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DESIGNING THE RECIPIENT: MANAGING ADVICE RESISTANCE IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

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Abstract

In this paper we consider a collection of conversational practices that arise where a professional is faced with extended resistance to the advice that they are offering. Data comprise telephone calls to a UK Child Protection Helpline. The practices we identify occur recurrently across our corpus of advice resistance sequences, and involve a) repackaging resisted advice in more idiomatic form; b) combining that advice with a tag question that treats the client as able to confirm the reformulated version despite their prior resistance to it; and c) dampening the response requirement by continuing past the tag question, which would normally be a transition place for the advice recipient. We also discuss the tension between the contrasting projects of callers and call takers that can lead to both delivery of advice and the resistance of that advice. In doing this we will highlight the way advice may be an element of broader institutional practices. In specifying these practices we draw upon analytic tools employed by conversation analysts, for example various features of sequence organisation (Schegloff, 2007) and turn design (Sacks et al., 1974). The analysis is intended to contribute to three main areas of research – to the applied topic of managing advice resistance, to the growing literature on understanding institutional practices, and to broader concerns in conversation analytic and discursive psychological literature, such as the status of the ‘psychological’ in interaction, and the specification of actions across turns and sequences of talk.

Keywords

Helpline, advice, conversation analysis, discursive psychology, institutional talk, tag questions

One of the practices common in a wide range of contemporary health and social services institutions is delivery of advice, either face to face or by phone or internet. Advice may be the principle official business of the institution (e.g. in the case of the UK's Citizen's Advice Bureau) or it may be one of a range of relevant practices (e.g. in a medical consultation). Obtaining advice may be the principle project of a service user when they access the institution; alternatively they may bring a different project to which advice may be a more or less satisfactory alternative. On the occasion of advice delivery recipients' options vary between straightforward acceptance to outright resistance.

There is a small, but growing, literature that considers the interactional organization of advice (see below and also Hutchby, 1995; Kinell & Maynard, 1996; Waring, 2007a,b) and a still smaller literature that considers the organization of advice resistance (see below and also Pilnick & Coleman, 2003; Pudlinski, 2002; Vehviläinen, 2001). Within this literature work on how professionals *manage* this resistance has received even less attention.

The current paper will consider one group of connected interactional practices for managing advice resistance focusing on a collection of examples from a UK child protection helpline. These practices are:

- (a) Repackaging resisted advice in a more idiomatic form;
- (b) Combining that reformulated advice with a tag question that treats the client as able to confirm the reformulated version; and commonly
- (c) Dampening the response requirement by continuing past the transition place.

The analysis is intended to contribute to three main areas of research – to the applied topic of managing advice resistance, to the growing literature on practices in institutions, and to broader concerns in conversation analytic and discursive psychological literature, such as the status of the ‘psychological’ in interaction, and the specification of actions across turns and sequences of talk.

Advice

The standard definition of advice in interaction research comes from Heritage and Sefi. They identify advice in institutional settings as sequences of talk in which a professional ‘describes, recommends or otherwise forwards a preferred course of future action’ to the client (1992: 368). This can include approving or supporting a past course of action or what the client is doing currently. They note that advice giving is both *normative* and *asymmetric*. It is normative in the sense that advice giving is strongly prescriptive, identifying future actions that are appropriate, healthy, necessary and so on. That is, advice prescribes what *should* happen rather than predicting what *might* happen. Insofar as it is prescriptive it goes beyond merely delivering information (Silverman, 1997). It is asymmetric in the sense that the advice *giver* is projected as more knowledgeable, or skilled, or experienced than the advice *receiver*.

There are some important complexities here. First, the vernacular and institutional category ‘advice’ may be avoided or cause problems for reasons derived from the institution’s theorising of its own practices or for a range of legal reasons (Pilnick, 1999). For example, some helplines specifically gloss their role as *not* delivering advice (see Emmison & Danby, 2007). On the one hand, this can reflect a

‘person centred’ concern that the client builds their own response to their own situation (Butler, et al., 2010); on the other, it can attend to the possible legal culpability that can come from advising clients to engage in specific courses of action. In other settings the relevant local category may be ‘counselling’ or even ‘therapy’, in each case there are more or less theorised and psychologically complex constructions on the given ‘advice’ (see papers in Peräkylä et al., 2008). We will work with the notion of advice as defined by Heritage and Sefi (1992) without expecting that participants will always use this term to describe what is going on.

Second, although we are working with Heritage and Sefi’s (1992) useful definition, we expect that there may be further distinctions to be made between different kinds of activity that fit this definition. In addition, there are likely to be different kinds and degrees of asymmetry between client and professional. For example, genetic counsellors may have a range of highly technical and often mathematical information at their disposal that few of their clients will have a sophisticated grasp of (Armstrong, Michie & Marteau, 1998). In contrast, health visitors are offering advice to mothers who often consider themselves to be highly expert in their own circumstances (Heritage & Sefi, 1992) or who may be concerned to display competence to professionals whose job is assessment of wellbeing.

Third, there are important differences between advice giving and advice resistance in institutional and mundane settings, and different institutions provide for the delivery of advice in their self presentation and interactional procedures. Jefferson and Lee (1992) showed that in mundane conversation advice can be occasioned by one person’s troubles telling. However, the positioning of that advice was crucial. If advice was delivered too early it was treated as failing to attend to the requirement for

‘emotional reciprocity’ and, indeed, the troubles recipients’ job should be more focused on proffering reciprocity than delivering advice. They note that this pattern is reversed in service encounters, where the troubles teller ‘properly receives and accepts advice’ (ibid. : 546).

Fourth, advice can be delivered to satisfy varying institutional purposes. For example, it may be used as an alternative to providing goods or services, and as such can have different implications for the recipient. For instance, a parent may take a child with an ear infection to a pediatrician with the expectation that antibiotics will be prescribed; and in that context the provision of advice on treating the child without antibiotics can function as a rebuff (cf. Heritage & Stivers, 1999). Thus from a recipients' point of view it is not just that the specific content of some advice may be unwelcome, rather the very delivery of advice may mark a failure to receive some other form of support. As Raymond & Zimmerman (2007) note in their analysis of a collection of 9-1-1 calls, it is important to consider advice in the context of its positioning vis a vis both the projects of particular callers and its positioning within the institution as an alternative to other activities. Clearly, advice that is delivered as an alternative to requested goods or services has the potential to encounter resistance.

Advice resistance and its management

Heritage and Sefi (1992) note two primary ways in which clients of health visitors can resist advice. First, resistance can be performed through ‘unmarked acknowledgements’ with tokens such as ‘mm’, or ‘that’s right’. Such tokens have two relevant features. They do not mark the advice as news. Indeed, with tokens such as ‘that’s right’ speaker claim prior knowledge of the information. At the same time they

offer no undertaking to act on the advice. Second, resistance can be performed through assertions of knowledge or competence. Thus mothers may respond to health visitors' advice by pointing to features of their current practice that are already in line with what has been suggested.¹

Other researchers have found in different kinds of setting that these two forms of resistance may be supplemented by more explicit rejections of the advised course of action. Thus in his study of HIV+AIDs counselling, Silverman (1997) found repeated instances where advice is not only explicitly rejected, but repeatedly rejected. As he put it 'resistance to advice may assume quite spectacular proportions' (1997: 154).

Heritage and Sefi (1992) devote less attention to the way the health visitors managed advice resistance. They note, however, that it was not uncommon for advice giving sequences where there has been resistance to end in a 'competence struggle' where the advice is pressed despite the mother claiming to *already* appreciate and understand it.

Silverman (1997) suggests that the resistance to advice may appear in different environments - most importantly either after a question from the client or after there has been a question from the counsellor. He noted that the latter environment is less auspicious because when a client formulates an interrogative this can display a stance that can be used to build the advice in a personalized manner. Counsellors may thus hold off delivering advice until the client has solicited information themselves. Indeed, he suggests that one effective way of managing some of the problems is to turn advice giving into information delivery by, for example, embedding it within stories.

Conversation and Cognition

Although the primary aim of this paper is to contribute to the applied literature on advice and advice resistance, and the interactional literature on talk in institutional settings, the secondary aim is to contribute to the literature on ‘discursive psychology’ (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Hepburn, 2007). This is an analytic perspective that considers how what have hitherto been understood by psychologists as ‘psychological’ phenomena are constructed, attended to and understood in interaction. It develops an alternative to the idea that human action must be explained by reference to inner mental processes of some kind. Instead, discursive psychology focuses on how descriptions implicate psychological matters, on the way psychological states are displayed in talk, on how people are responded to as interested, ignorant, irritable and so on, and how all of these things are built for the roles they play in courses of action in talk (Edwards, 1997). From this perspective, viewing mental objects or processes as the primary explanations for human action is a rather impoverished endeavour. Over the last fifteen years respecifications of more traditional topics of social cognition, cognitive psychology and cognitive science have been offered (for an overview and history see Potter & te Molder, 2005). At the same time, studies have considered the way more traditional psychological methods constitute their objects and produce them as the property of individuals (Antaki, 2005) and have focused on the intersection of psychological and institutional matters (Edwards & Potter, 2001).

Discursive psychology has increasingly drawn on the methods and findings of conversation analysis, as these provide a powerful resource for understanding human

action. For the most part conversation analytic research has followed Sacks' original injunction to not worry how fast people think or whether they are thinking at all: 'just try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off' (Sacks, 1992: 11). With few exceptions conversation analytic work has not attended to cognitive matters (Heritage, 1990/1; Mandelbaum & Pomerantz, 1990; Schegloff, 1991). However, recent work has attempted to address the psychological more directly (Drew, 2005; Heritage, 2005; Hopper, 2005) although there are often difficulties with the conceptualization of cognition in this enterprise (Potter, 2006).

In the current study we will be using conversation analytic methods to consider the way a collection of conversational practices are used to interactionally rework a participant's state of knowledge and belief in real time, and the role that this practice plays within the ongoing course of institutional action. This will highlight the way intersubjectivity becomes a contested terrain (cf Hepburn, under editorial consideration) in which declarative + tag question constructions are used in a way that is both *coercive* (attempting to alter the recipient's conduct) and *invasive* (by virtue of their interactional reconstruction of features of the recipient's psychology).

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children child protection helpline

Our primary research materials have been a corpus of more than 180 calls to the UK National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). This helpline currently receives nearly 100,000 calls a year from across the UK. The helpline is advertised as offering a range of services. For example, the current text on their website (July 2009) states:

We exist to enable anyone who is concerned about the welfare of a child or young person to have someone to turn to. We can offer you *help, advice, guidance, support or take action on your behalf* if you have concerns about a child who is either being abused or at risk of abuse (emphasis added).

It is a challenging environment for the Child Protection Officers (CPOs) who take calls with different action implications about problems with varying degrees of urgency from callers with highly different ages, social and ethnic backgrounds and regional accents. Unlike other contemporary phone based institutions (e.g. 9-9-9, 9-1-1, NHS Direct), the CPOs do not use a checklist or have a set of software fields to fill in while on the phone. Instead the helpline employs social workers who have at least three years field experience of child protection work as CPOs. On this basis, they are allowed considerable autonomy to deal with the different kinds of calls in the most appropriate way. Unlike some other helplines the CPOs here are specifically mandated to offer advice and expected to be able to draw on their field experience to make that advice effective. The calls unfold with widely different trajectories.

A crucial part of a Child Protection Officer's job is to assess the severity of reported abuse. When they suspect serious abuse they are legally mandated to pass the report on (whether the caller wishes it to stay confidential or not); typically this involves an immediate follow-on call to the relevant local Social Services department. This type of call will involve detailed and extended evidence gathering and testing to facilitate immediate and effective action.

Although these calls are a vital element of the service, in more than eighty percent of cases the caller's information is not deemed actionable in this way. Sometimes the evidence is simply not compelling, but more often the call is not one in which there is immediate and acute risk to a child. Indeed, many calls concern

children who are already known to local services and where legal or medical personnel may already have been involved; often the caller is related in some way to the child (e.g. separated parent, grandparent). There are often complex mixed allegiances for the Child Protection Officer to disentangle as ex-partners may be reporting abuse to their children in the context of ongoing custody disputes, where a range of potential motivations may be live. In such calls there may be requests for direct help or for the NSPCC to intervene in some kind of dispute. In these cases it is common for the Child Protection Officer (CPO) to offer the caller advice. Note that these calls may not be so urgent, but that does not mean they are not important. The CPOs are aware that abused children have often had extended contact with medical and Social Services personnel and the provision of advice and information in such calls is seen as an important part of the job. This is one of the reasons why such calls are much lengthier than, for example, typical calls to emergency services (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987).

Out of calls averaging more than fifteen minutes in length there are often several minutes of advice delivery. Often this advice is focused on what the caller ought to do; as with other helplines there is a strong expectation that callers will have already initiated appropriate actions that are within their capacity (Edwards & Stokoe, 2007). This is the context for much of the advice resistance we will consider below. Some form of advice resistance appears in around a third of the calls in our corpus. Of these a sizable minority include extended sequences of resistance in which advice is reasserted by the Child Protection Officer and then undermined by the caller.

Note that for Child Protection Officer s (and researchers) there is no simple way of assessing if the caller acts on the advice and therefore independently

measuring the success of the advice. This is, of course, true of many situations of advice delivery and is a common feature of many of the settings in which advice has been researched. After advice has been clearly laid out and repeated by the CPO, and after advice resistance has itself been resisted, the aim may shift to closing down the advice sequence and initiating the closing of the call. The central set of practices we will consider work *both* to consolidate the advice package in a hard to resist way and to start to effect call closure.

It is important to note that in our advice resistance sequences there are endemic epistemic asymmetries between the parties. On the one hand, the caller knows about her or his own situation – the people, the neighbourhood, the victim, the timings and so on – in a way that the Child Protection Officer can only access via reports and constructions that the caller offers. On the other, the CPO knows about definitions of abuse, the operation of Social Services, legal issues related to custody, medical examinations and so on. A feature of this asymmetry is that advice resistance can easily be built by the caller out of details that are not available to the Child Protection Officer. The CPO does not have their own access to the detail of the situation as a resource to counter the resistance; instead they have their generic knowledge of people, communities, social services and so on as well as their conversational and persuasive resources.

Most of our data was collected at the London call centre where up to 18 Child Protection Officers could be on duty at one time. All callers and CPOs gave their consent to be part of the research process. Calls reporting abuse average just over 15 minutes, but can be shorter or last over an hour. A range of different features of this helpline have been documented in a series of previous studies (Hepburn 2005, 2006;

Hepburn & Potter 2007; Hepburn & Wiggins 2005; Potter & Hepburn 2003, in press).

The data base for the programme of work is the collection of calls. However, this was supplemented by the first author spending time with Child Protection Officers, sitting in on (and later contributing to) staff meetings, talking to them about their job and observing them fielding calls, making referrals, accessing information about local social services and so on.

ANALYSIS: RESISTING ADVICE RESISTANCE

The basic collection of practices we consider appear in environments where there have been extended advice resistance sequences. These resistance sequences are in turn typically occasioned by the Child Protection Officer (CPO) rejecting a request for action or some kind of alternative project. Typically the main element of the advice is that the caller her or himself should initiate some course of action. In the resistance sequences the CPO has reissued advice, often on several occasions during the call, and the caller has indicated in a number of direct and/or indirect ways that they are unlikely to take up the advice.²

The extract that follows comes from a call where the Caller is expressing concern about her neighbour's actions toward the Caller's son, and is 'wondering' whether she should report her neighbour to Social Services³. The Child Protection Officer (CPO) has asked for detailed descriptions of what the Caller knows about the abuse and it becomes clear that the main problem occurred some months ago, and is relatively minor – the neighbour grabbed the caller's son and this left a scratch on his arm when the caller's son was engaged in a dispute with the neighbour's son. In the ensuing discussion, the caller appears to accept that a social services referral would be

inappropriate after this amount of time has elapsed (we reproduce the relevant sequence in a footnote).⁴ The Caller and CPO engage in further discussion about whether there might be an ongoing problem of verbal harassment, and the CPO repeatedly advises the Caller to communicate directly with the neighbour to try to sort out the problem. At different points the caller is advised to drop the neighbour a note and get her side of the story. The CPO also observes that the neighbour may be upset and stressed by the birth of a recent baby. If the caller was to accept the advice it would constitute an abandonment of the project on behalf of which the call was made in the first place. This is the context in which the caller is resisting the advice.⁵

Extract 1

JX Neighbour and son: Grown ups

- 01 CPO: ↑Well perhaps↑ you need to extend that hand of
02 friendship an if she really is: .hhhh ↑ye know
03 if she is finding it a bit tough with the new baby
04 an everything she might really welcome (0.2) .hhh
05 you making ↑contact with her again.=If you have been
06 friendly in the pa:st,
07 (0.2)
08 Caller: Yeah::.
09 (0.2)
10 CPO: Ye know,
11 (0.9)
12 CPO: °°Ehr:
13 (0.3)
14 Caller: [Y:eah.]

15 CPO: → [.hh #a-]#It sounds as though the grown ups
 16 → have got to be grow:n u:p.=Doesn't it.=Really:,
 17 Caller: Ye- Oh ye[ah because I mean the girls get o:n]:,
 18 CPO: [u- FOR THE CHILDREN'S POINT is (it)]
 19 Caller: She told one o' my neighbours recently, that
 20 (.) she ws gunna move anyway after chrissmas

At the start of the extract we see the Child Protection Officer (CPO) issuing advice that has already been given at more than one place in the call. The advice is to talk directly to the neighbour, supported by a speculative and sympathetic account for the neighbour's claimed abusive actions. The CPO reminds the caller of an earlier observation in the call – that she and the neighbour had been friendly in the past. After a short delay the caller issues an equivocal sounding Yeah:.. (line 8) which is followed by further delay. This fits Heritage and Sefi's (1992) pattern of resistance through unmarked acknowledgements, which display no undertaking to act on the advice. The CPO's Ye know, (line 10) seems designed to build the advice as common knowledge (Edwards, 1997), so acts as a pursuit of a more engaged and advice responsive response. After a notably longer delay without any such response forthcoming, the CPO makes a quiet noise that may indicate that they are still waiting for some response from the caller (line 12). Finally, after further delay the caller issues another 'Yeah.' (line 14) that again offers no undertaking to act on the advice. What we can see, then, is that the resistance to advice that has been a feature of the call up until this point is continued in lines 8-14.

Our particular focus is the turn in lines 15-16. We will break it into four elements, and take them in order.

First, ‘it sounds as though’. One of the difficulties for the CPO when delivering advice and managing advice resistance is that much of their specific understanding of the situation comes from the caller who has access to an indefinite number of further details that can be marshalled in an ad hoc and unpredictable manner to build further resistance. This element of the CPO’s turn marks what follows as epistemically dependent on what the caller has said in the call, which is also useful given the slightly confrontational nature of the advice.

Second, ‘the grown ups have got to be grow:n u:p.’ is an idiomatic description, or what Sacks’ described as an ‘idiomized way of talking’ (Sacks, 1992: 156). One of the features of idioms is that they are self-sufficient and robust. As Billig (1987) argues they have a take-for-granted quality. They often have a proverbial or tautological character that makes them tricky to directly counter (which is not to say they can’t be resisted in a range of ways – Kitzinger, 2000). In this case, the construction has a tautological character, and the advice is pushed with the moral implication that acting in alternative ways would not be the grown up thing to do. Note that this is not a fresh recommendation following the failure of a different strand of advice; rather it is built as a summary of what has come before.

One of the features of idiomatic formulations identified by Drew and Holt (1988, 1995, 1998) is that they recurrently appear in situations where a speaker is developing a complaint and the recipient is withholding affiliation (e.g. sympathy or support). Again, their production trades on their robust and hard-to-deny properties. Such formulations are often accompanied by transitions to new topic; indeed the production of the idiom is one part of the procedure for moving to new topic as it

summarizes what has come before in a manner that is not easy to further pick apart (Holt & Drew, 2005).

In terms of advice resistance in the helpline calls, then, an idiomatic construction has two important virtues from the point of view of the Child Protection Officer (CPO)s. It allows a repackaging of advice, making it hard to rebut or counter at this point in the call. It can also project imminent termination of the advice/resistance sequence.

The third element of the turn is the interrogative (the tag question):
=Doesn't it. A feature of a tag question formatted in this way is that it treats the recipient not only as already knowledgeable about the content of the declarative element (in this case the idiomatic construction) but also treats agreement as the *expected* and *preferred* response (Hepburn & Potter, 2010; Heritage & Raymond, 2005). That is, the recipient is treated as able to confirm and agree with a course of action, despite the fact that they have earlier resisted doing precisely that. Put another way, instead of trying to persuade the recipient of the virtue of this course of action they are sequentially positioned as already supporting it.⁶ Note that these sequences do not further extol the benefits of the proposed course of action, probably because such benefits have already been countered in the advice resisting moves developed by the recipient. Nor do they treat the recipient as not having understood the advice. However, note also that the tag question here, by virtue of treating the caller as able to confirm the (idiomatically formatted) declarative, further treats it as a reformulation of what has come before, rather than newly delivered advice. That is, the self-evidence or idiomatic construction is built as merely spelling out the earlier advice.

The final element to consider is the continuation after the tag. The increment =Really:, is latched to the tag question. This continuation past the point of possible turn transition leaves the interrogative in a turn medial position. The consequence of even such a brief continuation as this is to dampen the response requirement, and close what might have been a stretched gap between turns, indicating further disagreement. The interrogative projects a ‘yes’ response, but does not wait for it to be delivered. Other research on turn medial tag questions such as this shows that they are particularly useful and prevalent in closing down interactional trouble, or in sequential positions where alignment is salient, such as call closings (Hepburn, under editorial consideration). The lexical item that appears post-tag - ‘really’ – also intensifies the prior advice, and so further builds an environment in which disagreement would be unreasonable.

Overall, then, the idiomatic formatting (re)produces the advice in a manner that is difficult to resist; the tag question treats the recipient as able to confirm and agree with it; and the continuation both further presupposes that agreement, and holds off an upcoming dispreferred response, projectable from prior resistance to the advice. This combination of practices is common in our materials, and concentrated in areas where alignment is a live issue. It can be thought of as a moment of intersubjective arm twisting where the speaker performs an invasive reworking of what the recipient knows and, just for a moment, holds them off making a retort, suspending them in the position of accepting the advice that has been pushed.

Before considering further examples of the practice, we will consider what happens in the unfolding of this call to highlight how the practice can build towards call termination.

Advice and call termination

As we have indicated above, after advice has been developed clearly and repeatedly, and after advice has been resisted over an extended set of turns, the institutional aim will shift to focus on terminating the advice sequence and initiating call closure. As we have noted, idiomatic formulations are often used in topic closing environments (Drew & Holt, 2005). It may be that the utility of the advice packages we have been considering comes from their dual role in repackaging advice in a hard to resist manner and closing down the advice sequence just at the point of this repackaging. When successful they terminate the advice sequence with a pithy restatement that underscores its main features in a possibly memorable form while producing the conditions for a sequential environment where alignment is due (call closing). Being able to close a call which has been in some difficulty with caller and Child Protection Officer (CPO) in alignment is an important achievement for an institution of this kind. At the same time, call closure is itself a major task as it frees up the line for the CPO to deal with a new call with possibly more pressing reports of abuse. There are often other callers waiting (a large board on the wall of the call centre highlights the size of the current caller queue; due to resource pressures more than 10 percent of calls go unanswered).

None of this is to say that this format is always completely successful in either delivering advice that will be acted on or closing the topic and/or the call. It is instructive to consider in detail the way the sequence in Extract 1 continues to the end of the call.

Extract 2

JX Neighbour and son: Her plate

- 1 CPO: [.hh *a-]*it sounds as though the grown ups
2 → have got to be grow:n u:p.=Doesn't it.=Really:,
3 Caller: Ye- Oh ye[ah because I mean the girls get o:n]:,
4 CPO: [u- FOR THE CHILDREN'S POINT is (it)]
5 Caller: She told one o' my neighbours recently, that
6 (.) she ws gunna move anyway after chrissmas
7 cos they wan'ed a fresh star:t an she was gunna
8 marry the baby's fa:ther.=An:=
9 CPO: Mm[:.
10 Caller: [.hh (0.2) an: need a bigger hou:se,
11 (0.2)
12 Caller: .h[h
13 CPO: ↑↑Well't ↑sounds as though↑ she's got quite
14 → a lot on her ↑plate then.=doesn't it.
15 Caller: Y:e-an she also said to my neigh:bour:, (0.2)
16 who's a friend o'mine:.=
17 CPO: =Mm:.
18 Caller: .h er:m: (0.4) ah think the girls are lovely:.
19 (.)
20 Caller: She said, (0.3) they're love[ly] girls an
21 CPO: [Mm.]
22 Caller: my daughter will really miss them when we
23 mo:[ve:.=An ah] thought well (1.1) she says
24 CPO: [*M- mm:.]
25 Caller: things like tha:t, but when ah see 'er in the
26 street'n (0.7) if ah got near: enough ah would
27 s:ay hall[o:.=But] she- before I even get

28 CPO: [Mm:.]

29 Caller: chance to get near enough to smile o[r say 'ello]

30 CPO: [M m : : .]

31 Caller: she' [s ↑cro]:ssed!

There are a number of noteworthy features to this continuation:

- 1) Note that the Caller's next turn starts with the 'Ye- Oh yeah'. That is, we can see an abortive 'yeah' response repaired to 'oh yeah'. As Raymond (2003) has shown, this type of 'yes/no interrogative' prefers a 'type conforming response' i.e. a yes or a no. This indicates another value of issuing advice in the form of a tag question – it takes extra work to produce a non type conforming response, so can get some kind of agreement on the table, however qualified or pro forma it turns out to be. Heritage (1998) has also noted that oh-prefaced responses to questions can indicate that a question is problematic with respect to its relevance or presuppositions. In this case, the problem that makes the repair worthwhile may be the possible presupposition of the Child Protection Officer's idiomatic formulation that the caller is neither being grown up, nor setting a good example.
- 2) The Caller follows this with a series of reasons why the advised action is not needed: the children do get on; the problem mother is moving away; the problem mother is in fact positive about some of the Caller's children (who are therefore not being adversely affected by the hostilities).
- 3) The Child Protection Officer offers another tag formatted idiomatic construction (lines 13-14) that suggests an account for the 'problem' neighbour possibly acting in a problem manner ('she's got quite a lot

on her ↑plate then.'). This further reinforces the idea that the neighbour may not be such a problem, and therefore should be approached in a friendly manner (the previous line of advice) and treats, by way of the tag question, the Caller as able to confirm this, while again setting up agreement (and a type conforming 'Yes') as the preferred next option.

- 4) Note the way that despite its possibly contrary position to the Caller's complaint about the neighbour, the Child Protection Officer again builds this idiomatic construction as an inference from what the Caller has already said. This building is done with '↑sounds as though↑' and 'then.'. As we noted earlier, this is an endemic feature of the epistemic position for CPOs. However, it is also the case that the CPO is the expert on child protection matters, and if something still sounds the same despite caller evidence to the contrary, 'it sounds as though' could as easily index the CPO's expertise, based on the caller's version of things. In addition, the business here is not directly the caller's, so she will be in a similar position to the CPO in terms of her access to it.
- 5) There is no attempt to run on post tag in this example, perhaps because the Child Protection Officer glosses the immediately prior talk of the caller, i.e. that her neighbour has just had a baby, and is planning to get married and move house. The contrastive work (that the neighbour is probably under stress and the caller should therefore take the initiative and make the first move) performed by the CPO's gloss is not immediately obvious in this turn.
- 6) Note the intonation contours of the first part of the Child Protection Officer's turn. The very high pitch, particularly on 'well' may mitigate the contrastive

work done by the utterance. The Caller continues with a brief narrative that suggests her good intentions which were in line with the advice even though they were thwarted by the actions of the neighbour.

- 7) Note again, the caller's abortive 'y:e- response on line 15 – the tag question has again made agreement a relevant next option, placing the caller in a position where she has to do more work to disagree. It's not immediately obvious what it is she should be disagreeing with, and the caller simply ignores it and continues with the complaint.

Even after this, there are 46 further lines of transcript where the Caller recycles some of the original complaint (while carefully managing her own potential accountability for the problems and emphasising again her good intentions with respect to the problem neighbour). The Child Protection Officer recycles the advice and the call closes with a strong reassertion of the advice, with a tag format, which breaks into further Caller suggestions about problems:

Extract 3

JX Neighbour and son: Sort it out

- 1 Caller: [↑B'ahm so annoy:ed↑ now cos she ↑'ad the
2 ba:by↑ an:: >ye know ah< daren't even go round
3 with a ↑card or no:thing.=Because ah thou:ght
4 well: (0.5) ah could geddit (0.4) the door
5 slammed in me- I-I'm fri:ghtened to go rou:nd
6 li[terally] becu[s

7 CPO: [#↓Mm:.] [BUT IT does sound as though
8 → you need to sort it ou:t don't you really.
9 Caller: Ye::p
10 CPO: Yeah.
11 (0.8)
12 Caller: Ye::[p.]
13 CPO: [AN] AHM sure she'd take that:..
14 (0.2)
15 Caller: Ye- oka:y the:n.
16 CPO: O:ka::[y,
17 Caller: [Right ↑thanks then,=
18 CPO: =Well thanks for ringing,
19 Caller: Okay. ↑Than[k you:]
20 CPO: [Bye::]:
21 Caller: Right ↑bye:
22 (0.5)
23 -----((end of call))-----

Note the way here the Caller emphasises what she would have done when the neighbour had a new baby (go round with a card), but was afraid to do. This neatly manages advice resistance (she is a grown up), reiterates the complaint (the neighbour is hostile and scary), and against justifies the original concern that she might report the neighbour to Social Services. However, in the face of the Caller's accounts for inaction, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) breaks into the Caller's ongoing turn (line 7) with a loud contrastive 'BUT'. The emphasis on 'does' in 'does sound as though' also does contrastive work with the caller's reiterated case that she *doesn't* need to sort it out. The CPO therefore issues yet another turn that includes a

formulation of the advised course of action ('you need to sort it out' - not so strongly idiomatic this time), a tag construction, and then as with our first extract, a continuation with 'really'. The CPO thereby reiterates yet again that the Caller needs to take action and, by tag formatting it, sets up the requirement for the Caller to confirm and agree with this advice.

Note the caller's response: 'ye::p' on line 9 (and also 13, as well as the cut off ye- on 15). Again this does the kind of 'unmarked acknowledgment' that we discussed earlier, as well as producing a more clipped version of 'yes'. It may be that clipping a 'yes' into a 'yep' is a form of agreement that displays the redundancy or 'already known' nature of the thing it is designed to agree with, and will perhaps be another feature of lack of total alignment with a proposed course of action.

It seems, then, that the collection of practices we have focused on are characteristic of calls where the Child Protection Officer is giving advice that runs counter to the caller's already stated preferred course of action. In the case above the caller's (tentative) project of reporting the problem neighbour to social services is effectively wiped out by the CPO's advice that she should personally initiate friendly contact. It is in these situations that the advice often encounters resistance. In this case the CPO sustains her line of advice against wide-ranging resistance from the caller and a pithy restatement of the advice is the last thing she delivers in the call before the call closing.

Although the practice we have identified drives the advice to a close, we are not suggesting that closing down these sequences is their only role or that the content of the advice is not itself important. Key reasons for treating the advice as more than a procedure for somewhat cooperative call closing are: (a) advice is a headline role of

the helpline in its publicity; (b) the expensive use of skilled professionals with field experience rather than operators with call centre experience supported by software provides a service that can offer targeted advice; (c) the advice sequences often go on for many minutes; (d) there is considerable repetition of the basic features of the advice (as we see with the example above). Note that the Child Protection Officer in this call has not rejected the caller's basic concern - that there has been a problem with a neighbour. But they have pressed a course of action different to that projected in the initial enquiry by the caller. This advice likely reflects the CPO's experience of dealing with child protection issues, and her judgement that it is unlikely that local Social Services will respond actively to a complaint of this kind. It's worth looking a bit more closely at the turn design and sequential organisation of this practice with some other examples.

Advice Resistance and Conversational Organization

In the following call, the caller has occasional custody of his daughter, and is concerned that she is being bitten by fleas while at her mother's house. The caller phones to request that someone (perhaps from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty itself; callers sometimes expect it to have its own field social workers) could investigate the conditions of the house.

Extract 4

DG Daughter and fleas: Animal flea bites

- 1 Caller: Er:m o↓kay=erm all it is: is erm (0.2) an I >dunno
2 wevver you can help me at all,< .h[h er but]
3 CPO: [Okay,]

4 Caller: basically I'm (0.2) separated (0.2) erm from my
5 wi:fe,=an I've been so fer: two year:s, .hh
6 CPO: K[ay,]
7 Caller: [Er:]m an I have my daughter every other wee:ken:d.
8 h.hh er:m but she's s::tartin to come home wi:v er:m
9 (0.4) like animal flea bites:?=Hhh er:m an
10 [she's got 'em] all over 'er legs:,
11 CPO: [M : h m ,]
12 CPO: M[m :]
13 Caller: [An a]ctually on her body as well now:,
14 (.)
15 Caller: .Hh Erm she's (0.3) haddem fer: (0.7) >khin've<
16 like a li- a little while just round her ankles:.
17 An that.
18 CPO: Mm.=
19 Caller: =Er:m but now she got wor:se,
20 CPO: Mk[ay,]
21 Caller: [Er]::m:
22 CPO: ↑How old's the child,=
23 Caller: =She's fi:ve
24 (1.3)
25 Caller: °She's five.°
26 (0.4)
27 CPO: Okay[:,]
28 Caller: [A]:n:d >I was jus' wonderin< if: dere's
29 anyfink (0.4) that (0.4) kin've like anyone can do
30 to j's go an make sure that she's (.) .hh ye know
31 [the accommodation] is ok[ay,]=
32 CPO: [° O k a y : . °] [.hh]=

33 CPO: =Well ↑have you spo↑ken to her mother a[bou:t it.]
 34 Caller: [I c(h)an't]
 35 (0.3) speak to her mother unfo[rtunately,]

The caller builds his request in a form that is common in calls to remote services such as afterhours doctors or 9-1-1; that is, it is built using a 'wondering' construction that Curl & Drew (2008) argue displays an orientation to high contingency over whether the request can be satisfied and low entitlement to what is requested. Indeed, the Child Protection Officer does not respond to the request directly but instead issues a new action via the use of an 'advice implicative interrogative' (a practice we have further developed with Butler, et al., under editorial revision), which focuses on the possibility that the caller talks to the child's mother. It's possible to see these sorts of interrogative formulations as heralding proposals about a course of action ('advice') – sometimes even as 'pre-advice' or 'pre-proposal' sequences. The interrogative can be heard as packaging a suggested course of action – speak to the child's mother and sort this out yourself. Such advice implicative interrogatives may allow the caller to pre-empt the advice about to be delivered and to block it, as the caller does here. They may also allow the Child Protection Officer to assess what kind of resistance there might be to a proposed course of action. By the time we get to the the following sequence the caller's resistance has gone for a number of turns.

Extract 5

DG Daughter and fleas: Your child's health

1 CPO: Y:ep. Yep. Okay, .h have ↑you got↑ parental
 2 responsibili↓ty ↓for your daughter.↓=

3 Caller: =Only when I have her.<O[r] er:m (0.4)

4 CPO: [tk]

5 CPO: Right. So you haven't l:i- e- you're an unmarried

6 couple are you:?

7 (.)

8 Caller: No ah wus ma- married so I [have]

9 CPO: [You] were

10 ma[rrie:d ru- at the time of her birth]

11 Caller: [Yeah (I was married) ()]

12 CPO: S[o ye have] got parental responsibility >.h[h that]

13 Caller: [Yeah.] [Yeah.]

14 CPO: means <↑you have↑> actually got the right to take

15 her to: e- a gee: pee: >or something °sh- s-°< or

16 to actually .hh (0.3) tch uh:m: <be involved> in

17 aspects of her life.>I me[an what] I would suggest

18 Caller: [Ri:ght]

19 CPO: .hh would be that ee- u- however: (.) difficult the

20 situation i:s:,=

21 Caller: =Yep=

22 CPO: =.h uh:m: I think >you know I mean< your <child's health>

23 → hass to come f[ir:s]t. Doesn' i:t.=.hh M'n there

24 Caller: [Yep]

25 CPO: can be many reas[:ons why]

26 Caller: [Mean I've ta]:ken 'er to the doctor's

27 b[efor]e:, an they've basically said she

28 CPO: [Mm]

29 Caller: needs to go to 'er own gee pe[e.]

30 CPO: [Y]ep.=

31 Caller: =.hh And I don' know what 'er own gee pee i[:s.]

32 CPO: [Yulp.
 33 (.)
 34 CPO: Yup.

Following some resistance to the Child Protection Officer's prior advice which suggested that the caller needs to sort out his own problem and contact his daughter's mother, the CPO moves to the related issue of the caller's legal rights as a parent on 1-2. Once the caller's legal status is established by line 12, the CPO suggests that the Caller could 'actually' be '<involved> in aspects of her life' (lines 16-17) or that he could take his daughter to a doctor (GP). The Caller responds on 18, and there is evidence (his turn on 26 returns to the issue of the GP) that he may have spotted where this advice is going and taken a more extended turn here, probably to block it, if he had been given the chance.

However, the Child Protection Officer rushes through into the contribution which will be our main focus. This is a compound turn constructional unit, prefaced with 'I me[an what] I would suggest .hh would be' on 17-19. In Edwards' terms, it is scripted (1994, 1997) – i.e. it is built as a suggestion that the CPO would normally deliver in this kind of situation. Scripting may be a useful device in advice giving (especially where there is resistance) as it avoids a stark ad hominem suggestion, and presents the advice as generic.

The Child Protection Officer then continues with a further preface to her actual advice 'however: (.) difficult the situation i:s:,' (lines 19-20) which is hearable as heading off the future resistance that is projectable by the CPO, given the caller's stated difficulties in talking to the child's mother, and his attempts

to gain the floor. This preface may also allow the Caller to project that further unwanted advice of a similar kind is in the offing, and his positioning of a clipped ‘yep’ in response to these prefaces on line 21 does suggest that he may already be treating what is to come as projectable and redundant.

Now we come onto three familiar elements: an idiomatically formatted declarative; a tag question; and continuation after the tag. First consider the declarative: ‘your <child’s health> hass to come f[ir:st]t’. This is hearable as another attempt to persuade the caller to bury his difference with his ex-wife and put his daughter’s health ‘first’. The advice that it packages has already been resisted earlier in the call (and the same advice is re-offered more explicitly later in the call). The idiomatic formulation makes it difficult to resist: for a parent putting a child’s health first has a self sufficient quality and would be hard to criticise or qualify. Note the way that this manages the epistemic asymmetry of the CPO/Caller relationship. As we have already emphasised, because of the epistemic asymmetries endemic to the speakers, positioning specific advice related to the details of the situation is always vulnerable to the Caller providing further detail that is unavailable to the CPO. By reissuing the advice in idiomatic terms the CPO can work instead with a hard-to-refute commonplace.

Second, consider the tag question. As the declarative turn constructional unit (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) comes to a close this is added as an increment (a continuation after a point of possible completion – Schegloff, 2007). By issuing an interrogative at this point the Child Protection Officer treats the caller as being in a position to confirm the content of the declarative (the idiomatically packaged advice). As before, the Caller is treated as being in a position to confirm this *despite* their

resistance prior to the declarative that suggests a stance directly contrary to confirmation. The issuing of this interrogative is even more noteworthy given that it is plausible that the CPO has already heard the caller's agreement with the declarative⁷, given there is a normal transition with a 'beat of silence' (i.e. the interrogative is not latched straight on to the candidate turn constructional unit). That is, the CPO is pursuing *further* agreement, perhaps hearing the agreement on line 24 as unmarked acknowledgement.

Third, consider what happens after the tag question. Although the interrogative ending is added on as an increment, it is in turn medial position⁸ - the Child Protection Officer rushes through into her next turn constructional unit with a hearable in-breath, projecting more to come⁹ at a transition relevant-place; that is, at a place where the speaker could be projected as done and the recipient could have taken a turn (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). The addition of further talk after the tag ending fills the transition space where there would have been a stronger requirement for some kind of uptake from the recipient. By moving beyond that requirement and building on the caller's agreement on 24 (which, given what comes next, is almost certainly a pro forma agreement prefacing further resistance), the CPO reinforces the 'recipient designing' role of the tag question. The Caller is interactionally built by the declarative + tag to now be in a position to confirm what he has previously resisted.

These conversational practices are recurrent across our corpus of advice resistance sequences. Let us lay out more schematically some of its features.

1. The declarative rephrases the recipient's action-relevant version of him/herself (in this case the Child Protection Officer rephrases the caller's

extended resistance to conversing with the child's mother with 'your child's health has to come first').

2. This rephrasing makes relevant a competing course of action for the recipient (in this case, talking to the child's mother).
3. The rephrasing of the advice repackages it in more idiomatic terms. This has the regular features of idioms that they are difficult to resist, while managing the epistemically asymmetric position of the Child Protection Officer who does not have access to the indefinite details of the Caller's situation.
4. As we have noted, the idiomatic rephrasing of the advice may also work toward closing this line of advice (and resistance). However, as in the previous case, the Caller can rework the details of their actions in the terms of the idiom. They go on to describe an (unsuccessful) attempt to take their daughter to a GP; the Child Protection Officer, meanwhile, continues to stress the need for direct communication with the ex-partner.
5. The interrogative (tag) that follows the declarative treats the caller as able to confirm the rephrased version, and sets up a preference for agreement. This happens despite the caller having shown considerable resistance to putting his daughter's health above his personal differences with her mother up to this point.
6. Further practices dampen the recipient's response requirement:
 - (a) continuing past the transition relevance place for the tag question and
 - (b) employing a broadly idiomatic formulation which may also seek to close the topic (Holt & Drew, 2005).

Standardization and dispensability in managing advice resistance

Let us consider one further example to indicate the generality of these features before going on to note some variations and elements that may be dispensable and to consider some broader issues related to the role of these practices. In this extract a Caller is phoning about her teenage daughter who has been aggressive and disruptive to her other children. It becomes clear fairly early in the call that the caller is hoping that the daughter can be taken into care by Social Services and that the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children can help effect this. The Child Protection Officer notes that Social Services are very unlikely to take the daughter into care, and suggests alternative courses of action, including family therapy and the caller taking time off work to spend more time with her daughter. The caller has been resisting this line of advice for the first half of a 10 minute call before we get to this extract.

Extract 6

WO Problem daughter II: Priorities

- 01 CPO: R:ight.= [would it not be possible for you to]
02 Caller: [.h h h h h h h h h h h h]
03 CPO: maybe take some lea:ve while-while she's livin
04 [wiv you.]
05 Caller: [.shih] I:'ve only jus' started this jo:b.=I
06 [mean] er i' possible but you know
07 CPO: [Ri:gh'.]
08 Caller: I'd be unpaid 'n I'm [just st]artin a new

09 CPO: [Mm:.]

10 Caller: mhor(hh)tghage (hh)an [I-]

11 CPO: [Ri]:ght.

12 Ri[ght.]

13 Caller: [Ye kn]ow it's::

14 (0.6)

15 CPO: → °°k (.)°°tk Yerh:..hh I mean- ye know at the end of

16 → the day i-it's about priorities isn' it.=an

17 → [ye know o]bviously she: 's got to come fir:st

18 Caller: [I know:..]

19 CPO: in all of this.=[because she's (the-)]

20 Caller: [Yeah but if I've got]

21 nowhere to li(hh)ve then she sh- .hhh

22 Caller: [ye know,] [.hh

23 CPO: [NO::..]=BUt [y'kn]ow I mean social services

24 would be sayin to ↓you:, y-ye know that th-the

25 job would have to come secondary.=I mean

26 ultimately [(as I said)]

27 Caller: [But it ~ca:n']t.~

28 (.)

As is recurrent in this corpus, the Caller builds resistance through detailing particulars that they have privileged access to (in this case the new job, the new mortgage). That is, they build their advice resistance from the texture of particulars that they have privileged access to and the Child Protection Officer only knows indirectly. The CPO responds in lines 15-17 by using the practices we have been describing.

1. Idiomatic formulation that rephrases the caller's action relevant version of themselves: 'at the end of the day i-it's about priorities'. It is hard to counter the claim that 'it's about priorities', especially when neither the 'it' nor the 'priorities' are specified. Indeed, priorities are typically indexically understood – different people can have different priorities. Put another way, to counter this construction the Caller is faced with spelling out the 'it' and the 'priorities' – both of which might generate more trouble for her.
2. The additional figurative construction 'at the end of the day' disengages the claim about priorities from current specifics. Note that by delivering this construction the Child Protection Officer is treating the Caller as needing to be told this; i.e. she is produced as not recognizing the appropriate priority of her daughter's problems and instead is, perhaps selfishly, focused on her own trouble managing the daughter.
3. The rephrasing presents the caller with a course of action that runs counter to her preferred option
4. The idiomatic rephrasing may work toward closing this line of advice (and resistance).
5. The tag construction: 'i-it's about priorities isn' it.' treats the Caller as in a position to confirm that it is about priorities; that is, to confirm precisely what they have been resisting up to this point – that her daughter's needs are paramount. By issuing the tag in this environment the recipient is designed as already able to agree with (an idiomatic version of) the advice.

6. The Child Protection Officer latches further talk to the tag, which fills the transition space and attempts to dampen the response requirement. This further talk unpacks the idiomatic construction, filling in the nature of the priority explicitly (the daughter), and building this further construction as both known in common (‘you know’) and self evident (‘obviously’ – cf. Edwards, 1997). This leaves the caller in the position of having to compete (line 20) in overlap for a turn that resists the reissued advice.
7. The target turn follows a similar preparatory interrogative, which begins with a negative interrogative ‘would it not be possible’ on line 1, which as Heritage (2002) has shown are often treated as assertions rather than interrogatives. This allows the Child Protection Officer to gauge what the likely resistance will be to the proposed course of action – put your daughter’s needs first.

DISCUSSION: SOME PRACTICES FOR MANAGING ADVICE RESISTANCE

The aim of this paper has been to contribute to the interactional literature on advice giving and particularly the management of advice resistance. We have described a cluster of practices that Child Protection Officer s recurrently use when faced with extended resistance to the advice that they are offering. These advice delivery sequences inevitably occur when the CPO is refusing a request for a particular type of help or intervention that they have deemed inappropriate, such as reporting a caller’s neighbour or ex-wife to Social Services, and having one’s daughter taken away by Social Services. So the environments in which the alternative courses of action are

being issued are already troubled by the CPO's lack of alignment with the caller's project.

The first practice employed by Child Protection Officers is to repackaging the advice as some kind of commonplace or idiomatic form. Such commonplaces have a self-sufficient quality which makes them hard to counter (Drew & Holt, 1988; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Kitzinger, 2000). Typically this presents the advice resistance as going counter to this commonplace – not being grown up, not putting the child's health first, having the wrong priorities.

As well as providing a powerful rhetorical counter to the resistance this response allows the Child Protection Officer to manage the epistemic asymmetry that is endemic to these calls. It moves from the specifics of the situation (where the Caller has primary access to an indefinite range of particulars that can be marshalled to support claims) to general socially normative maxims (which the CPO can use largely irrespective of their secondary access to the Caller's situation). In mundane conversation where there has been a lack of affiliation with a complaint, idioms are used to initiate topic shift (Drew & Holt, 1988). It is plausible that CPOs are using these idiomatic constructions to attempt to close down further resistance to a line of advice; however, it is perhaps notable that the Caller's commonly continue to effect resistance after these constructions. In line with previous work on idiomatic formulations, the callers do not directly resist the idiom. Rather, they often rework their actions as already being in line with it. The generality of idioms allow this kind of reworking.

The second practice involves following the idiomatic construction with a tag question. Strikingly, this treats the Caller as being in a position to confirm the

question *despite the evidence of their prior advice resistance*. If we think about this in terms of the notion of recipient design (Sacks, 1992), the customary focus has been on how speakers design their talk for recipients. The striking thing here is that the talk is not so much designed to accommodate to the recipient's clearly displayed stance on the advice as to treat the recipient as having a different, and indeed, contrary stance. This is what we mean by the Child Protection Officer's *designing the recipient*.

Famously tag questions have been treated as weak or subservient moves in classic sociolinguistic work (Lakoff, 1975). However, what we see here is a conversational move that can be both *invasive* and *coercive*. It is *invasive* in the sense that it reconstructs the stance of the recipient on the offered advice. It is *coercive* in the sense that it attempts to alter or place constraints on the recipient's conversational conduct (Hepburn & Potter, 2010). In terms of basic social psychological matters, one party is not so much persuading the other as rebuilding them as already persuaded. In this sense it is not as interactionally coercive as, say, issuing a directive or threat, a common practice in adult/child interaction (Hepburn and Potter, under editorial consideration).

The third practice involves the Child Protection Officer continuing to talk past the transition relevance place, often with latching to compress the transition space. This practice builds on the recipient designing role of the tag question by dampening a response requirement. By continuing to speak the CPO displays an expectation that no further disagreement will be forthcoming or, at least, suggests a lack of attention to such a response. In terms of the unfolding of social psychology, the caller is thus conversationally pinioned in their (presupposed) agreement with the

content of the idiom (which itself constructs the self-evidently appropriate nature of action in line with the advice).

Note that even though the response requirement is dampened by the latching of further talk this does not prevent Callers responding. In the three examples we have considered in detail earlier in the paper, and in some others in our corpus, the Caller *does* respond, either after the declarative (as in Extract 4/5), the tag (as in Extract 6), or to the compound of declarative, tag and further talk (as in Extract 1). In each of these cases, the Caller agrees with the idiomatic formulation, but then gives further detail about their situation that continues to resist the specific advice. That is, they attempt to decouple the idiom from the advice. Thus in Extract 1/2/3 the Caller agrees and then details how they are acting in a grown up way; in Extract 4/5 the immediate description of taking his daughter to the GP evidences how the Caller is putting his daughter first; and in Extract 6 the focus on the house and mortgage is produced not as having the wrong priority but as being concerned with the daughter having somewhere to live.

The overall pattern, then, reflects the contrasting epistemic positions of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Caller. When CPOs give advice they are dependent on the Caller for their specific understanding of the situation. When Callers resist advice they often introduce further details. One feature of the CPO's move to more idiomatic or commonplace constructions is that they become less dependent on details that are vulnerable to further qualification, enhancement or modification by the Caller. It is thus an interactionally 'strong' move for the CPO who has access only to a relevant combination of what has been described in the call so far, generic social/cultural knowledge, and more or less technical knowledge of child protection

and social services. It moves the talk onto their own area of expertise. However, one of the features of commonplace or figurative constructions is that they are vague in their application. Callers can exploit this in turn by characterising their conduct, perhaps identifying further particulars not yet in the call, as not requiring modification (as the CPO's advice pushes) but as actually in line with the idiom. There is a subtle epistemic struggle here where each party has different resources, like a chess game where one player has their rooks and the other their knights.

We have pointed to another feature of advice resistance sequences that can yield useful insights – the advice implicative interrogative (Butler et al., under editorial revision). Typically these turns seem to preface the delivery of advice, so could function as a kind of pre-sequence to allow the callers to block unwanted advice, and to allow the Child Protection Officers to assess the likely resistance to a proposed course of action. These may be common even where no resistance is expected, and would be a fruitful topic for future research.

Let us end by standing back a bit and considering the place of this work within the broader traditions of social psychology. Although we have been concerned to contribute to literatures on conversation analysis and the study of institutional interaction, and particularly to address applied questions about the successful delivery of advice, we are also interested in the way broader social psychological questions can be rethought. One way of understanding this research is as a contribution to the study of social influence (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). However, there are basic differences between the kind of analysis we have developed and the social cognition tradition. Discursive psychological work does not focus on the relationship between variables and the hypothetical social/cognitive processes that mediate such relationships

(information, social norms and so on). Nor does it attempt to offer an experimental test of such relationships, either using a field simulation or in the laboratory. Important and influential although it is, one of the features of this cognitivist paradigm of work is that it moves the focus away from the detailed and specific study of practices. In social cognition it is the underlying competence that is typically treated as the proper object of study and the surface performance is treated as impossibly messy and not easily amenable to systematic study. Even where there has been an emphasis on the direct observation of behaviour (something Baumeister et al. (2007) note has become increasingly unusual) the standard approach is to have behaviour counted and coded with the aim of accessing an underlying variable. Social cognition has not focused on practices in a way that does justice to their status *as* practices. That is, it has not focused on the way the practices are oriented to action, the way that action is situated and co-constructed within unfolding sequential interaction, and the way that interaction is itself a constitutive part of some more or less institutional setting such as a family mealtime or a child protection helpline.

In the study above we have considered the process of social influence, the process through which the Child Protection Officer hearably and persistently attempts to persuade the caller of the appropriateness of a course of action. These attempts are analysed as embedded in their institutional context. It studies the way ‘information’ is delivered in the form of advice spread over turns of talk and the way that advice is normative and future oriented. Crucially the analysis highlights the way the CPO exploits local conversational objects (idioms, tag questions) and builds them into a machinery of influence. A striking feature of this is the status of what the caller knows and how this is a basis for their future action becomes itself an object to be reworked,

not through a process of persuasion but through a process of interactional redesign. The space of intersubjectivity in which both parties know things in common becomes a space of conflict and control.

Note that the timescale at which these phenomena are operating (in terms of their production and orientation to their development) is in the order of tenths of a second. They offer a way into the unfolding processes of influence, and resistance to influence, in real time. And they highlight the delicate interconnectedness of issues such a 'information' and 'normativity'. This different perspective that uses the metatheory of discursive psychology (itself drawing on Wittgenstein and Sacks) and the methods of conversation analysis offers a completely different take on social influence. One ambition we have is to foster different kinds of engagement (critical and complementary) across these paradigms.

Overall, we have described one collection of conversational practices where a professional attempts to manage advice resistance. Consideration of these practices highlights some of the ways in which speakers can actively attempt to manage psychological business in a situation of conflict and in the context of competing paths of action. This kind of analysis does not explain their actions as a product of their psychological dispositions; rather those dispositions are seen as a reflexively accomplished part of the production of action. It is likely that there are a range of further practices for managing resistance and their adequate documentation will be an important topic of study if professional-client interaction of this kind is to be better understood. In addition, it is likely that further work will highlight organizations which are more specific to certain institutional situations or more generic across many. Such specificity is likely to depend on the goal orientation of the institution, the

available time, the modality of the communication and the relative epistemic start points of the professional and client.

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- 1 This raises issues that will need further analytic exploration. In particular, how far does showing existing competence offer *resistance* to a course of action, rather than aligning with the trajectory of the advice by offering a shared perspective.
 - 2 The question of generality of these practices is complex. Quantification in conversation analytic work needs to be conducted with caution, for reasons

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- 6 We are indebted to Emmison (personal communication) for pointing out that Baker, Emmison & Firth (2005) originally developed the term ‘redesigning the recipient’. They employed it to describe examples where callers to a computer support line display their competence in the light of questions that are generating a form of calibration of that competence. However, they did not develop this further, and their sense of it differs quite markedly from our development of it here.
- 7 The caller may be able to project the completion of the turn constructional unit and arrive in overlap on 24 because of the stretched emphasis on ‘child’s health’ on 22 and the projectability of the action.
- 8 Initial analysis suggests that there are different types of turn medial tag question, some, like this one, occur at transition relevant places (or transition relevant places, which can carry on with the addition of something incremental, or a whole new turn constructional unit), and a smaller number that project more to come post-tag (e.g. ‘An’ it’s js terrible isn’t it how the months go by’n [it’s been so cold...’; Hepburn, in preparation). Note that the former tend to get a response in overlap, in the latter responses occur at transition relevant places (here occurring after ‘months go by’n..’) although responses to the specific component targeted by the tag may sometimes not appear at all, suggesting that they simply mark the prior (e.g. it’s terrible) as something the recipient will be able to confirm, without the expectation of a response. These examples await further analysis.
- 9 Albeit in a non-vocal way that may leave room for the recipient to offer a (preferred) response without requiring overlapping talk

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