

# CDFWRe@der

Volume 10 No. 3  
March 2012



Sibling incest and implications for practice

Conventional and innovative justice  
responses to sexual violence

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention  
Forum 2012 program



[www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au)



# Director's message

Following the launch of the Council of Australian Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, CDFVR has been actively working to promote the Plan and engagement in its implementation. The success of the National Plan depends on active engagement of individuals and the community sector, in addition to governments at local, state and federal level. Engagement of individuals and the community sector is needed in at least two important ways. First, we all have a responsibility to challenge the attitudes and beliefs that contribute to violence against women; we all need to actively work towards a broad-based cultural shift so that violence against women is not minimised, justified, or tolerated in any way. Second, we need to work collaboratively and proactively across all levels of government to ensure commitment to implementing the National Plan remains on the COAG agenda. We must not let this opportunity to seriously reduce violence against women slip away.

Since the launch of the National Plan, CDFVR has been involved in three key activities aimed at supporting its implementation. We have been collaborating with the National Rural Women's Coalition and the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance on a project to support women in rural communities to implement primary prevention strategies in their local communities. In October last year, CDFVR convened a panel discussion on the National Plan and produced a DVD of the discussion for wider distribution. Both these initiatives have been discussed in previous editions of the CDFVRe@der. Further, we have been collaborating with members of the Queensland Sexual Assault Network to consider how CDFVR can support their work. This collaboration was inspired at a meeting of the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) in June last year where I discussed the National Plan. A QSAN member wondered aloud why the issue of domestic and family violence was so much more visible than sexual assault. This was an issue frequently discussed by members of the National Council, as well.

CDFVR's current work includes responding to sexual assault which occurs in a context of intimate personal, family and informal care relationships. QSAN and CDFVR have been seeking to extend that role to include responding to sexual assault that occurs outside those relationships. Understandably, QSAN is seeking a distinct and equivalent profile for sexual assault in the work of CDFVR. In February, I met with Karen Struthers, then Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, and Fiona Simpson, then Shadow Minister, to discuss a proposal for CDFVR to extend its brief to more explicitly include sexual assault in its



work. The proposal was met with support from both, but neither was able to commit at that stage to any additional funding to enable a distinct and equivalent focus on sexual assault. Nevertheless, CDFVR does have a role and reasonability in addressing sexual violence and this edition of the CDFVRe@der is dedicated to that role and the collaboration between CDFVR and QSAN.

I would like to acknowledge the work of former Minister Karen Struthers on addressing domestic and family violence and sexual assault. She has passionately campaigned against violence against women since the mid-1980s and was instrumental in the development of Queensland's first domestic violence legislation and stalking laws. It is fitting that her final achievement as Minister was the passage of the new *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, which provides for contemporary understandings of domestic and family violence and increased protection against it. Other achievements under Karen's leadership include the Queensland Government Strategy to Reduce Domestic and Family Violence, the establishment of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Committee, and the trial integrated response to domestic and family violence in Rockhampton. It was a pleasure working with Karen and we wish her the best in the future.

As this edition goes to print, the newly elected LNP Government has yet to announce its Cabinet. We were very encouraged by Fiona Simpson's interest in and concern about violence against women expressed at our meeting with her in February. Although Fiona was the Shadow Minister for Community Services and Housing for approximately 18 months before the election, we will just have to wait a bit longer before we can welcome the new Minister for Communities.

## Inside this issue

Sibling incest and implications for practice .....	3
At the coalface with Karen Cheyne .....	5
SHE - Strength Health and Empowerment program for young women .....	7
Culture and healing – The hard yarns .....	8
Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum 2012 Program .....	9
Conventional and innovative justice responses to sexual violence .....	11
The many facets of shame in intimate partner sexual violence .....	15
Widening the chasm .....	16
Ending violence against women initiative .....	17
Workshops, conferences, date claimers and seminars .....	18

## Centre News

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women resource

CDFVR is currently developing a new resource aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, under the guidance of a local reference group. Unlike our existing suite of factsheets, this resource will be in the form of a 20-page booklet, with different sections targeting young women, mature and older women who may be experiencing social, verbal, sexual, economic, psychological, emotional or spiritual abuse.

Each section will contain first person stories and advice on how and where to access help.

Additionally, there will be sections at the back of the booklet with advice on how other community members can recognise if someone they know

is in an abusive relationship, and how they can safely intervene; as well as accounts from various Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander service providers across Queensland describing what their service offers.

CDFVR would like to acknowledge Jenny Binsiar and Jenny Timor from DVRS Mackay, Sonetta Fewquandie from Mackay Aboriginal and Islander Justice Alternative Group and Leda Barnett from Qld Health, for their contribution to the development of this resource.

CDFVR hopes to launch this new resource at the 2012 Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum.

### Latest resources available

CDFVR has recently released new resources which are now available from their website. The **factsheets** for *babies and toddlers*, *children 4-12* and *young people* are designed to provide mothers with insight into what their children might be thinking and feeling if they are exposed to domestic and family violence and what they can do to protect them from its harmful effect.

The most recent **DVD** released is a panel discussion about the implementation of COAG's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*. It presents the views of seven of the eleven members of the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, which developed *Time for Action*, an evidence-based blueprint for the National Plan.

Two **research reports**, *Trial integrated response to domestic and family violence in Rockhampton: Client experiences and outcomes*; and *Intimate partner abuse of women in Queensland*, are also now available at <http://www.noviolence.com.au/reports.html>.

Don't forget to order your free resources for DV Prevention month in May!





# Sibling incest and implications for practice

by Renette Viljoen, CDFVR

Sibling sexual abuse is gradually becoming recognised as a significant community problem amongst professionals working in the field of sexual violence (Kambouridis & Flanagan 2003). It remains a sensitive topic to be addressed by society and, as such, it is rarely discussed in the media or even among survivors themselves (Champe 2008).

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (Public Law 93-247) defines child sexual abuse as “the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.” It involves any kind of touching, fondling, or penetration of a child by an adult or older child. Child pornography, showing a child one’s genitalia, or having them engage in any kind of sexual activity are all considered child sexual abuse. It is further defined as sexual behaviour between siblings that is not age appropriate, not transitory and not motivated by developmentally, mutually appropriate curiosity (Caffaro & Conn-Caffaro 1993). Sibling sexual abuse, as with emotional and physical abuse, is an abuse of power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity (Child Safety Australia 2005).

## Extent of the problem

It must be emphasised that while advocating that this type of abuse is similar to other types of abuse, the response to child sexual abuse should be regarded as an issue in its own right. Even though there are sometimes overlaps with other forms of maltreatment, it has its own set of unique and complex circumstances. Research, policy and practice in the area of child abuse and neglect have been dominated by child sexual abuse for the last few decades. It is estimated that approximately 15% of all people report some kind of sexual activity with a sibling in childhood. More specifically, studies have shown that between 2% and 4% of people have been sexually victimised by a sibling as the sexual contact involved some degree of forced or coercive activity (Leder 1993).

The Gatehouse Centre at the Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH), Melbourne; and the Children’s Protection Society’s Sexual Abuse Counselling and Prevention Program (SACPP) are two main service providers to victims of sexual abuse and young people with sexually abusive behaviours in the state of Victoria. Both organisations have received an increasing number of sibling sexual abuse referrals over the last two decades. Their research

indicates that 43% of young people referred to the SACPP in a five year period had sexually abused a sibling and the sexual abuse disclosed by over two-thirds of the victims attending the service at the time revealed the abuse involved penetrative offences and physical force. Nearly one-third indicated that the abuse had been occurring for a period of more than one year and the majority of the victims were less than 10 years of age (Flanagan & Hayman-White 1999).

It is considered healthy and necessary for normal sexual and social development if children, of any age, engage in some degree of sexual interaction between themselves, including self-exploration. According to Champe (2008), these types of activities between siblings that are close in age and locational proximity is fairly high and, if appropriate and based on mutual curiosity, not deemed to be harmful or distressing, either in childhood or later in adulthood. However, the line is crossed from sexual exploration to sexual abuse when sexual activity occurs between siblings where there is a significant difference in developmental age (more than 3 years), or where there is any use of force, tricks or coercion by one of the siblings.

Siblings often spend a great deal of time together, perhaps more than any other family relationships, as they may not only be together when in the family arena, but they may also share a bedroom, school, friends, clubs, toys, etc. Therefore, where sibling abuse is occurring, the sense of powerlessness and lack of control over their lives can feel even more pervasive and invasive when compared to sexual abuse perpetrated by others (Champe 2008).

Sibling sexual abuse can happen in any family; however, according to Champe (2008) there are some characteristics of family systems that are at high risk for sibling incest: a home environment that fails to protect; poor boundaries, with little regard for physical and emotional space or individual needs for privacy; physical or emotional absence of one or both parents; frequent unresolved issues; poor conflict resolution; poor communication avenues for the children; isolation from the community; and parent(s)’ chemical dependency and/or depression, which impairs the adult(s); ability to protect which creates role reversal whereby the children seek to protect and nurture their parents.

Sexual activity between siblings can develop if parents fail to respect the child’s privacy or may result from a lack of boundaries in terms of age/stage appropriate sexual activities. This can cause children to grow up unaware that they and others need privacy. It can also result in an inability to socialise or have intimate relations with peers

(Child Safety Australia 2005). Child sexual abuse affects each child and their family differently - children can suffer in many different ways including, but not limited to, physical pain and injury, severe emotional distress, depression, low self-esteem, a distorted view of sex, mistrust of adults and even suicidal thoughts. A child can not truly understand the power-play and the control that the perpetrator has in these situations and will often take their self-blame and internalise it. This internalisation of self-blame and responsibility for the abuse can later in life lead to feelings of worthlessness, guilt, depression, self-hatred, inability to self-care and risky behaviours, among many others (Champe 2008).

### Implications for practice

The challenge for agencies and service providers is how to achieve the best outcomes for families in dealing with immediate concerns and ongoing issues following discovery of sibling sexual abuse. Due to the limited research, clinical knowledge and often undetected or undisclosed incidents of sibling incest, there is still a lack of knowledge about this particular form of sexual abuse.

Counsellors reported that sibling sexual abuse cases are some of the most complicated and anxiety provoking that they may encounter in their work. Researchers, mental health professionals and the community in general underreport sibling abuse and legal systems often appear reluctant to accept and respond to sibling abuse reports. Inconsistent or ambivalent responses from professionals also impact on the parents/carers of the children concerned in that they have to deal with the pain of guilt and self blame for not having protected their child and the fear that they have failed as parents, as well as the pressure of knowing how to stay loyal to their children and to support them.

*Trying to balance the needs of individual family members, trying to make sense of the contradictory opinions in the literature, dealing with the inconsistent responses of the child protection, police and legal systems and not least, having our own beliefs about and experiences of sibling relationships questioned, can be enough to trigger professional denial ...*

*Kambouridis & Flanagan 2003 p.4*

Family dynamics and the different perspectives of all involved must be considered and parents need to support and take time to deal with the realities of what one of their children has done to the

other. Most of all they need reassurance that there is hope for recovery. This comes from professionals with relevant experience of family dynamics, developmental frameworks and intra-psychic factors that may be contributing to the situation. The first step is to engage families in therapy and thereafter to maintain the engagement and develop the therapeutic relationship. Professionals should approach the cases by first trying to understand how the abused child, the child who engaged in the abusive behaviour, the parents and then the family as a whole, make sense of the situation (Kambouridis & Flanagan 2003).

Sibling incest should also be addressed more seriously by judicial, child protection, and mental health systems on prevention and intervention levels, however, it is necessary to clearly delineate their respective responsibilities in the management of sibling incest cases. Whereas child protection authorities are concerned with current risk of harm to children, the police are concerned with investigating alleged criminal acts (Boyd & Bromfield 2006).

Sibling incest is not part of the 'normal' development of a child and is harmful and needs active intervention. The earlier the intervention, the less chance there is of the sexually abusive behaviour becoming an entrenched pattern. The active intervention should include multi-systemic responses that incorporate police, juvenile justice, child protection, schools and treatment programs. In addition, nationally comparable data on the nature and extent of the problem is needed to aid in research, to better understand this population of young people, and to plan effective service responses. Clarity about the impact of sibling incest ensures that all interventions are aimed at preventing its recurrence and although it can be initially distressing and disruptive for families, active intervention is in the long-term interest of the victims, the family and the young person.

### References

- Boyd C & Bromfield, 2006, Young people who sexually abuse: key issues, ACSSA Wrap no.3, December 2006.
- Caffaro JV & Conn-Caffaro A, 1993, Sibling affairs: the impact of abuse on sibling relationships, *The California Therapist*, 5(4), 51-60.
- Champe ED, 2008, *Risk factors/effects of sibling incest*, [www.wearesurvivors.org](http://www.wearesurvivors.org)
- Child Safety Australia, 2005, *Sibling Sexual Abuse*, [www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au](http://www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au).
- Flanagan K & Hayman-White K, 1999, *Sexual Abuse Counselling and Prevention Program: Five year review of work with victims and adolescent perpetrators of sexual abuse*, Melbourne, Australia, Children's Protection Society.
- Kambouridis H & Flanagan K, 2003, *The challenges of managing and responding to sibling sexual abuse*, Paper presented at the Child Sexual Abuse: Justice Response or Alternative Resolution conference, Adelaide 1-2 May 2003.
- Leder JM, 1993, Adult Sibling Rivalry: Sibling rivalry often lingers through adulthood, *Psychology Today* (Sussex Publishers) January/February 93, <http://psychologytoday.com/articles/index.php?term=19930101-000023&page=1>.



## At the coalface ...

**Karin Cheyne** is a support, group and community education worker at the Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors' Support Centre (BRISCC). BRISCC is a state government funded support service for women who are affected by sexual violence.

**CDFVR recently spoke to Karin about her current role and views on sexual violence.**

### ***How did you become involved in the sector?***

I had my training as a Youth Worker at Edith Cowen University in Perth where I was introduced to feminist theory and the issue of violence against women. After working as a community cultural development worker, I was employed as a collective member at Women's House in Brisbane in 1989. At that time, the collective operated a rape crisis centre which included a 24 hour rape crisis telephone line, a refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence and a refuge referral service. I was attracted to Women's House because of the organisation's feminist analysis of violence against women and the fact that it operated as a collective which had a commitment to power sharing and democratic decision making. Sexual assault services in Queensland were unfunded at the time and, consequently, we worked incredible numbers of hours a week for about \$20 more than the dole.

While working at Women's House, I was confronted by the shocking reality of the violence perpetrated against women, almost exclusively at the hands of men. The opportunity of sharing real lived experience with women and of being in an environment which encouraged the questioning of cultural assumptions about gender roles and the social institutions which legitimise sexual assault, helped me to develop my understanding of the nature of violence against women.

### ***What type of skills do you think are necessary for workers in the sexual assault area?***

I think that a gendered analysis of violence is a basic core competency necessary for workers in the sexual assault area. How we understand violence shapes our response to it. Violent behaviour is commonly explained as being a result of psychological problems within the abuser, such as stress; the inability to express emotions; inadequacy; insecurity; and provocation by women, and so on. These explanations tend to excuse the offender or blame the women. They mask the intention behind the behaviour which is to gain and maintain control and power over another.

Women who come to BRISCC often believe that the perpetrator can't help his violent behaviour or that she is somehow responsible for provoking the abuse. Explanations for violence which blame women and excuse perpetrators add to women's trauma and confusion. Even though a woman may have been powerless to stop the abuser, she can nevertheless feel she is to blame; that she should have known better or that she should have been able to stop the violence. A gendered analysis of violence recognises that violence against women is a social problem and provides women with an explanation for why they are not to blame for the violence they have experienced.

A sexual assault worker's primary focus is to support women in regaining control over their lives. It is therefore important that workers recognise women as the expert of their lives and allow them maximum control over the process of support and decision making. Additionally, workers need an understanding of the possible effects of trauma and have the skills to work collaboratively with women in a way that is safe, respectful and validating of her experience.

### ***What are some of your personal accomplishments in your role as spokesperson and counsellor – and some of the challenges?***

I am proud of the support group programme we provide at BRISCC. We offer a range of groups, including fixed term; drop in groups; social action based groups; and more community development focused groups. In talking together in a support group, women learn that what they had believed was a personal problem was in fact shared by many other women. We make connections between what are seemingly isolated acts in our personal lives and the world we live in. A place is created where we can come back from daily existence and examine our lives; to see clearly what is happening to us and focus on our own needs. This can be a very powerful experience and is a cornerstone of feminist practice.

### ***How does your agency support someone who has experienced sexual violence?***

BRISCC offers a range of support and advocacy services for women who have experienced sexual



violence. Individual counselling is available to women, either through our telephone support service or individual appointments. We also hold regular support group programs, ranging from focused sexual assault group programmes to less structured drop in groups which are often based around social action, speaking out or challenging the system, utilising art and other creative activities to make a stand.

***Do you find that most women and/or families know about sexual violence services in their communities?***

The reality is that there are very few sexual violence services for women to access in Queensland! A culture of silence around sexual violence is still very much alive and women find it difficult to disclose sexual assault due to family or social pressure to remain silent. It is still very hard for women to seek support in relation to sexual violence as many women blame themselves or fear they will not be believed. Often, women will try to put aside their experience and try to “get on with life” and will only seek support when they find that they are unable to control the effects of trauma or when an apparently unrelated event re-traumatises them.

***What could encourage more women who have experienced sexual assault to use services?***

In a hypothetical world, (which will no doubt exist in the future), where there is an adequate number of appropriately funded sexual assault services, I would say that a two pronged approach would be needed. Firstly, better promotion of support options for survivors and, secondly, targeted community education to address the ‘victim blaming’ culture around sexual violence. Media campaigns in Canada and the US directly targeting perpetrators have had positive results in reducing reports of sexual violence. Promoting support services is not enough if we are not doing anything to address the sexual violence prevention.

***To what extent do organisational policies, procedures and protocols hinder or promote the particular needs of women who are subjected to domestic violence or sexual assault?***

I am very concerned that the Queensland government may adopt recommendations made by the review of Queensland Health responses to adult victims of sexual assault conducted by KPMG in 2008. To quote the *Right to Choose* report, which was Queensland non-government sexual assault services response to the KPMG report: “The KPMG reviews proposed model would severely limit the range of services available through primarily focusing on the collection of forensic evidence and the establishment of pathways between medical, police and justice responses, in response to recent sexual assault. Services would generally be based in hospitals, and would mainly provide short term medical and counselling services using a medical model. The limited focus would not address the need of the majority of current service users.” (Quixley 2010, *The Right to Choose Report*; p18)

Rather, again in the words of *The Right to Choose* report, best practice demands that the sexual assault service delivery be driven by the rights and needs of women who have been sexually assaulted and is attuned to the ongoing and changing needs of women who have been sexually assaulted; acknowledges the importance of a gendered analysis of violence; treats prevention of violence and intervention as interdependent; and is customised to the needs of particular communities.

**For more information about BRISSC and the services we provide, visit the website at [www.brissc.org.au](http://www.brissc.org.au)**

Disclaimer: CDFVR welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre.

***‘Gammin Love’ - a fifteen minute short film reviewed by Terese Kingston***

The short film was produced in 2009 by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in association with the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association. The story centres on a teenage girl and her childhood friend, both struggling to deal with the violence in their lives. Themes embedded in the film include growing up in a violent household, binge drinking, controlling behaviour and psychological, social, physical and sexual violence.

The film comes with a 22-page booklet, produced by Congress Alkura Young Women’s Community Health Education Program, to be used in conjunction with the film. The ‘Gammin Love’ Program has been designed for educators, health and youth workers, and has been developed specifically for Indigenous women and men aged between 15-25. The booklet contains clear steps on how best to deliver the program and contains clear definitions and information on what to do if you are a victim, how a Domestic Violence Order works and a list of support services in the Northern Territory.

‘Gammin Love’ is a confronting and thought provoking film. When used with the booklet, it is an excellent and valuable resource for a range of professionals, particularly those who work with Indigenous youth. The resource can be viewed online at <http://www.myspace.com/centralmob/videos/video/107782813> or ordered from their catalogue at <http://www.caac.org.au/pr/downloads/alukura/Alukura%20Catalogue.pdf>



# SHE – Strength Health and Empowerment program for young women

by Kellie Wilk, guest contributor

As part of our community education and prevention work, the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence developed the '**SHE – Strength Health and Empowerment**' program for young women. The program involved three components; 'SHE' groups for young women, the 'SHE' young women's group facilitator's manual and a magazine style resource - 'Inspire'. All of these concepts focus on building capacity in young women so that they can identify and implement healthy behaviours and seek healthy relationships.

After securing one-off domestic and family violence and sexual assault federal funding, the first two components of the program were completed and then work began on the development of the third resource, an innovative magazine for young women.

Research has shown that the majority of young women obtain most of their information firstly from friends and secondly from magazines. During a consultation forum with local Gold Coast young women, a magazine style resource that mirrored existing teen magazines was overwhelmingly supported. The participants identified that by including elements such as fashion, music information, horoscopes and 'Dear Abby' style letters; the magazine would be credible to young women; however, the majority of the content would be based on safety strategies, positive self-esteem and domestic and family violence and sexual assault awareness and prevention.

A young women's reference group was established and a range of ideas were generated. The Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence prepared the vast majority of factual information for articles, in consultation with local health and welfare agencies. The reference group then provided feedback and design suggestions, while also assisting us in seeking stories, poems, artwork, 'models' and other contributions from local young women. Following a vote by the reference group, the emerging resource was named 'Inspire'.

Another partnership was established with a local commercial arts school which resulted in a team of young women joining us and turning our content into a young women's magazine with their layout and design skills.

Edition 1 of Inspire Magazine was officially launched in May 2007 by Steve Ciobo MP, Federal Member of Moncrieff, at an event attended by over 300 Gold Coast young women.

Copies of the magazine were circulated extensively on the Gold Coast through our agency, local schools, youth services, other community and welfare agencies and individuals. A total of 20 000 copies were eventually distributed throughout Australia and overseas.

Edition 1 of Inspire has been internationally recognised by the United Nations as an example of best practice and was highly commended in the 2008 Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Awards. The partnerships created to produce the magazine also resulted in two Gold Coast City Council Youth Achievement Awards.

Funding from the Queensland Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund enabled the printing of 20 000 copies of Inspire Magazine Edition 2 in 2008. Again, all copies were distributed, with the magazine available free on the Gold Coast and at a small cost elsewhere. This enabled us to generate some funds towards the production and printing of future editions.

However, ongoing, consistent funding of Inspire Magazine remains an issue and a barrier to the release of additional editions. It was only after a number of donations from a variety of sources that we were able to complete and print Edition 3, which was officially launched in August 2011. Copies of this edition are still available through the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence.

Every edition of Inspire Magazine features real young women and includes a range of articles, activities and tips to inspire the reader to recognise their individual strengths and uniqueness. Inspire Magazine aims to promote healthy relationships – to build respectful friendships and to have the knowledge and strength to make good decisions about love and dating relationships.

**Copies of Inspire 3 are still available from GCCASV for \$3.30 per copy - for further information and/or to obtain a copy contact: [admin@stopsexualviolence.com](mailto:admin@stopsexualviolence.com)**



Disclaimer: CDFVR welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre.



# Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum 2012

## Culture and healing – The hard yarns

by Annie Webster, CDFVR

Registration for this year's annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum is now open and available at [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au). The theme for this year, which was determined by participants at last year's forum, is *Culture and healing – The hard yarns*.

This year the forum program will be quite different from former years. CDFVR and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference group have decided that we need something different to complement this year's theme. Subsequently day one of the program will include an opening address by Venessa Curnow, member of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, followed by two workshops: **Red Dust Healing** presented by Tom Powell and Randal Ross of Spread Out and Stick Together Consultancy and **Not Our Way** presented by Ed Mosby and Gil Thomsen from Helem Yumba.

**Red Dust Healing** is about a spiritual understanding of self, identity, love, belonging, family, security hurt, heartache, good times, laughter and connection to land. Participants at this workshop will be encouraged to examine their own personal hurt and allow themselves to heal from within, addressing family and personal relationships and what may have been lifelong patterns of violence, abuse and neglect.

This healing workshop is about a grasp for hope and acceptance based on love and respect, of understanding of ourselves, our supports and being able to tell 'our' stories.

The **Not Our Way** program focuses not only on the individual using violence, but his wider systemic networks and environment. It puts forward the idea that Indigenous male violence and offending has evolved from a disconnection from traditional culture, a dislocation from family, community and responsibilities, and a depleted sense of self worth, self-determination and spirituality.

Workshop facilitators will share how the **Not Our Way** program has evolved. The evolution of the program has been one where facilitators have developed many insights and principles for delivering programs compatible for Indigenous males. Workshop participants will be encouraged to reflect on how the experiences and principles of **Not Our Way** may provide guidance in their own programs or services.

Day two's program will start with an opening address by Shirley Slann, CDFVR reference group member and senior worker North Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service. Shirley's address will be followed by a healing panel comprising Florence Onus, Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation Ltd; Seith Fourmile, senior cultural representative and traditional owner, Cairns; and Rose Elu, Indigenous Service Delivery Advisor, Relationships Australia.

Pat Anderson, co-author of the *Little Children are Sacred* report and Chair of the Lowitja Institute will talk about the Intervention and its impact on culture and healing. She will then lead participants to nominate 'hard yarning' topics that will be discussed in a whole-of-forum yarning session.

'Hard yarning' will be followed by a *Health, Hope, Healing* session which will give participants a chance to unwind, laugh and share some time together before closing with a rousing rendition of 'From little things big things grow'.

Registration fees have remained the same as last year - \$350 for Indigenous Australian participants and \$450 for all others, and confirmed upon receipt of registration fees. This year there are only 100 places available. As we go to print the 20 non-Indigenous places have been sold out, and there are only 15 of the original 80 Indigenous places left. Don't delay if you want a place at this year's forum!

**For further information contact Annie Webster on (07) 40497838 or email [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au)**



## DAY 1 – Wednesday May 9

8.00 a.m.	Registration
8.45 a.m.	Welcome to Country
8.55 a.m.	Didgeridoo
9.00 a.m.	Welcome – CDFVR Director, Heather Nancarrow
9.05 a.m.	Venessa Curnow, National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
9.30 a.m.	Questions
9.45 a.m.	<b>Morning tea</b>
10.00 a.m.	Deadly Skilling I (Choice of two workshops: <i>Red Dust Healing</i> or <i>Not Our Way</i> )
1.00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>
2.00 p.m.	Deadly Skilling II (Participants attend remaining workshop)
3.30 p.m.	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
3.45-5.00 p.m.	Deadly Skilling II (continued)
7.00-12 p.m.	Forum dinner and karaoke

### Red Dust Healing

Red Dust Healing is about a spiritual understanding of self, identity, love, belonging, family, security, hurt, heartache, good times, laughter and connection to land. Participants at this workshop will be encouraged to examine their own personal hurt and allow themselves to heal from within, addressing family and personal relationships and what may have been lifelong patterns of violence, abuse and neglect. This healing workshop is about a grasp for hope and acceptance based on love and respect, of understanding of ourselves, our supports and being able to tell 'our' stories.

**HARD Y**  
**E** Care <sup>T</sup> **Listo**  
**LOVE** <sup>k</sup> **FAM**  
**L** Rights **RE**  
**P** **S D P P**



## DAY 2 – Thursday May 10

- 9.00 a.m. Shirley Slann, CDFVR Reference Group member and Senior Worker North Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service
- 9.30 a.m. Questions
- 9.45 a.m. Healing panel – chaired by Charles Passi  
Florence Onus, Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation  
Seith Fourmile, Senior cultural representative and traditional owner, Cairns  
Rose Elu, Indigenous Service Delivery Advisor, Relationships Australia, Qld
- 10.30 a.m. **Morning tea**
- 11.00 a.m. Pat Anderson, co-author Little Children Are Sacred report and Chair, Lowitja Institute
- 11.30 a.m. The Hard Yarns – facilitated forum discussion
- 1.00 p.m. **Lunch**
- 2.00 p.m. Health, Hope, Healing - Massage, bubble blowing, group singing, quiet listening
- 3.00 p.m. From little things big things grow

## Not Our Way

**YARNS**  
enEMPOWER  
LY Culture A  
SPECT F  
O R H E

The Not Our Way program focuses not only on the individual but their wider networks and environments. It puts forward the idea that Indigenous male violence and offending has evolved from a disconnection from traditional culture, a dislocation from family, community and responsibilities, and a reduced sense of self worth, self-determination and spirituality. Workshop participants will be encouraged to reflect on how the experiences and principles of Not Our Way may provide guidance in their own programs or services.

Kathleen Daly (2012)

## Conventional and innovative justice responses to sexual violence

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

A précis by Heather Nancarrow and Renette Viljoen, CDFVR

*Conventional and Innovative Justice Responses to Sexual Violence*, an issues paper written by Professor Kathleen Daly<sup>1</sup> and published in 2011 by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA), reflects on the limits of legal reform in improving outcomes for victim/survivors of sexual violence, considers innovative justice responses that have been used, or proposed in Australia and internationally, and suggests the way forward to improving justice outcomes for victim/survivors of sexual violence. Daly's extensive knowledge, drawn from her long-term interest in and research of justice responses to gendered harms, has been brought to bear in this comprehensive and challenging issues paper. She observes that despite 30 years of criminal justice system reforms to better respond to sexual violence, conviction rates have gone down in countries such as Australia, Canada, England and Wales and there has not been any appreciable increase in the level of satisfaction that victims/survivors have with the way their cases are handled by police and courts, nor with their experiences of the trial process.

*Although the symbolic value of the law is recognised, there is "increasing scepticism that reform of rape law alone can change victims' experiences appreciably" (p1).*

The issues paper is constructed in three parts: 1) sexual assault law reform; 2) conventional and innovative justice responses; and 3) challenges and ways forward. A brief précis of each part is provided below.

### Sexual assault law reform

First, Daly notes that rape law reforms in Australia and the United States in the 1970s were the first of a wave of reforms in many Western countries. This is followed by a summary of key aspects of rape law reforms in Australian states and territories where the "focus was to shift attention away from the victim's character to the offender's behaviour, eliminate the witness corroboration rule and other physical evidence requirements to prove non-consent, and broaden the definition of rape and sexual intercourse" (p3). Specialised training for police and the establishment of specific support services for victims were also introduced to enable effective implementation of the legal reforms.

Although the key objectives of the rape law reforms were to increase prosecutions and

convictions, and improve the way victim/survivors were treated in the legal process (thus improving their experiences of the process), Daly concludes from her review of the literature that these objectives have not been achieved. She says "the most significant impact appears to have been on victim/survivors, who began to report sexual victimisation more often" (p3). In fact, in a five country study in which seventy-five distinct studies on rape case attritions (number of reported rapes resulting in a conviction, as a percentage of the number of rapes reported to police) were analysed, Daly and her colleague Brigitte Bouhours have shown that conviction rates have fallen in all countries but the United States where the rates stayed about the same. In Australia the rate fell from a 17% conviction rate in the period 1970-1989, to 11.5% in the period 1990-2005 (the biggest attrition across those periods of time was in England and Wales, where the conviction rate dropped from 24 to 10%). Tracking the journey of 100 cases of rape reported to police in Australia (1990-2005), Daly illustrates, diagrammatically, the point in the legal process at which attrition occurs.

*Of 100 cases, 20 proceed past the police and prosecution and are adjudicated in court, 3.5 go to trial and are convicted, 8 result in a plea of guilty (any sexual offense), so 11.5 of the 100 matters results in a conviction and 4.5 receive a prison sentence...for almost 9 out of 10 sexual assault victims, no formal legal redress occurs (pp4-5).*

Daly, together with many commentators and researchers she cites, asserts that the essence of the problem concerns cultural beliefs about gender and sexuality and the construction of the 'real rape' stereotype. Victims are adversely affected by the fact that it is still left to judges to make assessments about reliability and credibility of the witness in particular cases, and because trial judges appear to be pre-emptively warning juries about the quality of the evidence to avoid appeal challenges.

Further, Daly argues that the criminal justice system is not well suited to bringing about attitudinal and behavioural change; educational programs are preferable for that purpose. In closing this part of the issues paper, and drawing on the work of Judith Herman and that of Mary Koss, Daly emphasises that justice, from the perspective

<sup>1</sup> The author, Kathleen Daly, is a Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University.



of the victim, includes a range of needs, such as “social acknowledgement, a sense of control (and) an opportunity to tell one’s story ... (which) ... are not likely to be met by current criminal justice responses” (p8). This leads us into the second part of the issues paper, where Daly presents an overview of 48 conventional or innovative responses designed to better achieve justice for victim/survivors of sexual assault.

### Conventional or innovative responses

This part of the issues paper begins with the observation that while legal reform has sought to achieve increased efficacy (increased likelihood of conviction) **and** improvements in the system to respond to victim/survivors’ experiences and perceptions of the process, these goals are not always compatible.

*Further, where the legal reforms have failed to produce the increased convictions and levels of victim/survivors’ satisfaction sought because of the cultural construction of gender and violence, a range of conventional and innovative practices have the potential to overcome many of the limitations of the legal reform.*

Several key concepts (conventional and innovative justice responses; formal and informal justice; and restorative justice and conferencing) are explained in order to proceed to the discussion on various conventional and innovative responses.

Very briefly, *conventional justice* responses are those that work within or alongside the criminal justice system and are aimed at helping victim/survivors cope better with the system; *innovative responses* can also work within or alongside the criminal justice system, but they may also operate independent of it and are focussed on addressing victim/survivors justice needs, expressed above. Rather than see conventional and innovative responses as discrete categories, however, Daly proposes they be located on a continuum, particularly as hybrid forms of conventional and innovative justice are evident.

The term *formal justice* represents the traditional structure and purpose of the criminal justice system (police, prosecutions and adjudication by a court, all operating within standardised rules and procedures). *Informal justice* refers to various practices that are not bound by the same standardised rules and procedures embedded in formal justice practice, and allows for direct and indirect conversation between victim/survivors and offenders, friends and relatives and other relevant people who would normally have no role in the justice process. Informal justice practices may, or may not, be legally formalised but they operate within established rules and protocols to ensure profes-

sional and accountable practice.

There are many definitions of *restorative justice* but a number of core elements, including that there is no process for adjudicating facts, so restorative justice practices are only activated where there is an admission of guilt by an offender. As defined in the issues paper, restorative justice practices can be used as diversion from court or in pre-sentence or post-sentence processes and are called *conferences*. A conference is a meeting between an admitted offender, the victim, their supporters and other relevant people (in some cases police) with the aim “to discuss the impact of the offence and to censure the behaviour, for victims to voice their story and ask questions and for participants to decide on an appropriate outcome” (p10).

In response to the limits of the legal reforms identified in part one of the issues paper, Daly set out to identify conventional and innovative justice responses to sexual assault and developed an inventory of 48 such approaches identified in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, England and Wales, and some European countries. Approaches included in the inventory were, mostly, those that:

- addressed victims’ justice needs;
- involved more serious sexual offences categories (rape and attempted rape);
- were designed for adult female victim/survivors of male perpetrators (and for victim/survivors rather than offenders); and
- were practices or activities rather than proposals for legal reform.

The 48 responses are detailed in the online Appendix, “[Inventory of Responses to Sexual Violence](#)” and grouped into four broad types:

**Specialisation:** specialist police teams, investigation and multidisciplinary responses involving police, forensic specialists and sexual assault counsellors; specialist prosecution units and courts.

**Offender focus:** intensive case management and offender support and supervision.

**Legal reform:** reforms to legal procedure, definitions of consent, admissibility of evidence and adjudication processes.

**Victim advocacy and participation:** victim support, services and advocacy, such as sexual assault counsellors providing support during legal processes and witness assistance programs; mechanisms that encourage participation within the legal process, such as victim legal representation and victim impact statements and mechanisms that encourage participation outside the legal process by, for example, victim-offender meetings, memorialisation and cultural performance.

Most of the 48 responses were concerned with improving victim experiences (52%), or with system efficacy and victim experiences (34%). Bearing in mind the criteria for inclusion, only 6% addressed system efficacy alone, and 8% had an offender focus. On the other hand, improved victim experiences were the focus of all the programs and approaches within the victim support group, whereas both system efficacy and victim experiences are more often evident in the police teams and specialist courts groups. Innovative approaches were in the minority (19%) but existing research evidence of innovative responses existed for seven out of the nine responses, whereas research evidence for only half of the conventional responses existed. Daly notes "there is a paucity of evidence that compares innovative and conventional responses from the perspective of victim/survivors ... in most cases, it is not possible to directly compare the two because victims may choose to participate (or not) in the criminal justice system, or to participate in different ways; therefore, self-selection effects make comparison difficult, if not impossible" (p13). Of all the groups, relatively less research existed for the victim advocacy and participation group.

### Assessing conventional responses

Daly notes that within the group of conventional responses, specialist courts and legal representation have met with a positive response within the sexual assault sector. *Specialist sex offence courts*, with the specialisation of judicial officers, prosecutors, and defence, have been viewed positively as a means to lessen the trauma of the legal process for victims. However, in Australia and elsewhere, most rape cases are dealt with in the higher courts whereas experience of specialist courts has been in response to domestic/family violence, located in the magistrates' (lower) court jurisdiction. This has implications for considerations on whether specialised sexual violence courts should be for less serious sexual offence charges in the magistrates' jurisdiction, or for all types of sexual offences. Alternatively, says Daly, the magistrates' level court could be used for pleas to offences within its jurisdiction, and the higher level court (district or county) could respond to the tasks of adjudication and sentencing in more innovative ways.

Based on the evidence from civil law jurisdictions, another conventional response with promise is victims having *legal representation*. Daly believes this should be considered alongside other approaches that are currently used in common law countries and are effective from a victim's perspective, including "victim advocates and independent sexual violence advisors" (p23). However, she concludes that consideration must be given to the benefits of having a professional legal representative in the court room, against

having direct assistance to victims/survivors in terms of information and access to services and support provided by sexual assault workers.

### Assessing innovative responses

Most innovative justice responses in domestic settings involve meetings, conferences, or circles. The 'restorative justice guilty plea' occurs within the traditional legal process, while restorative justice processes such as 'conferencing' can occur at different stages of the criminal justice process, as noted previously. Daly notes that "restorative justice is a popular concept and dominates the landscape of discussion of alternative justice" (p23). However, the need for protections and conditions, including victim safety and a facilitator's awareness of power dynamics and how to manage these effectively, must be considered.

*In addition to actual practices, such as Indigenous community-controlled approaches, victim-offender mediation innovations and responses that may reside entirely in civil society, there is also a need to consider where they are located, when they are set in motion, and how they may articulate with the criminal justice system.*

Currently, the research evidence base for innovative justice responses is small, partly because the emergence of these responses is recent. Much of the existing evidence (particularly in regard to youth sexual violence cases) has come from Daly, herself, and her colleagues. However, one of the key barriers to research evidence in regard to restorative justice practices is that adult sexual assault cases have been deemed ineligible for conferencing, due to concerns about the power and control dynamic (and the inability of a conference process to deal with this dynamic) in gendered violence cases.

### Challenges and ways forward

Alternatives to standard legal process have the potential to provide rape victims "greater voice and participation, validation and vindication, offender accountability ... and a communicative environment where questions can be asked and assurances of no further harm given" (p24). However, concerns that the greater flexibility offered by alternative justice processes may enable the offender to manipulate the process and coerce the victim/survivor into 'agreement', and that the process represents leniency, have not been extinguished. Daly argues here, and elsewhere, however, that the concerns related to ongoing domestic violence have been conflated with what



may be more incident-based sexual violence.

Daly also raises an important point about the way sexual violence offenders are treated in the media, the criminal justice system and in the publication imagination; and the effect this has on victim/survivors' understandings of sexual violence and, consequently, their reporting of such violence. Daly says "the demonization of some sexual offenders ... makes sex offenders seem so monstrous that women's everyday victimisation experiences by partners, friends, and colleagues cannot be imagined as real rape" (p25).

The challenge we face is that legal reform has not achieved increased convictions; instead it has been associated with decreasing conviction rates over the past three decades, leaving victim/survivors with a sense of injustice. In part, Daly finds, this is because more rapes and sexual assaults are reported that do not fit the 'real rape' stereotype of stranger rape against an 'innocent' (i.e. deserving) victim.

Daly concludes the issues paper by advocating "more visionary change" (p27) and towards this objective she proposes consideration of six key points for future development of policy and practice:

- *Debate and clarify justice goals*

Decision makers need to reflect upon and debate justice goals for rape and sexual assault to build consensus on directions for change (i.e. 'symbolic justice' relies on one pathway of formal criminal justice; while 'pragmatic justice', relies on multiple pathways of formal and informal justice mechanisms, with an emphasis on victim participation).

- *Emphasise early stages of the justice process*

A key focus needs to be increasing admissions to sexual offences (though not necessarily convictions) when victims first disclose. There is also the need to recognise that educational programs are likely to be more effective in preventing sexual violence than criminal law sanctions.

- *Do not rely solely on criminalisation and punitive penal strategies*

Admissions to sexual violence can validate the harm victim/survivors' experience (whereas failure to convict has the opposite effect), so consideration must be given to whether admissions to sexual violence need always to be tied to convictions (as Daly says "treatment interventions for offenders could take place without a conviction" (p26)).

- *Reconsider the ineligibility of sexual cases for conferencing*

Daly argues here (and elsewhere) that the trade-off in decisions about including or excluding sexual

assault cases in conferencing is not between a more, or less, serious response, but "between any response or none at all" (p26); recalling that for nearly nine out of ten cases of sexual violence reported to police "no formal legal response occurs" (p4).

- *Resource practices and modify protocols*

Recognising that restorative justice practices were designed with offenders, rather than victim/survivors in mind, modification of protocols and practices is required to accommodate victim/survivors of rape and sexual assault.

- *Provide a menu of options*

Instead of only formal criminal justice responses, victim/survivors should have multiple justice options in response to rape and sexual assault. Alternative or informal justice processes can take place in many legal and organisational contexts and should allow the victim/survivors a greater degree of participation, voice, validation, and vindication.

## **Conclusion**

Incremental legal reform seems to have reached its limit in redressing low conviction rates and traumatic experiences of victim/survivors of sexual violence in the criminal justice system. Daly acknowledges the magnitude of the task of "finding the right balance between censuring wrongs, validating and vindicating victims, protecting society, and providing supports and services for offenders and victims in a democratic society that is committed to the rule of law and due process for citizens" (p27). She argues, however, that we must look beyond standard justice processes and the focus on increasing penalties for sexual assault and, rather, employ innovative ways to achieve justice for victim/survivors. Such innovations would be characterised by "more dialogue-based, interactive responses with a greater degree of active participation and decision-making by victim/survivors" (p27).

*Daly's issues paper is a thoroughly considered and genuine attempt to achieve justice for victims of sexual violence.*

*This brief summary is provided as a means of bringing her work to the attention of the broader domestic and family violence and sexual assault services sector. However, reading and discussing the entire issues paper is highly recommended.*

Read the full paper at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i12/>

# The many facets of shame in intimate partner sexual violence

- A review of Liz Wall's paper for the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

by Terese Kingston, CDFVR

Intimate partner sexual violence is a significant social problem, both in Australia and overseas. The Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* found that over a third of the women (34%) who had a current or former intimate partner reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence since the age of sixteen (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). The *ABS Personal Safety Survey* found that, of Australian women who had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15, 21% had been assaulted by an ex-partner, and 2% by a current partner (2006). Similarly, a US study of 1108 women found that 10% of the women in the sample had been raped by a current partner (Basile 2002).

It appears little public acknowledgement has been generated by these disturbing statistics and reluctance among victim/survivors to report or discuss the issue, even when physical violence is identified (Wall 2011, p1). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) personal safety data shows sexual assaults are less likely to be reported to police than physical assaults, with sexual assaults by a current spouse or partner the least likely of all sexual assaults to be reported (2006). Liz Wall's research summary (published in January 2012), examines the implications of shame in disclosing and help-seeking in victim/survivors of intimate partner sexual violence.

In reviewing the literature on intimate partner sexual violence, Wall states, 'shame consistently arises as one of the predominant feelings that victim/survivors describe' (2011, p1). Research on the topic centres on three key aspects of the relationship between shame and intimate partner sexual violence: the detrimental psychological effect of shame that isolates victim/survivors; the ways in which cultural attitudes regarding gender create and perpetrate shame; and how perpetrators of intimate partner sexual violence are able to use shame to disempower and control their partners. Wall draws on literature which identifies intimate partner sexual violence as a discrete type of intimate partner violence, and literature which considers shame within a post-trauma framework. The review focussed largely on studies published in the United States (US) and Australia from 1999 onwards, from the fields of sociology, psychology and medicine (2011, pp2-3).

The specific emotional trauma associated with intimate partner sexual violence is considerable and is highlighted in numerous studies across the literature, both in Australia and overseas. A key finding emerging from the body of research into the subject is that 'feelings of shame and trauma are intensified when sexual assault is perpetrated by an intimate partner compared to a stranger' (Wall 2011, p3). Studies in the field

indicated that the risk of exposure to multiple sexual assaults was higher if the perpetrator was in a spousal relationship with the victim/survivor; and that feelings of shame were likely to be intensified due to the frequency and ongoing nature of the assaults. 'Despite this repeated victimisation, research shows that help-seeking behaviour by victim/survivors of intimate partner sexual violence to be lower than those where the perpetrators were not partners' (Mahoney 1999).

A recurring theme in studies on male partner rape is that most women struggle to articulate their experience and/or minimise the violence involved (Heenan 2004). Discussing marital sex and sexual assault openly is still widely regarded as taboo, and this cultural attitude has resulted in a lack of public discourse around the issue, further contributing to feeling of isolation among the victim/survivors.

Domestic violence workers also indicated that sexual violence is the last kind of violence to be disclosed (Easteal & McOrmond-Plummer 2006). Shame causes feelings of alienation and worthlessness, and although it is an inward-focussed emotion, it may be reflected in body language such as shying away and reluctance to make eye contact (Rahm et al. 2006). Body language such as this may assist professionals working with victim/survivors in identifying possible experience of sexual violence, however they must be equally aware that feelings of shame increase the desire to isolate oneself, making victim/survivors less likely to volunteer information which may lead to further questioning.

Wall next covers social constructs of shame and associated cultural norms in her summary, citing Weiss's (2010) argument that 'shame is the result of social constructions of appropriate gender behaviour and how sexuality is dealt with in that culture'. Historically speaking, the fact that marital rape was not legally considered a crime in Australia until the 1980s is a reflection of the broader societal attitudes to sexual assault within marriage in the past (Easteal & Feerick 2005). Although the law has now changed in all Australian jurisdictions, there remains a cultural perception that intimate partner sexual assault is at the low end of severity when compared to assault by a stranger (Easteal & Feerick 2005). Societal attitudes towards violence against women in general, according to Flood and Pease (2009), impacts in three key areas: the perpetration of violence; women's responses to the violence; and the community's responses. Other research (Bennice & Resick 2003; Culbertson & Dehle 2001) suggests cultural norms contribute to victim-blaming, perpetration of myths regarding



gender roles and women internalising a cultural sense of sexual obligation within marriage. Shame of sexual victimisation may therefore be viewed as a 'culturally embedded' social process (Weiss 2010).

Finally, Wall states the research indicated that shame could be used as 'an effective tool for perpetrators to exploit the vulnerability of their victim and enhance their own power in the relationship dynamic' (2012, p6). She cites the work by Logan, Cole and Shannon (2007), examining the use of sexual degradation of women within violent relationships, and its close resemblance to psychological abuse. The resulting feelings of shame for women in these situations may have the dual effect of prohibiting the victim/survivor from reporting or discussing the assault, as well as eroding their sense of worth and self-esteem (Wall 2012, p7).

This demonstrated lack of disclosure of intimate partner sexual assault has significant implications for both understanding the trauma as experienced by victim/survivors, and in identifying a need for health and other care professionals to consider the possibility of sexual violence in spousal relationships where other forms of violence are recognised or suspected (Wall 2012, p7). Low rates of disclosure puts victims at a high risk of ongoing

sexual and other forms of violence. It is therefore important that health professionals and other support workers know how to react and support victim/survivors following disclosure of sexual assault, and how to refer them to local sexual assault and family violence services (Wall 2012, p8).



*The insidious and eroding effects of shame on victim/survivors mean that it is important that those who work with women in a health or support capacity, be pro-active in recognising and understanding the negative effects of shame in a post-traumatic context. Appropriate and supportive responses, including referral to specialist services, are key tools for overcoming the barriers that shame can impose.* Liz Wall 2012 p9



Read the full paper at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/researchsummary/> (references included).

## Widening the chasm - the medicalisation of rape

by Kathy Prentice<sup>1</sup>, guest contributor

There has been much debate in regards to the proposed revision of the DSM-1V to include 'Paraphilic Coercive Disorder' (could someone please show me the empirical evidence!). Despite the existence of paraphilia as a diagnosis in the DSM-1V, the majority of psychiatrists I have spoken to over the years do not regard sexual violence as a psychiatric illness, and indeed only a minority of men who commit sex offences have a mental disorder.

I also add my voice to those who are concerned that this medicalisation of rape will provide yet another tool for defence lawyers to use as a means to 'unfit to plead' outcomes for their clients, in a system that is already overtly biased. Some have also expressed concern about human rights and that the diagnosis will lead to offenders being incarcerated and 'the key thrown away' under sexually violent predator laws.

For me, however, it only reinforces how little progress we've made in the last 40 years; what this current debate demonstrates is how wide the chasm remains between the medicalised discourse of sexual violence where people who commit sexual offences are seen as sick, deviant and require treatment, and feminist perspectives of sexual violence, located in a society in which disproportionate power relations exist between man, woman and child, thus creating the breeding ground for acts of sexual violence. We are no closer now than we were in the 1970's to developing sound policy to work together to prevent and respond to sexual violence, or the sound practice that Anna Salter was advocating in the 1980's, that those who provide services for 'offenders' and 'victims' work closely together.

Let's use this latest challenge to bring renewed energy to issues of sexual violence, to work together intersectorally across all the spectrums of prevention. Here in Australia, we have organisations such as the National Association of Services against Sexual Violence (NASASV) and the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Assault (ANZATSA) who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in their membership – maybe an inaugural joint conference could be about 'Decreasing the chasm'.....

<sup>1</sup> Kathy Prentice is the Director at Phoenix House, Bundaberg, a charitable community based organisation providing safe, supportive service for those who have been harmed, are at risk of harm, and/or are willing to address their own harmful behaviours, using a public health approach to the prevention of sexual violence.

# Ending violence against women initiative

by Di McLeod, guest contributor

Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence (GCCASV) is a specialist sexual violence intervention and prevention service, providing counselling to women who have been raped and/or sexually assaulted at any time in their lives as well as prevention education to the broader Gold Coast community.

*We are committed to ending violence against women and recognise that, in order to achieve this, we must engage and work with men. We believe that no man has the right to rape, but all men have a collective responsibility to STOP RAPE.*

GCCASV staff work extensively in high schools with both young men and young women and provide a group for men at the Arthur Gorrie Centre. Informed by this work, we realised that many men did actually want to have respectful relationships but through a lack of information and of positive role models, simply didn't know how.

We developed an initiative to specifically target men and decided to call it **"Ending Violence Against Women is Men's Business"**.

The initiative includes a poster and a fold out business card, which "unpacks" what respect might look like. These resources encompass simple tips and strategies for men to focus on themselves and take positive action in their lives.

Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson, QPS South East Region, spoke passionately about men's responsibility to end violence against women and publicly launched the resource on the Gold Coast during Sexual Violence Awareness Month. Seventy eight supporters were present, including the Minister for Communities, Housing and Women, the Hon Karen Struthers, local politicians, senior bureaucrats, a large contingent of police as well as other health and welfare workers.

The resources have been distributed to sports and service clubs and are currently being distributed throughout our local community.

**To order copies of the poster or business card, contact GCCASV at [admin@stopsexualviolence.com.au](mailto:admin@stopsexualviolence.com.au)**



Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson, Queensland Police Service, South East Region.

Back row from left to right:  
Det Sen Sgt Nev Huth (Southern Investigative Group); Det Sen Sgt Paul Austin (Northern Investigative Group); Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson (A/C South Eastern Region); Supt Paul Ziebarth (District Officer, Gold Coast District); Inspector Glenn Allen (Inspector Patrol Services, Southport); Dr Alex Douglas former Member for Gaven; Peter Lawler, former Member for Southport; Dale Jackson (QPS Senior Community Crime Prevention Officer).

Front row from left to right:  
Christine Smith, former Member for Burleigh; Karen Struthers, former Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women; Di Macleod Director Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence; Thi Thanh Tam PHAM Graphic Designer of the Resources.



Disclaimer: CDFVR welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre.



# Workshops, Conferences and Date Claimers

5 April 2012

Working with Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse  
Burswood, WA  
Email: [rto@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:rto@anglicarewa.org.au)

19-20 April 2012

AHURI Homelessness Research Conference  
Melbourne, Vic  
<http://www.cvent.com/events/homelessness-research-conference/event-summary-1e0bf5850d614e6887b05bc21f13bee7.aspx>

9-10 May 2012

CDFVR's Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Culture and healing-The hard yarns  
Mackay, QLD  
<http://noviolence.com.au/forum2012/registration.html>

18-20 May 2012

2012 Rural and Regional Law and Justice Conference  
Coffs Harbour, NSW  
<http://www.une.edu.au/law/rrljconference/>

7-8 June 2012

Elder Abuse National Conference 2012  
New directions in Elder Abuse Prevention  
Brisbane, QLD  
<http://www.eapu.com.au>

14-15 June 2012

International Women's Conference: Connecting for Action in the Asia-Pacific Region  
Cairns, QLD  
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/iwc/registrations/registration/index.htm>

25-27 June 2012

International Indigenous Development Research Conference  
Auckland, New Zealand  
<http://www.indigenousdevelopment2012.ac.nz/registration-information>

## Solving the Jigsaw training

Professional development training modules

The Solving the Jigsaw training modules provide a practical whole school or cluster approach to wellbeing, violence and bullying, and offer an excellent training opportunity for implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework

Participants in the program learn ways of working with children and young people in building a culture of wellbeing.

With philanthropic support, training is offered in QLD and NSW in 2012. For further information on training dates and registration visit <http://www.solvingthejigsaw.org.au/training.htm> or contact Sissy Mylrea at 0407 694 429.

## Alternatives to Violence Projects (AVP)

The Alternatives to Violence Project Qld provides low-cost experiential workshops that empower individuals to liberate themselves and others from the burden of violence. You do not need to bring specific experience or qualifications to this work, but an interest in, and openness to, self-development and working in teams is essential.

BASIC LEVEL	BASIC LEVEL	2ND LEVEL	3RD LEVEL	BASIC LEVEL	BASIC LEVEL
May 26-27	July 7-8	Aug 11-12*	Sept 15-16*	Oct 20-21	Dec 1-2

\* These are provisional dates, subject to negotiation with participants. To confirm, please contact the AVPQ workshop coordinator on:

**[avp.qld.workshops@gmail.com](mailto:avp.qld.workshops@gmail.com)**

For stories and information about the work of AVP Queensland, go to the website [www.avpq.org.au](http://www.avpq.org.au).

To enquire about attending a workshop, email [admin@avpq.org.au](mailto:admin@avpq.org.au) or ring them on 07 3286 2593 or 0435 007 405.



CDFVR is hosting a *free* Research Seminar, titled ***Domestic homicide and death reviews – The Canadian experience.***

Presenter, Dr Myrna Dawson, is visiting from Canada to share trends and patterns in domestic homicide in Canada. Her research includes key findings on primary risk factors and recommendations for improvements across sectors as well as the benefits and challenges of implementing and conducting death reviews.

**Registrations close 4th of April 2012.**

For more information and to register online, visit [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au).

## Contact Us

Queensland Centre for Domestic and  
Family Violence Research  
CQUniversity Mackay  
P.O. Box 5606  
Mackay MC Qld 4741

Telephone: 07 4940 7834  
Fax: 07 4940 7839  
Email: [enquiries@noviolence.com.au](mailto:enquiries@noviolence.com.au)  
Website: [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au)



ISSN 1836-9847 (Print)  
ISSN 1836-9855 (Online)

## Staff

Director	Heather Nancarrow
Education Officer	Annie Webster
Education Officer	Renette Viljoen
Multimedia Officer	Clinton Rawsthorne
Research Assistant	Terese Kingston
Administration Officer	Lauren Pattie

We encourage readers to contribute to the CDFVRe@der. If you have any information or articles you wish to publish, please contact Centre staff.

### HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

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

If you would like to be included on, or removed from, the Centre's mailing list, please ring us on (07) 4940 7834.

The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVR) is located within the Institute for Health and Social Science Research in the Academic Research Division at CQUniversity. It is physically located at CQUniversity's Mackay Campus.



The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research receives defined term funding from the Queensland Department of Communities to undertake research and develop educational resources pertaining to domestic and family violence in Queensland.

**Disclaimer:** The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre, CQUniversity or the Queensland Government. Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.