
Another year has come and gone and in looking back some important milestones stand out. On the 16th of May 2007 the Child Discipline Bill was passed by Parliament, to remove the statutory defence of “reasonable force” to correct a child. This was also the year in which the Government launched its Campaign for Action on Family Violence, with an early survey showing that the “It’s Not OK” television advertisement is widely known and making an impact, including for men concerned about their violent behaviours. Much is yet to be done, but networks appear more strongly collaborative and cohesive in their intent to end interpersonal violence, at least within families.

The work of Te Awatea Violence Research Centre aims to enhance public access to research on not only family but wider, though often interlinking, aspects of interpersonal violence at a national and international level. The articles in the current newsletter reflect this wider concern.
women conceptualise or think about bullying and wonders if dominant talk that excuses such behaviours might be transformed by strengthening the place of Maori kaupapa and of mentorship by Maori elders, kuia and kaumatua, particularly for young Maori women in prison.

Dr Annabel Taylor follows this criminal justice theme by highlighting an aspect of her research which investigated risk and protective factors associated with women’s re-offending: the prevalence of violence victimisation (sexual abuse, assault and domestic violence) over the life course, particularly its contribution to early patterns of offending.

Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society Canterbury (PARS) has carried out its important work for many years and continues to endeavour to assist prisoners and their families pre- and post-release. Assisting the maintenance of relationships is pivotal for successful reintegration, as is respectful consideration of social needs for accommodation, adequate finance, and access to health services. PARS relies on its strong community networks to assist in addressing these needs.

Recent locally published reports that are featured in this issue include: How Can I Tell? Recognising when a child or family needs help; School-based Violence Prevention Programmes: A literature review; Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention - Challenges for the Future; and The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand: A review and evaluation of knowledge. Getting it Right: An evaluation of New Zealand community treatment programmes for adolescents who sexually offend is also profiled in this issue. All of these reports are available electronically, and the links are provided for those who wish to read beyond the brief summaries provided.

On November 8, Dr Neville Robertson and Associate Professor Ruth Busch presented a seminar based on their report Living on the Cutting Edge: Women’s Experiences of Protection Orders. There was a strong attendance, as is usual at our seminar series. As the Hon Lianne Dalziel, Minister of Women’s Affairs, is also reported to have said about the report, the presenters provided a powerful message about the impact of family violence by enabling some women who have lived through and survived family violence to communicate their experiences in their own voices.

Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention services, Age Concern New Zealand, employ co-ordinators who support the well-being of older people and their carers. A number of resources including two new DVDs have been produced to raise public awareness about the need to respect older people and promote their welfare.

PhD candidate Hong-Jae Park provides a brief summary of the preliminary findings of his research into the incidence of elder mistreatment and neglect within immigrant Korean families. Among the issues emerging from the study are the relationship between immigration and elder abuse and the erosion of the concept of “filial piety” in a cross-cultural context.

A review of the book Beyond Bad Girls: Gender, Violence and Hype recommends this as a readable book that challenges us to consider if a rising moral panic about girls’ meanness may be driven by a backlash, with at its roots our continuing insistence that girls and women should be nice – compliant, with gendered expectations of behaviour.

Finally, information about conferences and useful websites complete the newsletter. For those who prefer to read the newsletter in paper form, you may like to test the ease of accessing these sites through the electronic version available on our website.

With very best wishes from the research team at Te Awatea for a safe and happy 2008. We look forward to working together and meeting with you, via email or in person at our seminars.
This paper considers the sets of relationships between decision making and risk discourses in statutory social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The paper is based on a substantive study of child protection social workers undertaken in 2002 as part of Tony Stanley’s doctoral studies.

Political and public demands to ensure the safety of New Zealand children have become increasingly vocal in 2007. Our appalling record of child abuse and neglect is a shocking indictment of our society and something that New Zealand’s child protection system continues to grapple with. Sadly we are not alone as many international jurisdictions struggle to cope with increasing demands placed on child protection services (Scott, 2006). While social work practice often comes under scrutiny in times of tragedy, and reviews and recommendations attempt to address practice deficits (Connolly & Doolan, 2007; Doolan, 2004), these tragic events and swift organisational responses continue to significantly shape the work of child protection (Parton, 1998).

This is best illustrated by the uncritical adoption of risk assessment and risk management policies and tools, both increasingly relied on to assist the complicated and often uncertain work associated with child abuse and neglect. What seems to have been lost is the idea that working with risk actually means working with uncertainty. The need to tidy up and order rather messy areas of social life via risk assessments is actually masking the real promise of risk – that is, the utility of understanding how, who and what comes to be known as “risk”. Over the last 30 years, the discourses of risk have shifted and changed. This paper considers the role that social workers have in constructing facts about particular risks.

My research fills a major gap in the literature by focussing on the views and practices of statutory social workers in relation to risk in child protection. I am openly critical of risk discourses which argue for a common framework without taking account of differences in agency philosophy, remit and decision-making practices. I want to stress the need for better supervision and training, a recommendation which reflects current calls in the United Kingdom for more transparency in accountability and for a stronger culture that is open to learning from mistakes.

In practice, the balancing of child protection and family support imperatives has produced a working context for child protection social workers to negotiate (Stanley, 2005). Because “risk” has replaced “need” as the defining discourse in child protection work, it is important to understand how risk operates in practice. There is much to be gained from mining social work practice to explore how and in what ways the language of risk is employed.

**The shifting subject of risk**

Child protection work over the past 30 years can be characterised by three risk periods (Stanley, 2007). These periods are not discrete, as each informs and influences the next. Rather, a complex set of interacting social, economic and political factors plays a part in the determination of “at risk” children and families. Importantly, the term “risk” shifts and moves, responding to the socio-political context in which it comes to be known.

The 1970s was characterised by a growing anxiety about the safety and well-being of children. Increasingly all children came to be “at risk”. Risk was used to delineate those “at risk” from those posing a risk and, importantly, those not “at risk”. Risk entered official discourses of child protection, and social workers were increasingly expected to diagnose and identify risks for particular children and families (Parton, 1998). This was followed by a technological period in the 1980s and 1990s, characterised by the development of risk assessment tools and risk management policies. Cases were to be defined as “high” or “low” risk and, accordingly, to receive particular responses and resources from state agencies (Douseck, Levine, & Bronson, 1993; Gambrell & Shlonsky, 2001). More recently, a period of legitimacy has emerged; discourses of risk are drawn on to legitimise assessment decision making in child protection (Stanley, 2005). This is a significant shift in the relationship between families and social workers because family participation is inhibited when there is an insistence on locating “objective facts” about risk. Information about the subjective or local experiences of family members is less likely to be required when social workers seek evidence and proof that a child is or is not “at risk”. Importantly, the status given to the risk assessment tool will affect the end result.

A “science of risk” has emerged where “objective” understandings about what constitutes risk now dominate (Bessant, 2004). Risk is regarded as something that can be located and resolved, and this is influenced by particular understandings of risk that propose credibility and scientific rigour. Evidence and certainty are privileged, while ambiguity and uncertainty are managed through risk assessment procedures. This is best illustrated in child protection systems that have adopted actuarial risk assessment tools to guide practice. Actuarial risk assessments take an insurance approach to assessment work (Kemshall, 2002), where risks are understood in terms of statistical calculations. In contrast, New Zealand has favoured a consensus risk assessment tool, the Risk Estimation System (RES); a tool that has placed worker judgement at the centre of risk classification work for the last decade.

Because “risk” has replaced “need” as the defining discourse in child protection work, it is important to understand how risk operates in practice.

**Finding out about risk in practice**

In late 2002, and over a period of five months, I discussed risk assessment work with 70 child protection social workers, and this informed my doctoral research. Workers described both complex and straightforward cases of risk assessment work. Each case was classified as a unit of data because this was the actual experience of doing assessment work that was salient to the participant (Fook, 1996). Social workers make use of discourses of risk in their work of managing child safety, while undertaking their parallel responsibility of enhancing family support. They do this through a particular use and presentation of “risk”. According to Webb (2006), risk claims are attempts to argue for or against a particular decision, a point that has been overlooked in the risk assessment literature to date.

This point was illustrated in my study where a large number of workers described decisions to remove children from their homes following a risk assessment. Thus the rhetoric of risk was useful in supporting their decisions.

**Social Worker 3: [The risk assessment] was helpful [in] confirming or affirming that you saw those risks, and it’s okay [to remove the children].**

**Social Worker 27:** The [risk assessment] formalises things, [and] also gives you something to back up whatever assessment that you’ve come to.

**Social Worker 32:** We couldn’t leave the children there after that thing had been said [by the other parent]. I suppose it would be knowingly leaving the children ‘at risk’ even though it’s not a quantifiable risk, it’s a risk and that may be enough.

In contrast, a smaller number of social workers described cases where they made decisions to leave children at home following a risk
Social workers make use of discourses of risk in their work of managing child safety, while undertaking their parallel responsibility of enhancing family support.

Social Worker 22: [I made] the decision to leave the [teenager] there. I investigated the mother - I don't believe that [the teenager] was at risk enough to uplift.

To support and legitimise decisions either to remove or to leave children, risk is rendered into an objective, auditible and measurable state by the social worker. These decisions are rendered legitimate because they conform to a set of established rules, the rules are justifiable, and consent, from both supervisors and family members, is achieved (Beetham, 1999). This is a narrow focus on the risks facing these children. Risks associated with the removal of children to alternative care, and risks associated with being involved with statutory child protection staff, were not woven through an analysis of the risks facing the children or their families.

The majority of social workers who participated in my research explained that the work of risk assessment and its management were social work functions to be completed and then presented to families. While the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act (1989) is premised on family inclusion in decision making, there was overwhelming evidence in my research to show that families’ understandings about particular risks were not focussed on during assessment interviews. Instead, families were frequently encouraged to “come on board” and accept risk assessments presented by social workers. Families provided their consent, agreeing that social workers’ assessments of risk were right, and this assisted in legitimising social worker decisions and the notion of “risk”. This can be hard work for social workers and families, as one worker noted: Social Worker 27: [It] was really hard trying to convince the parents that their children were at risk.

The actions to ensure safety include making a declaration in the Family Court that a child is in need of care and protection. For a small number of social workers in the study this occurred prior to a completed assessment. This is also noted in the international literature (Arad & Wozner, 2001). Intervention decisions made prior to the completion of an assessment premised on absolute safety are very risky for children and families, as this worker illustrated:

Social Worker 54: [The] easiest part is applying for declaration of the child to leave home, because that way you can cut through everything and just have that child sitting there, and you know that that child’s safe in your custody, and then you can - this is terrible - it’s easier to make a declaration to keep that child safe than to go through the whole investigation process, because it’s much longer to go through that way.

Risk, then, is a discursive construct that was rarely critically examined by the social workers who participated in my study. Instead, risk becomes a “virtual object” constructed by social workers because they see their role as one of determining the amount of risk; that is, the “objective risk reality” that exists for the child and family. The role of the social worker is one of risk “quantifier”. As a virtual object, risk acts as a critical decision-making point from where practice decisions legitimately proceed. This point highlights the disempowerment potential of social work practice. Families can be left out of the very discussions necessary to manage risk because what they define as risky is less likely to be part of the assessment process.

When a narrow definition of risk is applied, the management options are also narrow. One worker demonstrated this when she explained that managing risk required the elimination of risk:

Social Worker 3: [S]omebody has to be removed from that situation to eliminate that risk … I think the most successful part of [decision making] was actually [being able to] eliminate the risk for [the child], the immediate risk for him at that particular time, and putting him in a safe environment.

However, to talk of risk elimination is potentially misleading, in that risk can never be totally eliminated from the lives of families (Titterton, 2005). Further, the notion of risk elimination may set up unrealistic expectations of and for social workers, and, importantly, of and for families.

Working with uncertainty

A model that social workers can use in their assessment practice is a risk continuum (for a full discussion see Stanley, 2007). Discourses of risk can be conceptualised along a continuum ranging from realist epistemologies, when there is little doubt that a child is at risk, to what Lupton (1999, p. 35) refers to as constructionist epistemologies: “What we understand to be a ‘risk’ (or a hazard, threat or danger) is a product of historically, socially and politically contingent ‘ways of seeing’.” Both ends of the continuum and all of the possibilities in between are useful for social work practice (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The risk discourse continuum

Uncertainty                Certainty
Discourses of Risk

There will be cases when there is no doubt that a child is at risk. However, in my research there were many examples when risk was less tangible, more nebulous and slippery, yet social workers attempted to render it as a certainty. Aiming for certainty may lead to a premature closing down of assessment work, or reaching early decision points that may not take into account all of the risks facing children and families. In a small number of cases, children were placed in care while an assessment took place, when on reflection the social workers said that this was an unnecessary step. Working with uncertainty need not be scary, concerning, or something to be swiftly managed, as it offers the possibility of being reflexive about the many and varied risks associated with child abuse and neglect work.

Supervision offers an important venue for discussions about risk and being less certain. Supervisees need to maximise the supervision session to build critical skills in discussing, engaging with, and conceptualising risk. This does require skill and knowledge for both social workers and their supervisors. While I am not suggesting that increased discussion on what “risk” is will avoid tragedies in practice, however, generating more talk about what constitutes risk and what this may mean for assessment practices would enhance practice. Importantly, it would ensure that discourses of risk were not used to legitimise assessment decisions. As Walker and Clark (1999, p. 1439) note: “Clinical supervision can offer compassionate and cost-effective risk management.” Social work practice can only gain from such an engagement. This may require a cultural shift within particular social work organisations. For example, in my study one worker noted:

Social Worker 69: [The] culture of this place is that you tend to defend your decisions and justify them, rather than using them as a benchmark for learning.

In a practice context where increasing demands and scrutiny are placed on child protection social workers to account for their work, risk can be used strategically to serve the organisational requirements of social workers. This has implications for the clients of social work practice because children and families are often at the receiving end of professional intervention.
New Zealand is involved in a major reorganisation of its child protection services where the higher risk cases will receive a statutory child protection assessment, while those assessed as lower risk will receive a family assessment.

decisions based on risk classifications (Cleaver & Freeman, 1995).

The challenge is to value different conceptions of risk, rather than forcing them into narrow technocratic frameworks. The Risk Estimation System (RES) was designed to facilitate this. Sadly, social workers are more likely to use risk discourses to order the uncertainties of practice, rather than explore uncertainty as a social construction: something that can then be theorised with families who remain the key stakeholders in the work of care and protection services.

There was evidence in my research that this may be easily achieved. The social workers who participated in my research found the process of talking about risk assessment work useful. Some remarked that the research process was like “an in-depth supervision session”. The following comments highlight this point:

Social Worker 1: [Y]ou know risk is, I guess … one of those things that you can never consider enough.

For many, this was the first time they had been asked to articulate particular “risks” that they were assessing.

In a practice context where increasing demands and scrutiny are placed on child protection social workers to account for their work, risk can be used strategically to serve the organisational requirements of social workers.

Conclusion

The discourses of risk located in child protection practice continue to shift and change, and new risks emerge. Social workers need to consider the risks associated with foster care, risks in leaving children in particular homes, risks in removing children, risks to themselves, and risks to the agency. Contact with statutory child protection systems is indeed risky for families (Scott, 2006). New Zealand is involved in a major reorganisation of its child protection services where the higher risk cases will receive a statutory child protection assessment, while those assessed as lower risk will receive a family assessment. Risk discourses will be drawn on to make these distinctions. This being the case, the concept of “risk” requires a reflexive response, because competing demands on social workers to assess and manage risk often support organisational requirements, rather than building family solutions (Titterton, 2005).

I support the need for the critical mining of risk communication in social work contexts, as Oaks and Harthorn (2003, p. 3) have noted:

Perception of risk is best argued to be socially and culturally constructed through a complex process that depends on a range of social and cultural factors and may be contributed to through processes of risk communication.

Risk discourses are useful for child protection social work because they assist in its organisation. However, as my research found, social workers are strategists, drawing on statements about risk to legitimise decisions made about children and families. They do this to manage any ambiguity and uncertainty associated with assessing child abuse and neglect, and it is this management that renders families less central to discussions about the risks facing their children. There is much to be learned from the subjects of risk: not only children and families but also, importantly, social workers who are increasingly expected to assess and manage it safely. It may be more risky for children and families when the system is too safety focussed.

Dr Tony Stanley, Senior Lecturer Social Work, School of Community Studies, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, completed his PhD in Social Work with the School Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury, in 2005. He is currently on leave, working in statutory child protection in the UK. This paper has been adapted from a seminar presentation given at Te Awaitea Violence Research Centre in August 2007.

References


Family violence – It’s Not OK

Early signs are that the Government’s Campaign for Action on Family Violence has reached into the homes and hearts of many thousands of New Zealanders and prompted them to think about and speak out about family violence.

The “It’s Not OK” Campaign is a social marketing campaign which aims to change the social climate in New Zealand that tolerates high levels of family violence.

Components of the Campaign are:
- television advertisements
- a community action fund supporting projects which change attitudes toward family violence at a community level
- a website, 0800 information line, and printed resources
- a media advocacy project to change the way family violence is portrayed in the news media.

The Campaign was launched early in September 2007 and the response in the first three months was extremely positive.

A survey of randomly selected people found that 87% remembered seeing the advertisement on television and one in five reported taking action as a result of the ad. The survey showed that the ad has had a strong impact across Maori and Pacific audiences.

The website has averaged 1200 visits a week since the Campaign was launched and the 0800 number has received around 350 calls a week. Nearly half the approaches to both are from men concerned about their own behaviour or the behaviour of mates or other family members.

The Campaign team has also received a number of moving and encouraging stories from family violence prevention agencies callers are referred to:

At Wellington Ending Abuse and Violence (WEAV) seven men have asked for help as a direct result of the television ads or media stories. One man said his partner had been telling him he was abusive but he didn’t believe her until he read a story in the local newspaper and realised he was.

Another family violence prevention agency passed on this story:

“Just got a call from a chap who saw the ad on TV last night; he had thought about it all day and rang the 0800 number for help with his violence.

He has been hitting his wife for years and putting his kids through hell and wants to do something about it.”

And this email was sent to the Campaign website: “I just wanted to write and say how happy I am to see these ads about domestic violence. I myself was in an abusive relationship for four years with three children. I commend the ads on TV as this does need to become more of a public issue. There is NOTHING to be ashamed about and that’s probably one of the biggest problems women like myself have to deal with.”

The Campaign slogan “It’s not ok” has been adopted by New Zealanders in many different settings from politicians to bowling club members to children performing Jack in the Beanstalk at a Wellington theatre.

Through the media advocacy strand of the Campaign, training has been provided for family violence prevention agencies so they can use their local media to speak up about family violence in their community.

The second phase of the Campaign will start early in 2008 and will include television ads portraying men’s stories of change.

For more information about the Campaign go to www.areyouok.org.nz

Media release

Office of the Children’s Commissioner

Children’s Commissioner asks New Zealanders to speak up and take responsibility for child abuse
19 November 2007

On World Child Abuse Prevention Day, the Children’s Commissioner, Dr Cindy Kiro said

New Zealanders needed to speak up if they witnessed abuse against children and young people, and hold others accountable if they knew they were abusers.

“While home should be a haven, for many children around the world it is a lethal place,” Dr Kiro said.

“We should focus on prevention and intervene when we see child abuse happening. Take action and tell someone. Call the police or Child, Youth and Family Services.

“Children and young people who are victims of abuse of any sort, or who feel unsafe, should tell a trusted adult and ask for help.

“Research shows that up to 60% of child abuse cases also involve violence towards women in the home. There is a strong overlap between violence towards women and violence towards children and what we are seeing is a cycle of violence that continues from one generation to the next. Adults need to take responsibility for violence towards children, so don’t ignore what might be happening in your home and communities.

“New Zealand is at a tipping point where communities are making it clear they will not tolerate child abuse and every adult needs to take responsibility for the physical, emotional and sexual abuse through neglect of our children.

“Children and young people tell my office how disturbing they find it to witness violence in their home, even if it is not directed at them. When their parents are confronted with this information, this is often the catalyst for them to examine and change their behaviour.”

Dr Kiro referred to studies that indicate New Zealand has a problem of abuse towards children, a problem that needs continued attention, particularly given that the reported child maltreatment mortality rate is higher than most countries within the developed world.

“New Zealanders must change their attitudes and behaviour to become more child-focussed. Children rely on adults to keep them safe and healthy,” said Dr Kiro.
Two and a half years on from its establishment in early 2005, the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse continues to encourage and facilitate information sharing across the family violence intervention and prevention field.

This year, the Clearinghouse has further developed the fundamental services that have made it such a valuable national resource, including the Library (an award-winning collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development’s Information Centre) and the Good Practice Database both available through its website. In an effort to encourage what the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families has termed “horizontal learning”, the Clearinghouse has also taken advantage of its relationships within the tertiary sector and held three “virtual” seminars. The seminars, using facilities made available by the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network (KAREN) and the Building Research Capacity in Social Science (BRCSS) network’s Access Grid technology, enable researchers, policy makers and practitioners from around the country to participate in knowledge sharing from access points, or “nodes”, located in universities across the country.

The first NZFVC virtual seminar, held in March 2007, was a presentation by Debbie Hager (MPH), from Homeworks Trust, who discussed her research, based on a survey of 39 women’s refuges, on the relationship between mental illness and/or substance abuse and domestic violence, and the need for specialist refuge services for this group of marginalised women. In September, Judge Eugene Hyman, from the Superior Court of California, provided an international judicial perspective in his presentation of the work of the Juvenile Delinquency Domestic Violence and Family Violence Court which he established in 1999. The focus of the Court, the first of its kind in the United States, is on young people who use violence against partners and family members. The final virtual seminar for the year, in October, entitled Maui Ora in Action, featured presentations by three members of Project Amokura, a family violence prevention initiative based in Te Tai Tokerau, Northland. The focus of the presentation was on methodological practices that support kaupapa Maori research and strategies for addressing whanau violence. Overall, the seminar series has been a cost-effective means of bringing together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to facilitate the exchange of information.

The Clearinghouse has focussed on information sharing as a way to encourage the use of research evidence to inform practice. One specific initiative has been developed in response to media interest in family violence. In collaboration with the Campaign for Action on Family Violence, the NZFVC Outreach Co-ordinator, Sheryl Hann, has developed training programmes for journalism students and put together a toolkit for journalists, Reporting Domestic/Family Violence Guidelines for Journalists (available from the Campaign’s website: www.areyouok.org.nz). The toolkit contains resources and statistics to dispell the myths and provide information to assist with accurate reporting of domestic violence issues. These initiatives, along with media training of family violence service providers, have had some encouraging results.

An audit of family violence media reports (commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development) shows that, compared to 2005, more domestic violence stories, including information about the impact on the victims, are now reported in the media, domestic violence experts are frequently used as sources of background information, and rather than using euphemisms such as “domestic-type situation”, the violence is named as “family violence”.

The NZFVC User Survey 2007, a part of our contractual requirement, was conducted in July to evaluate customer satisfaction with the services offered by the Clearinghouse and the functioning of the website. The results show that both the newsletter and website connect well with users, providing much appreciated information. Respondents, the majority of whom were from the community and education sectors, also thought the free library service and other communications with NZFVC staff were most helpful. Final comments from users include: “an excellent initiative … gaining in credibility every day”, “an enormously useful tool”, and “huge potential - essential if New Zealand is to address FV effectively for one organisation (NZFVC) to organise and collect information and resources”.

The User Survey 2007 Final Report is available from: www.nzfvc.org.nz/14227.pub

This year has also seen the publication of the NZFVC Strategic Plan 2007 (www.nzfvc.org.nz/About.aspx), developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, which highlights the vision, mission, principles and projects the Clearinghouse intends to focus on over the next three years.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far and look forward to doing more to improve and expand existing services and develop new initiatives. In the future we will continue to push the boundaries of the e-information envelope to foster cross-sector information exchange and the utilisation of knowledge. We will be looking for further time- and cost-effective means of assisting our stakeholders to learn from each other, as we all strive for the elimination of family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. We welcome your input and collaboration in our continuing journey towards that goal.

For more information on NZFVC initiatives see www.nzfvc.org.nz

No violence within families is acceptable. We are role models for our children and it is our responsibility to make sure they grow up expecting respectful, positive relationships in their lives.

Dr Rajen Prasad, Chief Commissioner, Families Commission, November 2007
LIVES CUT SHORT
CHILD DEATH BY MALTREATMENT

The death of a child from abuse or neglect poses a challenge to us all. Children are the most vulnerable in society, and when a child dies the impact extends far beyond the child’s immediate family. When a child dies through homicide, grieving communities demand answers and seek assurances that it will never happen again. That it does happen again is rarely a reflection of a lack of community care or professional diligence. More often children die in situations that are difficult to see in advance.

This book, produced in conjunction with New Zealand’s Children’s Commissioner, is the first detailed analysis of individual cases of child deaths by maltreatment in New Zealand. The book will help us to better understand these tragedies and how as a society we respond to them. It proposes that by strengthening systems of response and working collectively to break cycles of child abuse and neglect, we will have a better chance of reducing the number of lives cut short.

Lives Cut Short
Child Death by Maltreatment
by Marie Connolly and Mike Doolan

Please send me __________ copies of this book.
I enclose my cheque for $ __________

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
                                          ________________________________
                                          ________________________________

A5, 136pp
RRP: $24.95/postage included
Publication date: November 2007

SEND TO:
Office for the Children’s Commissioner
PO Box 5610
Wellington

PHONE: 04 471 1410
EMAIL: children@occ.org.nz
The bullying problem: Exploring ways young women prisoners talk about prison bullying

Sophie Goldingay

Victimisation in prison poses significant risks to young women prisoners’ mental health and is often cited as precipitating self-harm and suicidal behaviours. Those who victimise or bully others are also at risk of becoming entrenched in anti-social behaviours, which will hinder their adjustment to life outside prison.

Research has indicated that prisons, being authoritarian in nature, present a higher risk of creating an environment that encourages and supports bullying. This article explores the experience of bullying for women prisoners in a New Zealand women’s prison. The article is based on a study, part of a doctoral thesis in progress, which explores whether young women in prison are in need of separate facilities from adult prisoners whilst they serve a prison term.

Prisons have a responsibility to protect young people in their care under the United Nations Conventions of Rights of the Child (Department of Justice, n.d.). They are also charged with rehabilitating offenders (Department of Corrections, 2007). To this end, prisons need to ensure their environment is one that is conducive to making the best use of treatment to address issues that lead to offending. There is a lack of research that addresses bullying in women’s prisons, and assumptions may have been made in the past that bullying and victimisation are less of a problem in women’s prisons in New Zealand than in men’s (Department of Corrections, 1998). This may be due to fewer incident reports and fewer signs of violence or bullying that are observable by staff. It may also be due to assumptions about women’s aggressiveness, as traditionally, men have been regarded as the more aggressive gender (Davidson-Adar, 2005; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000).

A study of 11 young women prisoners (aged 14-19 years) in one New Zealand prison has been conducted to investigate the meanings young women construct amongst themselves around bullies, victims, and associated behaviours and subjective experiences of these various “selves” (Burt, 1995). A discourse analysis approach has been used in order to gain an understanding of the social context and power dynamics within the prison (Terasahjo & Salmivalli, 2003). The majority of participants demonstrated clear justifications for bullying, especially those who had been in this or another institution for a number of years. A smaller number also demonstrated through the language they used their means of resisting these dominant ways of framing bullying behaviours.

Aggression amongst young women prisoners

In the 1970s, researchers believed that bullying was rare amongst young women prisoners, and, therefore, research was limited to young men (Ireland, 2001). More recent studies demonstrate that “females are as aggressive as males as far as the motivation to hurt is concerned” (Björkqvist & Niemela as cited in Matthews, 1999, p. 12). For example, females tend to use indirect (or relational) means of aggression and bullying, such as gossiping, spreading rumours, social exclusion, and ostracizing (Connell & Farrington, 1996; Ireland, 1999; Smith & Gross, 2006; Viljoen, Jodi, O’Neill, & Sidhu, 2005). Further research has shown that ostracism and social exclusion may be more damaging than more direct types of bullying in terms of the effect on victims’ mental health and personality development (Baldry, 2004; Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2005). Other types of victimisation identified overseas include extortion, threats, and verbal aggression (Ireland, 1999, 2001; Palmer & Farmer, 2002; Viljoen et al., 2005).

Young women prisoners: A vulnerable group

Young women prisoners are a particularly marginalised and voiceless group (Gaarder & Belknap, 2004; Redman & Fisher, 2002). Many will have suffered sexual and/or physical abuse prior to entering prison (Bergesmann, 1989; Carlen & Worrall, 2004; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Gaarder & Belknap, 2004; Redman & Fisher, 2002; Singer, Bussey, Sony, & Longhofer, 1995; Viljoen et al., 2005; Watt & Tomnay, 2000). Given this, young female prisoners may be particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of victimisation as it may “further exacerbate the psychological damage of their earlier abuse” (Davidson-Adar, 2005, p. 556). Furthermore, victimisation is likely to undermine any rehabilitative attempts (Davidson-Adar, 2005; Tie & Waugh, n.d.).

Studies have also noted that being victimised has negative consequences for a victim’s mental health (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001; Connell & Farrington, 1996) and their social adjustment (Crick & Bigbee, 1998). Being a victim of bullying, for example, may lead to self-harm or suicidal behaviour (Biggam & Power, 1999; Terasahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Tie & Waugh, n.d.).

In one study, being victimised appeared to have a greater negative impact on adolescent girls’ future emotional well-being than it had on boys (Bond et al., 2001), indicating that girls may be particularly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of being victimised. An environment where one person is able to victimise others may also have consequences for a young person’s social development (Connell & Farrington, 1996; Owens et al., 2000). Young women prisoners who engage in bullying may become entrenched in victimising behaviours towards others, which may affect their adjustment to society once released.

Social environment in prison

Both in New Zealand and overseas, the inmate subculture in a male prison has been described as a context where “bullying enhances an inmate’s status” (Biggam & Power, 1999, p. 309; Connell & Farrington, 1996; Ireland, 2001; Tie & Waugh, n.d.). This status enhancement is not just amongst prisoners. Overseas studies have indicated that in some prisons such status enhancement may also be perpetuated by staff who afford more status and privilege to a bully, and stereotype a victim as a “wimp . . . who needs to learn to be tough” (Brown & Falshaw, 1996, p. 23). Due to a lack of research, it is unclear if similar processes occur in New Zealand women’s prisons. It has also been argued that prisons are “essentially authoritarian environments” (Ireland as cited in Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003, p. 49). Leymann (as cited in Jennifer et al., 2003) has suggested that authoritarian environments create a higher risk of bullying. In the New Zealand context, kuia (respected Maori elder) Mrs Kiwi Hutchen (personal communication, July 18, 2007) notes that gang culture, with its violence and acceptance of criminal behaviour, may also be present, with varying degrees of intensity, within the women’s prison setting. Such acceptance of violence may further increase the likelihood of bullying and victimisation.

Young women prisoners who engage in bullying may become entrenched in victimising behaviours towards others, which may affect their adjustment to society once released.

Approach for this study

A small number of quantitative studies overseas have investigated bullying in women’s prisons and describe types of bullying and characteristics of bullies and victims (Ireland, 1999; Viljoen et al., 2005). The study reported on in this article, builds...
on this knowledge and generates a sense of the social context in which bullying takes place and of the social relations that are at work in New Zealand women’s prisons. Therefore, in keeping with other studies (Owens et al., 2000; Terasahjo & Salmivalli, 2003), transcripts of the interviews with research participants have been analysed using a discourse analysis approach (Willig, 2001). This approach is underpinned by assumptions that language creates and is created by social interaction and hence it is language that should be studied (Burman & Parker, 1993; Willig, 2001).

In keeping with this focus on language, I investigated the various versions or common-sense accounts (Parker, 1993) of bullying put forward in the language used by research participants. The study of participants’ language did not seek to discover who the bullies and victims were. Such a quest would imply that this behaviour is located in individuals, as opposed to the context in which it occurs or the dynamics between individuals. Rather, my approach has been in keeping with social constructionist ideas, which indicate that behaviour is strongly predicated on the type of “selves” available in a social context, as opposed to something that is fixed in “personality” (Burr, 1995).

Feminist and anti-colonial underpinnings

The research has also been guided by a feminist approach, which sought to raise awareness of young women’s experiences in prison, in order to improve or advance their situation. This is in keeping with the approach of other feminist researchers who have conducted research with women who are, or have been, in prison (Comack, 1999; O’Brien, 2001; Taylor, 2004). In addition, given the high proportion of young female prisoners aged 14-19 who identify as Maori (76% in 1999 and 81% in 2003) (Department of Corrections, 1999, 2003), the study has also been guided by an anti-colonial stance (see Goldingay, 2007a, for more information on the use of this approach). This perspective supports the use of Maori world-views and methodology when researching Maori (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 1998).

Analysis of the data

The data to be analysed for this paper was drawn from 11 face-to-face interviews, which explored a number of aspects of the participants’ prison experiences and their well-being, in order to consider the most suitable housing arrangement during their prison term. Only material relating to bullying or victimisation in one prison has been included here. Analysis involved separating the texts produced by the women according to

The data to be analysed for this paper was drawn from 11 face-to-face interviews, which explored a number of aspects of the participants’ prison experiences and their well-being, in order to consider the most suitable housing arrangement during their prison term. Only material relating to bullying or victimisation in one prison has been included here. Analysis involved separating the texts produced by the women according to the various issues that were discussed. Figure 1 describes the selected results of this analysis (see Goldingay, 2007b, for all extracts which contributed to this discussion).

During interviews, eight out of the 11 participants drew on ways of talking about bullying which justified or supported it, and three talked about it in ways that did not accept it. Whilst Figure 1 gives the impression that there are clear-cut categories of either “accept” or “not accept” bullying, further extracts demonstrated that the reality of life for the young women participants was not so simple. The analysis showed that some participants faced dilemmas as bullying was talked about in contradictory ways. One participant drew on both accept and not accept bullying discourses. The following extract is one example of this:

**Participant:** So getting them to get things when they need it and stuff like that, I mean. I don’t know how people can do that because … people have done that for me but I don’t feel good doing that…

Here, the participant drew on discourses that did not accept bullying, when she said, “I don’t know how they can do that”, which indicated bullying as mean behaviour. She then said, “people have done that for me” in a way that indicated the inevitability (and therefore justification) of her participation in getting someone to “get things when she needs it”. She then said she did not “feel good doing that”, possibly because it did not fit with what she considered the right thing to do.

Other studies have also found such contradictions where bullying occurred amongst adolescents in the school setting, indicating a powerful social pressure to conform to group norms (Owens et al., 2000; Terasahjo & Salmivalli, 2003). The “self” or identity that the young person is able to construct for herself here is dictated to a large degree by such pressures. Notwithstanding other factors that may be unique to each, it appears that the institutions of school and prison may produce similar contradictory yet powerful social pressures.

Figure 1: Discourses of acceptance and non-acceptance of bullying amongst participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accept bullying (used by 8 participants)</th>
<th>Not accept bullying (used by 3 participants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying-as-justified behaviour</td>
<td>Bullying-as-mean behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate reasons:</td>
<td>Victim taken advantage of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•  victim’s crime and/or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•  deficits within the environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i.e., boredom)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•  Bullying as a way of protecting the self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying-as-normal</td>
<td>Bullying-as-cowardly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•  Inevitable — it is what always happens here.</td>
<td>•  Perpetrators lack “real” toughness as carry out bullying in groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notwithstanding other factors that may be unique to each, it appears that the institutions of school and prison may produce similar contradictory yet powerful social pressures.
Whilst it seems that the dominant interpretation or discourse is one that justifies bullying, as it occurred most often as a meaning attributed to bullying, a small number of participants who did not accept bullying used power productively and enlisted discourses which resisted the dominant notions.

The use of the word “bum” to denote a victim in this context is likely to have originated in men’s prisons where sexual assaults may be part of the overall victimisation. In contrast to studies in men’s prisons (Chancor as cited in Tie & Waugh n.d.; Roush & Dunlap, 1997), participants in this study did not discuss sexual victimisation. Thus, in the apparent absence of sexual forms of abuse amongst women prisoners, or their unwillingness to discuss such abuse, using the word “bum” may enable women to claim a (possibly esteemed) masculine self or identity whilst denigrating their victims to being a “bum”. For victims who are demeaned, objectified and perhaps dehumanised in this way, therefore, the experience of the social interaction within the prison environment is very oppressive.

Another oppressive feature of the social dynamics, which may affect many within the context of the women’s prison, is the prevalence of gossiping and spreading rumours. For example:

Participant: I’ve never seen so much rumours and such gossip go round or, um, hitting, little hitters ... cos they’ve got nothing to do here (laughs), honestly, I’m just being straight.

Of note here is that rumours and gossip are associated with the word “hitting”. One implication is that in the prison setting, as in any other context, making a person the target of rumours, gossip, and perhaps subsequent exclusion, may cause as much pain as a physical “hit”. Whilst the effects may be harder to observe than in physical aggression, relational aggression may cause deeper pain. For teenage girls, relational aggression may be particularly painful due to their intense need for connection to others (Covington as cited in King, 2005). Nevertheless, common sense justification for such behaviour, evident in the above extract, is that they have nothing else to do, as, presumably, such behaviours fill in the time.

For victims who are demeaned, objectified and perhaps dehumanised in this way, therefore, the experience of the social interaction within the prison environment is very oppressive.

The nature of power

Some writers (for example, Westwood, 2002) draw on Foucault’s theories that describe power as both productive and oppressive. The oppressive power described so far is not the only type of power present amongst prisoners who took part in the study. Analysing the transcripts using discourse analysis demonstrated competing ways of interpreting bullying as it occurs amongst young women prisoners. Whilst it seems that the dominant interpretation or discourse is one that justifies bullying, as it occurred most often as a meaning attributed to bullying, a small number of participants who did not accept bullying used power productively and enlisted discourses which resisted the dominant notions. For example, in the extract below, the young woman appeared to hold contempt for those who stood over others, indicating that if they were truly tough, they would not have needed to use this tactic:

Participant: ... there’s people ... I’ve watched people try to stand over smaller people in the wing which I’ve stuck up for ... just people that ain't got no form but talk shit [...] they think they’re tough and walk with this big attitude when really at the end of the day they ain’t got no form, they just hang around with the big people so that they look tough. The presence of such resistance “talk” in the prevailing dominant way of talking (Burman, 1990) offers opportunities for positive change. Power relationships that exist may be challenged because “wherever there is a relation of power it is possible to modify its hold” (Sawicki as cited in McLaughlin, 2003, p. 128) through strengthening resistance to such power relationships. This and other resistance talk that does not support bullying behaviours, could be strengthened within the prison setting.

In order to strengthen ways of framing bullying that may be relevant in the prison setting, I sought the advice of people familiar with the cultural context of the prison. In keeping with the anti-colonial underpinnings relevant to this study, I consulted with local iwi. I also consulted other researchers who had worked in a prison setting and drew on my own previous experience as a social worker in a women’s prison.

Ways to draw on productive power in the prison environment

A local iwi representative indicated that efforts to reframe the dominant social landscape must include work which connects young Maori women with their families (K. Hutchsen, personal communication, July 18, 2007). She said it is important for whanau to take responsibility for their own young people and that familiarity with whakapapa (genealogy, involving connection with ancestors, land, rivers, and mountains, all of which have spiritual significance for Maori) is essential for well-being and positive identity for Maori. She also stressed the need for women prisoners to embrace Maori cultural and spiritual values and to know that gang culture, with its violence and acceptance of criminal behaviour, is not Maori culture. Encouraging and resourcing more input from kuia or kaumatua, who can help to frame positive discourses around Maori cultural and spiritual values, and assist women to become familiar with their whakapapa, may enable this to happen.

Therapeutic communities or programming in prisons may also assist in supporting the use of discourses which do not accept bullying. These programmes would need to be perceived as relevant and realistic by prisoners and delivered by staff, community groups or well-trained and supported prisoners who have high standing amongst the wider prison group. Again kuia, kaumatua, or Maori service providers, may be appropriate personnel to deliver such programmes. A recently purchased tikanga Maori programme for women which emphasises the relationship of the individual with their socio-cultural environment (Department of Corrections, 2005), could be introduced. This may further help Maori women to connect with cultural and spiritual values.

It is not clear what influence staff culture may have on the social environment for prisoners in women’s prisons. It may be useful in the future to explore staff “talk” around bullies and victims and to consider what their influence may be on the acceptance of bullying as has been apparent in this cohort of young women. Reframing staff talk through staff training may also help to strengthen ways of talking about bullying that do not support it. In addition, whilst traditionally, prisons have been authoritarian and built around military models of power and hierarchy, other models based on Maori kaupapa (philosophy) have recently been built into the prison system. These new prisons may provide a unique opportunity to create a non-authoritarian and more supportive environment for prisoners and staff alike.

Other opportunities for positive change in women’s prisons need to be developed through more comprehensive research across women’s prisons in this country. Some recent research (Goldingay, 2007a) has indicated that the strong presence of Maori within this cohort of young female prisoners may enable the cultural practice of respecting elders (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004) to predominate. Such respect appears to extend to older women prisoners which indicates a
These programmes would need to be perceived as relevant and realistic by prisoners and delivered by staff, community groups or well-trained and supported prisoners who have high standing amongst the wider prisoner group.

posibility that with sufficient motivation and appropriate support, supervision and guidance, adult women prisoners of high standing may be able to reframe and recreate the dominant ways of talking about bullying and significantly alter the power dynamics in women’s prisons.

To work towards addressing the demand for drugs within prisons, a “Strategy to Reduce Drug and Alcohol Use by Offenders” (Department of Corrections, 2004) is in place which involves a partnership between the Department of Corrections and the Ministry of Health. This strategic partnership is designed to “strengthen efforts at reducing offender’s demand for drugs” (p. 4). One specific initiative is to “develop and implement a programme for women offenders with complex multiple needs, including substance abuse” (p. 7). Questions around which approach is most effective with prisoners (Department of Corrections, 2004) still remain, however, and clarifying this is also a priority of the strategy.

Should the strategy prove effective in reducing the demand for drugs, this may lessen the toxicity of the prison environment, as there will be fewer means through which prisoners can exercise power over and victimise others.

Programming and services which reframe bullying and also address addiction issues may assist in disrupting a culture where bullying amongst prisoners still occurs.

Conclusion

This has been an introductory enquiry into bullying in a New Zealand women’s prison. It has offered an interpretation of some meanings embedded in texts produced by young women prisoners, although other interpretations are always possible. Nevertheless, the study offers a framework from which to consider some power relations that may be present, and from this, the implications for the mental health and overall well-being of young women prisoners. It appears from this analysis that the type of bullying most often talked about consisted of threats and extortion, or “stand-overs”. One speaker alluded to spreading rumours as another form of victimisation which may inflict as much pain as being physically “hit”. Such bullying may be particularly detrimental to the vulnerable young women, who may have experienced victimisation prior to their incarceration. It may also be particularly painful as it alienates and marginalises young women who need to be connected to and supported by others.

A small number of participants used ways of talking about bullying that did not accept or condone it. These ways of talking about and framing bullying could be strengthened by the presence of adult prisoners, or kuia or kaumatua, who are able to reinforce Maori cultural and spiritual values. Programming and services which reframe bullying and also address addiction issues may assist in disrupting a culture where bullying amongst prisoners still occurs. More extensive use of alternative prison structures, such as those based on kaupapa Maori, may also create a more supportive environment for prisoners, as opposed to the current model which may contribute to a higher risk of bullying. Additional data collected from other women’s prisons will require analysis, however, as will consultation with Maori in the main urban areas where women’s prisons are located. These analytical and consultative processes are needed prior to any recommendations regarding national policy with respect to the bullying that some young women experience while in prison.

Sophie Goldingay is a PhD candidate with the School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury. This article is adapted from a paper presented at the What Works with Women Offenders: Challenging Stereotypes and Achieving Change Conference, held in Prato, Tuscany, Italy in September 2007, and based on a study funded by the SPEar Linkages PhD program.

References


Our attitudes need to change so that we are clearly saying that violence is not acceptable. Our children should not be growing up to expect and tolerate being bullied and hit. Nor should they be growing up feeling that it is acceptable to treat other people this way.

Sandra Alofivae, Commissioner, Families Commission, August 2007
Presbyterian Support Upper South Island (PSUSI) recently completed a research study into youth anger and violence. The qualitative study explored factors that contribute to youth anger, factors that help young people experiencing anger issues, and factors that may contribute towards a reduction in youth anger. Participants included 39 young people who were identified as experiencing anger issues. The young people (aged between 7 and 15 from throughout the upper South Island) took part in semi-structured interviews or focus groups. Nine parents also participated. In addition 40 professionals completed a survey with open-ended questions on their experience of working with youth.

The research found a strong connection between anger and violence. Addressing anger helped reduce violence. Anger is the fuel of violence, but anger itself is a reaction that masks many other emotions, such as feeling hurt, sad, frustrated or let down. Parents, professionals and young people identified youth anger as rooted in particular relationships, experiences and contexts. Anger indicates unresolved issues between people, or within environments, but often the young person or their behaviour becomes the sole focus of the intervention.

Most of the situations that young people who took part in the study felt angry about would also invoke adult anger. These included feeling unfairly treated, not feeling listened to or believed, and being hit, bullied or verbally abused. Most young people felt sad or upset about these experiences and sometimes reacted by acting violently - a vicious cycle. This also disconnected them from their hopes and dreams.

Professionals spoke of girls increasingly externalising their anger and acting in more aggressive ways. They also identified a general trend towards increasing levels of violence, and people requiring help for anger issues at younger ages than previously. Parents and professionals lamented that help was often only available once crisis point was reached and violence was resorted to. They also identified a number of systemic issues and wider influences that put stress on parents and young people. Parents identified the need for social investment in further early intervention and preventative services. They also suggested a number of changes at the institutional and macro level that would help young people and their families.

All parties identified that addressing anger would help reduce violence. Addressing anger involves examining the issues that cause people to feel angry, including environmental factors, in the intervention framework, and generating future-focused solutions.

The findings of the research suggest attention to three broad areas would reduce youth anger. Firstly, fostering healthy respectful relationships is crucial. Caring, empathetic and healthy relationships with effective communication are not only protective factors against anger issues but important in helping young people to manage issues and feel supported. Listening often helps to diffuse anger that may have led to violence. Sometimes listening helped people to thoughtfully consider issues and come up with useful solutions. Secondly, it is critical to tackle our cultural tolerance of violence, not just within families but at the community level. Thirdly, young people need to have appropriate boundaries and support in place to facilitate positive development.

Offering young people choices and infusing them with a sense of optimism and hope heightens their sense of self control and motivation. An emphasis on interdependence and responsibilities in tandem with rights is advocated. To achieve these things professionals felt a holistic approach was needed. This means also valuing and supporting parents, and those providing key services for young people and their families. Collaborative multisectoral action is needed to effect significant change.

For further information about this research, or a full version of the research findings, please contact Sue Milligan on 03 363 8203, or email suem@psusi.org.nz

We know that children who have been subjected to abusive, violent upbringings or who have early conduct problems have a much higher risk of becoming offenders as adults. We know that we must identify and support these children from an early age if we are to change what happens to them later in life …

Hon Annette King, Minister of Police, November 2007
Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society Canterbury is part of a national federation, NZPARS, which traces its roots back to Dunedin in June 1887 when the constitution of the Patient and Prisoners’ Aid Society was approved. By the 1950s, three organisations were offering services to prisoners in Canterbury and in 1958 they amalgamated to become the South Island Prisoners’ Rehabilitation Association, in 1961 becoming federated to the national body (NZPARS).

The objectives of PARS are to assist prisoners to reintegrate back into society as law abiding citizens after release, and to assist the family/whanau of prisoners to manage through the period while their loved one is in prison, and to adapt to their return. To achieve this, we use a holistic and high-contact process that includes prisoners, their family/whanau, community groups and government departments through all stages of their sentence and often well after release. In order to do that, we have a staff of eight full- and part-time paid employees and over 40 dedicated volunteers.

Pre-sentence
We assist prisoners to prepare for the often unfamiliar world they are facing so they can minimise the negative impact and assist them to make the experience a positive and rehabilitative one. We can also help them tidy up their affairs and often work closely with their family/whanau, helping them get any appropriate benefits and support and helping them arrange visitation.

During sentence
Many prisoners, especially long termers, receive few, if any, visitors, and many of our team of volunteers visit these men and women on a regular basis. We also help prisoners access courses and training, assist them in self-advocacy, communicate on their behalf with their outside community and help facilitate visits by family. Helping with visits is an extremely important part of our work, and experience has taught us that when a prisoner maintains strong links with their family/whanau, they are significantly less likely to reoffend. We often take children in to see their parent, especially when the parent and their former partner are estranged and where a visit from the partner would be harmful. We will also look after small children and babies to allow their parent to visit their loved one, and this is an important role as many parents do not want their children to see their father or mother in prison.

Before and after release
This is a particularly critical period, and we work hard with prisoners, their family/whanau, community groups and government agencies to make the transition from prison to society as smooth and productive as possible. If the prisoner has nowhere to go we will help them (where needed) find appropriate accommodation, assist them with getting some clothing, basic household goods, a food parcel, etc. We will also help prisoners work with Work and Income to get the appropriate benefits. In many cases released prisoners suffer from undiagnosed, or unsupported, mental health issues, and we network with a wide range of community agencies to try and address these needs. Recidivism is a significant problem with over 40% of released prisoners reoffending and returning to prison within 12 months. Behind these statistics lies a trail of victims, often including the family/whanau of the prisoner, many of whom end up victims of family violence. Every year PARS works with over 1000 men, women and children; often from the least advantaged sectors of our community, and every year our field workers and volunteers are able to help these people rebuild their lives and relationships. Every year we are able to look at men and women who are living crime and violence free lives, often for the first time ever, due to the input of our team of highly trained staff and volunteers.

For further information contact:
PARS
196 Wordsworth Street
Waltham
PO Box 7697
Sydenham
Christchurch
Manager: Colin Elliott
Phone: 03 371 9183
Publicity: David Thompson
Phone: 027 603 0387
Email: parscant@xtra.co.nz

### Greater impacts in reducing re-offending: Reintegration

Many offenders face significant social and personal obstacles on their release from prison: these include unemployment, inadequate accommodation, financial difficulties, marital or family conflicts, lack of social support, and chronic health problems. Providing support for offenders when they return to the community after prison is an important way in which rates of re-offending can be further reduced.

Corrections provides a range of services which teach offenders the skills needed to deal with such challenges, and resolve or manage specific issues. Reintegrative teams are active in all prisons, with specialist units recently opened at Mt Eden and Rimutaka prisons.

Some reintegrative services provided are jointly delivered in partnership with other organisations such as the New Zealand Prisoners’Aid and Rehabilitation Society. The Department and the Ministry of Social Development have set up prison reintegration teams to provide employment support for released prisoners. Assistance is also provided in assessing accommodation requirements, advice on relationships and managing finances.

**Department of Corrections, Briefing for Incoming Minister, November 2007**
Recent publications

How Can I Tell? Recognising when a child or family needs help
Anthea Simcock, Child Protection Studies Institute, 2007

The booklet, How Can I Tell? provides basic information on how to recognise abuse or potential abuse and how to assist children and families when they need help. The booklet is a response to those who may have said, “I was worried about that child, but I didn’t know what to do.”

The booklet identifies physical and behavioural indicators that offer clues that child abuse and neglect—physical, sexual and emotional—may be occurring. Very clear and detailed descriptions are provided of children’s behaviour that can alert us to the possibility of abuse, while noting that these signs and symptoms may be related to major life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, and the arrival of a new sibling. A number of family and adult indicators are also identified, as most cases of abuse and neglect are perpetrated by someone known to the child.

The booklet provides advice about where to go for help and support that can lead to appropriate intervention when abuse or neglect is suspected and requires a response. There are also clear directions about who to report to when there are concerns that serious harm may have occurred, such as the police or Child, Youth and Family, who are then responsible for any assessment or investigation.

Knowing what to look for and what to do when we suspect children may be abused or neglected will help to reduce the risk of children being hurt or harmed and protect them from the long-term effects of trauma. Taking action to stop the abuse will help to improve the well-being and quality of life for children, and contribute to achieving the dream of making New Zealand a safe haven for all children.

How Can I Tell? is available free of charge (a donation would be welcome) and multiple copies are available from:

HCIT
PO Box 679
Hamilton 3240
Phone: 07 838 3370
Fax: 07 838 9950
Email: hcit@cps.org.nz
Website: www.cps.org.nz for a downloadable version.

Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention - Challenges for the Future
Age Concern, 2007

The report, Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention - Challenges for the Future, discusses key issues facing elder abuse and neglect prevention services. These key issues, to be addressed in the national strategy for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and Neglect, currently being prepared, include:

- Filling in the gaps: work across a whole of government and community action
- Better data collection so the real dimensions of the problem can be identified
- Funding to support DHBs to implement the new Family Violence Intervention Guidelines – Elder Abuse and Neglect
- Tackling the root cause: the ageism and lack of respect older people face

“Older people need respect. To make a difference, we must all challenge ageist attitudes and create an environment where older people feel safe and valued and where people working with

School-based Violence Prevention Programmes: A literature review
Ian Hassall and Kirsten Hanna, Institute of Public Policy, Auckland University of Technology, 2007

Worldwide, school-based programmes are being developed as a means of preventing violence. The aim of School-based Violence Prevention Programmes, prepared for the Accident Compensation Corporation, has been to review the scientific literature and establish criteria to evaluate best practice violence prevention programmes in schools.

The review used national standards that have contributed to the development of programmes in New Zealand as the basis for an exploration of programmes from early childhood to secondary level with a focus on primary prevention. Four programme types are identified: anti-bullying, safe dating, sexual abuse and personal safety, and parenting programmes. While internationally some programmes have been successful in modifying behaviour within the school, programmes that involve the wider community tend to be more effective.

The report also notes the need to acknowledge political and economic influences that may also contribute to the success of programmes.

Key ingredients for success include the quality of the programme; implementation and appropriateness of programmes that target risk and protective factors within and involve collaboration across critical domains, such as individual, peer, family and school; and programmes that focus on skill building.

The report concludes by suggesting that opportunities to reinforce or intervene in antisocial or pro-social behaviour occur at all stages of life and go beyond the school. The earlier the intervention, however, the more successful the outcome.

School-based Violence Prevention Programmes is available in pdf format from:

www.ipp.org.nz/publications.htm
older people are valued,” says Martin Martyn, Chief Executive, Age Concern New Zealand.

The report also includes an analysis of referrals to Age Concern elder abuse and neglect prevention services from 2004 to 2006. Reported cases, as international research indicates, are only the tip of the iceberg.

Common forms of abuse in the 944 cases analysed in the report included psychological (62%), material and/or financial (42%) and physical abuse (20%). Cases of neglect (19%), active and passive, included health, nutrition, advocacy, personal hygiene, and social isolation. Abusers are most likely to have been family/whanau; consequently, the older person “lives in fear of those they love and trust”.

Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention - Challenges for the Future, is available in pdf format from: www.ageconcern.org.nz

Copies can also be obtained from:
Age Concern
PO Box 10 688
Wellington
Phone: 04 801 9338
Fax: 04 801 9336
Email: orders@ageconcern.org.nz

The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand: A review and evaluation of knowledge

Denise Lieveore and Pat Mayhew, Crime and Justice Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, 2007

The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand, a review undertaken by the Crime and Justice Research Centre, is intended to support the work of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.

The report provides a comprehensive review of published and unpublished research relating to the types of family violence identified in Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy (MSD, 2002): intimate partner violence; dating violence; child abuse and neglect; elder abuse and neglect; and sibling abuse. It also includes analyses of data collected by government and non-government agencies.

The report draws attention to the difficulties in defining violence where the distinction between deliberate, on-going and severe violence and inadvertent and less harmful acts has not been clarified, and contextual factors may not have been taken into account. The report also notes the difficulties of providing reliable estimates of the extent of family violence given the sensitive and covert nature of family violence.

The results of this comprehensive review of research studies to date and official records support the understanding that family violence is widespread and that the characteristics of victims are known. The findings also support what is known about the “probable underlying social fractures at play, the overlap between victims and perpetrators …, and the transgenerational cycle of violence.”

While more research could provide more exact and detailed data, sufficient is already known to support “remedial solutions”. Some areas for future research that could expand the current level of understanding include resilience as opposed to risk factors, and the structural and cultural factors that contribute to and influence the context and dynamics of family violence.

The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand is published by the Ministry of Social Development and available from:

Urgent need for child sexual abuse prevention

A study by The University of Auckland indicates that about one in four New Zealand women have been victims of child sexual abuse before the age of 15: 23% of women in urban areas and 28% in rural areas experienced some form of sexual abuse as a child.

In the majority of cases one perpetrator was involved, usually a male family member, and around half of the women had experienced the abuse on more than one occasion. The average age of the victim at the start of the abuse was nine years old, with the average age of the abuser being 30.

“There is an urgent need for the implementation of programmes for the primary prevention of child sexual abuse, and the provision of support and treatment for women who have experienced child sexual abuse, as well as treatment for perpetrators of child sexual abuse,” says Dr Janet Fanslow of the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

“With one in four New Zealand women reporting child sexual abuse, the scale of the problem calls for urgent implementation of programmes to prevent child sexual abuse and to address the impact of child sexual abuse within our communities. Maori women were more likely to report child sexual abuse compared with women from other ethnic groups, highlighting the need for culturally appropriate services.”

The New Zealand Violence Against Women study, funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, was a replication of the World Health Organisation Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women. The New Zealand study interviewed nearly 3,000 women aged 18 to 64 from the Auckland and Waikato regions about their experiences of violence prior to and after 15 years of age.

Women offenders in Aotearoa New Zealand: The impact of violence across the life course

Annabel Taylor

The life histories of women offenders highlight their gendered experience of violence, the significance of repeat violent victimisation and how these factors potentially mediate other forms of disadvantage. The effect of victimisation alters across the life course reflecting different group membership and intimate partner relationships mostly characterised by violence and control. The recurrence of victimisation suggests a cumulative effect similar to the notion of “cumulative disadvantage” (Laub & Sampson, 1993).

This article is based on research findings from a larger PhD project (Taylor, 2004) that investigated risk and protective factors associated with women’s re-offending. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 26 women who had been released from a regional prison in New Zealand over a period of up to seven years prior to the interview. Life history data indicates an association between women’s victimisation through precipitating life events and exposure to early risk of offending.

The findings suggest that victimisation was experienced by both women who were re-offenders and women who had not re-offended and was not connected specifically to recidivism. The contribution this study has made to the notion of “cumulative disadvantage” (Laub & Sampson, 1993). Childhood abuse and neglect have been associated with subsequent posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), although this may be mediated by family, individual and lifestyle variables (Widom, 1999). Victimisation throughout the life course has been found to result in poor health outcomes for women (Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005). A cumulative effect from repeated experiences of victimisation has been related to women’s depressive symptomatology (McGuigian & Middlemiss, 2005).

A link between physical and sexual abuse of women and crime has been raised by feminist theorists (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Katz, 2000; Kubiak, 2004; Moe, 2004). The notion of a cycle of violence (Widom, 1989) that links to life course trajectories as a consequence of victimisation, has highlighted the early involvement of victims of sexual abuse in criminal behaviour (Widom & Ames, 1994). Childhood abuse has also been linked to later perpetration of violence (White & Widom, 2003). Katz (2000) has shown that addressing victimisation has been critical for women in the desistance process.

Other international research has focussed attention on the connection between victimisation and substance abuse and how these two factors may influence pathways into women’s criminal lifestyles (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Katz, 2000; McLellan et al., 1997; Taylor, in press). Victimisation throughout the life course has been found to result in poor health outcomes for women (Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005). Considerable research concerning women offenders has placed victimisation in the context of cycles of poverty, victimisation, substance abuse and crime in which women find themselves trapped with little opportunity to escape (Carlen, 1982; Carlen & Worrall, 1987 [UK]; Chesney-Lind, 1997; McCorkel, 2004 [US]; Moth & Hudson, 1999; O’Neill, 1989; Taylor, 1996 [NZ]).

The combination of individual experiences of victimisation and socio-structural disadvantage relates to Laub and Sampson’s (1993) concept of “cumulative disadvantage”.

The role of victimisation

This study found a high incidence of past victimisation among a group of 26 released women inmates. Twenty-three participants (88%) reported some form of childhood abuse. A high incidence of sexual abuse in adolescence was also reported; 18 participants (70%) stated that they had experienced sexual assault between the ages of 16 and 20 years. For many participants this would have occurred in addition to the various types of abuse they had experienced in early childhood.

In terms of more recent relationships, including long-term relationships, 13 participants (50%) had experienced physical assault. One woman described her experience of psychological abuse as the most difficult to bear. Her view was that she would have much preferred to be beaten than to be constantly “put down”. She saw this as having a more negative effect on her self-esteem as she was growing up than any other form of abuse.

The quantitative data support the notion that early childhood and intimate partner violence are likely to be a feature of the lives of women offenders throughout different stages of the life course. How this interacts with offending and re-offending is more difficult to establish. However, retrospective accounts offer insights into possible relationships between re-offending and victimisation and also into the complexity of this relationship.

Participants also reported that they had experienced violent incidents while in prison. When seen in the context of their personal histories, this suggests that as part of incarceration the majority of participants were exposed to further victimisation which they were unable to escape. Two women stated that their experience of violence in prison had a long-lasting effect on their adjustment after release. In terms of dealing with grievances that arose during prison sentences, participants who accessed the formal complaints process expressed a high level of suspicion and lack of trust in complaint mechanisms. They reported fear of repercussions, from either staff or other inmates, if they did complain.

In contrast with the negative experiences of imprisonment, participants also reported positive effects of participating in prison programmes such as the Mana Wahine programme (to aid recovery and build self-esteem using Maori perspectives). They described the support of empathetic prison staff and counsellors and...
Considerable research concerning women offenders has placed victimisation in the context of cycles of poverty, victimisation, substance abuse and crime in which women find themselves trapped with little opportunity to escape...

access to therapeutic counselling for sexual abuse as “significant”. In some cases, prison gave women the first opportunity to discover that various forms of abuse were unacceptable, and were able to begin the process of recovery.

**Age-related findings**

The study explored victimisation factors and the possible association with risk of offending at various stages across the life course. At the earliest stage, from 0-12 years, “sexual abuse” was most commonly reported as a factor associated with offending by participants (56%). This was followed by “running away”, “truanting”, “losing family support”, and “alcohol and drug abuse”. Physical and psychological abuse and “becoming an angry person” were also reported, as was the “loss of an important person”. This cluster of factors appears to be associated with entry into offending given their age at the time; however, this is not to say that some life events at this stage in a person’s life may be perceived as contributing to offending across the life course.

In the 13-18 age band, having “criminal associates” was the most commonly reported factor. This was followed by “running away”, and “having a relationship with an offender”. “Sexual abuse” was the next most common factor, followed by “loss of an important person”, “becoming angry”, “alcohol and drug abuse”, “truanting”, and “joining a gang”. The data reveal little support for the impact of parents’ and siblings’ criminality at this stage but some support for the impact of physical and psychological abuse.

In the 19-25 age band, “having a relationship with an offender” featured more frequently in association with re-offending. This was followed by “alcohol and drug abuse”, “having criminal associates”; and “losing an important person”. These were followed by the category “becoming an angry person”. A small number of participants referred to “sexual abuse” at this stage.

In the 26-45 age band, “relationship with an offender” was also the most frequent feature, along with the “loss of an important person”. “Alcohol and drug abuse” and the category “other” accounted for the next most commonly referred to factors. In the category of “other”, reference was made to the trauma associated with a violent murder, lack of money, and needing to pay the bills and buy food, abuse by husbands (two references) and “pleasing parents” as explanations for ongoing offending.

**Life history findings**

The primary interviews concluded with a life history question relating to victimisation. The purpose of this question was to gain an understanding of how participants’ re-offending may change developmentally across the life course.

In the participants’ narratives, in which victimisation encompassed sexual, physical, psychological abuse, emotional abuse was most prevalent. Early victimisation was not described as an immediate precipitant of offending, but rather as an underlying factor that led to a series of consequences that in turn led to offending.

The category of “running away” was a corollary to early victimisation for nine participants. The effect of childhood maltreatment left them with no option but to run away from home. This exposed them to life on the streets where they met other young people who were abusing drugs and alcohol, and committing theft in order to survive. The consequence of this entry point became years of dealing with their substance dependency, criminal offending, and abusive relationships.

Sexual abuse was described by some participants as precipitating a sequence of events that also led to offending. As one women explained:

I was brought up in a traditional family where you were seen and not heard. A close family member abused me but it was kept in the family. I couldn’t talk to my parents about it. I began running away when I was a teenager. I came across offending by other teenagers at the time. We used to hang around the Square. I began using LSD at this time.

For another participant, witnessing domestic violence coupled with her own experience of sexual abuse finally led to her removal from the family home and her introduction to offending. Mum was caring and hard working and supported us children. ... [she] was stabbed by my father when she was seven months pregnant and I saw that when I was six. I saw Mum chased through the paddocks with a machete. ... I was abused by the second partner of my mother and this was traumatic. Mum has said to talk to her about anything but I didn’t. My mother caught my stepfather taking me away – she was hurt I didn’t tell her. She stopped the relationship with him after that. I was ten years old. I began to run away from home and was put into foster homes, but then I would run away back to my mother’s house. Through running away I went to Borstal and met up with kids doing drugs early on. I began using dope and heroin. I was dependent on heroin from the age of 11 or 12.

The impact of early victimisation on re-offending as opposed to beginning offending was less clear. However, the issue of early victimisation was described more often as having a life-long influence on the participants.

The experience of violence and the issue of power and control in recent relationships were more likely to be directly linked to recent re-offending. In response to this life history question, 11 participants described the violence and control exercised by a male partner that had a direct impact on their re-offending. Since this question was reflective and retrospective, the women were commenting on the effect of these relationships on their re-offending regardless of whether they had more recently stopped offending.

A significant number of the women bore physical scars that were mute testimony to the acts of violence they had experienced; in some cases these had been inflicted in early childhood.

One participant described her experience of living with a violent partner:

[My ex-husband] used to beat the kids and I had to step in between him and the children. I was too scared to leave and I didn’t trust that the police would get there in time. ... [he] was a drug dealer and I had to do things for him. I thought my selling drugs would keep my ex-husband happy. He’s got a cocaine addiction and he easily puts $65,000 up his arm. He’s been inside a lot. My family always expected me to die and they didn’t want anything to do with him. I ended up with addiction to valium. While I was in prison he sold our home and my share of the money was invested with a lawyer. He spent all my share by forging my signature on cheques and giving them to the lawyer.

Other participants also described in graphic detail incidents where they had either been victims of or had observed violence, and of the injuries they had sustained. However, they did not present themselves as victims in relation to their experiences, but rather as survivors. In many instances, the degree of violence was “normalised” within the different settings from which it originated; for example, whether it was the family home, the streets they learned to live in, or in gang-related settings. A significant number of the women bore physical scars that were mute testimony to the acts of violence they had experienced; in some cases these had been inflicted in early childhood.
The views of informed experts

Seven practitioners from a number of key organisations providing services for released inmates, including Community Probation, were also interviewed. Their narratives provided explicit and compelling descriptions of the impact of violence and power and control within the women’s relationships. A common reference was to: “an eternal problem of violence against women and abuse of women”. One practitioner stated: “My overwhelming impression, when looking back over the years is being struck by how generally unhelpful women offenders’ partners were.”

Others described how some women appeared to drift towards abusive partners simply because they found relief in having someone “willing to stay with them long enough”, or would “forgive their boyfriends for the most scummy things”. One described the women as “beautiful, heart of gold people, and it’s sad seeing just a little spark that keeps getting crushed and the potential to develop and grow gets lost”.

The findings of this study clearly show the need for greater gender-responsiveness to the diverse needs of women offenders during sentencing, when incarcerated, and in their transition back to the community.

Discussion

The high level of victimisation in early childhood and in intimate relationships found in this study reflects that reported in studies of women’s prison populations in the United States (Chesney-Lind, 1989, 1993; Widom & Ames, 1994) and in New Zealand (Lashlie & Pivac, 2000; Moth & Hudson, 1999; Taylor, 1996). More importantly, the study draws attention to the accumulated effect of re-victimisation over the life course. It also highlights some of the complexities of victimisation, how these relate to other forms of disadvantage that affect women’s lives, and how individual life course trajectories and transitions are impacted by victimisation.

From the age-related data, the role of victimisation emerged as the precipitating factor in a series of related events that led to entry into offending. Running away and forming relationships with older offenders on the streets was a typical consequence of early victimisation. In adolescence re-victimisation occurred in initial intimate relationships. The descriptions of the various types of violence indicated both the traumatic nature of early events and also the “normalisation” of much of this experience after further re-victimisation. In life history accounts, both victimisation and re-victimisation had a significant impact on adult relationships. In addition, some participants experienced acts of violence during their imprisonment.

The data from interviews with practitioners as informed experts also described the impact of victimisation on the quality of clients’ relationships with intimate partners. The availability of therapeutic counselling was valued by participants wanting to address the harmful effects of sexual abuse while in prison. The positive outcome of counselling extended beyond the prison environment and appeared to assist the women in their personal growth and in addressing their offending.

Associated with the experience of victimisation was the overall lack of choice available to this group of women, bringing with it an overriding sense of inevitability. A similar inevitability was described by the practitioners who worked with the released women in the community and who also described their frustration with the external influences that were seen to be beyond their and their clients’ control.

Conclusion

The findings of this study strongly suggest that the long-term impact of childhood and repeat victimisation needs to be addressed in the desistance process. For example, continued access to sexual abuse counselling will offer women in prison the opportunity to address the multitude of issues abuse raises for them in the context of their lives.

More effective early intervention for many of the participants might have resulted in a different life course in terms of their entry into offending. The systems in place to assist families with serious care and protection issues for their children clearly failed in the case of many of the participants. The fact that the majority were able to leave school in early adolescence, without effective intervention, resulted in increased affiliation to other youth already on the streets. It also exposed them to the risks of street prostitution and to substance abuse. More effective early intervention measures are clearly needed not only for families but also in schools so that more stringent, ongoing monitoring of school attendance can address the early precursors of criminal offending.

Intimate partner violence also featured in the life histories of participants who referred to the failure of response services to protect them. There are outstanding issues in relation to facilitating access for women with criminal offence histories to domestic violence response services. Previous negative experiences of police and NGO support services may mean reluctance on the part of victims to notify and involve authorities.

The violence experienced in the prison environment also impacted on the participants’ adjustment after release. The widely held distrust of prison complaints systems expressed by participants warrants further investigation. Whilst such distrust continues, inmates are constrained in their ability to address grievances during their prison sentences. Independent review mechanisms are needed in order to investigate complaints so that inmates are able to discuss their concerns and the real level of misuse and abuse of power can be disclosed.

The findings of this study clearly show the need for greater gender-responsiveness to the diverse needs of women offenders during sentencing, when incarcerated, and in their transition back to the community. Responsive prison policy would seek to provide treatment approaches that include access to education and self-development programmes, and individual multimodal therapy in line with best-practice models (Briere & Jordan, 2004). Attention to the quality of prison staff should ensure that empathic and respectful interactions that recognise different cultural beliefs are fostered, so that women are not further disempowered and victimised.

Dr Annabel Taylor is Deputy Director of Te Awatea and a senior lecturer with the School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury. Her research interests relate to criminal justice and social work and women’s experience of the criminal justice system.

References


Police, Women’s Refuge and Child, Youth and Family are working together to ensure that there is a speedy and appropriate engagement with families that are experiencing violence. By sharing information and their collective experience, they can ensure a swift and effective response.

Hon Ruth Dyson, Minister of Social Development and Employment, December 2007
Since signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) New Zealand has made significant progress to improve the well-being of our young – in relation to their health – their education achievement – their safety in a range of environments. Although we have some way to go it’s important on occasions like this to celebrate just how far we have gone as a country to be a better place for children and young people.

Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Youth Affairs, UNCROC 18th birthday celebration, 20 November 2007
Living on the Cutting Edge: Women’s Experiences of Protection Orders
Dr Neville Robertson and Associate Professor Ruth Busch, University of Waikato
8 November 2007

Dr Neville Robertson and Professor Ruth Busch’s seminar presentation was based on their report, Living on the Cutting Edge: Women’s Experiences of Protection Orders, commissioned by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and prepared by a team from the University of Waikato. The report is in two volumes.

The first volume highlights the stories of the 43 Maori, Pasifika, Pakeha and ethnic minority women who took part in the research and their experiences of domestic violence. The case studies selected from the research presentation offered a chilling account of the reality of living every day with domestic violence, and the impact it has on the women and children who are largely the victims. That 212 women and children have died in domestic violence incidents since the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 1995, provides evidence of the covert nature of domestic violence and the severity of its outcomes. Despite the soundness of the legislation, some interpretations and responses tend to limit its effectiveness.

What's to be done? is the focus of the second volume. This explores women’s experiences of applying for protection orders and examines the responses of statutory agencies and community organisations as well as professionals to women and children caught up in the chaos of domestic violence. Of the 32 women in the study who applied for without notice protection orders, 28 were granted a temporary protection order. However, a range of contextual factors may create barriers to the process of applying for a protection order and undermine the degree of safety they are designed to provide. Key informants who also took part in the study noted that the threshold for granting without notice orders has been raised in recent years. This can lead to further difficulties for women who often continue to confront and be victimised by the power and control tactics wielded by their abusers. A woman’s own assessment of the risks she and her children face needs to be acknowledged alongside the evidence presented to support her application. There is also some concern that the risks may be minimised or dismissed and that paper-based evidence may not always receive the attention expected given the risk of violence is known to increase at the time of or following separation.

Selected case studies were used in the seminar presentation to tell the stories of women who had experienced breaches of protection orders. These highlighted the insidious nature of domestic violence where electronic forms of stalking and harassment can continue to victimise women post-separation, despite a protection order. Abusers were also successful in having a protection order legally discharged or, by using intimidation tactics, persuading the woman to abandon the application for a final order. Examples were also given of the ways in which women consider the interests of their children in negotiating their own safety: either to stay or to leave the abuser.

The extent to which some abusers ignore the impact of their actions on the emotional and physical well-being of their children and the compromises women are forced to make in order to comply with legislative provisions for custody and access, despite the risks, indicate the highly complex and expansive range of issues involved where violence occurs within families. More importantly, this complexity needs to be better understood so that formal and informal sources of support can be more responsive to and effective in contributing to the safety of women and children and in holding perpetrators accountable.

Living on the Cutting Edge is available in pdf format from: http://research.waikato.ac.nz/CuttingEdge/

Protection orders vital tool to reduce family violence
Hon Lianne Dalziel, 27 August 2007

In response to the release of the report, Living on the Cutting Edge, Lianne Dalziel, as Minister of Women’s Affairs, said: “The most powerful aspect of the report for me is the stories of the 43 women who have lived through family violence. I would like to pay tribute to those women, who shared their harrowing stories in the case studies. Their bravery has enabled us to gain an insight into what things need to be done to better protect those at risk of family violence. They also show us what is working well and that, despite problems, protection orders do work and can save lives.”

The report has been referred to the Taskforce on Action on Violence within Families which is to consider and report on the recommendations.

“A lot has already been done to tackle New Zealand’s appalling record of family violence since this report was commissioned (by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs) in 2005. These include the establishment of the Taskforce and the review of relevant legislation including the Domestic Violence Act 1995, which governs protection orders. Initiatives developed in many parts of government have already begun to address some of the report’s recommendations,” Lianne Dalziel said.

The close working relationship between government and non-government agencies will support the strong focus on community action and attitudinal change within the Taskforce’s first programme of action.

“The report provides a powerful reminder about the nature of family violence and what can be done to help victims. This includes giving those victims good support to help them understand the nature and risks of their situation.

“One thing that stood out from the report for me was the need for the perpetrators of domestic violence to receive clear and unambiguous messages about the unacceptability of violence. They must be held to account and that requires a consistent and escalating response if victims are to be protected.

“The report also reinforces the fact that it is possible to predict the risk that victims of domestic violence face. As the report says, ‘past behaviour is a very strong predictor of future behaviour’ but more than this, the victim’s own perception of the danger is one of the best indicators of actual risk,” Lianne Dalziel said.

Further information on the government’s response to the report and on protection orders can be found in the “What’s new” section of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs website: www.mwa.govt.nz
Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Working to prevent elder abuse and neglect

What's happening behind closed doors at 47 Waihinau Street?*

Peter Smythe’s business and then his marriage failed within months of each other. His mother, Rita, welcomed him when he asked to move back home. She was 78, and living alone was becoming a struggle, so this seemed the answer to all their problems.

Now, a year after Peter moved in, the house and garden are unkempt, the phone’s been disconnected and Rita is seldom seen. On the rare occasions she goes out, Rita seems withdrawn. She has lost weight, and she wore a home-made sling on her arm all last month. Friends and neighbours know something’s wrong, but no-one seems able to do anything and Rita says “everything’s fine”.

What can they do?

They can contact any Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention (EANP) service, and an EANP co-ordinator will investigate the situation.

The co-ordinator will consider whether:
• Rita is experiencing elder abuse – emotional, financial, physical, and perhaps even sexual.
• Peter is providing suitable care while coping with his mother’s deteriorating state of health.
• Respite care and/or specialist assistance is required to improve their situation.

The truth could be a combination of all three.

EANP co-ordinators work to support the rights and well-being of older people and their carers. They work with family members and community and health organisations with the goal of promoting the older person’s welfare, maintaining family links and resolving problems.

Age Concern New Zealand employs Louise Collins as the National Co-ordinator, EANP services, to support and develop all services.

“The problem is huge. Up to 50,000 older New Zealanders may be being abused – most of them by their own families,” she says. “Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention services are ready to help, but not everyone can access these.”

Age Concern is calling for Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention services to be expanded into parts of the country that currently have no cover. For example, Thames-Coromandel, West Coast, and Northland are missing out, along with parts of the main centres.

“Protection from elder abuse and neglect is a vital part of older people’s health and welfare, and we think it’s a national tragedy that some older people and their families aren’t covered,” Louise Collins says.

EANP services also offer education for people working with and caring for older people, and public awareness-raising activities aimed at early identification and prevention of elder abuse or neglect.

Age Concern New Zealand produced two new DVDs this year, to assist in education and public awareness programmes. The first, It’s All About Respect, is an interactive training tool with uniquely New Zealand content suitable for people working with older people. The second DVD, Why Respect?, is a compilation of comments from a broad range of people from the community and professional sector on what “respect” means to them, and the need to respect older people.

“We have built up the most comprehensive picture of elder abuse and neglect in New Zealand with our series of reports. Our most recent publication Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention - Challenges for the Future gives an excellent overview of the New Zealand situation,” says Louise Collins.

“I urge anyone who suspects an older person is being abused or neglected, or wants information about this topic, to contact an EANP service. As we say in our DVD, ‘we need to give them respect – they’re depending on us for it.’”

*Representative case study from Age Concern New Zealand files. Details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

More information, EANP service contact details, reports and training materials are all available at www.ageconcern.org.nz or call Age Concern New Zealand, 04 801 9338.
Elder abuse is a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon. Cultural factors play a large role in how people define elder abuse and construct their perceptions of the problem. Different meanings of elder abuse exist in different societies or cultures (Moon, 2000). For a deeper understanding of such a complex issue, this New Zealand study explores how Korean older people have perceived or experienced elder mistreatment and neglect in their new environment. Elder abuse in Korean culture interacts with traditional filial values that espouse mutual respect between parents and children; the concept of filial piety, therefore, is critically investigated within the wider cross-cultural and social context.

Issues emerging during the research
Issues that have emerged during the research process include the relationship between immigration and elder abuse, the distinction between domestic abuse and institutional abuse, and the ethical challenges in studying elder abuse within a minority population.

The relationship between elder abuse and immigration has important implications for situations that require cross-cultural adaptation to ageing and resettling in an unfamiliar place. Older migrants are likely to be vulnerable to elder abuse while traditional filial values, involving well-established protocols in intergenerational exchanges, are being eroded (Sung, 1995). Emotional maltreatment and neglect appears to be extensive, in part due to the combined effects of ageism and racism in the host society. Factors that may affect the risk of elder abuse among Korean older people include the degree of acculturation to the host society, income, living arrangements, and social isolation (Moon, 2000).

In this study, the concept of filial piety has emerged as a dynamic and complex process, involving not merely a cultural belief system but also practical values that have universal roots. The role of the community becomes crucial in caring for older members who are likely to be isolated by language and culture.

The primary focus of the study is on Korean older people living in private dwellings, although abuse of older people also happens in residential settings. The distinction between the different types of abuse in the two settings has been a feature of the study that seeks to formulate an integrated conceptual understanding of filial piety and elder mistreatment. One of the reasons for this distinction is related to the assumption that elder abuse is a form of family violence that takes place in homes where love, trust, and respect play vital roles. In residential settings, paid carers may provide “good enough” care supported by their employment contract or professional duty, rather than the love or filial piety that underpins a relationship continuum in families (Meagher, 2006, p. 33). It could be argued that elder mistreatment in home care and maltreatment in institutional care should be dealt with in different ways in order to develop effective, responsive interventions. In institutions, where older people are particularly vulnerable to elder abuse, health care workers must be professionally responsible under clear policies or guidelines. They must be well trained as professionals, unlike family carers, to deal with factors that may trigger abusive situations.

Undertaking social work research on elder abuse raises a number of unique ethical challenges. The study population includes many vulnerable people with various psychological, physical, and social difficulties. Information to be collected may be highly sensitive for some participants and their families. Investigating elder abuse in a small community may involve a range of risks, physical, emotional, and ethical, for both the participant and the researcher. There may also be unexpected risks in working in the field. For social work researchers, in particular, unlike purely academic researchers, whilst there may be a synergy between research and practice, role confusion, as either a social worker or a researcher, may occur during the research study (McLaughlin, 2007). The researcher, therefore, not only needs to take account of the ethical issues in a systematic, administrative way but must also take personal responsibility for acting ethically throughout the whole process of the research.

Conclusion
Elder abuse and neglect occurs indiscriminately across cultures, races, and social-economic backgrounds; it can happen anywhere, whether older people live in their home country or in a host country (Glasgow & Fanslow, 2006). The problem of elder mistreatment encompasses a range of domains including older people’s physical and mental health, well-being, and social connectedness. The abused elderly may be marginalised as the least advantaged members of society, be “aging in silence”, and become invisible in society. In order to help older people to live free of abuse, and with dignity and security in their families, communities and society, the issue of elder abuse should not be ignored.

Hong-Jae Park is completing a three-year doctoral research project, April 2006 to March 2009, under the supervision of Mr Jim Anglem, Dr Annabel Taylor and Dr Verna Schofield, School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury. The study is funded by the SPEAr Linkages Postgraduate Scholarship, and has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, and the Multi-region Health and Disability Ethics Committee.

References
In the lead up to White Ribbon Day, Human Rights Commissioner, Joy Liddicoat said it was time for New Zealand men to reflect on the tragedy of domestic violence.

"White Ribbon Day provides an opportunity for men to stand up and speak out against violence. On average a woman is killed by her partner every two and a half weeks. It’s a shocking statistic that we cannot be complacent about," Ms Liddicoat said.

"A culture of violence can exist where attitudes that seem to condone or endorse violence are not challenged – the Commission encourages men to speak out against those attitudes."

White Ribbon Day on 25 November is the international day when men wear a white ribbon to show they do not tolerate or condone men’s violence towards women. It is the largest effort by men across the world working in partnership with women to end violence against women and children.

Among the range of activities supported by the Commission in the lead up to White Ribbon Day and the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence that followed, was an exhibition in Parliament Buildings of 19 quilts from the Human Rights Quilt Challenge which highlighted issues of violence against women and children. The quilts, on tour around New Zealand during 2007, make a powerful statement about the impact of family violence.

"The key purpose of this evaluation was to inform us about what works, what doesn’t and any improvements we need to make to ensure our processes and the programmes themselves are doing the best for the young people, their families and the community."

"One of the most important changes has been to strengthen our relationship with the providers and other youth justice agencies. This has led to social workers having more involvement, increased referrals, and better support and monitoring of the young people while they are in the programme and once their treatment has finished. There has also been an increased focus on ensuring the programmes are tailored appropriately to meet the cultural needs of Maori and Pacific Island families," says Ray Smith.

Report confirms treatment helps young people
27 November 2007

Ray Smith, Deputy Chief Executive for Child, Youth and Family, welcomed the release of a report which measures how well community-based programmes for young sex abusers are meeting the needs of clients and their community.

The report confirms that treatment programmes being delivered by community providers SAFE Network in Auckland, WellStop in Wellington and Christchurch-based STOP are effectively reducing the number of young people who continue to abuse. "Only 2% of the young people who complete one of these programmes go on to abuse again, and of those who do, the incident is of a much less serious nature."

"As well as reducing sexual abusive behaviour the programmes are helping many of the young people get their lives back on track, with 62% stopping offending altogether," Ray Smith says.

The report shows that some of the strengths of the programme include the provision of holistic services, creative treatment approaches and a mix of treatment interventions including individual, family and group therapy. Many of the young people said that the strong relationship between them and their therapist, plus family support are critical to successful outcomes.

"The providers we work with do an amazing job, and that shone through in the report. In programmes like these the young people are in the best possible environment to change. They also enable us to monitor that change and ensure children and young people are treated and supported in a way that is best for them," Ray Smith says.

The report also highlighted areas for improvement – one of the challenges is to ensure there are suitable placements and follow up for young people as they come out of the programmes.

Ray Smith says that Child, Youth and Family and the providers have been working together on ways to address this and introduce other enhancements.

"The providers we work with do an amazing job, and that shone through in the report. In programmes like these the young people are in the best possible environment to change. They also enable us to monitor that change and ensure children and young people are treated and supported in a way that is best for them," Ray Smith says.

The providers we work with do an amazing job, and that shone through in the report. In programmes like these the young people are in the best possible environment to change. They also enable us to monitor that change and ensure children and young people are treated and supported in a way that is best for them," Ray Smith says.
Beyond Bad Girls: Gender, violence and hype
By Meda Chesney-Lind and Katherine Irwin
Routledge, 2008

This relatively brief and easily read book canvasses important issues relating to girls' violence, its prevalence and impact. Whilst easily read, the text is nevertheless well presented and supported by examples from statistics, and research. The authors' own qualitative research was based on an analysis of interviews with 27 young women, mostly aged in their early twenties (average age 22.5), about their experiences in peer groups.

The authors cogently question the reality base of the public perception that girls are becoming increasingly wayward, bad and mean. The main message of the book is that this image of girls is a social construction in which media, service providers and researchers invest, perhaps with good intentions, but with an outcome that girls and girlhood remain constrained and heavily policed. Girls are not all sugar and spice, and it should not surprise us that they can at times be mean. However, the extent of the alarm that is raised when girls step outside the confines of their socially ascribed roles is not justified by the facts as the authors present them.

In chapter three, entitled “Speaking of Girls”, the authors discuss the results of their research. They illustrate, by reference to their transcripts of conversations with young women, that girls form strong friendships that assist them to build resilience, and that when they recollect “meanness” as “the worst thing that ever happened” a surface analysis could allow the strength of such supportive relationships to be obscured. However, they proffer, whilst girls may often declare the life changing or destructive impact of mean remarks or social exclusion by their girlfriends, in reality these setbacks are generally overcome. Such experiences do not prevent girls from forming future friendships with others of their gender, nor do they stop them being confident in work and in relationships. Such readily named hurts are, it is suggested, far outweighed by the anguish and lasting damage inflicted by less nameable physical and sexual abuses or the racism that pervades and shapes the social contexts of girls’ lives.

Whilst much attention is directed to the “problem” of youth, there is little analysis and intervention into the larger social issues that surround them. For example, there is little recognition of the extent to which young women of colour may be doubly penalised by critiques that focus not only on their lack of compliance with gender norms, but with “… ‘white lies,’ in which white middle-classness is constantly constructed as normal culture” (p. 137). The authors draw on international research to suggest that within schools, negative stereotyping and criticism by teachers has a corrosive effect, with African American, Latino, Samoan and Filipino youth becoming shamed, withdrawn, and ultimately stereotyped as “lazy”.

And are girls truly meaner than boys? Or is it merely the case that similar behaviours may be called “scheming” when displayed by girls and “political strategising” when undertaken by boys? Popular perception, for example in relation to bullying in schools, is increasingly that bullying by girls (emotional, psychological) is more common, worse, more harmful than bullying by boys (more direct, more easily processed and dealt with). Concern over sexual harassment, meanwhile, has largely subsided or gone underground.

When young women do engage in violence or are involved in gangs, they may attract notoriety and spectacular media attention. However, in reality girls rarely gain status or otherwise benefit from such involvements. Instead, they tend to be subjected to violence and become ensnared in the justice system, when they may have been really seeking reprieve from a background of abuse.

In a brief nine chapters, this book questions the driving forces behind a current culture of concern about girls, and shows how shifting patterns of gendered labels ultimately continue to endeavour to constrain girl- and womanhood. In presenting their analysis, the authors make a timely and sobering contribution to a field that is overfull with emotional investment and moral outrage. An appendix and chapter notes supply additional methodological, statistical, and research details, thus satisfying the academic reader without disrupting the text. This book is recommended reading for researchers, youth workers, and all of us who might sometimes struggle to find balance amongst hotly contested diametrically opposed perspectives about girls, boys, women and men and violence.

Dr Kate van Heugten is Head of School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury, and Director of Te AwaTea. Her research interests are in the area of professional practices and processes, including workplace violence.
A selection of international conferences: 2008 – 2009

2008

25-27 February 2008
Washington, DC, US
Theme: Outcomes, integration and public policy: achieving positive change for children
Further information: www.cwla.org/conferences/2008nationalrfpsubmissionintro.htm

17-19 March 2008
Blueprints Conference 2008
Denver, Colorado, US
Theme: Evidence-based prevention and intervention programmes relating to youth violence, delinquency and drug prevention.
Further information: www.blueprintsconference.com/

18-19 March 2008
Family Aggression: Causes and Consequences:
First Biennial Conference of International Family Aggression Society
Preston, Lancashire, UK
Theme: Preventing and treating family aggression and the consequences of it.
Further information: www.uclan.ac.uk/psychology/ифas/conference.html

20-28 March 2008
Brainwave Trust workshops with Dr Shari Barkin
Christchurch: 20 March
Wellington: 26 March
Auckland: 28 March
Further information: Email: sandie@brainwave.org.nz

26-29 March 2008
16th World Family Therapy Congress: Transformation and Globalization: Family Therapy in the 21st Century
Porto, Portugal
Themes: The global family in flux; intimacy, desire, and domesticity; family therapy in a post-modern world.
Further information: www.paragon-conventions.com/ifta2008

31 March - 2 April 2008
International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Stalking
New Orleans, Louisiana, US
Theme: Highlighting promising practices and emerging issues in sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking.
Further information: www.evawintl.org

10-11 April 2008
Child Law Conference: Child and Youth Advocacy: Current Issues, Trends and Research – the Challenges Ahead
Auckland, NZ
Themes: Child abuse, youth alcohol and drug use and the impact of family violence.
Further information: www.lexisnexis.co.nz/conferences/seminars/2008/childlaw/default.asp

14-15 April 2008
Keeping Kids Safe – tamariki te tuatahi
Manukau City, NZ
Themes: Services for at risk children and families: what works to keep children safe.
Further information: www.psn.org.nz

17-19 April 2008
First Bi-Annual International Conference: Chronic Traumatization: Disrupted Attachment and the Dissociative Mind
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Theme: Impact of traumatization, particularly chronic child abuse and neglect: Therapeutic approaches.
Further information: www.estd.org/conference

22-25 April 2008
2008 Child Abuse Summit & Family Violence Conference:
Portland, Oregon, US
Theme: The Power of One in Collaboration with Others: working together to protect and make each child safe in our communities.
Further information: www.clackamas.us/sheriff/summit

5-7 May 2008
7th Global Conference: Violence and the Contexts of Hostility
Budapest, Hungary
Theme: To identify and understand violence in contemporary society.
Further information: www.inter-disciplinary.net/ptb/hv/vcce/vch7/cfp.html

16-25 May 2008
Reconsidering Trauma: Treatment advances, relational issues and mindfulness in integrated trauma therapy (Dr John Briere)
Melbourne: 16-17 May
Sydney: 20-21 May
Brisbane: 24-25 May
Theme: A nonpathologising developmentally-informed approach to the treatment of complex posttraumatic presentations.

19-22 May 2008
Prevent Child Abuse America 2008 National Conference
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, US
Theme: Connecting the dots: turning knowledge into action.
Further information: www.preventchildabuse.org/

4-6 June 2008
Naming the Truth About Violence Against Women Conference
Sydney, Australia
Theme: Confronting and transforming male violence in all its forms: verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, including sex trafficking and prostitution.
Further information: www.womenanddepression.herokuapp.net/modules/wfchannel

3-9 July 2008
10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women: New Frontiers: Dares and Advances
Madrid, Spain
Theme: The experience of dislocation whether physical or conceptual affects women in specific ways.
Further information: www.mmwwo8.org/

20-25 July 2008
15th World Congress of the International Society for Criminology: Crime and Criminology: Research and Action
Barcelona, Spain
Further information: http://perso.orange.fr/societe.internationale.de.criminologie/1-3
1-3 August 2008
Advanced Paediatric Training Course (Dr Lori Frasier)
Christchurch, NZ
Theme: Child abuse and neglect.
Further information: www.dsac.org.nz/index.html

3-8 August 2008
International Conference on Child Labour and Child Exploitation
Cairns, Queensland
Themes: Economic, social cultural and health issues, legal and political measures; commercial and corporate responses; public awareness and education initiatives.
Further information: www.childjustice.org/wsecl

18-20 August 2008
Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies Conference
Sydney, Australia
Themes: Social disadvantage, safety and wellbeing, building capacity, out of home care
Further information: www.acwa08.com

27-30 August 2008
10th International Conference of International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders: Sexual Violence: Preventing through Offender Treatment and Public Policy
Cape Town, South Africa
Theme: The treatment of sexual offenders as a prevention strategy for gender and aged based sexual violence.
Further information: www.iatso.org/08capetown/

7-10 September 2008
XVIIth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect: Towards a Caring and Non-Violent Community: A Child's Perspective
Hong Kong
Theme: Preventing abuse and neglect: innovative approaches and evidence-based best practices.
Further information: www.ispcan.org/congress2008

8-9 September 2008
The Third International Asian Health and Wellbeing Conference 2008: Building Healthy Communities: North and South
Auckland, NZ
Themes: Traditional health practices and innovative services; access to health care; mental health, family violence, gambling; life style issues relating to health.
Further information: www.health.auckland.ac.nz/population-health/cahre/

8-11 September 2008
1st World Conference of Women’s Shelters
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Theme: Discovering the common core: practical frameworks for change.
Further information: www.womenshelter.ca/

24-26 September 2008
3rd National Stopping Sexual Violence Conference: Hurt – Hope – Health
New Plymouth, NZ
Theme: Working with children, adolescents and adults; addressing issues in different cultures and gender appropriate ways.
Further information: www.safercentre.org.nz

5-8 October 2008
Seventh North American Conference on Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma)
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Theme: Research and prevention techniques.
Further information: www.dontshake.org

20-23 October 2008
International Safe Communities Conference: Safe Communities Meeting the Needs of a Changing World
Christchurch, NZ
Themes: Working together to reduce risk for vibrant and safe communities/cities; reduce the impact and consequences of injuries; build the network to think globally, plan nationally and act locally.

22-25 October 2008
27th Annual Research and Treatment Conference: Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)
Atlanta, Georgia, US
Theme: Issues in victim and perpetrator research and treatment.
Further information: www.atsa.com/conf.html

13-15 November 2008
24th International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) Annual Meeting
Chicago, US
Theme: Terror and its aftermath.
Further information: www.istss.org/meetings/cfp_08.cfm

2009

15-19 June 2009
11th European Conference on Traumatic Stress
Oslo, Norway
Theme: Violence and trauma in lives and communities: Roads to prevention and repair.
Further information: www.ecots2009.com/home.cfm

15-18 November 2009
12th Australian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
Perth, Western Australia
Theme: Look at child abuse and neglect through the lens of prevention.
Further information: contact@napcan.org.au

See also:
National Center on Sexual and Domestic Violence (US): www.ncsvs.org/ncd_upcomingtrainings.html

Disclaimer: Information about these conferences has been obtained from a variety of sources. No liability for the accuracy of dates or other content is assumed. For further information, please refer to the respective contact organisation.
Useful websites

New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse
www.nzfvc.org.nz

New Zealand Government
ACC Injury Prevention
www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention
Children’s Commissioner
www.occ.org.nz
Crime Prevention Unit
www.justice.govt.nz/cpu
Department of Child, Youth and Family Services
www.cyf.govt.nz
Family Court of New Zealand
www.courts.govt.nz/family
Families Commission
www.familiescommission.govt.nz
Ministry of Health
www.moh.govt.nz
Ministry of Justice
www.justice.govt.nz
Ministry of Social Development
www.msd.govt.nz
Ministry of Women’s Affairs
www.mwa.govt.nz
New Zealand Courts
www.courts.govt.nz/courts
New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy
www.nzips.govt.nz
New Zealand Police
www.police.govt.nz
Statistics New Zealand
www.stats.govt.nz/people/justice-crime/crime.htm
Strengthening Families
www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz
Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Maori Development
www.tpk.govt.nz
(The Government’s primary adviser on Maori issues and responsible for furthering Maori development in New Zealand.)
Youth Education Service
www.police.govt.nz/service/yes

University research centres
Children’s Issues Centre, University of Otago
www.otago.ac.nz/cic
Crime and Justice Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington
www.vuw.ac.nz/cjrc
Injury Prevention Research Centre, University of Auckland
www.health.auckland.ac.nz/ipc/
Injury Prevention Research Unit, University of Otago
www.otago.ac.nz/IPRU
Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families, Victoria University of Wellington
www.vuw.ac.nz/mckenzie-centre/

Community organisations
Age Concern
www.ageconcern.org.nz/
Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC)
www.alcohol.org.nz
Amnesty International New Zealand Section
www.amnesty.org.nz
Auckland Sexual Abuse Help
www.asah.org.nz
Crime.Co.nz
www.crime.co.nz
DSAC: Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care
www.dsac.org.nz
He Waka Tapu
www.hewakatapu.org.nz
HMA Hall, McMaster & Associates (Resources for human service workers)
www.hma.co.nz
Home and Family Society
www.homeandfamily.org.nz
Jigsaw
www.jigsaw.org.nz
Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
www.mentalhealth.org.nz
National Collective of Independent Women’s Refuges Inc.
www.womensrefuge.org.nz
Preventing Violence in the Home
www.preventingviolence.org.nz/
Rape Prevention Education
www.rapecrisis.org.nz
Refugee and Migrant Services
www.mrs.org.nz
Relationship Services
www.relate.org.nz
Stopping Violence Services
www.angermanagement.org.nz
Te Pukenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga: National Network Stopping Violence Services
www.nsvse.org.nz
The Institute for Child Protection Studies
www.cpstraining.co.nz
Victim Support
www.victimsupport.org.nz
Youthline
www.youthline.co.nz

International websites

Australia
Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse
www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au
Australian Institute of Family Studies
www.aifs.gov.au
Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre (DVIRC)
www.dvirc.org.au
Domestic Violence in Australia
Queensland Centre for Domestic & Family Violence Research
www.noviolence.com.au
Women’s Safety Agenda – Elimination of Violence

Canada
National Clearinghouse on Family Violence
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cfv-cnivf/familyviolence

United Kingdom
Home Office Domestic Violence Website
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/
www.nspcc.org.uk/
Research in Practice
www.rip.org.uk/index.asp
Women’s Aid
www.womensaid.org.uk/

United States
Child Welfare Information Gateway
www.childwelfare.gov
International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)
www.ispcan.org
Minnesota Centre Against Violence and Abuse
www.minczava.umn.edu
National Centre for Children Exposed to Violence (NCCEV): Child Study Centre
www.nccev.org
TARANAKI SAFER
FAMILY CENTRE

Invites You or Your Agency to:

**Present a Workshop or Paper**

At

3rd National Stopping Sexual Violence Conference

**“HURT – HOPE – HEALTH”**

An opportunity to share work, research or papers with peers in the field of Sexual Violence focusing on working with

- Children
- Adolescents
- Adults

Examine ways to address issues in different cultures and in gender appropriate ways

Workshop can be 1½ - 2 hours

24-25-26 September 2008

Quality Hotel Plymouth International
NEW PLYMOUTH

Send a synopsis of your workshop to:

Paul Howison
Convenor
Taranaki Safer Family Centre
Phone: 06 758 4178
199 Devon St East
NEW PLYMOUTH
Email: info@safercentre.org.nz

Please Submit by: Friday 28th February 2008
Acknowledgements

Te Awatea Violence Research Centre is grateful for the support it has received from the Lion Foundation, Save the Children New Zealand Small Grants Fund, the Cathy Pelly Maungarongo Trust, the Family Violence Taskforce, and the University of Canterbury.

If you would like to be included in Te Awatea Violence Research Centre's mailing list please complete the slip below and return to:

Te Awatea Violence Research Centre
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8140
NEW ZEALAND

Name:  ..........................................................................................................
Address:   ..........................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................
Phone:  ..........................................................................................................
Fax:  ..........................................................................................................
Email:  .........................................................................................................