



centre for research on
families and relationships

CRFR News 15
Summer 2009

New look to CRFR

Launch of new website and Research Network

The last month saw two major developments in the way that CRFR communicates with its network and the outside world: a new look website and the renaming of CRFR's Register of Research Interests (RoRI) to CRFR Research Network.

"We are regularly renewing how we engage with the research, policy and practice communities interested in families and relationships," said Sarah Morton, Co-Director (Knowledge Exchange). "Our new website aims to help people engage with our research and other work more easily."

The CRFR website has been redesigned and includes new features created to enhance the experience of our website user, better identify what CRFR does and allow users to find information quickly.

After many years, RoRI, CRFR's online membership database of people and organisations interested in families and relationships across Scotland and beyond, has been renamed the CRFR Research Network. Further developments and enhancements to the database are planned in the coming months. The aim is to make the Network more user-friendly.

In addition to the events, news and contact information found on the previous website, the new version includes a number of improved features. For example, enhanced publication search facilities, quick links to CRFR blogs and further information about the range of Knowledge Exchange work we do.

The Projects section has been reorganised to aid quick access to information about all CRFR research and other projects.

www.crfr.ac.uk

CRFR is very interested in hearing people's views on the new website and our developments to the CRFR Research Network. Please send comments to Jennifer Flueckiger, j.flueckiger@ed.ac.uk.

www.crfr.ac.uk/researchnetwork/

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Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

The University of Edinburgh
23 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9LN
Tel: 0131 651 1832
Fax: 0131 651 1833
Website: www.crfr.ac.uk

The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships was set up in January 2001 to produce research and commentary on families and relationships relevant to Scotland and to disseminate such work widely. It receives financial support from the Scottish Government and other sources. CRFR facilitates a network of researchers and those interested in families and relationships research, produces regular research briefings and information bulletins, and holds events.

A consortium of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Stirling and the UHI Millenium Institute

Portrait of a Tattooed Man Looking Out of a Window © Getty Images.

The needs of male survivors

Sarah Nelson

February saw a packed and very successful Edinburgh conference to launch the research report *Care and Support Needs of Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Survivors themselves – often speaking publicly for the first time – made a direct input into the day.

The mental health charity, Health in Mind collaborated with CRFR on this Big Lottery funded project.

Little research, particularly from survivors' own perspectives, had been done on the needs of men who experienced child sexual abuse.

One of the key aims of the conference was to ensure that survivors' voices were heard by the policy makers and practitioners in attendance so that proposals for practical change could be discussed.

Survivors worked with CRFR Artist in Residence Rosie Gibson to develop a performance and a series of nine banners for the conference.

The study

Researcher Sarah Nelson, with assistants Ruth Lewis and Sandy Gulyurtlu, recorded life history interviews with 24 men. A subgroup of eight younger men was made up of serving or recent prisoners.

The majority were first abused between age six and ten, and for more than two years. Most abusers were male. Trusted staff or "family friends" outnumbered family members.

Key findings

Only a quarter of survivors had been able to tell anybody about the abuse as a child. Most were disbelieved. The rest were silenced through intimidation, shame, self-blame or fear of the being branded gay.

A minority of survivors poured themselves into work and achieved highly as a form of escape. Most found daily concentration and ability to learn at school severely affected. Some became bullied loners and others became angry and disruptive, leading to punishments and exclusions. Several deliberately offended to try and get removed from the abusive situation.

Fear of being branded gay was particularly influential in silencing boys as children and fear of being assumed an abuser often silenced them again as adults.

Most struggled with confusion over issues of sexuality and masculinity. Many had problems in intimate relationships, but supportive partners and children proved a strong impetus to seeking help.

The survivors suffered a wide range of mental health effects during their lives. Most criticised mental health services for over-medication, over-control and for ignoring the abuse. They valued empathetic, knowledgeable and informed staff. Most had found counseling very helpful – especially the prisoners.



A quarter of survivors had entered the Forces, but had found these macho environments which coped badly with abuse trauma. While most achieved well in careers, they almost all suffered disruptions. They felt training, benefits and employment systems took poor account of abuse trauma.

While some survivors took their anger out on themselves as adults, others acknowledged how rage drove them to lash out at others or to be over-controlling in relationships.

Amongst the prisoners interviewed, a link between offending and their abuse trauma was evident. All had suffered extremely deprived and violent backgrounds. Nearly all had been in care. Two experienced horrific, yet unreported, sexual assaults during abscondings from care.

A quarter of the survivors had become addicted to drink or drugs to blot out the trauma. Survivors criticised alcohol and drug programmes for failing to identify underlying reasons. Other addictions included gambling, compulsive eating, "workaholism" or anonymous sex in public places.

The male survivors shared many experiences, effects and views with female survivors in the 2001 Beyond Trauma study. But they appeared to find it even harder to trust and tell, they were much more vulnerable to confusion over their gender identities, and issues about career problems were greater.

Recommendations

- The search for alternatives to school exclusion, and sensitive inquiry about underlying problems are urgent.
- Homophobia needs to be challenged in school and youth settings, before most boys will feel free to report sexual abuse.
- More specialists to work with the effects of serious childhood trauma are needed, especially in residential care. Otherwise attempts to improve their educational achievement may continue to fail.
- There is a considerable unmet need for a range of therapeutic and support services for adult male survivors, in the community, within mental health services and in prisons. Survivor self-help groups need resources and support.
- Abuse as a possible root cause of aggression, persistent offending or intractable substance use should be explored and resources for recovery provided by criminal justice and other agencies. That would also help keep the partners and families of aggressive men safer.
- Confidential helplines and genuinely independent counsellors should be set up in the armed forces.
- Professionals working with male survivors in mental health and a range of services need training and confidence-building to address male sexual abuse, rather than to ignore, fear or sidestep the issue.
- Many survivors were silenced in adulthood through others' beliefs that abused men would abuse children. Agencies and employers should assess risk individually - not through collective prejudice.

The draft report, briefing and conference Powerpoint presentation are available at: http://www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_malesurvivors.html

The report will also be available in hard copy later in the summer. For further information on the report contact Sarah Nelson at Sarah.Nelson@ed.ac.uk

Exploring population change



centre for population change

CRFR has a new relationship with the Centre for Population Change (CPC) including a research project, two PhD studentships and collaborative work on other research and knowledge exchange projects.

The research project 'Global Recession, Global Threats and Young People's Anticipated Futures as Partners and Parents' aims to explore whether and how the current economic crisis and other global threats (such as global warming or security threats) inform how young people talk about the future. Specifically the research will focus on how they are thinking about, talking about and doing or preparing for partnering and parenting.

CPC brings together experts from across the social science disciplines to carry out research that will lead to a better understanding of the key drivers of population change and the implications for economic welfare and social support at the national, local, household and individual level.

It is based jointly at the University of Southampton and at the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), Edinburgh. It also involves a consortium of Scottish academics coordinated by the University of St Andrews with the Universities of Dundee, Edinburgh, Stirling and Strathclyde and the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR).

Evidence and Policy Seminar Series



Final Workshop

The final seminar in the series Evidence and Policy took place in Dublin in March 2009. The seminars, organised by a collaboration of CRFR and the Research Unit for Research Utilisation at Edinburgh, with the University of Iceland, National University of Ireland, University of Oslo and Erasmus University (Rotterdam) aimed to advance international and comparative understanding of the use of different forms of knowledge and evidence in the policy process through a process of sharing of ideas and discussion across these jurisdictions.

The group are now working on a special edition of the journal 'Evidence and Policy' to be published in spring 2010.



Five themes describe our research studies

Children and young people

Growing older and caring relationships

Families, policies, evidence and practice

Changing families, changing relationships

Health, families, well-being, and relationships

This is a summary of progress on some of our research projects. For our full range of research activity please visit www.crfr.ac.uk



Growing Up in Scotland

The Growing Up in Scotland study is now 4 years old. The most recent findings were presented and discussed at the third GUS Annual conference held in Glasgow in March and was attended by over 150 professionals from a wide range of organisations working with children and their families.

Data collection for the next sweep was launched in April. This year, only the families with a child in the younger cohort will be visited. As well as an interview with the child's main carer, the children themselves will take part in ability exercises to test their cognitive development.

Meanwhile a Review of GUS is underway to consider how the study should develop in the future.

For more information, see:
www.growingupinscotland.org.uk

**Rural and urban solo living:
social integration, quality of life
and future orientations**

Following paper presentations around Britain and the world, findings for the Rural an Urban Solo Living project are to be presented in Edinburgh on 25 October.

An online Solo-living Network has attracted more than 50 worldwide members. Network member Kay Trimberger (Institute for the study of Social Change at the University

of California Berkley) will present in Edinburgh on 15 September.

Starting in 2007, the Rural and Urban Solo-living project, an ESRC funded study, investigated the experiences and expectations of working-aged people living alone and how these might differ in rural and urban areas. Findings have been presented at conferences and seminars in Edinburgh, Warwick, Berkley, Lisbon, Helsinki and Amsterdam.

The new online Solo Living Network, set up to connect those working on issues relating to solo-living, has attracted interest from more than 50 academics and policy makers from four continents. Those joining the network will have access to information on relevant research and publications and will be added to the members-only email list.

For further information on the Solo Living Seminar, 26 October see:

www.crfr.ac.uk/events/soloseminar.htm

For further information on Kay Trimberger seminar 15 Sept see:

www.crfr.ac.uk

For further information on the Solo Living network see:

www.crfr.ac.uk/sololivingnetwork.html

Care. Quarterly postcards have been sent out and new practice development sites have been identified.

The project, a resource to support learning and practice development across all settings in order to improve the quality and experience of care for older people in Scotland, is funded by NHS Education Scotland and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland in partnership with the Care Commission.

Innovative practice development resources from across Scotland have been popular. In particular, the DVD called 'Who Cares?' has been in demand from all care settings. It is being used in training sessions for staff who care for older people. Feedback from those who are using this resource is available on the projects' website at www.connect-in-care.net.

Quarterly post cards have been sent to the project's e-network members with discussion points relating to different aspects of care and network members are asked to respond to these postcards with stories. These will be available on the website.

Four new practice development sites have been identified for the second year of the project. Two will focus on facilitating better communication procedures when older people move from one care sector to another.

The fourth project will explore various resources that are currently in use to assess people with communication difficulties. In this project, Ailsa Cook from the Joint Improvement Team (JIT) part of the Partnership Improvement and Outcomes Division



Practitioners have welcomed the practice development resources recently disseminated by Connect in

within the Scottish Government's Health Directorates, will be introducing the Talking Points (previously known as The User Defined Service Evaluation Toolkit UDSET) approach.

Connect in Care will use the Talking Points approach which will help individuals with communication difficulties and their families. Identify the outcomes that they want to achieve in order to support provision of a more personalised service in the course of assessment, care planning and review processes.

For further information, see:
www.connect-in-care.net

Legal practitioners' perspectives on the cohabitation provisions of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006

Work started in April on the first study of the functioning of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 based on the experiences of those working with the law.

This one year study, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, is a collaboration between CRFR and the Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge. The research team consists of Fran Wasoff, Enid Mordaunt and Jo Miles.

The focus will be on experiences and perspectives of legal practitioners and other selected family law professionals regarding the use of the provisions in the first three years of the legislation.

They will examine:

- the nature and frequency of the use of the provisions
- the circumstances in which they are used
- the type of issues covered
- the cost and effect and any benefits and difficulties
- the provisions have brought for both potential pursuers and defenders.

The study will draw from postal questionnaires and follow up, in-depth telephone interviews.

A report, which sets out the background and context of the research and the postal questionnaire for over 380 family lawyers across Scotland is currently being prepared. Once the

questionnaires have been analysed, telephone interviews will be conducted with lawyers and other professionals. We expect the findings to be of use to the Scottish Government as aspects of the 2006 Act are already under review. However, as England and Wales has no equivalent legislation, the research could well inform the current debates in both Houses of Parliament.

For further information, see:
www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_cohabitation.html

Work and family lives: the changing experiences of 'young' families

This study, which aims to explore the ways in which families negotiate their work and family lives over time, is now in its third year.

Having conducted the majority of the family group interviews over the winter months, we gave a paper at the BSA Conference in April which reflected on the methodological issues raised by conducting and analysing the groups.

Fourteen families are taking part in the study and ten of these are more affluent while four are on lower incomes. The study involves three fieldwork visits which include repeat individual interviews with parents and children as well as family group interviews.

The third wave of fieldwork is scheduled to start in June and will involve another round of individual interviews with parents and children. These interviews will explore any changes in the families' lives since our last contact with them and will examine the impact of the recession on current everyday family practices as well as on participants' thoughts about the future.

This study is part of Timescapes, the ESRC-funded longitudinal research initiative involving five universities based across the UK.

For further information see:
www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk

Having a say at school: research on pupil councils in schools across Scotland

This Big Lottery funded project is being undertaken as a partnership between CRFR and Children in Scotland.

Schools are key sites of governance in children's services and children's lives, with the gaps between government agendas, teachers as professionals and service providers, and rhetoric in favour of greater pupil participation. Pupil (or school) councils have emerged as the primary form of formal participation of children in school governance in the UK. Yet there is no systematic Scottish evidence about their operation or effectiveness.

A range of information has been collected from key members of education staff in all 32 local councils and members of staff and pupil councils in 612 schools (primary, secondary, special and independent) across Scotland.

We are currently completing analysis of the data and preparing reports and conference papers for both the British and European Educational Research Associations. Additionally, we will disseminate our research findings and recommendations widely, especially among pupils and educators, to encourage improved forms of pupil participation.

For further information, contact Sue Milne at s.e.milne@ed.ac.uk or see the project website:
www.havingasayatschool.org.uk

Examining agency and the politics of reproductive choice

Over the next 10 months, through a series of papers, Post Doctoral Fellow Jessica Gunson will be presenting the results of her PhD which looked at the public debates in the USA and Australia about the use of oral contraception to suppress menstruation.

Conferences include: Feminist and Women's Studies Association conference in June, the European Sociological Association conference in September, and several informal seminars at The University of Edinburgh.

A summary of this study will also form the basis of a CRFR Research Briefing to be published early next year.

For further information, see:
www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_reprochoice.html

Studentships at CRFR

There is a large number of postgraduate students attached to CRFR, with some based at the University of Edinburgh, and others in our collaborating institutions. Some are funded through collaborative studentships (known as CASE studentships) by the ESRC, whilst others are funded through other ESRC studentships, or other means.



Fiona McQueen

Sexual Communication between heterosexual couples in Scotland

My PhD research topic developed from my undergraduate research into the embodiment of female sexual pleasure. I wanted to explore the topic of sexuality in more depth, and more specifically the power dynamics within sexual relationships.

My PhD will look at sexual communication between women and men so that I can examine the interplay of genders within social relationships. I am interested in how social change may have impacted gender hierarchies and how people communicate sexual pleasure in relationships.

Participants will be aged from 20 to 60 years old in order to gauge changes in gender hierarchies within this age group.

Nughmana Mirza

The Experiences of Family Violence of Muslim Women in Scotland

Family life is central to the Muslim community, but as elsewhere, family violence exists. Due to cultural stigma the voices of Muslim women may remain unheard and suppressed. Family violence in the Muslim community goes beyond what is generally understood as domestic abuse, where the perpetrator is most likely to be a partner or ex-partner but may also include in-law abuse, and parental abuse and forced marriage. This has been insufficiently researched, and it is not known the extent to which service providers cater satisfactorily for the complex needs of Muslim women.

The aim of this research is to explore Muslim women's experiences of family violence and to document both user and service provider perspectives on policies to address family violence.

We spoke to three graduates who recently completed PhDs linked to CRFR



Susan Elsley

'Heroes and heroines or just like us? Young people's views on childhood in children's books'

What did you like best about working with CRFR?

CRFR has a commitment to linking research with policy and service provision. Its approach makes the process of doing research real and valuable with a connection to the 'big wide world'. I have liked working in a research centre with values which are in tune with my own professional experience and enjoyed having contact with such a friendly and expert team.

What are your plans for the future?

I am currently working with CRFR to develop research around children and young people. I am also continuing my work as an independent children's rights consultant. I want to carry on working across the interface of research, policy and services - focusing on work which has the potential to contribute to change which benefits children and young people - where possible.



Ruth Lewis

'Time to talk? A qualitative exploration of intergenerational communication about sex and sexuality in families in Scotland'

What did you like best about working with CRFR?

It was an absolute pleasure to be associated with CRFR during my PhD.

I was extremely well supported, both by academics and administrative staff, and there was a real sense of peer support among the PhD students. I was impressed and inspired by the range of excellent research projects, and the collaborative ethos of the centre.

What are your plans for the future?

I'm leaving Edinburgh this summer, to take up a position as Research Fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, researching young people's sexual practices. While I'm very excited about a new challenge, I'll be sad to leave friends and colleagues at CRFR but hope to maintain contact with the centre.



Sue Milne

'Children's experiences and conceptualisations of child-adult relations within, and beyond, their families'

What did you like best about working with CRFR?

The best thing about working with CRFR is the people. Lynn and Kathryn my supervisors kept me at my PhD through difficult times. Fellow students provided practical and emotional support individually and through the student group. Office staff were always on hand for technical and muscular support (it's amazing how much a thesis can weigh!).

What are your plans for the future?

Thankfully I am not departing, yet! I will continue working part-time on the 'Having a Say: Research on Pupil Council Project' until the end of October 2009. I hope to continue tutoring on the Data Collection course and to expand my lecturing portfolio whilst looking for another research project in the area of children and families.

Events



CRFR International Conference 2010

Changing Families in a Changing World

John MacIntyre Centre
The University of Edinburgh

June 16 - 18 • 2010

Call for papers

We live in times of enormous change on personal and global levels. Families are more diverse and more likely to change, with divorce, separation, stepfamilies, international adoption, increased life expectancy in some parts of the world and decreased in others, and a growing divide between rich and poor at local and global levels all becoming more prevalent. At the same time global recession, uncertainty about the impact of environmental degradation and increase religious and civil unrest provide a changing backdrop against which families live their lives.

What happens to families in this changing world? How do they deal with the way in which global changes impact upon their lives? What do we know about these changes and how they play out in and across different parts of the globe?

CRFR's international conference will address these issues and invites paper and workshop proposals.

What does ageing mean for people with a learning disability - a lifespan perspective

MacDonald Holyrood Hotel • Edinburgh

23 September 2009

Taking a life course perspective on ageing, the aim of this one day event is to bring together practitioners to focus on some of the overarching and specific service issues when supporting people with a learning disability as they grow older.

The event is a combination of keynote speakers and more practice orientated workshops and expert knowledge cafes. The format is intended to offer opportunities for sharing experience and knowledge between all participants.

Solo Living Seminar

CRFR • The University of Edinburgh

25 October 2009

This day long event provides an interdisciplinary forum for the dissemination of and discussion about research on solo living, or one-person households.

In the morning session presentations by Professors Lynn Jamieson and Fran Wasoff, and Dr Roona Simpson will report the findings of a two year in-depth study investigating the experiences and circumstances of working-age adults living alone in various locations in Scotland (Rural And Urban Solo Living). The afternoon session is an opportunity for those working in this area to present their research, including work in progress, and to explore possibilities for international collaborative research.

CRFR Informal Seminar

CRFR holds occasional informal seminars. These seminars are free but places are limited, so please contact l.marshall@ed.ac.uk if you wish to attend.

Dr Wendy Hulko
Thompson Rivers
University, Canada

First Nations' Perspectives on Dementia

9 September 2009

CRFR • The University of Edinburgh

Little is known about indigenous communities and dementia despite the growth in their senior population and the prevalence of 'antecedent conditions'. The purpose of this presentation is to present and discuss findings from an exploratory research project on First Nations' perspectives on dementia that began in September 2007.

For further information about any of our events or to make a booking please visit our website

www.crfr.ac.uk

CRFR News

Welcome...

Enid Mordaunt

We are delighted to welcome Enid Mordaunt to CRFR. Enid will be working with Fran Wasoff on the research project 'Legal practitioners perspectives on the cohabitation provisions of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006'.

Jessie Gunson

Welcome to Jessie who recently joined CRFR to work on the project 'Examining agency and the politics of reproductive choice'. We also congratulate her on giving birth to a baby girl named Dee in March. It's the first time we've been able to welcome and congratulate someone on having a baby at the same time!

Congratulations...

Caroline King

On the 18 April Caroline gave birth to a baby girl, Catriona Emily. Congratulations from everyone at CRFR.



Susan Elsley

Congratulations go to Susan who was awarded her PhD on the project 'Heroes and heroines or just like us? Young people's views on childhood in children's books'.

Sue Milne

Congratulations also to Sue who was awarded her PhD on the project 'Children's experiences and conceptualisations of child-adult relations within, and beyond, their families'.

Hot off the press...

CRFR have been awarded an ESRC grant for a series of seminars exploring children's relationships across majority and minority worlds. Seminars will explore peer relationships, intergenerational relationships, youth transitions to adulthood and migration, bringing together the sociology of childhood with development perspectives.

More information will be posted on our website soon.

Recent publications



Davis J, Tisdall K, Gallagher M 'Researching with children and young people, research design, methods and analysis.' December (2008) SAGE Publications Ltd.

Jamieson L, Simpson R and Wasoff F (2009) 'Solo-living, demographic and family change: The need to know more about men', *Sociological Research Online*, 14 (2/3), www.socresonline.org.uk/14/2/5.html

Wasoff, F (2009) 'Public attitudes and law reform: extending the legal framework for child contact to unmarried fathers, grandparents and stepparents?' *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 31 (2).

Bowlby S, Gregory S and McKie L, 'Informal care and global interdependencies', *The social issues collection: Routledge/University Readers Custom Library for Teaching*.

Simpson, R (2009) 'Contemporary Spinsterhood in Britain: Gender, Partnership Status and Social Change', VDM Verlag: Saarbrücken.

Simpson, R. (2009) 'Delayed Childbearing and Childlessness in Britain', in Stillwell J, Coast E and Keele D (eds), *Fertility, Living Arrangements and Care: Understanding Population Trends and Processes*, Springer: Dordrecht.

McIntosh I and Punch S (2009) 'Barter, deals, bribes and threats: Exploring Sibling Interactions', *Childhood*, 16 (1):49-65.

Anderson S, Brownlie J and Given L (2009) 'Therapy Culture? Attitudes towards emotional support in Britain' in A Parks et al (eds) *British Social Attitudes 25th Report* London: Sage. Accessible at www.udu.com/britishsocialattitudes-25threport-chapter7/

Skafida, V (2009) 'The relative importance of social class and maternal education for breast-feeding initiation', in *Public Health Nutrition* (first view article available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1368980009004947>)

Latest crfr research briefings

CRFR Briefing 44	June 2009	Care and support needs of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse
CRFR Briefing 43	May 2009	An artist in a research context
CRFR Briefing 42	March 2009	After domestic abuse: children's perspectives on contact with fathers
CRFR Briefing 41	December 2008	Infertility in Malawi: exploring its impact and social consequences
CRFR Briefing 40	October 2008	Parenting practices and support in Scotland
CRFR Briefing 39	September 2008	Older women and domestic violence in Scotland

Research briefings can be downloaded from our website www.crfr.ac.uk, or contact us for printed copies