelevant’. Indeed, describing something the caller has said about themselves as irrelevant is potentially a very difficult thing to manage in interaction, and here it is hearable that the issue if age or category is irrelevant as the caller is upset regardless of age or category. The ‘I mean’ thus acts to also display that the MW is clarifying her meaning on what is irrelevant.

Importantly the formulation also functions in a similar way to those discussed earlier, in that in receipting an occurrence of crying following or during a complaint sequence in a call, the MW formulates the caller’s situation using an emotional / psychological term (in this case ‘upsetting’) and thus manages to display empathy and align with the caller while helping the MW to remain neutral on aspects of the complaint. The caller is positioned as having displayed upset, and the MW as receipting this. Also similar to the other extracts, the epistemic rights of the caller in describing the situation are oriented to through the use of ‘obviously’, which marks the formulation as stemming from the caller’s display, and similar to the formulations in the second call, the use of the extreme case formulation “very” serves to construct the MW as taking a serious stance towards the issue. Finally, the formulation indexes the general situation ‘It’s upsetting for you’ rather than directly describing the caller as upset, which again helps to align with the caller through constructing the upset as triggered by the events rather than (e.g.) dispositions of the caller.

As in all of the extracts above, the caller here does not offer an agreement or disagreement with the assessment element of the MW’s formulation, nor is one sought. The MW follows by again formulating the caller’s situation (while not overlapping with the caller’s sharp in-breath and wet sniff on line 20); “it sounds like you could get some support. (. ) v’know an’ >maybe< p.hhhh (. ) taking some advice”. Notice the stress on ‘you’; the caller has been describing a relative’s illness and the lack of support from local services. Here, the MW changes the notion of support to something which the
caller may benefit from, and specifically suggests advice. Thus, as in the other extracts, the formulation which follows the display of emotion has created an interactional space for moving towards the business of the line. This is done here by constructing the caller's problems and upset in a way that is suitable for 'advice' to be suggested, which the MW can direct the caller to.

The next extract is the first of two where the pattern described above is not followed, despite both containing occurrences of caller crying.

Extract 4: JM 68749 - Troubles Telling and Complaints

1 CA the< day time now's >when I actually<
2 call people. .h[hhhh] and being housebound.
3 MW1 [Yeah]
4 (.2)
5 MW1 Yeah.=
6 CA =fheh is really shit.£
7 MW1 'Well' that's it isn't [it. That's all.]
8 CA [An I- I I've
9 actu'ly -been walking with sticks when I
10 should be in a wheelchair.-
11 MW1 TK Right
12 CA an should'f been in a wheelchair years ago.
13 because I've ahm, (.3) °°°°t(I've been)°°
14 (.3) .hh HHHHHHHHHH (.3) °tm'y hh° .hh [ .hhhhh ]
15 MW1 [‘saright?]°
16 CA my <BACK was brochen.
17 (.1.4)
18 CA HHHHH .HH 1.hhh
19 (.6)
20 MW1 .hhh 's clearly a lot happening for you
21 is[n't °there°]
22 CA [There is:.]=
I don’t need mental health support workers coming in say’n . HH you seem alright y:ou see> an’ y’know< another [person] called Nigel, [Mm hm.]

The MW’s turn on line 15 (‘saright?’) is similar to the ‘take your time’ turns discussed by Hepburn and Potter (2007), where the disruption to the call is acknowledged in an affiliative way, while also displaying an understanding of the caller as upset. When the caller starts again and finishes the turn begun in lines 12 to 14, he says that his back was broken. This is certainly quite an extreme physical trouble to be telling, and it is followed by a pause of 1.4 seconds, and then sobbing (line 18). Thus far, when MWs offer formulations of callers’ situations after occurrences of crying, it is some variation on ‘It’s clearly a very upsetting/frustrating situation’. While the turn here in lines 20 to 21 (“.hhh ‘s clearly a lot happening for you isn’t ‘there’”) is still empathetic while wonderfully managing to maintain the MW’s neutrality, I hear it as less empathetic than the ‘upsetting/frustrating’ formulations; mainly as it avoids any display of understanding the internal state of the caller, or of the situation itself as being an upsetting or frustrating one.

Rather than claiming an understanding of the difficulty level of the caller’s situation, the formulation offers an understanding that “a lot” is “happening”. This incorporates the (vast amount of) other complainables that the caller has covered in the ten minutes prior to the extract above, all of which are complaints against services (Social Services, Samaritans, Community Mental Health Workers, his psychiatrist, & his G.P.). The tag question (“isn’t there”) and the use of “‘clearly’” manage the epistemics of providing a formulation of someone’s current affairs and they serve to ground it in the caller’s prior talk. As with the other formulations of this kind in the corpus, it forms part of a sequence designed to move the call on; see the MW’s turn on line 23 (“An’ you need that suppo:rt.”). From here the MW can move onto the business of the line and start providing the contact details of organisations which may provide appropriate ‘support’. In this
position, the formulation may also serve to ward off any potential further complaints against services which may follow from the caller’s turns (An I- I’ve actu’ly ~been walking with sticks when I should be in a wheelchair.~ an should’f been in a wheelchair years ago. because I’ve ahm,"’) e.g. against the NHS for not providing a wheelchair.

Moving on to more suitable institutional business is resisted here however, and the caller confirms the formulation of ‘a lot going on’ while providing no uptake of the ‘need for support’, in his turns from line 24. From there he returns to the business of complaining against services.

In this instance then we have an episode of crying, which does not occur during the delivery of a complaint (although the caller has previously made a great deal of complaints against services), and is receipted by an empathetic formulation which does not contain any emotional / psychological terminology. The following extract comes from a call where there is an episode of crying which is not followed by an empathetic formulation. The caller has been discussing her son, who she says has mental health problems which have led to him getting into great financial debt.

Extract 5: JM 68629 - Son’s Debt Problems

1 CA he thinks the only thing he can do is. (1) declare himself

2 Mw5 bankrupt but [ y’ne ]ed three

3 CA hundred and thirty pounds to do

4 Mw5 [Mm hm]

5 CA ~got it~

6 Mw5 Yeah.

7 CA ~ahm~

8 Mw5 (1)

9 Mw5 .hhhh

10 CA ~Can mihh~ .hh ~can ~mind (~) ~help,~
15 (1.1) [at all]
16 CA .hhhhhh[hh]
17 MW5 [is] -there anything you could
18 CA suggest. - (.) >S'anybody< he could see
19 to, (.) [advise him]
20 MW5 [ .hhhh ahh]
21 (.2)
22 MW5 owh- w- Well (. ) -ahm-
23 (.7)
24 MW5 ~he-se he's he has already s:oken
to the most appropriate people regarding
25 the finances. .hhhh
26 CA [Yeh]
27 MW5 [ah ] like Debtline .hhh (. ) Cit'ens Advice.
28 (.7)
29 MW5 >but< ;where abouts is he. .hhhh
30 CA He's (. ) at (. ) ;I don't know the postcode.

The caller's turns in lines 8 and 10 are delivered in tremulous / crying voice, as is the
delivery of the first part of her question on line 14. There is also some disruption with the
first attempt of 'Mind' needing to be redone as it is disrupted with a sob, and there are
two pitch increases on line 16 including a very high pitch finish on the end of "at all".
The example of crying here is indeed one of the strongest in the collection.

While the question of line 14 is syntactically complete, it is potentially pragmatically not
complete, and it may be unclear as to what, up to the end of that turn, was being asked.
The MW's response is indeed delayed, and line 14 is potentially hearable as a request for
money (see the mention of a specific amount needed by the son in lines 3 & 5), and this
would be inappropriate for the line. Also, as mentioned, Hepburn and Potter (2007) found
that any pause is potentially left as time for the crying speaker to recover. As the question
is extended it becomes a request for suggestions or advice. When the MW does respond,
it with some trouble i.e. with cut-off words, pauses and tremulous delivery, and unlike
the previous responses to caller crying, a formulation is delivered of the son’s previous attempts to remedy the situation. This formulation, also unlike the previous crying receipts, does not contain any psychological/emotional terminology. The MW moves from this formulation into the business of the line on line 30; asking for the son’s location so that a service search can be initiated. The caller aligns with this project on line 31, even orienting to the type of location information that the MW needs for the search but did not explicitly ask for (the postcode). Caller crying occurs in the above extract, and unlike the others in the collection so far it is not part of or preceded by a complaint. No empathetic formulation follows.

An issue here is that, unlike the position of the formulations in the other extracts, the one under analysis here follows a direct yes/no interrogative from the caller regarding whether or not MIND can help. A formulation regarding the caller’s situation would thus represent a dispreferred response, and it is perhaps arguable that this is why none is given. But the response is type non-conforming as it is neither a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’, and prefaced with the dispreference marker ‘well’, and it formulates previous rather than future actions. Thus it is difficult to argue that an empathetic formulation does not appear due to the requirement of providing a preferred response to the caller’s question. While no work needs to be done by the MW in remaining neutral on a complaint in this extract, an empathetic response could still have been proffered, yet none is after this particular display of emotion.

**The deployment of formulations in the absence of crying.**

The type of formulation discussed above does also appear in MIND Infoline calls where callers have not been crying or complaining about services. Where they do appear in other calls, they perform many of the same institutional tasks for the MWs as have been discussed above. The following extract comes from a call where the caller has been discussing his mother’s behaviour towards him, stating that she has been accusing him of stealing from her and now refuses to talk with him.

**Extract 6: JM 58468 – Mother’s Mental Health Problems.**

```
1  CA     I’ve not done anything (.) an’ it’s
2      really just .hh I mean she’s adamant
```
it's myself (. ) >that's< [taken thes]e

[ Yes: ]

things and >doesn't< want anything to
>do with< me anymore,
(.2)

MW3

Y:eah.

CA

A:hm (.2) and ahm (. ) and basic'ly >I'm her<
on' y (.6) ah s:on >that< #y# y'know=ah (. )
y'know (sense) in contact with her;.hh

MW3

Yes:

= a:n' it's just tryin' to (. ) either
persuade< (. ) I >mean< she's adamant. (.4)
;she >doesn't need any< ;help I do and
I- #eh-# (.3) I'm just tryin' to see (. ) if
at all:. (.1) .hhhh I can persuade her to
>come an'< r- (.6) see >somebody< with
m[e, >I mean< <we're not on talk]ing

MW3

[ (Right I see. ) ]

CA
terms >at the moment,< I'm- I'm jus'
corresponding=in=writing. .hhhhh

MW3

Ri::ght ok[a:y,=I] mean it d- does sound like

CA

[ Ahm ]

MW3

>it's a very< really really difficult

situation=[and ]

CA

=[YEAH]=

MW3

=AND upsetting like you say
an' that's understandable. .hh[hhh ahm ] tk

CA

[Absolutely yeah.]

MW3

with regards to >actually< persu:ading #he:r#.
of'en what yo- y- y- can find sometimes is
ahm .hhhh ;people who’re are experiencing mental health difficulties (.) a <have what (.1) what’s called. classed as an unshared perception of reality .hhh[hh  }

ca

Yeah.]=

So: (. ) they (. ) have a belief that’s diff’rent from anybody else’s

As can be seen, the caller is engaged in a troubles telling regarding his relationship with his mother and her accusations against him (lines 1 to 15 and 19 to 22). He also discusses his current actions in trying to remedy the situation by getting her to ‘see someone’ with him (lines 17 to 19). This is receipted by the MW with a formulation like those discussed in the first four extracts above. As a neutral and empathetic receipt to the troubles telling, and as a transition to the mother’s problematic perceptions of reality, the MW offers “Ri::ght oka:y,=I mean it d- does sound like >it’s a very< really really difficult situation=and=AND upsetting like you say an’ that’s understandable.” It appears that the formulations can be effectively deployed in response to troubles telling as well as in the positions above where they follow caller crying.

Notice however that this troubles telling does involve what may be hearable as a complaint by the caller against his mother. She has made accusations against him and they are not on talking terms. She is adamant he is at fault, and he is trying to persuade her to ‘see someone’. The use of the formulation by the MW then allows her to align with the caller, display empathy, and move towards the business of the line without explicitly affiliating with the caller’s description of his mother as being at fault. Tacit affiliation may be found however in the information she provides about people with mental health difficulties having ‘unshared perceptions of reality’. I argue thus that the empathetic formulations are deployed and utilised in the avoidance of affiliating with complaints, rather than as a response to displays of upset, or to troubles tellings.
Discussion

In an attempt to create a clear discussion which covers all of the points made above, I wish to continue here by separately highlighting the main social and institutional functions carried out by the formulations deployed by the MWs.

Providing an Empathetic Response

In the analysis of crying receipts in calls to a child protection helpline, Hepburn and Potter (2007) discuss empathetic receipts as those which contain a formulation of the caller’s mental state, and a candidate cause for this invoked mental state. The formulations produced by the MWs above in receipt of caller crying are similar in that candidate internal states are produced and accounted for, but this is done through descriptions of the situation, rather than of the caller. ‘Situation’ may be explicitly done as for example in extract 2 above; “Sounds like an extremely frustrating and upsetting situation certainly.” This can also be done implicitly by saying e.g. ‘It is frustrating’ as in Extract 3A above; “tk I- it is incredibl’ frustrating and I do understand how upsetting it must be for you.”. Of course, both formats infer that the candidate internal state is one experienced by the caller. While the situation is what is being described as something frustrating, upsetting or difficult, the adjectives used imply that the situations are leading to frustration, upset, and difficulty being experienced. This is stated in stronger terms in some of the formulations e.g. “I do understand how upsetting it must be for you.”, which indexes both the internal state of the caller and a quality of the general situation. Through this practice of indexing the internal experience of the caller, and the external situation they are dealing with, these formulations tie together the internal experience and external (causal) world. A pervasive theme in discursive psychology has been to examine the ways in which speakers manage the relationship between the subjective internal world, and the external, objective world (Edwards, 2004), and the MW formulations are an exemplary case of such management.

Offering any description of the callers’ experiences in the sensitive sequences above may lead to difficulty for the MWs should the caller disagree with them. Peräkylä and Silverman (1991) claimed that individuals have final, authoritative rights in describing their internal experiences, and showed that describing the experiences of co-present others requires delicate management. Similarly, Heritage and Raymond (2005) showed
how offering a description of an event or experience which the recipient has sole or shared access to may be difficult to manage in talk. Thus it is important that the formulations here are also similar to those discussed by Hepburn & Potter (2007) in that they contain epistemic markers, e.g. “it’s clearly very upsetting for you” (extract 3A). Grounding the description in the callers’ previous talk and/or displays allows the MWs to manage the issue of epistemic rights quite effectively; note that none of the formulations are challenged by the callers as incorrect or insufficient. A possible variation on this format can be found in extract 1. Here, in lines 42 to 45 the MW says “.hh yeah. .h I know it’s difficult=obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to s: to stop your benefits an’ it’s worrying you.” The ‘obvious’ here is hearable in two ways; first as obvious from the caller’s talk and emotional displays that the situation is worrying her, and secondly as obvious in this type of situation where such a threat is present and it is worrying the person involved. Recall from extract one above that this caller has already been constructed as ‘worried’ by the MW.

A final observation here is that these formulations are the only format in which MWs can display empathy while adhering to the remit of the line. MIND Infoline operates a policy of not providing ongoing emotional support for callers, and callers’ current internal states are not invoked or asked about by MWs. Formulating their internal experience in the ways explored is the main way (in all of the calls in the corpus) of deploying a display of empathy. Yet these displays are designed in such a way as to not make relevant further talk on the issue, and the MWs use them as a pivot between callers’ troubles tellings and the delivery of information or a COA. These displays of empathy are indeed limited and are typically quickly moved on from. This may reflect the institutional reticence (not prohibition) on providing emotional support to callers.

**Aligning with Callers while Maintaining an Institutional Neutrality**

The formulations discussed here are deployed by the MWs following occurrences of crying which occur during or close after a complaint about services, although as we have seen they can be deployed in other positions also. As MWs are not free to agree with complaints and must remain neutral, it appears that central to managing this neutrality is the practice of describing situations in the formulations. The use of ‘frustrating’ and ‘upsetting’ in a description of a situation (e.g. “Sounds like an extremely °e-° (0.1) frustrating an- and upsetting situation certainly.” call 2: extract 1), mark such an internal
response as understandable when in this situation, while also avoiding the placement of blame on any individual or service that the caller may be complaining against. Such use of emotion terms is an exemplary case of the discursive psychological approach to the use of terms from the “psychological thesaurus”. Furthermore, such formulations also avoid constructing any internal upset as being due to dispositions of the caller, as well as avoiding making any comment on the caller’s level, or type of reaction to the situation e.g. that it is a correct or excessive reaction.

In the example from extract five above where a caller is crying but no complaint has been made, we see that the MW deploys a formulation of the COA already engaged in to remedy the situation on lines 23 to 27 (“ow- w:-o Well (~) ahm- (.7) ~he-o=he’s~ ↑he has already spoken to the most appropriate people regarding the finances.), before moving on to proffer a COA of his own. I argued that the lack of a complaint by the caller negated the need for an empathetic formulation in this instance. We also saw how empathetic formulations can be deployed in the absence of crying, and in extract six saw the MW deploy such a formulation following a troubles telling. Notice however that this troubles telling involves a complainable; the caller is describing difficulties in his relationship with his mother, and has claimed that she is wrongly making accusations against him. While the formulations carry out a number of interactional tasks, they seem to be routinely deployed in locations where callers have been engaged in complaints rather than more ‘neutral’ troubles tellings. My argument then is that their main function is in maintaining an institutional neutrality in the environment of a complaint against persons or services, which as we have previously mentioned, is prohibited on the line.

Another aligning device observable in the extracts above is that of a display of stance on the callers’ situations, through the use of extreme case formulations, for example, “>mn certainly sounds lik-< extremely difficult situation” (Extract 2A: 19 to 20). The use of these ECFs marks the formulations as considered, and as a personal stance on the situation (Edwards, 2000) and thus help in these instances to align with the callers. Alignment is also achieved through such ECFs in that crying (an extreme response) is accounted for by the MW’s by constructing the situation as extreme. In sum, while no specific comment is made on the source of the invoked frustration or upset, and while in none of the calls do the MWs offer opinions on the service which callers are complaining about, or indeed even refer to the callers’ talk as a complaint, the formulations allow the MWs to align with the callers that they are experiencing something problematic.
Moving to the Business of the Line

It has been claimed above that the MWs’ formulations create an environment in which a move can be made away from the callers’ occurrences of crying (when these follow or are part of a complaint) and towards the business of the line (to provide information). Callers do not orient to the formulations as requiring a specific response e.g. as assessments which need to be ratified or agreed with, although as seen in extract 2A (line 12), the caller begins what appears to be an agreement which is quickly abandoned “It really ↑I mean I’m- .....”. Similarly, Drew & Holt (1998: p.495) discuss “figurative expressions” (idiomatic phrases such as ‘come to the end of her tether’ or ‘had a good innings’) as providing a short formulation, assessment, or gloss on the previous talk and which do not require a specific response, and which allow for subsequent topic transition. This transition is possible as while the recipient may agree with the turn containing the figure of speech, the turn itself does not project further talk. The formulations analysed above also offer what may be hearable as a gloss or an assessment of the callers’ prior descriptions, and the callers and MWs do not orient to the formulations as requiring any uptake. As such, the formulations do not appear to project further talk, and it is this quality that allows for the transition from one project in the talk to another.

Similarly, Beach (1993) showed how the use of ‘okay’ by a second speaker, in turn-initial position following a telling by a first speaker, remains both of and for the current topic while projecting further talk from the second speaker. Studying the use of ‘okay’ in medical interviews, Beach (1995) found that in that particular institutional setting, ‘okay’ was often used to receipt a telling from a patient and to move the interaction forward to talk of solutions, or to further questioning from the doctor. Patients seemed to orient to ‘okay’ as serving these functions, and in the data analysed above, the MWs’ empathetic formulations are often closely, if not immediately, prefaced by an ‘okay’.

Extract 2A (Lines 19 - 20):

“≡.hh okay≡ .hh >mn certainly sounds lik-< extremely difficult situation”

Extract 3 (Lines 33 - 36):

“↑O↓ kay. (1.0) .hhh it’s=it- clearly very upsetting for you”
It may thus be the case here that callers do not respond to the formulations as they follow what may be hearable as a turn towards institutional business, with a token such as ‘okay’ indicating that the MWs are about to take a number of turns embodying this business. Similarly, the formulation in call one above is “yeah” prefaced (line 42) which Jefferson (1993) discusses as remaining on topic while shifting an interaction towards a new topic.

An issue here may be in describing what follows the formulations as a move to the business of the line. In support of this claim, notice first the turns which proffer a COA follows after the formulations in extracts 1 – 3 above;

Extract 1 (lines 47 – 51):

“but the local mind might be a really good place to start, because they do offer benefits advice…..”

Extract 2A (Lines 50 – 53):

“have you spoken to the G.P. today and expressed how how this is developing, and how- hhhhh (0.3) >the situation’s becoming< increasingly worse.”

Extract 3; (lines 37 – 41):

“as you were saying< you’re only eighteen. maybe childline; have you (.) you know j’st to talk things ↑through with somebody.”

These turns proffer candidate sources of assistance, and candidate actions to engage in with those sources (receive benefits advice, express how a situation is developing, ‘talk things through’). Importantly, the sources offered are ones that the callers already have access to or are ones which the MWs can direct the callers to and thus engage in the business of the line; providing the contact details of services. In their analysis of talk from both ‘ordinary’ home telephone conversations, and calls to commercial or helpline
services, Jefferson & Lee (1981) found that advice was often rejected when it was offered at the end of a complaint or 'troubles telling'. Jefferson & Lee showed that speakers accepted advice more when it was delivered after a direct request, and was rejected in places where a 'trouble' was being described. They argued that participants describing a trouble, position their co-speaker as troubles recipient and not as advice giver. When advice is given in response to a troubles telling, the first speaker is then positioned as an 'advice recipient', as opposed to 'troubles teller'. The MW formulations discussed above avoid such interactional difficulties by providing a more preferred response to a troubles telling (an empathetic receipt) before moving to the proffering of a COA, which as we discussed in the previous two chapters may arguably be considered advice. Indeed, Hepburn & Potter (2007) found that the empathetic receipts to caller crying in their child protection helpline calls often occurred in places where callers were unresponsive to call-taker actions such as advising. In the extracts above, the potential for such trouble is negated by offering the empathetic receipt before proffering the COA.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to explore a number of interactional phenomena in a corpus calls to a mental-health information line (MIND Infoline), drawing upon discursive psychology and conversation analysis in the detailed analysis of the recorded calls. The analysis has focussed on varying aspects of calls which were all chosen by the call-taking staff of the line; dealing with explicit or implicit requests for advice, responding to crying callers, and asking callers what they want from the line. A recurrent theme throughout the chapters has been how the call-takers of this line respond to particular caller activities while managing specific institutional constraints on their responses; prohibitions on giving advice, providing emotional support, and on agreeing with complaints against services. The level of detailed analysis that has been engaged in for this thesis has allowed me to explicate how these institutional constraints are managed by the call-takers, and also how various institutional tasks are achieved in their talk as it unfolds. For example we have repeatedly seen how, while managing the various constraints upon them, the call-takers are able to move the interactions forward to a point where they can engage in the main business of the line; providing information on mental health issues and related services. Indeed, the analysis has shown how both the callers and call-takers engage in a number of differing social activities through their talk.

Reflexivity and Critique

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed Schegloff's (1991) argument that a fundamental issue for the analyst is to demonstrate that context or social structure is something which participants are oriented to, showing how the social structure itself is produced in interaction. This notion of "procedural consequentiality" (p.49) was described in the introduction as the concept that, if any context or setting is deemed to be having an impact upon an interaction, the analysis much show how this impact is manifested in the ongoing elements of the interaction. All of the analytic chapters have discussed institutional goals or restrictions of MIND Infoline; that MWs must not 'chat' but must engage in the provision of information, that they must not give advice, that they must not align with complaints against services, and that they do not offer emotional
support. In line with the concept of procedural consequentiality, I have attempted to
demonstrate how the MWs are oriented to the institutional context in which they work
and that they engage in actions in ways which manage the various institutional
constraints placed upon them.

The danger exists however for every analyst that they will not differentiate their work
from that of more mainstream social science writers, and will stray into what Drew and
Heritage (1992: 19) call the “bucket theory” of context. This occurs when the analyst
discusses context as shaping an interaction, without actually paying attention to how
context relates to the various macro or micro elements of the talk. For example, I have
claimed at various points in this thesis that various elements of the particular institutional
context of MIND Infoline impact upon the interactions in analytically tractable ways. I
have aimed to demonstrate this impact in detailed analyses of particular excerpts,
discussing particular recurrent activities that the MWs engage in which manage
institutional constraints and requirements. The question arises however as to whether a
discussion of how MWs will engage in an activity such as (e.g.) using If / Then
Constructions to proffer a course of action, is truly a demonstration of procedural
consequentiality. It may be argued that the MWs are simply engaging in activities found
in everyday conversation, and that the case has not been made that when these activities
occur in MIND Infoline calls, they are the product of the specific institutional context.

Indeed, it may be argued that the reader is forced to ‘take my word’ for the argument that
it is the institutional context of MIND Infoline which leads to the recurrent use of the
particular interactional activities I have discussed in the analyses. To counter this
potential claim, I would argue that procedural consequentiality can only be incorporated
as an analytic criterion when the analyst has a suitable level of knowledge about the
institutional context they are attempting to discuss. They must be able to draw upon a
preliminary understanding of the context to explicate to the reader how this context is
being oriented to. They must be able to discuss the procedural “connection between the
context so formulated and what actually happens in the talk.” (Schegloff, 1991: 53). Thus
the analyst must discuss and outline for the reader, the various contexts or social
structures they wish to discuss in their analyses, so that the reader can have an
understanding of what the speakers are said to be orienting to in the talk. Furthermore,
the demonstration of procedural consequentiality is not restricted to cases where
particular activities are solely found in a particular institutional context. Arminen (2005)
proposes that there are two levels of argument regarding the relationship between context and interaction. The strong version would argue that only when sequential or other elements of the talk are particular to an institutional setting can we say that the institutional context is evident in the talk. The weak version would argue that elements of the talk in question may be found in both mundane and institutional data, but in institutional data they may be utilised in the accomplishment of institutional activities, or the production of an institutional context. Arminen argues that it is not the case that all institutional interactions would contain their own unique interactional features.

In line with Arminen’s (2005) proposal, I argue that we have seen the institutional context of MIND Infoline at work in the activities engaged in by the MWs. Of course, my individual knowledge about the setting, gained during my time at the line’s working base (discussed in Chapter 2), is what has allowed me to discuss and offer to the reader the particular remits, constraints, and general context of MIND Infoline. I recognise that sequential and other aspects of talk may still be accounted for in any analysis of institutional interactions, albeit in a more superficial way which will not have much to offer about the institutional nature of the talk, if the analyst cannot clearly demonstrate the ways in which a particular institutional context is impacting upon an interaction. I argue though that what has been achieved in this thesis is a demonstration of how the MWs utilise interactional phenomena (such as formulations and ‘Yes / No Interrogatives), to engage in institutional activities and to manage the constraints placed upon them by the institutional setting of MIND Infoline. Procedural consequentiality has been demonstrated (and working to the the previously mentioned ‘Bucket Theory’ of context has been avoided) through outlining for the reader what the specific institutional context is in this instance, and through showing how various interactional phenomena are repeatedly used by the various MWs to achieve the same interactional goals.

The Application of the Findings

In the introduction to this thesis I described the concluding chapter as one which would also discuss how the various analyses have been discussed with the MWs in terms of potential applications for their working practices. In an attempt to structure this concluding chapter in a clear manner, I will discuss these issues in the order they
appeared in the analytic chapters. As chapters four and five both cover the proffering of courses of action, I shall deal with them together.

Feedback session to the staff were organised such that two sessions would be run on each visit to ensure that some staff were always available to callers. Two of the MWs and the supervisor on duty would attend the first session, and the remaining three MWs would attend the second session. Often, a liaising member of MIND would attend, or would ‘listen in’ to the session using the conference call technology in the meeting room while following along using handouts I had forwarded to them electronically. Before the initial feedback session, I discussed how I would be focussing on existing working practices of the MWs, outlining elements of interest which they had engaged in during calls. The supervisors and liaison person from MIND asked (understandably) that I provided as many cases of what might be the most effective practices to achieve their institutional goals. Thus I attempted to focus on particular practices which may be said to be the most effective in achieving these goals. However, on each occasion, I discussed how talk-in-interaction is designed to be well fitted to the talk which precedes it, and that deploying a stock phrase in response to a situation rather than in response to what is being produced by a co-speaker may seem ill-fitted. This was accepted and understood by all, although requests for the ‘best’ form of a particular practice were issued at each feedback session. I will discuss the specific elements of the feedback sessions as we go through the particular analytic chapters they relate to.

Engaging in the analysis thus involved producing two separate end products; the feedback materials for MIND Infoline, and the writing of thesis chapters. I treated these as two quite separate products, and not all of the analysis engaged in for the feedback sessions has been included in the thesis, although all of the analysis incorporated into the chapters has been discussed to some degree during feedback sessions. For example, one feedback session involved the analysis of calls where the caller would hang up or react badly to being asked what they wanted from the line. This has not been included in the thesis for reasons of time. With hindsight, this was probably not the best method of producing the work, and the thesis could perhaps have been improved by incorporating more of the work done with the staff of the line. I hope to incorporate this into further writings however, and make it available in the near future, in the form of research articles.
I continue from here now with a discussion of the individual research chapters.

Chapter 3: The Business of MIND Infoline

This first analytic chapter had a number of aims; seeing how calls to MIND Infoline typically progress from opening to closing, displaying and discussing the main elements which constitute MIND Infoline calls, and examining occurrences of callers being asked what they wanted by the MWs. We saw how a short, typical call occurs when callers request information, which is then provided and accepted. Call length increases when callers engage in an action other than requesting information, or when they reject the information or course of action proffered by the MW. Following this we saw how callers may request information, often using a subjective telling about what they are ‘wondering’ rather than using an interrogative, and also that they may request something other than information, such as advice, or help, or to speak with someone.

In terms of analytic findings, the main issue in chapter three was the exploration of how the MWs will often ask callers ‘what it is they want’ from the line. This topic was chosen by the MWs, initially in the form of a request for me to explore calls where the callers ‘did not know what they wanted’. As this ‘not knowing’ was a category for the MWs, and not something often explicitly stated by callers, it was agreed with the MWs that I would examine calls where they asked callers what they wanted. This type of question appeared on occasions when callers did not make a request for information, and served to exert constraints on how callers may reply by making relevant a request for appropriate information. The following example is to serve as a reminder of what I termed ‘agenda constraining interrogatives’ deployed by the MWs in such environments.

Extract 3 (Chapter 3): JM - Flagged Call 1; lines 16 - 31

16 CA I’m rin. (.8) °a°=hhh=g know~:::~ I wi- >I’ll
17 level< wiv you, f:y- p- par- part of the (.)
18 >reason I’m< ringin’ is >cos I’m just<
19 desp’ret >for someone to< talk to,
20 (.5)
21 MW1 Right, Oka[y ]
This extract comes soon after the opening of a call, and we can see that the caller says at the beginning of this excerpt that he is calling in part because he is ‘desperate for someone to talk to’. Notice though how this is prefaced; “I’m ring (.8) ’a=hhh=I know-=:: I w: I’ll level< wiv you, f:v- p- part of the (.) >reason I’m< is >cos I’m just< desp’ret >for someone to< talk to,” (lines 16 – 19). Having begun to say why he is ringing, he breaks off to ‘come clean’ about the partial reason for the call. This displays an orientation to how this may be a difficult issue for the MW.

I argue that the agenda constraining interrogatives display an orientation by the MWs to the institutional constraint of engaging only in the business of the line. They appear in locations where callers have not requested information, or engage (or appear as though they may engage) in something else. Although the interrogatives did not always lead to a request for information, they serve to make one relevant, and attempt to keep the call within the realms of MIND Infoline’s remit. In one of the examples, the agenda constraining interrogative was followed by a caller issuing “khh hm. .hh (.6) w’ll hh (.3) t.hhh >I don’t< know:.” (Extract 4; Chapter 3: Lines 8 to 9). This is of great interest considering the impetus for studying these questions (the MWs considering that some callers do not know what they want), and further data collection may shed more light on what precedes such turns by callers and provide useful results for the MWs.

These findings were fed back to the staff of the line, in conjunction with a clear discussion of the analysis using soundfiles and transcripts. While they agreed that it is on
occasion counter-productive to ask such questions (due to the possibility of getting an ‘I don’t know’ response), they agreed that it is useful for the MWs to use the agenda constraining interrogatives as a resource, deploying them when callers do not form appropriate requests for information. They were keen to know whether there may be a form of agenda constraining interrogative which was more effective than others, and wanted to have such a form ‘up their sleeves’ and ready to deploy when callers were perhaps being particularly slow to request information. I discussed with them how an interrogative which made relevant a request for information while also invoking the line’s remit may be most effective, as in the example above. I also contrasted this with examples of interrogatives where the status of the line was not invoked such as the following (also discussed in detail in Chapter 3) and outlined how these may be less likely to be followed by an appropriate request for information as they do not exert any constraints on the caller to request information.

Extract 5: JM – 58970 Brother’s Alcoholism and Illness

24  →  MW4  okay, .hh so: .thh (. ) w: hat >kind of
25  information then are you< looking
26  [for from me regarding this (then. )]
27  CA [w’l l because i think °e-  ° I: : ] 1 thin:k
28  that he: .hhhh ↑↑>lots o’times ↑ when he’s
29  gone on a bender< e- e- he swears, blind
30  >that he< hasn’t had a drink an’ >things

As the MWs’ use of these interrogatives displayed a view of callers as wanting information, I argued that they thus constituted the remit of the line in talk. I also argued in Chapter 3 that if a request for information followed then the interrogatives will have successfully moved the interaction towards the business of the line. This chapter also outlined the caller practice of problem delivery, and the MW activity of moving calls forward towards statistical information gathering, and call closing. Indeed, chapter three discussed a number of the MWs’ methods for aiding the progression of calls forward into the provision of information, statistical information gathering, or towards closing. All of these phenomena are of course worth further investigation, but the aim in discussing
some of these phenomena was essentially descriptive than finely analytic, to allow them to be more easily referred to in the analytic chapters which followed.

**Chapters Four and Five: Proffering Courses of Action to Callers**

These two chapters aimed to outline some of the ways in which talk of courses of action, which callers may engage in, are deployed by the MWs. While a number of varying forms were used by the MWs to proffer courses of action, chapters four and five discussed the three most frequently occurring forms. These were, in chapter four, using modal verbs (e.g. ‘You can speak to the family rights group no problem’) and the use of If / Then constructions (e.g. ‘If you wanted those treatments through the NHS I guess it’s going to your G.P.’), and in chapter five the use of Yes /No Interrogatives (e.g. “Are you looking for a helpline?”). This topic was again prompted by the MWs as they had asked that advice be something which was covered in the analysis of their calls. They claimed to frequently feel under pressure to provide advice to callers, and callers did often explicitly ask for advice in the calls in the corpus, as well as often engaging in troubles tellings. Both the requests for advice and the telling of troubles were typically followed by a response which contained a remedial course of action for the caller to engage in. I claimed that the avoidance of hearably giving advice is a particularly live issue in many of the calls due to all of these issues, and we saw that while the ways in which courses of action are proffered by the MWs varied greatly, they all managed the issue of advice prohibition.

Both of the forms discussed in chapter four deliver the COA as information about what can generally be done as a remedy to the situation the callers have depicted. In the first form described (the use of modal verbs), the CsOA are constructed as what is either possibly or conditionally able to be done by the person referred to. It is hearable as information about the COA, while proffering the COA. The form avoids explicit advice-giving through it’s design of mentioning what can, could, or would be done, as opposed to what (e.g.) should be done or what is recommended. Indeed; not a single occurrence of ‘should’ being used in such a manner was found in the corpus. In the second form (the use of If / Then constructions), the CsOA are explicitly marked as conditional, according to the recipients’ wants, but are also hearable as information about a COA which may be engaged in by anyone on this situation. As mentioned, Silverman (1997) claims that
advice as information is a useful device for avoiding the interactional dilemmas of advice giving.

Both forms then manage to proffer a COA which is a remedy to a trouble delivered by the caller, and thus are in one sense tailored for that caller, while also incorporating the use of a 'passive voice' (Silverman, 1997) which makes the CsOA less hearable as personal ideas or recommendations from MWs. Both forms also manage to avoid delivering the CsOA 'out of the blue', which was discussed at the beginning of chapter four as massively problematic in institutional interactions. Constructing the callers’ situations in a hypothetical manner, invoking the callers’ perspectives, and using interactional devices such as ‘In regards to...’ are all deployed in the service of avoiding the delivery of unexpected or spurious CsOA. All of these characteristics were also seen earlier in chapter four as being found in the management of advice giving in other institutional settings, and thus the analysis here supports those findings by showing they exist in a setting where advice is prohibited, and where talk of CsOA which callers can engage in needs much delicate management. It is notable that where we have seen that COA is resisted, it is the specific COA that is rejected, and not the offering of a COA in itself. There are some similarities between the ‘modal verbs’ format and the If / Then Construction format, particularly that they both make the COA hearable as information about what the caller can or could do.

Of particular interest was, when discussing the modal verb form, we distinguished between the use of ‘can’ and ‘could’ or ‘would’; the use of more conditional ‘could’ and ‘would’ forms explicitly mark the COA as conditional, whereas ‘can’ simply marks the COA as generally able to be done. We saw how the more conditional modal verb forms seemed to be deployed in places where there is a potential for the caller to reject the COA, and further work on a larger data set may allow me to strengthen this argument.

In Chapter five we examined interrogatives used by the MWs which followed problem deliveries by callers. These interrogatives had either a COA embedded within them, or they made relevant some form of caller uptake after a COA had been proffered. Three types were described, which occurred with relatively similar frequency: Type 1 YNIs which followed a turn designed as a description of, or information on, a service which the caller may engage in, e.g. “Obviously there’s the women’s aid domestic violence helpline that you can ring. Did you want their number”; Type 2 YNIs which had a COA
embedded within them and questioned the caller as to whether they wanted, or ‘had’ wanted, the MW to provide contact details for organisations relevant to the COA, e.g. “Are you looking for a helpline?”; and Type 3 YNIs which had a COA embedded within them and required the caller to confirm or disconfirm whether they had engaged in it, e.g. “Have you spoken to your gee pee at the moment how the psychiatrist wants to sign you off”.

As was the case with the modal verb form for proffering CsOA, types one and two were shown to incorporate a form for a more tentative delivery when resistance of the COA was more strongly possible; that of using a conditional or past tense. Again, further data collection would be necessary to speak with more certainty about this. All three forms of interrogative help with the progression of the call by moving from a problem telling, to talk about remedial actions. By making relevant the callers’ uptake or resistance of the COA, type one and two interrogatives aid in the progression of the interaction towards the delivery of contact information of the relevant organisations, or indeed the proffering of an alternate COA. At the end of both advice chapters, I discussed how the various forms for proffering a COA managed various dilemmas traditionally seen as commonplace in institutional interactions. An important element of the use of interrogatives in proffering a COA is that they avoid invoking the traditional asymmetrical roles of advice giver and advice recipient, which we discussed as problematic in both ordinary and institutional interactions due to the insipient claim by the advice giver as being more knowledgeable on the matter than the advice recipient. It was also discussed how this work on the use of interrogatives in the proffering of CsOA was a further step in addressing the relationship between normativity and asymmetry in advice giving; something that Butler et al (2009) claim to be missing from the literature. I have addressed this issue in chapter five through outlining the ways in which an interrogative can proffer a normative action for a caller to engage in, while creating an epistemic landscape which favours the callers’ knowledge and reverses the usual asymmetry found in advice giving.

It is arguable that the proffered CsOA we examined in all forms represent advice-giving, as they are future oriented actions to engage in, proffered by the representative of a service, which are aimed at remedying a trouble claimed or invoked by the caller. All of these types make the COA embedded within them hearable as a normative action to engage in relative to the callers’ specific circumstances. Notice that when callers tell of
their problems, the MWs typically proffer one just COA, rather than (e.g.) listing a number CsOA as options. It is only when a COA has been rejected that a different one is proffered, and thus I have argued that the CsOA have a ‘targeted’ element to them as they are a single COA aimed at remedying the problem at hand. This was not something to be decided within this thesis however, and I focussed on how all of the forms discussed above manage the issue of offering CsOA in an environment where advice giving is prohibited.

With regards to our focus on procedural consequentiality (Schegloff, 1991), it has been clearly shown that the methods for proffering a COA all avoid a more hearable form of advice giving. It was perhaps in the analysis of the If / Then Constructions that the MWs were most clearly shown to be oriented to the prohibition on advice giving. I would like to refer here to the negative case analysis discussed in chapter four, where an MW had begun an ‘If / Then Construction’ where a COA is proffered.

Extract 8 (Chapter 4): JM - 69622 Contact with Son

01 MWs .hh ahm ;I’d- I don’t know thei reasons basic’ly.

02 =on’y th[ey (.) >c’n tell you< (.) that (.)but. .h]

03 CA [no y:ou don’t know ( )]

04 — MW5 ;if: .hhh (.) if >you want< more cont;act >I mean<

05 (.) >can you< go there?

Rather than deploying this in the usual format (if you want Y, you can do X), the MW pauses, restarts, inserts an “I mean”, pauses again, and then issues the ‘then’ element through the use of an interrogative. The turn is indeed troubled, and my analysis was that the MW was headed for the standard if / then construction to proffer the COA, but changes the trajectory as this would have sounded like advice giving. If the MW were to complete the urn using the syntax he had begun with, the turn would have taken a form such as ‘If you want more contact you can go there’. It is such a form that I argue has been abandoned here and replaced with the (grammatically odd) form which was used, displaying an orientation to the ‘regular’ form as problematic in this instance, and as one to be avoided.
MIND Infoline calls are different from many other institutional interactions studied previously for how advice is delivered, as they have an agenda to deliver information linked to the COA that the caller may engage in. In feeding back the analysis of such calls to the MWs, they have all agreed that CsOA are delivered in the ways outlined in chapters four and five in an attempt to avoid sounding as though they are giving advice, because of the prohibition on advice giving on the line. When all of the various forms for proffering CsOA were outlined to the staff and management of the line, the management agreed that these were acceptable working practices for the MWs to engage in, as they recognised the difficulty the MWs have in getting to the point in the call where information is provided. Our discussion also covered the existing research in the area, and how the existing research demonstrates that many institutions with prohibitions on advice-giving were engaging in similar practices to the MWs.

The MWs did again raise the question as to which form may be most effective. My answer was that, while all forms were successful in proffering a COA in a way which avoided traditional advice formats, the YNIs that they use are built in such a way as to constrain the callers’ responses such that they must stay within the agenda set by the interrogative, and to make the callers’ stance on the COA immediately relevant. As a result, callers are less free to shift topic as may be the case with more open ended questions, and thus these YNIs may provide a ‘shorter route’ to the delivery of information. It is interesting to also note however, that helplines are typically encouraged to use open ended questions to encourage callers to respond, but the analysis here shows that often, a closed YNI may be a more powerful tool for call takers to use.

A further benefit of all of the methods for proffering CsOA is that, as the MWs are not hearably giving explicit advice, but are rather proffering information about a COA or asking about a COA, the potential asymmetrical relationship of knowledgeable advice giver and less knowledgeable or competent advice recipient are not invoked. On initial examination, some of the data here would appear not to fit with Jefferson & Lee’s (1981) notion that advice cannot follow a troubles telling, as the reversal of the recipient from troubles teller to advice recipient will lead to interactional asynchrony. Perhaps it works here in that, while callers and MWs orient to the transition space following a troubles telling as a place for a COA to be delivered, the COA is delivered in ways which help it to be less hearable as advice, forming a perfect bridge between callers’ troubles telling (or problem delivery) and the proffering of a COA.
Chapter Six: Empathy and Institutional Business in Receipts of Caller Crying

The aim of this chapter was to examine occurrences of caller crying and the ways MWs receipt these. The MWs reported that caller crying is difficult to respond to due when emotional support is something not offered by the helpline (as the management feel it may promote a dependency on the line and would also be too difficult a task for the MWs to engage in on a regular basis). Analysis showed, however, that the MWs deploy well-fitted, empathetic responses in response to caller crying, which also serve to move the call forward towards the provision of information. This was an especially interesting phenomenon as the callers were mostly engaged in troubles telling or issuing complaints while crying, and the analysis showed how the movement towards the business of the line was achieved through the deployment of empathetic responses which created a suitable interactional environment for the proffering of a COA. These empathetic responses also allowed the MWs to manage another prohibited issue, that of aligning with complaints made by callers. The following is an example of these empathetic receipts.

Extract 1 (Chapter six): JM - 65252 Benefits Problems; line 39 - 54

39 CA "'mm' 'WELL I DON'T< ~know, -'
40 (2.2)
41 CA ['~Mmm.~']
42→ MW4 [ .hh ] yeah. .h I- I know it's difficult
43 =obviously it's frustrating if: if
44 somebody's threatening to s: to stop
45 your benefits an' it's worrying you.
46 .hhhh ah but unfortun'y cos we can't
go advice in that area. .hh but the
47 local mind might be a really good place
48 to s[ta[r, because] they do offer
49 CA [ okay then. ]
50 MW4 benefits advice an' they're n:ot
51 connected. .hhhh [a:hh]
52 CA [Okay then]
53 CA yeah I'll deal with 'em,
Turns with elements such as “I know it’s difficult – obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to stop your benefits an’ it’s worrying you.” were discussed as empathetic receipts, as they contained a formulation of the caller’s mental state, and a candidate cause for this invoked mental state (as discussed by Hepburn & Potter, 2007). These formulations always invoked the callers’ situations as the target for any description, such that callers themselves were never described as (e.g.) upset or frustrated, but rather as being in situations which were upsetting, or frustrating. The closest example of a caller being described in a direct way comes from the example above, where the MW says “an’ it’s worrying you” (Line 45). Notice however that this ‘worry’ is hearable as contingent upon the situation which the MW has constructed; “obviously it’s frustrating if: if somebody’s threatening to stop your benefits an’ it’s worrying you.”. This makes the description hearable as pertaining to anyone in the situation, rather than specifically the caller.

Of course, these descriptions infer that the candidate internal state is one experienced by the caller. While the situation is what is being described as something frustrating, upsetting, etc, the adjectives used imply that the situations are leading to frustration, upset, and difficulty being experienced. This is stated in stronger terms in some of the formulations e.g. “I do understand how upsetting it must be for you.”, which indexes both the internal state of the caller and a quality of the general situation. Through this practice of indexing the internal experience of the caller, and the external situation they are dealing with, these formulations tie together the internal experience and external (causal) world. A pervasive theme in discursive psychology has been to examine the ways in which speakers manage the relationship between the subjective internal world, and the external, objective world (Edwards, 2004), and the MW formulations were discussed as an exemplary case of such management.

In this chapter I argued that there were two issues being managed by the MWs empathetic responses; a prohibition on agreeing with complaints, and a restriction on providing emotional support for callers. In managing the latter, these formulations employ a format which allows the MWs to display empathy while adhering to the MIND Infoline policy of not providing emotional support for callers. Callers’ current internal states are not invoked in any other format, nor are callers ever asked how they are feeling by the MWs (although the formulations do all contained an epistemic marker which acknowledged the callers’ primary rights to describe their internal states). The
formulations were discussed as not requiring callers to ratify or confirm that they were indeed experiencing the internal states invoked, and the MWs typically moved from these to proffering a COA. I argued that by limiting the interactional focus on callers’ internal states, the formulations reflect the institutional reticence (not prohibition) on providing emotional support for callers.

We also saw how the formulations were deployed by the MWs following occurrences of crying which occur during or close after a complaint about services. As MWs are not free to agree with such complaints and must remain neutral, I argued that central to managing this neutrality is the practice of describing situations in the formulations. The use of ‘frustrating’ and ‘upsetting’ in a description of a situation (e.g. “Sounds like an extremely frustrating an- and upsetting situation certainly.” call 2: extract 1), mark such an internal response as understandable when in this situation, while also avoiding the placement of blame on any individual or service that the caller may be complaining against. The formulations also avoid constructing any internal upset as being due to dispositions of the caller, as well as avoiding making any comment on the caller’s level, or type of reaction to the situation e.g. that it is a correct or excessive reaction. While no specific comment is made on the source of the invoked frustration or upset, and while in none of the calls do the MWs offer opinions on the service which callers are complaining about, or indeed even refer to the callers’ talk as a complaint, the formulations allow the MWs to align with the callers that they are experiencing something problematic.

Special attention was paid to the one call in the corpus where a crying caller was not complaining about individuals or services, as in this call, the MW did not offer an empathetic response. Rather, the MW proffered a formulation of the actions already engaged in by the person in question, and then to the proffering of a COA. We also saw how an empathetic formulation was deployed in the absence of crying, but following a troubles telling by a caller in which he describes his acrimonious relationship with his mother, describing accusations she is making against him. As the empathetic formulations appear routinely in the environment of what are hearable as complaints against other people or services, I argued that their main function is in allowing MWs to maintain an institutional neutrality in regards to complaints. This is again an instance of procedural consequentiality at play. Empathy is arguably useful to display in response to occurrences of crying (cf Hepburn & Potter, 2007) or indeed in response to occurrences of troubles tellings in general (cf Jefferson & Lee, 1981), and the empathetic
formulations carry out a range of institutional tasks when they are deployed. Yet it is only one specific interactional environment in which they are deployed. The main use of the formulations then seems to be in the management of responding to caller complaints, in an environment where agreeing with complaints is prohibited.

As mentioned, the empathetic formulations also served in the forward progression of the calls, allowing for the movement from the troubles tellings or problem delivery to the delivery of information or a COA. This transition is possible as while the recipient may agree with the turn containing the figure of speech, the turn itself does not project further talk, and it is this quality that allows for the transition from one project in the talk to another.

The staff and management of the line were quite enthusiastic about all of the above elements of the formulations during feedback, and as they acknowledge that responding to crying callers and to complaints can be problematic in terms of adhering to institutional policy, they discussed the potential for including examples of the empathetic formulations in the training materials for new MWs. These examples could be discussed in training as examples of ‘best practice’ in difficult situations. Specifically, the feedback session which covered this analysis focussed on how the formulations formed a pivot between a focus on the problem, or on a complaint, and the proffering of a COA by the MWs, and how these formulations were generally quite successful as a method for achieving this transition. The MWs did ask if I had intended them to see the formulations as a quick method for achieving transition between problem or complaint focussed talk and the proffering of a COA, and again I discussed the need to ensure the ‘fit’ of a turn to what precedes it. I did however encourage them to see how they were already utilising these formulations effectively, and that they may well be a useful tool in situations where they wish to achieve such transition.

As an aside, a visiting manager from MIND was present during this particular feedback session, and commented that they heard the formulations as an example of MWs trying to remain kind to all callers, due to the mixture of aligning with them and using a pivot to move to the business of the line in a way which may be less ‘blunt’ than other options such as moving directly into a COA.
Final Comments

Indeed, all of the phenomena covered in detail in the analytic chapters, are utilised in the forward progression of the calls, as an additional if not primary function. Perhaps it is this repeated activity of moving calls forward which is the “institutional fingerprint” (Drew & Heritage, 1992) of MIND Infoline. Drew and Heritage discuss the institutional fingerprint of an organisation as the unique patterns of interaction which constitute a particular institution. Indeed, activities which aid in the forward progression of the calls are a routine feature of all of the phenomena we have discussed, appearing in most extracts in the thesis, and together, the analysis chapters show how MWs encourage progression of the call at various points.

An interesting issue has arisen during the course of preparing and writing up this thesis, which is whether the MWs may be utilising the normal patterns of talk as a ‘deliberate’ method for engaging in their work. For example, misaligning with the preference structure of a question is not something which recipients generally do, as it is more socially cohesive to align with the first speaker (Sacks, 1987). With this principle in mind let us examine the Yes / No Interrogatives used to proffer a COA which were discussed in chapter five, for example, “Have you spoken to your gee pee at the moment how the psychiatrist wants to sign you off”. The preferred response here to this positively framed interrogative would be a ‘yes’. Is it possible that the MWs are deliberately using this preference structure as a way of communicating a normative COA to callers?

The agenda constraining interrogatives of chapter three may be utilised in the same way, such as the question, “what information were you looking for today?”. While it may display to the caller that the MW considers them to be ‘looking for information, it is a step beyond this analysis to consider whether the MWs are deliberately utilising the question in an attempt to elicit a request for information. Are the MWs manipulating the rules of conversation to force the interaction in a certain direction? In the analysis of YNIs in medical interviewing, Boyd and Heritage (2006) argue that the physicians’ expectations as to what answers are preferred can be “thoroughly conveyed” through their design and sequential placement (p.171). Are the MWs intentionally ‘conveying their expectations’? In answer to (or perhaps avoidance of) this, my preference is to stay outside of the realms of the MWs’ intentions. The activities addressed in the analysis chapters of this thesis may be evolved practices, which ‘work’ well and are increasingly
utilised in the course of answering calls due to their effectiveness, regardless of any actual intent. My interest is in what happens in the interactions rather than in internal phenomena, about which we may only speculate.

As was discussed in the introductory chapter, interaction research work in institutional settings had initially focused more on institutions with very restricted, formal speech structures, such as courts proceedings and doctor appointments. This has changed in recent years with the analysis of interactions in settings where an institutional agenda remains, but where client speech may be less restricted in terms of turn length and turn content. This has been due to the increase in work in areas such as telephone helplines, and counselling and psychotherapy sessions. The research in this thesis adds to this body of work, and also adds to the emerging body of work where the analytic findings are utilised and applied back to the institution.

I hope that I have illuminated some interesting interactional practices for the reader. I have certainly enjoyed the analytic process, and engaging with the staff of MIND Infoline immensely. I am indebted to them for allowing me access to their working lives, and for being so open to the analyses and the feedback.
References


Appendix A: Documents relating to the ethical permission to conduct the research.

1: Copy of the Research Proposal for the University Ethics Board.

ETHICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Loughborough University

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR HUMAN BIOLOGICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

This application should be completed after reading the University Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Participants (found at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/incophp.htm).

1. Project Title
   The discursive analysis of telephone calls to a depression helpline.

2. Brief lay summary of the proposal for the benefit of non-expert members of the Committee
   Calls to a depression helpline for men will be recorded and subject to analysis. The specific approach is based on conversation analysis and discursive psychology. Loughborough Social Sciences has an international reputation for work of this kind. I will be exploring the calls, looking at the ways in which psychological concepts such as depression are constructed, and how they are dealt with in the call by both speakers.

3. Details of responsible investigator (supervisor in case of student projects)
   Title Mr.  Surname Moore  Forename John
   Department  Social Sciences
   Email  j.moore@lboro.ac.uk
   address
Personal experience of proposed procedures and/or methodologies.

I have studied and worked in this field for a number of years. I hold a degree in Psychology and an MSc in Health Psychology, both from the University of Derby, both 1st Class. I will also be awarded an MSc in Social Research from Loughborough university in December, having recently completed that programme.

Also, I have served as a call-taker at a number of helplines for the suicidal, in the U.K and Ireland with the Samaritans, and in the USA with the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Centre.

I am supervised by Professor Jonathan Potter who is a world authority on the analysis of materials of this kind.

4. Names, experience, department and email addresses of additional investigators

5. Proposed start and finish date and duration of project

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<tr>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Finish date</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2006</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>2 Years 6 Months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start date for data-collection: January 2007

NB. Data collection should not commence before EAC approval is granted.

6. Location(s) of project

Data collection would occur at the helpline centre in Edinburgh, and all analysis etc. would occur at Loughborough.

7. Reasons for undertaking the study (eg contract, student research)

This research will form the basis for my PhD thesis.

8. Do any of the investigators stand to gain from a particular conclusion of the research project?

No.
9a. Is the project being sponsored?  Yes [x]  No [ ]

If yes, please state source of funds including contact name and address.

I am in receipt of an ESRC studentship.

9b. Is the project covered by the sponsors insurance?  Yes [ ]  No [x]

If no, please confirm details of alternative cover (e.g., University cover).

No specific insurance has been sought for this project. Please do let me know if you think I need to arrange cover.

10. Aims and objectives of project

The main aim of this project is to explore the talk between callers and call-takers at a helpline for men with depression, in particular the ways in which psychological concepts such as 'depression' and 'suicide' are worked up and oriented to in the talk. It will explicate features of the calls such as openings, closings, advice giving, support, and empathy. Detailed analysis of this kind can be a resource for improving the service offered.

11. Brief outline of project

The CALM helpline has agreed that its calls may be recorded for the purposes of this research, and potentially for further projects at a later date. The practical arrangements of call recording are currently being discussed. Once the calls have been recorded the researcher will transcribe them, taking care to omit any identifying details on the caller & call-takers. These transcripts will be subject to in-depth discursive analysis.

A) STUDY DESIGN

This is a non-experimental, qualitative design.

B) MEASUREMENTS TO BE TAKEN

No constructs will be measured in this project.

12. Please indicate whether the proposed study:

Involves taking bodily samples  Yes [ ]  No [x]
Involves procedures which are physically invasive (including the collection of body secretions by physically invasive methods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

Is designed to be challenging (physically or psychologically in any way), or involves procedures which are likely to cause physical, psychological, social or emotional distress to participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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Involves intake of compounds additional to daily diet, or other dietary manipulation / supplementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

Involves pharmaceutical drugs (please refer to published guidelines)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Involves testing new equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Involves procedures which may cause embarrassment to participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Involves collection of personal and/or potentially sensitive data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Involves use of radiation (Please refer to published guidelines. Investigators should contact the University's Radiological Protection Officer before commencing any research which exposes participants to ionising radiation - e.g. x-rays)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

Involves use of hazardous materials (please refer to published guidelines)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Assists/alters the process of conception in any way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Involves methods of contraception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

Involves genetic engineering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X</th>
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</table>

If Yes - please give specific details of the procedures to be used and arrangements to deal with adverse effects.

The collection of the data for this project will not involve the researcher. The calls to the helpline will be taking place regardless of the researcher's involvement. Callers will of course be asked for permission to record their calls for research purposes. When callers decline to give permission, their calls will not be included in the data corpus. Calls which are recorded will proceed as normal, as the research does not involve the manipulation or alteration of call procedures. Any identifying details will be omitted or altered so as to render all speakers anonymous, thus avoiding any 'adverse effects' of involvement.
13. Participant Information

Details of participants (gender, age, special interests etc)
The participants will be those who take calls at the call centre, and those who phone in. The helpline promotes its services to young men, and thus it is envisaged that the callers will primarily be men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. The call takers will not be as homogenous a group as this however, as they are the staff of the helpline, and as such may potentially be any age or gender.

Number of participants to be recruited: N/A (see below)

How will participants be selected? Please outline inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

All call-takers and callers will be asked for their consent before having their interactions recorded. The 'figures' for this study relate to the amount of calls recorded, and I am hoping to collect a corpus of around 150 - 200 calls. This will mean that some of the callers will be the same in different calls, as helplines typically have a large number of regular callers, and also that many of the staff will appear more than once in the corpus.

There are no features of this project which dictate that some callers or call-takers should not be recorded (apart from the issue of consent). Thus, any call where both taker and caller have given their consent to be recorded will be included in the data set.

How will participants be recruited and approached?
For the call-takers, I will travel to the helpline base of operations to meet with all of the helpline staff, and discuss the research with them. Members of staff will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and will then be asked as to whether they wish to have their interactions recorded. The helpline is set up such that callers are initially greeted by an automated response. The helpline management have decided that it is best for their callers to be given the option to partake in the research at this point, although they will of course be able to ask questions about the research if they wish.

Please state demand on participants' time.
There will be no demands on the time of the callers, as these are calls which would have been made to the helpline regardless of my involvement. The call-takers will need to spend some time with me so that the project can be explained to them, but I will travel to their place of work for this, and the demand on their time should be no more than an hour or two.
14. Control Participants

Will control participants be used? Yes [ ] No [x]

If Yes, please answer the following:

Number of control participants to be recruited:

How will control participants be selected? Please outline inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

How will control participants be recruited and approached?

Please state demand on control participants' time.

15. Procedures for chaperoning and supervision of participants during the investigation

Participants will be engaged in an interaction that is independent of the research project, and thus the need for chaperoning or supervision is negated.

16. Possible risks, discomforts and/or distress to participants

There are no foreseeable negative implications for participants.

17. Details of any payments to be made to the participants

No payment will be made.

18. Is written consent to be obtained from participants? Yes [ ] No [x]

If yes, please attach a copy of the consent form to be used.

If no, please justify.
Callers to the helpline will be based throughout the country, and it is not possible to canvass them before the call (due to the spontaneous nature of availing of such services). They will however be able to provide their informed consent in verbal form. Call-takers will also be given opportunity to provide informed consent in verbal form, and will not be asked to provide written consent, as this may lead to perceived differences in the treatment of callers and call-takers.

19. Will any of the participants be from one of the following vulnerable groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children under 18 years of age</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People over 65 years of age</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with mental illness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners/other detained persons</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vulnerable groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have selected yes to any of the above, please answer the following questions:

a) what special arrangements have been made to deal with the issues of consent?

It is possible that some callers to the helpline will come from any of the above listed groups. The helpline staff are trained to support all callers, including those considered vulnerable, and the information delivered regarding the research, and consenting to have calls recorded will be accessible to all. While I have ticked the box labelled "Children under 18 years of age", as it is a possibility that this group may call the service, callers are typically over this age.

b) have investigators obtained necessary police registration/clearance? (please provide details or indicate the reasons why this is not applicable to your study)

I will have no contact with the callers, including those considered vulnerable, and thus I do not need to apply for police clearance.

20. How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw from the study?

This will be part of the message provided for callers, and I will make it explicit to the call-takers before the research begins. The callers have the opportunity at the start of the call to ask further questions if they wish to.
21. Will the investigation include the use of any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio recording</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video recording</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If yes to any, please provide detail of how the recording will be stored, when the recordings will be destroyed and how confidentiality of data will be ensured?
Records of the calls will be stored in digital format, on a password protected computer. Any identifying details can be omitted or scrambled to ensure confidentiality. I have agreed with the helpline management to keep the data for possible use in future research projects.

22. What steps will be taken to safeguard anonymity of participants/confidentiality of personal data?

In both the digital records and the written transcripts of the calls, any identifying details (names, addresses, etc) will be omitted, changed, or scrambled to ensure anonymity. It must also be pointed out that no ‘demographic’ information will be collected in this study. The study does not require the collection of any information from the callers or call-takers such as age, gender, nationality, etc. The only data recorded will be the naturally occurring call.

23. What steps have been taken to ensure that the collection and storage of data complies with the Data Protection Act 1998? Please see University guidance on Data Collection and Storage and Compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Callers and call takers will be given full information as prescribed by the data protection act. Also, the data will not be shared with any individuals or organisations, and will be used solely for research by myself. Written transcripts will be stored in secure cabinets, and electronic copies of calls and transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer, both in a lockable office.

24. INSURANCE COVER:

It is the responsibility of investigators to ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for the procedure/technique.

The University maintains in force a Public Liability Policy, which indemnifies it against its legal liability for accidental injury to persons (other than its employees) and for accidental damage to the property of others. Any unavoidable injury or damage therefore falls outside the scope of the policy.
Will any part of the investigation result in unavoidable injury or damage to participants or property?  

If yes, please detail the alternative insurance cover arrangements and attach supporting documentation to this form.

The University Insurance relates to claims arising out of all normal activities of the University, but Insurers require to be notified of anything of an unusual nature.

Is the investigation classed as normal activity?  

If no, please check with the University Insurers that the policy will cover the activity. If the activity falls outside the scope of the policy, please detail alternative insurance cover arrangements and attach supporting documentation to this form.

25. Declaration
I have read the University's Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Participants and have completed this application. I confirm that the above named investigation complies with published codes of conduct, ethical principles and guidelines of professional bodies associated with my research discipline.

I agree to provide the Ethical Advisory Committee with appropriate feedback upon completion of my investigation.

Signature of applicant:  

Signature of Head of Department:  

Date  
PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ATTACHED COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO YOUR SUBMISSION.

- Participant Information Sheet
- Informed Consent Form
- Health Screen Questionnaire*
- Advertisement/Recruitment material*
- Evidence of consent from other Committees*

*where relevant

2: Copy of Email Granting Permission for the Research Proposal.

On Tue, 23 Jan 2007 14:12:38 -0000
"M.R.Lee" <M.R.Lee@lboro.ac.uk> wrote:
> Research Proposal: The discursive analysis of telephone calls to a depression helpline.
> Reference No: R07-P4
>
> I write to confirm that the above research proposal has been cleared by the University's Ethical Advisory Committee and may now proceed under your directions subject to the conditions outlined in the attached document.
> This document and the proposal you submitted to the Committee is the approved protocol which will be lodged in the Committee's files.
>
> Thank-you for assisting the Committee with its work.
>
> Meredith Lee
>
> Administrative Officer
> Student Office
> Academic Registry
> Loughborough University
> Leicestershire
> LE11 3TU
> tel: 01509 222228

Ref No: R07-P4
LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY
ETHICAL ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE

RESEARCH PROPOSAL
INVolVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Title: The discursive analysis of telephone calls to a depression helpline

Applicant: Mr J Moore

Department: Social Sciences

Date of clearance: 18 January 2007

Comments of the Sub-Committee:

The Sub-Committee agreed to issue clearance to proceed subject to the following condition:

- That the investigators provided additional information on the rationale for callers to be given the option to participate in the research during the initial automated response, including a transcript of the existing and proposed automated messages. The Sub-Committee was concerned to ensure (i) that callers were left in no uncertainty that taking part in the research was entirely optional, and that whether or not they agreed to do so would have no bearing on the level of assistance they would receive, and (ii) that callers were not discouraged from using the service upon hearing the initial recorded message with its reference to participating in research.
On Wed, 25 Jul 2007 16:12:50 +0100
"Meredith Coney" <M.R.Coney@lboro.ac.uk> wrote:
> Dear John
>
> Thank you for your email, I apologies for the delayed response. The proposed changes to your project have been reviewed and I do not think that changing the changing helpline warrants a new submission as long as the assurance and recorded messages that we specified in the proposal and clearance document are met.
>
> Many thanks
>
> Meredith
>
> Meredith Coney
> Administrative Officer
> Student Office
> Academic Registry
> Loughborough University
> Leicestershire
> LE11 3TU UK
> Tel: +44 (0) 1509 22 2468
> Fax: +44 (0) 1509 223901
> www.lboro.ac.uk
> ----- Original Message -----
> From: John Moore
> To: M.R.Lee
> Sent: Tuesday, July 17, 2007 10:43 AM
> Subject: Re: Research Proposal R07-P4
> >
Appendix B: Explanation of Transcription Symbols.

† Upward arrows represent marked rise in pitch. Two arrows denotes a more extreme rise.

↓ Downward arrows represent downward pitch shifts.

> < Text encased in 'greater than' and 'less than' symbols is hearable as faster than surrounding speech.

< > When turned outwards the encased speech is stretched or slower than surrounding speech.

> A 'greater than' sign before talk indicates that it has a 'hurried' sounding start.

= An equal to sign between sections of talk indicates that there is no hearable gap between them.

. A period represents falling, end-of-sentence intonation at the end of a turn.

, A comma denotes continuing or slightly rising intonation at the end of a turn.

? Question marks represent a more extreme rising of intonation than a comma; a questioning intonation.

÷ Upside down question marks denote a rise which is higher than a comma, but lower than a question mark would denote.

a The underlining of text represents a slight emphasis of the sound.

: Colons after a letter represent a continuation or prolonging of that sound; multiple colons denote a longer continuation.

a Text printed in bold type is hearable as more strongly pronounced.

A Capitalised text denote increased volume.

* * Text encased in degree symbols is quieter than surrounding speech. Double degree signs refer to whispered speech.

[] Square brackets identify sections of overlapping speech.

( ) Parentheses indicate trouble in deciphering what has been said. These may be left blank, or may contain a candidate hearing of the talk.

(())) A double set of parentheses contain a note or comment from the transcriber.

hhh These represent an out-breath. The number of hₜ aims to capture the length of the sound.

.hhh Preceded by a period these denote an in-breath.

~ Talk encased in tildes symbols denote a tremulous or tremulous delivery.

(.7) Numbers in parentheses represent pauses in the talk, measured in tenths of a second. A period with no following number denotes a hearable pause of less that one tenth of a second.
Talk encased in hash symbols has a rough or coarse guttural quality.

- A dash after a sound indicates that it had a 'cut off' or unfinished delivery.

.shih This is used to describe a wet sniff.

Hhuh Combinations of Hs and vowel sounds are used to capture sobbing.