

Newsletter

From the Director

In just a few weeks now, Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month begins and planning for CDFVR's second annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Men and Women Working Together, will be all but completed.

The annual Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, an initiative of the Queensland Domestic Violence Council, which started as a week of activities in 1992, is co-ordinated by the State's Department of Communities, with activities conducted by a wide range of government and non-government agencies around the State. As in previous years, the theme for the Month is 'there is no excuse for abuse'.

While commencing on 1 May, the Month will be officially launched by the Minister for Communities, the Honourable Warren Pitt, on Wednesday 4 May, in Brisbane. This day also marks the annual Remembrance Day, which acknowledges and pays respect to those killed as a result of domestic and family violence, and highlights the critical importance of continued commitment to preventing, and intervening as early as possible in situations of domestic and family violence.

In celebration of continued prevention efforts, prevention awards will be presented in five categories: individual, community, government, partnerships, and school-based prevention initiatives, at a ceremony to be held in Brisbane on 26 May. Nominations for the awards closed on 21 March 2005, and there is always next year if you have a great initiative that was not nominated this time.

CDFVR's 2005 Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month initiative picks up on feedback from last year's Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Which Way Now? Participants in that forum advocated for recognition of the work that men, as well as women are doing around the State to prevent family violence. This theme of men and women working collaboratively to address violence in Indigenous communities is echoed in workshops to be co-facilitated by men and women. Major areas of focus for the forum are justice responses and education initiatives. We are delighted to have three keynote speakers at this year's forum: Magistrate Jacqui Payne; Kerrie Tim, Office of Indigenous Policy Co-ordination and Chris Sarra, Queenslanders of the Year and Cherbourg State School Principal. A forum registration form is enclosed with this issue of the Newsletter.

See page 11 for a final update on outcomes from the 2004 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Which Way Now?

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It is a pleasure to welcome Dr Sanjay Sharma as Postdoctoral Research Fellow to our Centre. Dr Sharma is MA, MPhil and PhD from the Department of Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India, and was Senior Research Fellow of the University Grant Commission, New Delhi, India.

Before migrating to Australia, Dr Sharma was a Senior Lecturer of Sociology with a post-graduate college, affiliated to the University of Rajasthan; and has conducted teaching programs to graduate and post graduate students.

His major areas of academic interest are gender, women empowerment, youth, equity, justice, environment and developmental studies. His doctoral thesis was on farming communities in a drought-prone, arid region. His post graduate research work is on the status of women in India – addressing social, economic and political issues. In his other work, Dr Sharma has worked on the marital issues and professional aspirations of university students.

Dr Sharma is a regular contributor to academic journals, and has published and presented 10 papers at national and international forums. He has co-edited one book on “Health Hazards, Gender and Society”.

Domestic and Family Violence Database

The 1st of October 2003 marked the first anniversary of the Centre’s Domestic and Family Violence Database, which stores data collected by government-funded domestic and family violence support services across the State. The primary purpose of the database, co-ordinated by the Centre in collaboration with the Department of Communities and contributing agencies, is to contribute non-government data for the impact evaluation of amendments to Queensland’s civil domestic violence legislation, which commenced in March 2003. The data from the Centre is the only data currently available for the evaluation that identifies characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and type of relationship and is therefore a vital contribution.

Over the course of the first year of operation, the Centre and database contributors identified a number of areas in which the database could be improved, both in terms of efficiency and content. Following consultation with the relevant networks, contributors and the Department of Communities, a number of relatively minor adjustments to the database will be made to enhance the information collected, and efficiency in producing statistical reports. The changes will commence following consultation and negotiation with all partners. Quarterly statewide summaries will continue to be posted on the Centre’s website (www.noviolence.com.au) and any changes in the information or formatting will be a consequence of the changes to the database).

Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews in Queensland

In recognition of the devastating impacts of domestic homicides, the Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group has been established to lobby the Queensland Government to create a thorough process that reviews domestic and family violence related deaths.

Fatality review teams are comprised of representatives from agencies such as police, justice, coroner’s office, corrections, health, domestic violence prevention services, child protection and perpetrator programs and convene to review public records and other relevant documentation in detail. The reviews aim to contribute to efforts to prevent further domestic homicides by increasing knowledge of the nature and patterns of lethal domestic abuse, identify the gaps in current responses and formulate recommendations for policies, services and resources.

The Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group is seeking support from the community to have formal fatality review processes established by the Queensland Government. To lend your support to the lobbying efforts, add your name to the online petition at http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/EPetitions_QLD/cgi-bin/petitions.cgi. This petition will be presented to government at the end of May 2005.

Domestic Violence and Child Protection: Integrated Responses to Children and Young People Living with Domestic Violence

Michelle Bradford, Education Officer

October 2004 marked the first anniversary of the launch of a regional collaborative strategy aimed at formalising and integrating community and statutory agencies' responses to child protection within the context of domestic violence. This strategy takes the form of a protocol document that identifies roles and responsibilities of key response agencies and guidelines for policy and practice, including assessment, case management, and referral. The Domestic Violence Child Protection (DVCP) Protocol strategy was developed through collaboration between non-government organisations and the statutory child protection authorities in the Mackay Whitsunday region of Queensland.

The DVCP Protocol strategy intended to:

- “Raise awareness of the impact of Domestic and Family Violence on children and young people;
- Provide some common ground/principles for joint work;
- Enhance knowledge of the roles, responsibilities of agencies in the domestic and family violence and child protection sector; and
- Provide a guide for domestic violence services in responding to child safety concerns” (Dow, 2004).

The DVCP project group responsible for co-ordinating the production of the Protocol recently held the inaugural training day for community and statutory agencies currently providing services to families and children living with domestic violence. This training was presented to an audience of approximately 60 people, and aimed to facilitate greater awareness and understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of agencies and examine the issues that both support and hinder the integrated response advocated in the Protocol.

CDFVR is a member of the DVCP project group. Centre Director, Heather Nancarrow, delivered a keynote address in which she reminded the audience of the vision that underpinned the 1999/2000 PADV funding for the Queensland-wide project of which the Protocol is a result. This vision recognised the risks that domestic violence creates for children and sought to enhance collaboration between child protection and domestic violence sectors to prevent mother-blaming and support the protective actions of mothers to decrease risks and danger to children.

Heather challenged the audience to develop child protection responses that draw on the strengths and expertise of the non-abusive parent, protect the non-abusive parent-child attachment and recognise the range of complexities that confront women attempting to protect their children and themselves from violence, including the heightened risk of homicide or escalated violence that is frequently associated with leaving the relationship.

The keynote address further challenged practitioners to understand that domestic violence and child abuse are not two separate problems occurring in the same place, rather, they are part of the same problem: the perpetrator’s violence.

The keynote address further challenged practitioners to understand that domestic violence and child abuse are not two separate problems occurring in the same place, rather, they are part of the same problem: the perpetrator’s violence. This understanding requires child protection and domestic violence workers to be adequately trained and resourced to work collaboratively for integrated responses that appropriately assess risk, plan for safety, support victims to protect their children and hold abusers accountable.

Further presentations from Domestic Violence Resource Service, Mackay Inc. counsellors, Julie Godden and Jen Keioskie, again highlighted the inseparability of spousal violence and child abuse and referred to the importance of integrated responses not only addressing related issues of attachment, trauma, childhood abuse and substance abuse, but also expanding to address systemic issues such as societal attitudes, poverty, inadequate housing options and inadequacies in the legal and family law systems.

“Interagency collaboration is essential for delivery of comprehensive services to women and children”

An overview of statutory child protection assessment and practices was presented by representatives of the Department of Child Safety, followed by an interactive session co-facilitated by CDFVR Education Officer, Michelle Bradford, which invited the audience to actively participate in applying the protocol and developing a co-ordinated response to a case study. The training day concluded with a workshop session that identified the range of issues that support and constrain successful implementation of the protocol at an agency level.

Irwin, Waugh and Wilkinson’s four-year study on domestic violence and child protection (2002:12) found:

“Interagency collaboration is essential for delivery of comprehensive services to women and children. However, communication between agencies is often poor thus compromising the effectiveness of intervention. There is a need to develop interagency guidelines at the local community level that outline the roles and responsibilities of agencies. It is critical that these be monitored in an ongoing way and if necessary amended to reflect the reality of interagency practice. There is a need for agencies to develop relevant policy and practice protocols which will enhance the protection of children living with domestic violence.”



Domestic Violence Resource Service counsellor, Jen Keioskie.

The DVCP Protocol is one region’s attempt to improve and enhance the protection of children and young people living with domestic violence. Achieving a co-ordinated multi-agency response not only requires clarity of roles and responsibilities and transparency of practice, it also requires commitment from workers and agencies to build strong and collaborative relationships, courage to review practices and creativity to develop processes that hold perpetrators accountable and respond to the range of complexities that confront women and children living with violence.

The DVCP training day provided a starting point for statutory and non-statutory agency staff to come together on a large-scale and explore practices and options for shaping co-ordinated responses to women and children living with domestic violence. More training sessions are planned for 2005; these will address training needs identified by the audience, as well as facilitate further opportunities to build and improve relationships.

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Intersections of Oppression in Women's Experiences of Intimate Violence

By Kay Gray & Michelle Bradford



Kay Gray

The following article was produced during Kay's fourth year student Social Work field placement with CDFVR.

Introduction

Intersectionality is a concept proposed by Crenshaw (1991) used for locating and analysing multiple constructs of oppression and discrimination experienced by marginalised people. Crenshaw (1991) based her analysis on intersections of gender, race and class. An intersectional framework is of significant purpose for identifying and understanding locations of vulnerability to domestic and family violence for women. Patel (2001) applied Crenshaw's framework identifying social, economic, cultural, political and legal factors with critical implications for people located at intersections of oppression, subordination and discrimination. Women's experiences of domestic and family violence at these locations are strongly influenced and compounded by structural processes inherently associated with multifaceted domination. Gender, race, ethnicity, nation of origin, class, social status, geographic location, sexuality, disability, age, motherhood and daughterhood positions are all significant contemporary constructs that dynamically and interactively shape and compound women's experiences of domestic and family violence (Patel, 2001; Makkonen, 2002; Easteal, 2001; Mears, 2002).

African American theorists were pioneers in examining structures of domination inherent in intersections of race, gender and class to gain insight into their multiple influences on power relations and identity (University of Washington, 2002). They developed a range of metaphors to facilitate conceptualisation of intersectionality and to explore its implications for people located at these positions. The perspective of intersecting constructs of dominance was depicted by Crenshaw as a system of intersecting roads where multiple dimensions of oppression collide to impinge on experiences (Patel 2001). Other African American authors who influenced analytical and practice frameworks embracing the concept of intersectionality include Essed, Collins, hooks, and Dill, Nettles and Weber (University of Washington, 2002).

In emphasising the felt experience of persistent everyday injustices, including gendered racism, Essed (1999) underlines the insidious complex nature of abuse and manipulation experienced through simultaneously convergent constructs, difficult to name and counter. The author proposes a method of intersectional analysis that encourages women to value their own voices and insights regarding abuse and to utilise analytical tools to identify and unravel intertwined gender, race, ethnic, class and other relevant constructs from which specific experiences of domination emanate.

A kaleidoscopic glimpse of the way intersections of difference impose on women's experiences in Australia facilitates recognition of

Intersectionality as an integral dimension of domestic violence dialogue. This framework of analysis is relevant in research, policy development and practice to aid deconstruction of the complex interactions associated with domestic violence and to generate approaches that recognise the complexity of women's lives and enhance their holistic well-being. (Easteal, 2001; Bograd, 1999; Weeks, 2000; Taft, 2003).

It is beyond the scope of this article to examine all of the implications and applications of an intersectional framework in the context of domestic violence. The nature of intersectionality is complex and cannot be summarised simply or succinctly. Instead, the article will examine intersections of gender, race and class and highlight examples of critical and widespread significance. Future newsletter articles will examine other intersecting constructs of marginalisation and oppression, including rurality, age, sexuality, disability, motherhood and daughterhood.

Intersectionality reminds us that whilst there may be commonalities in women's positions, it is vital not to construct new essentialist perspectives that emanate from assumptions about women's social locations and subordination based on intersectional stereotypes. A postmodern perspective that embraces a non-categorical approach enables openness to grounded analysis of individual positions and community locations as women experience them (Makkonen, 2002). Further, women who experience intersectional discrimination may be viewed as actors rather than victims, a position that generates energy towards realisation of individual aspirations. Testimonies and qualitative exploration of disadvantage and discrimination, reflecting subjective as well as objective meanings of particular intersectional locations offer deeper insight into women's experiences, needs and desires (Makkonen 2002).

Gender Race Intersections in Australia

Indigenous

Dispossession, community fragmentation and marginalisation are among the diverse contexts in which Indigenous women encounter family violence and normative policies aimed at intervention (Bessarab, 2000; Woods, Wanatjura, Colin, Mick, Lynch and Ward 2000; Easteal 2001; Jan, 2002). Dominant social, economic, cultural, political and legal forces in Australia often controvert actual needs of women related to family violence (Easteal, 2001; Jan, 2002; Greer, 2002).

Intersections of sexism, racism, institutionalised racism and internalised sexism frame and characterise Indigenous women's participation in family, community and national relations (Jan, 2002). Feminist politicisation may project domestic violence in terms of non-Indigenous women's experiences and ground practice accordingly, minimising or excluding Indigenous women's needs and experiences. Indigenous political and practice strategies dominantly reflect male perspectives and homogenised rather than diverse postcolonial experience of Indigenous women and men (Jan, 2002).

Intersectionality is a concept proposed by Crenshaw (1991) based on her analysis on intersections of gender, race and class.

Andrews (1997) draws on the meanings and implications of intersectionality in proposing an international human rights approach against violence to Aboriginal women. Intersections that characterise this realm of violence and subordination include race, gender, colonisation, minority discriminated status and socioeconomic disadvantage. In her analysis of race, gender and class, Crenshaw contended that ignoring meanings of racism and sexism in feminist and anti-racism discourses respectively, result in issues critical to minority women's experience of violence being concealed or invalidated (Crenshaw, 1991).

Andrews (1997) supports assertions that Indigenous and non-Indigenous women have avoided disclosure of violence in Indigenous communities because of fear of confirming stereotypes of violent Indigenous males and creating divisions in Indigenous communities. She reiterates that lack of public attention and education reflects the sparsity of data regarding the level and nature of violence to Indigenous women. When data identifying the level of violence to Indigenous women are not published, its extent, nature and conditions remain concealed and the relevance of social, economic, cultural and legal contexts and policies suppressed (Crenshaw, 1991; Greer, 2001; Huggins, 2004).

Rejection of gender perspectives of violence and inappropriate exertion of power by Indigenous males who interpret Indigenous cultural values to justify domination of women, compounds women's vulnerability to violence (Jan, 2002). Minimal representation of Indigenous women in state and national organisations aimed at domestic violence prevention and intervention, characterise the powerlessness of Indigenous women to develop policies that respond relevantly and creatively to intersecting mechanisms of domination that engender experiences of violence (Jan, 2002).

Policies that reinforce micro and macro differentiation and exclusion of Indigenous women through cultural communication limitations and expectations exacerbate their vulnerability. As the needs of many Indigenous women are frequently extensive and profound, limited funding and services provided on the basis of uninformed expectations, assumptions and calculations may hinder their empowerment, healing and self-determination (Crenshaw, 1991, Woods et al, 2000).

Migrant Women

Migrant women are exposed to violence through restrictive immigration and refugee policies and lack of knowledge and familiarity with legal and structural conditions and processes as well as mindsets associated with traditional sexist relations of their country of origin (Stubbs, 1997; Eastal, 2001). Cultural and structural contexts frequently restrict their capacity and opportunity to escape violent situations, compounding their vulnerability (Crenshaw, 1991; Patel, 2001). Makkonen (2002) identifies and analyses the connection between the failure of governments to secure human rights for women in their countries of origin with migrant patterns and the vulnerability women experience through immigration. Lack of recognition of skills and qualifications and non-English speaking backgrounds limit women's opportunities to gain employment, frequently leaving them dependent on their husbands (Makkonen, 2002).

The multiple dimensions of prejudice, undervalued skills, non-English speaking background, lack of knowledge and access regarding services, structures and laws, legal discrimination, socioeconomic disadvantage, cultural and social isolation, religious constructions and migration contexts intertwine in migrant women's vulnerability to domestic violence in Australia (Cunneen and Stubbs, 1996; Stubbs, 1997). An intersectional perspective is highly relevant to understanding differential positions of migrant women regarding domestic violence in Australia because of the facility it provides to uncover unrecognised and unacknowledged dimensions and mechanisms of domination that reinforce and compound discrimination, marginalisation and vulnerability to oppression. (Cunneen and Stubbs, 1996; Eastal, 2001).

Experiences of past trauma and torture refugee women have suffered exacerbates the impacts of discrimination, exclusion and oppression they frequently encounter on seeking asylum in Australia (Pittaway and Pittaway, 2004; Rees, 2004a). Intersecting variables such as lack of knowledge, religious construction and prejudice, frequently reproduce exclusion and abuse, experiences that initiated women's refugee experience. In analysing the intersectional characteristics of their locations, Rees (2004) identifies patriarchy, culturalism, socioeconomic disadvantage, traumatised histories and exclusionism as interactive elements that manifest continued exposure to violence and violation of their human rights.

“...Intersections that characterise this realm of violence and subordination include race, gender, colonisation, minority discriminated status and socioeconomic disadvantage”

Refugee women's experiences of social, economic, cultural, political and legal marginalisation are imposed through power differentials of race, class and gender. In Australia, histories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse compound psychological impacts of discrimination, exclusion, family fragmentation and loss of identity they experience on arrival (Rees, 2004). Refugee conditions encountered in Australia potentiate domestic violence. Women's experiences of domestic violence are further exacerbated by lack of availability and access to services sensitive and responsive to the short and long-term needs of women who have endured complex loss and trauma (Rees 2004).

Class and Status

Economic, legal and political contexts, in which women experience and challenge domestic violence are critical at micro, mezzo and macro levels. Aspects of these forces have been considered in relation to particular constructs of 'otherness' but intrinsic facets of class and status that impact on women across these dimensions require more detailed analysis.

Economic Disadvantage

Weeks (2000) discusses connections between socioeconomic position and violence. While she reasserts that violent behaviour embodies abuse of power and that stress stemming from socioeconomic disadvantage does not cause violence she also strongly criticises domestic and family violence policy that is not responsive to socioeconomic needs of families. As hooks (1990) and Crenshaw (1991) identify, disadvantaged socioeconomic status and discrimination 'others' experience in employment and housing, repress identity, self-esteem and self-confidence and fuel frustration.

While economic disparity and disadvantage experienced by marginalised groups is too vast an area to cover here, it is important to note that Weeks (2000) and Jamrozik (2001) consider many Australian families are facing extreme stress and marginalisation through increasing economic polarisation that shapes families' social class and associated self-esteem. Jamrozik (2001) points out the inequitable opportunity for tertiary education associated with private schools. Employment opportunity for those who did not have that opportunity is disadvantaged as is earning capacity. Weeks (2000) underlines the housing related poverty that many groups and especially single parent families experience. Aboriginals, women escaping violence and people on social assistance predominate the 10% of Australians disadvantaged in obtaining adequate housing.

Legal Parameters

Legal constructs permeate assumptions and processes through which women encounter and contest domestic violence (Easteal, 2001). A range of legislative sources and laws frame legal contexts and concerns in the arena of domestic violence. State and Federal law delineate legal processes and position intersections of domestic violence and family law in Australia while international conventions are gaining attention as options for women to name and claim freedom from abuse as their human right. The Queensland Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act (1989), Queensland Criminal Code, Federal Family Law Act and Federal Immigration Act, as well as anti-discrimination legislation instituted by State and Federal Parliaments essentially inscribe the legal contexts through which statutory and human service agencies and women who experience domestic violence meet. The legal system in Australia is inherently patriarchal in position and perspective as Easteal (2001) emphasises and Nancarrow (2004) identifies as a profound influence in domestic violence issues and experiences for women.

The legal domain is also contextualised by the way communication is structured and interpreted, discriminating against women who do not relate to the formal and foreign ways of legal communication and process. According to Easteal (2001) subordinated groups characteristically repress any sense of personal authority in communication, giving others power to define their reality. Unfamiliarity with legal contexts, purposes and procedures leaves them unequipped to express the meanings and consequences of their subjective experiences of domestic violence. Direct questioning, interrogation and imposed communication styles inhibit and intimidate many women from articulating their experience congruently to their reality. The experience in itself manifests disempowerment, disillusionment and frustration.

Institutional Oppression

Use of depersonalising labels and language to describe women's behaviour and wellbeing and inequitable power relations in institutions inscribes authority for institutional intervention in women's lives that may be neither welcome, informed, congruent or empowering (Scourfield, 2001; Thomson and Thorpe, 2003; Heller et al, 1996; Wineburgh, 1998; Taft, 2003).

Curran and Takata (2000) discuss the occurrence and meaning of structural violence associated with bureaucratisation and regulations constructed to manage families, students, and government who don't fit expected norms and rules. They also emphasise that structural violence may be internalised by its recipients whose frustration and powerlessness is then compounded by institutional blame.

Conclusion

The compilation of examples of women's experiences of domestic and family violence recorded in literature demonstrates the complex nature of women's locations, intricately shaped and shaded by intersecting social, economic, cultural, political and legal forces of oppression and marginalisation. The kaleidoscopic review, although by no means comprehensive, illustrates the value of an intersectional perspective to analyse complex structures and dynamics that interactively shape environments that compound women's experiences of intimate violence. The analysis demonstrates the way colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial perspectives and practices, experienced by Indigenous people in Australia, have forced and reinforced their subjugation and marginalisation. Strategic imperialism, as globalisation is constructed, has re-established global domination by elites and rationalisation of discrimination and exclusion (Brah and Phoenix 2004). These global forces have critical implications and impacts at micro, mezzo and macro contexts in which women are subject to intimate violence.

Aspects of race are encoded in language and law that infer inferiority, incredibility, incongruity and indebtedness. Powerlessness and marginalisation of women is perpetuated through racism on the basis of colour, culture, spirituality, nation of origin, immigrant status and residential location. Socioeconomic disadvantage permeates women's experiences of violence maintained across generations through lack of educational, employment and enterprise opportunity indivisibly intertwined with disempowering constructions of race, gender, sexuality, age, ablist, location, motherhood and daughterhood. Policies and practices framing universal responses to such diverse contexts and needs of women reflect the blurred and biased vision of their proponents. It is clear that women's experiences of otherness in Australia are multifaceted and intersectional in shaping and compounding domestic and family violence and exposure to it.

Intersectional locations influence individuals' angles of vision of experiences, issues and needs (University of Minnesota, 1998). An intersectional perspective reminds the practitioner to acknowledge, explore and work with the woman's own angles of vision in order to facilitate a meaningful and constructive experience. Future newsletter articles will explore the impacts of other intersecting dimensions of oppression on women's experiences of domestic violence, and the applications of a framework of intersectionality to practice and policy.

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Flash Backs of Fax-Back:-

On 7 and 8 April 2005, the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service will be hosting a conference for Fax-Back Workers & Police Officers. The Conference will be an opportunity for existing Fax-Back Workers to network, to foster relationships between the Queensland Police Service and Non-Government Services and to support a statewide collaboration of Fax-Back Programs. The conference plans to build on a forum held in Brisbane in 2002, and carry forward some of the recommendations from that forum.

The conference will also be a unique opportunity for Fax-Back Workers, Police and other interested services to network and share knowledge and information. The conference will run over 2 days, with the first day outlined for showcasing existing programs and networking opportunities for police & workers. The second day will involve three training workshops for services thinking of beginning a fax-back program in their area to learn and ask questions of workers from existing programs.

For more information contact Jo Cannon or Pauline Woodbridge at NQDVRS on (07) 4721 2888 or email nqdvrs@nqdvrs.org.au.

Centre's Director, Heather Nancarrow, receives ANZSOC award

Heather Nancarrow, Centre Director, was recently awarded the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC) prize for best paper in criminology or a related discipline by an Australian or New Zealand student for 2004.

The winning paper was Heather's MA (Hons) thesis titled "In Search of Justice in Domestic and Family Violence". The thesis presented the results of Heather's qualitative study of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women's perspectives on the application of the criminal justice system and restorative justice practices in cases of domestic and family violence. The paper was nominated by Professor Kathy Daly, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University, who supervised Heather's thesis. The award was officially presented to Heather at the opening ceremony of the 18th annual ANZSOC Conference "Crime, Community and the State" held in Wellington, NZ from 9-11 February 2005.



Heather receiving her award from ANZSOC President, Dr Don Weatherburn

Heather also presented a paper at the ANZSOC conference based on her MA (Hons) research. This paper will be published in November 2005 in "Gender, Race and Restorative Justice", a special issue of *Theoretical Criminology* edited by Kathy Daly, Julie Stubbs and Kim Cook.

Australian National Plan of Action to Address Violence Against Women

In conjunction with Amnesty International's six-year global campaign to Stop Violence Against Women, Amnesty International Australia is calling on organisations and individuals to join the campaign to lobby the Federal Government to establish a National Plan of Action to eliminate violence against women.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was endorsed by Australia, identified the need for governments to take action to eliminate and prevent violence against women. Amnesty International Australia advocates a whole-of-government approach that draws on a human rights framework to address the structural inequalities that underpin violence against women.

"A National Plan of Action would facilitate a more co-ordinated and consistent government policy across states, more effective use of financial resources and expertise, a coherent approach to prevention, and the possibility of mainstreaming neglected and under-resourced issues".

Amnesty International invites individuals to sign a public petition that will be presented to the Australian Senate later in 2005. This petition can be accessed online at: www.amnesty.org.au/svaw. Postcard petitions have also been released and are available to the public.

For further details contact the Queensland office of Amnesty International Australia on 1300 300920.

Measuring violence against women: a review of the literature and statistics.

The Australian Parliament, Parliamentary Library recently issued an E-brief (electronic document) titled *Measuring violence against women: a review of the literature and statistics*.

This brief draws together major resources, research and studies on violence and sexual assault against women in Australia, to provide a comprehensive overview of the evidence on issues such as: prevalence; homicide; criminal justice system outcomes; state and territory comparisons; at risk groups and economic, social and health costs of violence. A selection of international crime victim and violence against women surveys are also explored and links to the various Australian and international studies are provided.

The E-brief may be accessed online at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/INTGUIDE/SP/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm>

Harm to women, children and animals: Institutionalised cruelty?

Dr Nik Taylor & Dr Tania Signal, School of Psychology & Sociology, Central Queensland University – Guest contributors.

Links between domestic violence, child abuse and cruelty to animals have been recognised in recent years, particularly within the US (Ascione, 1998). More recently this has become the focus of much interest in Australia within both academia and frontline service provision (e.g., Taylor & Signal, 2004). Overseas research indicates that animals are often caught up within family violence. For example, it may be that threats (or actual harm) towards the family pet are used as another tool to coerce compliance from both women and children (Adams, 1994). Furthermore, we know that violence to animals outside of the family unit can be predictive of the potential for later violence directed at humans. This may be concurrent with the animal abuse but should also be seen as a risk factor indicative of later, adulthood, antisocial behaviour (Taylor & Signal, 2004).

Such links between domestic violence, child abuse and harm to companion animals need to be taken seriously on both human, and animal, welfare levels. This is particularly important in the area of service provision. For example, we know that many women (up to 50%) will choose to remain in violent situations rather than leave their own, or their children's, pet animals behind (Ascione, 1998). It is therefore important that we begin to work with services within the domestic violence, child abuse, and animal protection fields to ensure that women and children in these situations have more choice. For example, by following the lead of those in the US who offer pet foster care programmes aligned to their domestic violence prevention/crisis services (Arkow, 1996).

However, it is not enough to simply address such issues on an individual, case by case, level. Perhaps we should be analysing this within a wider framework which sees such links as symptomatic of an institutionalised attitude which condones, and indeed implicitly (and all too sadly, sometimes explicitly) supports, violence towards disenfranchised 'others'. Those within the domestic violence sector will be well aware of the numerous examples of institutionalised violence towards women and children but may not be as aware of the myriad of examples of institutionalised violence towards animals. One recent example within Queensland was the Richmond township's bounty for feral cat pelts. While numbers of certain species may need to be reduced (e.g., feral cats or cane toads) this should be done humanely and by qualified professionals. As it stands, offering incentives to members of the public to engage in deliberate harm to 'inconvenient' animals is at best negligent and at worst promotes the very type of harm to animals that research has shown as a risk factor for interpersonal violence.

This broader perspective which takes account of the institutionalised nature of such cruelties will allow us to move away from the individualising, victim blaming culture of which we are currently a part and thereby allow us to begin combating violence towards women, children and animals on a much broader scope. Additionally such an approach will ensure that we have to take account of, and ultimately change, the societal structures currently in place which allow and support violent treatment of women, children and animals.

“.....we know that violence to animals outside the family unit can be predictive of the potential for later violence directed to humans...”

References:

- Adams, C. (1994). Sheltering Companion Animals of Battered Women. *Feminists For Animal Rights Newsletter*, 8(1-2), 1-8.
- Arkow, P. (1996). The Relationships Between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence. *Family Violence and Sexual Assault Bulletin*, 12, 29-34.
- Ascione, F. (1998). Battered women's reports of their partners and their children's cruelty to animals. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 1(1), 26.
- Taylor, N., & Signal, T. (2004). Attitude to animals: An indicator of risk of interpersonal violence. *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, 11(3), 9-12.

ATTENTION:

- Do you currently work within Domestic Violence service provision?
- Are you interested in links between domestic violence, child abuse and cruelty to animals?
- Here is a chance to have your say ...

Researchers from Central Queensland University will soon be mailing out a questionnaire to all Domestic Violence Service providers asking you to share your experiences in this area. If you want any further information in the meantime please contact, Nik Taylor on 07 4930 9433 or email: n.taylor@cqu.edu.au.

Final update on actions from 2004 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum - Which Way Now?

Following the 2004 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum, and a subsequent meeting of the Centre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, the Centre's Director wrote to various Ministers; the Director-General of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and the Director of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse to raise issues from the Forum falling within their responsibilities. The following summarises their responses to the issues raised.

Issue:

CDFVR sought from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP); a response to its submission on the 2003 *Safe and Strong Families Agreement*; advice on progress with its implementation and evaluation; and access to the data used for the evaluation.

Summary of response:

On 1 November 2004, Dr Warren Hoey, Director-General of DATSIP, advised that: the Centre's submission was one of six written submissions received and considered; the Family Violence Agreement had been recast as an action plan under the proposed Partnerships Queensland framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy; and the Queensland Government was advancing negotiations with the Australian Government for a bilateral agreement on child protection and family violence.

Regarding the request for access to data, DATSIP relies on other departments for data. Until recently police and justice data did not have an Indigenous identifier, so there was limited useable data for the evaluation. Dr Hoey advised that the Centre should negotiate directly with relevant departments about accessing their data and he supplied a list of relevant departments and data available for this purpose, and requested access to any publications from the Centre resulting from analysis of this data.

Dr Hoey also advised that the review of alcohol management plans was part of Cabinet processes and data is therefore subject to confidentiality arrangements.

Issue:

Strategies for increased collaboration at policy and program implementation levels

Summary of Responses:

- On 4 November 2004, the Honourable Liddy Clark, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (since resigned from Cabinet post): referred to the proposed Partnerships Queensland, which recognises that effective policies must be developed in partnership with Indigenous people and communities; advised that Safe and Strong Families Agreement was being redrawn as the Safe and Strong Families Action Plan to support key goals (Strong Families, Strong Cultures and Safe Places) of Partnerships Queensland; and that she was in discussion with the Australian Government on a bi-lateral agreement on child protection and family violence, with the aim of improved policy and program co-ordination between State and Commonwealth Governments.

- On 12 November 2004, the Policy Advisor for the Honourable Mike Reynolds, Minister for Child Safety advised that the new structure for the Department of Child Safety has an Indigenous Support and Development Branch, based in Cairns, to support initiatives providing culturally appropriate services to Indigenous communities, and that the Minister would like to consult with officers from this Branch prior to responding in detail (no further response to date, a contact for the Indigenous Support and Development Branch was provided).

- On 24 November 2004, the Honourable Warren Pitt, Minister for Communities advised that as lead agency for domestic and family violence, the Department of Communities was involved in key initiatives in partnership with other Queensland Government agencies (eg the Family Violence Agreement; implementation of Coordinating Efforts to Address Violence Against Women: and evaluation of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*), and had entered into a partnership with Brisbane City Council for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month 2004.

Issue:

Strategies to increase Indigenous involvement in activities of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.

Summary of response:

Ms Jane Mulroney, Director, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse advised by telephone (confirmed on 2 March 2005), that a number of strategies have been developed, including a separate page for Indigenous Family Violence on the Clearinghouse website, but implementation of these is dependent on the Federal Government continuing to fund the Clearinghouse beyond June 2005.



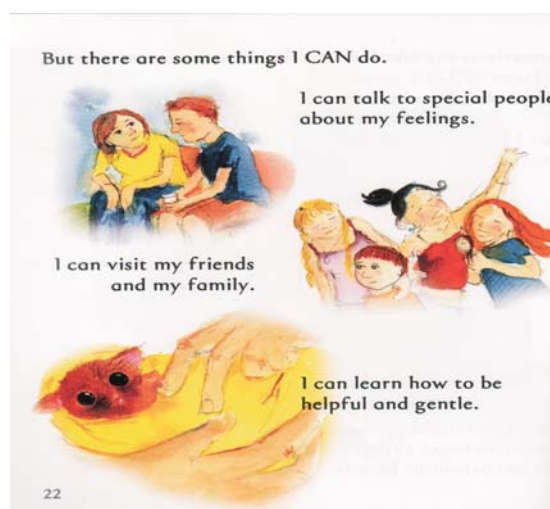
Resource for Children living with Domestic and Family Violence

I feel scared When Mum and Dad Fight is a beautifully written and illustrated story book for children that explores a range of feelings associated with living with family conflict or violence. Written by Tess Rowley and illustrated by Rhiannon McLay, *I Feel Scared When Mum and Dad Fight* was developed in collaboration between the Communities Caring for Kids Coalition, Toowomba and South West and Centacare Catholic Family and Community Services in Brisbane.

“When Dad gets home late and starts shouting at Mum, I hide under my bed. If I hear Mum crying I wish I could stop him hurting her.”

The book identifies feelings of fear, anger, worry, embarrassment, confusion and guilt, as expressed by a number of characters and explores a range of strategies for coping and managing.

I Feel Scared When Mum and Dad Fight is a useful resource for joining with children who live with domestic and family violence to explore their perceptions of, and reactions to, the violence and to examine the options for coping



I Feel Scared When Mum and Dad Fight is available for purchase from Centacare Catholic Family and Community Services, P.O. Box 289, Fortitude Valley, Qld. 4006. Phone: (07)3252 4371; Fax: (07) 3854 1246; Email: cfcsc@centacarebrisbane.net.au

Training Conference - Charleville

The Working Against Abuse Service (WAAS), under the auspices of Roma Town Council, is holding a training conference “The BIG Spark” on April 26 - 29 in Charleville.

The conference, a training format for service providers, is designed to empower people working directly or indirectly with domestic and family violence issues, by rekindling the SPARK within.

The conference, run over four days, promotes a holistic response to domestic and family violence to acknowledge the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects involved in the healing process.

Workshops, conducted by Grant Sarra, Wendy Wattego Ittensohn, Pat MacArthur and Lee Prince will be held at various locations in the town, providing an innovative approach to encourage community participation.

For further information call Cecilia Davidson at WAAS on 0746225230.

Elder Abuse Concerns in Indigenous Communities

By Guest Contributor, Nick Harris, Project Officer, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

The imposition of a European system on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has facilitated the erosion of traditional culture, authority and structures, together with a range of socio-economic problems that have perpetuated the vulnerability of older people to abuse. The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU), in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and service providers is currently initiating the development of a culturally appropriate response to the abuse of older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ANPEA) defines elder abuse as:

any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and or neglect (ANPEA, 1999).

Background

The EAPU is funded by the Department of Communities to provide a state-wide service to respond to the abuse of older people in Queensland. Initial consultation in the North Queensland and Torres Strait regions identified several initiatives to respond to elder abuse including the production of video scenarios on elder abuse for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, tailored training for Indigenous service providers and the adaptation of existing Elder Abuse Prevention resources.

Scope

With Grant Sarra as facilitator, later consultations held in Brisbane, Cairns and Mackay, focused on two primary objectives:

1. To identify ongoing strategies to raise awareness of the abuse of older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; and
2. To determine the general content of a video and resource kit that may be used to raise community awareness of elder abuse and that may be used to develop individual community responses to elder abuse.

“This model is consistent with the Human Rights based approach to addressing the mistreatment of older people and the Coordinated Community Responses’ (CCR) best model of practice identified by the Prevention of Elder Abuse Task Force (PEAT Force)”

Through ongoing consultation, the aim is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people direct and inform all stages of the project. This approach supports self determination, which is the right of all people to freely determine their status on a political level, freely pursue and have control over their economic, social and cultural development. It is in essence, a fundamental human right under international law (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2003).

This model is consistent with the Human Rights based approach to addressing the mistreatment of older people and the Coordinated Community Responses’ (CCR) best model of practice identified by the Prevention of Elder Abuse Task Force (PEAT Force). The CCR encourages specific regional or culturally based groups to form a response to elder abuse appropriate to their communities’ individual needs and resources. The EAPU’s consultation process strongly supports the empowerment of Indigenous communities and individuals to direct the development of the response. The unique nature of Indigenous communities also indicates that a broad-brush approach to elder abuse across all such communities is unlikely to be successful.

The EAPU acknowledges the limitations of short-term funding responses and the importance of recurrent funding for research and the development of sustainable programs. Having received \$7000 from the Department of Communities to assist with the consultations, the unit will continue to seek out additional funding opportunities to further develop the initiative. The unit is determined to follow through a long term sustainable response to elder abuse. The coordination and development of appropriate resources, the adaptation of mainstream training material and the provision of support to community members and interrelated agencies to deliver this material is the first step. Through the consultation process, community members expressed the need for a long-term response and the Unit aims to further assist this by structuring a funded position for an Indigenous Project Worker.

This role would include the provision of state-wide training within Indigenous communities and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific elder abuse training and community education material. Given the limitation of resources for the EAPU to facilitate face to face training with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the adaptation of mainstream Elder Abuse training remains a viable temporary measure. It is also envisaged that further funding will be sought for positions located within communities. Throughout initial consultations, community members and service providers were extremely enthusiastic, providing detailed strategic options. These spread across a number of sectors including community, individual, cultural values, education, health, service, promotional and government. Specific community-based and interagency mechanisms were also discussed. Currently the EAPU is negotiating additional consultations for late April. Once confirmed, details will be made available on the Unit's website and in the March 2005 edition of the Unit's Newsletter.

“Individuals need to be encouraged and assisted to make their own decisions, through the provision of information about all relevant options, and given the choice to refuse services if able to do so.”

Research

Despite Indigenous communities on a local and regional level acknowledging elder abuse as being widespread, elder abuse research within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is limited. The incidence of violence within many Indigenous communities is disproportionately high in comparison to mainstream society, however violence does not infer the occurrence of elder abuse. Significantly, risk factors associated with violence such as substance abuse, elevated rates of serious health complaints, gambling, inadequate housing and income related problems are also risk factors for elder abuse.

With theoretical understandings of elder abuse in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities being limited to domestic violence, future research could determine the incidence of elder abuse within these communities and identify the range of contributing social factors. Any such research needs to be culturally appropriate, embraced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and respectful of Indigenous communities and individuals.

Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People:

The response to abuse of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will require the commitment and flexibility of participating government and non-government organisations to work with individual communities to address the issues they identify. This approach empowers individuals and communities through self-determination. Individuals need to be encouraged and assisted to make their own decisions, through the provision of information about all relevant options, and given the choice to refuse services if able to do so. Even when people can not make all of their own decisions, their views should be considered (Prevention of Elder Abuse Taskforce 2001). Individuals and communities can be empowered through control of the decision-making processes. This has been demonstrated by facilitating the establishment of coordinated community responses (CCR's) to empower regional (and to date, non-indigenous) communities to respond to elder abuse.

Direction:

The role of the EAPU has been to facilitate this process by: assisting with staff training; supplying and developing appropriate resource material; and providing assistance with lobbying for services and funding bids.

The role of the CCR is to control the agenda by: identifying specific issues within the community; setting priorities; and developing strategies and implementing those strategies as a community initiative.

A major challenge for a number of government and non-government organisations is an attitude and policy shift from a traditional top down directive approach to a community based decision-making process. This model, reliant on co-operation and co-ordination, is underpinned by a considerable amount of trust and respect.

The EAPU's role will be secondary in nature, and involve the co-ordination and provision of resources, support and assistance to develop the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to respond to elder abuse. This response will also strengthen current approaches and policies at a government level through coordinating existing services at a regional and local level.

For more information please email: eapu@lccq.org.au

References

United Nations (1966). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Article 1.

United Nations (1993). The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Article 31.

Prevention of Elder Abuse Taskforce (2001). The Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Elder Abuse in Queensland, Queensland Government (Department of Communities).

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2003). Bringing them home Education Module: Indigenous Social Justice: Self Determination.

Workshops, Conferences and Date Claimers

- April 3-5 2005
4th Biennial Working with Boys Building Fine Men
Conference
Melbourne, Victoria
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/programs/conferences.html
- April 5 2005
Working with Fathers 2005
London, UK
www.fathersdirect.com
- April 6-9 2005
Navigating Pathways to Violence Prevention: Exploring
and Strengthening the Links Between Families and
Communities
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
www.fcvp.org/conference%
- April 7-8 2005
Flash Backs of Fax-Back Conference
Townsville, Queensland
Phone: (07) 4721 2888
Email: nqdvrs@nqdvrs.org.au
- April 12-16 2005
Engine Innovate – Young People’s Thinking on Professional
Practice: An Integrated Conference for Youth and
Community
Port Fairy, Victoria
www.adolescent.com.au/conference
- April 18-23 2005
15th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
Portsmouth, NH USA
www.unh.edu/fri/conferences/2004/index.html
- April 20-22 2005
5th Australian Women’s Health Conference – Reflecting
on Gender: Confronting the Evidence
www.womenshealth2005.com.au
- April 26-29 2005
The BIG Spark - Training Conference
Charleville, Queensland
C. Davison at WAAS (07) 46225230
- April 28-29 2005
Healthy Solutions for Children: Making the Right Choice
Sydney, NSW
www.mob.com.au/awch2005
- May 12-13 2005
Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum - Men and
Women - Working Together.
Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence
Research, CQU, Mackay, Queensland
www.noviolence.com.au
- May 11-14 2005
8th IAAH World Congress: Positive Youth Development
Lisbon, Portugal
www.mundiconvenius.pt/2005/iaah/default.htm
- June 1-3 2005
Mexican International Family Strengths Conference
Cuernavaca, Mexico
- June 3-6 2005
OCCFR 52nd International Conference – Differing Needs:
Societies’ responses to children, parents, families, couples
and the older generations
Vienna, Austria
www.octf.sa.edu.au
- June 16-18 2005
Early Childhood Conference: Our Children the Future 4
Adelaide, South Australia
www.octf.sa.edu.au
- June 17-19 2005
36th Annual CCSA Conference – Children’s Services as
Family Services: revolution or evolution?
Newcastle, NSW
www.ccsa-nsw.asn.au
- July 10-13 2005
10 International Family Violence Research Conference
Portsmouth NH USA
www.unh.edu/fri/conferences/2005



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Administration Officer

We encourage readers to contribute to the Centre's Newsletter. If you have any information or articles you wish to publish, please contact Centre staff.

HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

We have become aware that some recipients of the CDFVR newsletter have relocated or changed contact details, including email address. To enable us to update our records and ensure that you receive our quarterly publication, please contact us at the above phone, fax or email address with your change of details. Please be assured that the Centre does not release your details to any third parties without your permission.

If you would like to be included on, or removed from, the Centre's mailing list, please ring us on (07) 49407834.

The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVR) receives triennial funding from the Queensland Department of Communities to undertake research, education and evaluation activities pertaining to domestic and family violence. CDFVR is located within the Centre for Social Science Research in the Faculty of Arts, Health and Sciences at Central Queensland University, Mackay Campus.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Queensland Government, Central Queensland University, or Centre for Social Science Research.

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