

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this issue

Dear ACSSA reader

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of *ACSSA Aware*, the quarterly newsletter of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, continuing to provide news, reviews, articles and notices for those working in the sexual assault field in Australia. This newsletter was edited by Cameron Boyd, Research Officer at ACSSA.

This newsletter contains two feature articles by ACSSA staff. 'Perspectives on the treatment of men and boys who sexually abuse', by Cameron Boyd, explores the neglect of feminist theory and critical studies of masculinity in literature regarding the treatment of men and boys who have been sexually violent. It discusses a small but growing body of literature on therapy and interventions ('treatments') that place gender and power at the centre of working with these men. 'Considering elder abuse and sexual assault', by Antonia Quadara, follows on from an article on elder abuse in *ACSSA Aware* 13 ("Elder abuse" and the sexual assault of older women: A new Australian policy response'), also by Antonia, and is particularly pertinent, given potential developments as Australia prepares laws regarding the mandatory reporting of the abuse of elderly people.

In addition to these articles, we review a report by Moira Carmody and Karen Willis, *Developing ethical sexual lives: Young people, sex and sexual assault prevention*, which discusses the first stage of a three-year project that explores sexual assault prevention for young people. We also review a book providing a guide to the laws relating to sexual and reproductive health in NSW, *Sex and the law: A guide for health and community workers in New South Wales*.

In addition, we interviewed Anna Song, from Friends of 'Comfort Women' in Australia, for this newsletter. Friends of 'Comfort Women' Australia is a group established in 2006 to mobilise supporters in Australia to bring justice for 'comfort women'. After this interview took place, the first 'Wednesday protest' occurred in Australia on 7 March, with the protestors gathering outside the Japanese Consulate in Sydney receiving widespread media attention.

There is also our usual 'News in brief' section, detailing recently released reports and other news from the sector.

Finally, there are our regular columns on conferences and training, as well as literature highlights from recent additions to the ACSSA Library collection at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

As always, ACSSA remains keen to receive feedback on how we can better meet the needs of those committed to working against sexual assault. Please continue to provide us with your comments on current or future publications—we always love to hear from you.

If this is the first issue of *Aware* that you've read, earlier editions can be requested via email or by returning the form on the back page of this issue. Also, all our publications are freely available online at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa

We thank you for supporting ACSSA, and hope you find this newsletter informative, inspiring and perhaps also helpful in your invaluable work to better understand, respond to and ultimately prevent all sexual assault in Australia.

Dr Zoë Morrison
ACSSA Coordinator



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault aims to improve access to current information on sexual assault in order to assist policy makers, service providers, and others interested in this area to develop evidence-based strategies to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through the Women's Safety Agenda. The Centre is hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

NEWS IN BRIEF

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Private Lives: A report on the health and wellbeing of GLBTI Australians (Monograph Series No. 57). Pitts, M., Smith, A., Mitchell, A., & Patel, S. (2006). Melbourne: Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria & Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

Launched at the end of 2006, this report contains the results of a survey on the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians, including information on their experiences of sexual violence. The survey suggests gay men report higher rates of sexual assault than heterosexual men, while lesbian women reported lower rates than both gay men and heterosexual women (when comparing to the Personal Safety Survey). People who identified as transgender or intersex reported particularly high rates of sexual victimisation.

The full report is available for download at www.glhv.org.au/?q=node/215

An investigation into the effective and ethical interviewing of suspected sex offenders (Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No. 327). Kebbel, M., Hurren, E., & Mazerolle, P. (2006). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

This report, released as part of the Australian Institute of Criminology's Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, considers and investigates the value of employing effective police interviewing strategies for suspected sex offenders.

The report reiterates that, along with low reporting rates, sex offence cases also experience high attrition and low conviction rates. The report highlights that difficulties associated with processing sex offence cases are, to a significant degree, because the offence typically occurs in private, leaving little, if any, corroborating evidence or witnesses, thereby relying on the victim's word against that of the offender. As such, the authors emphasise the important role of confessions in maximising the likelihood of convictions for guilty suspects. According to the paper, a confession to an investigator is likely to: increase the chance of securing a conviction; reduce the involvement by, and therefore the burden on, the victim; and avoid a lengthy, costly trial.

The report draws on four research studies that focused on identifying factors associated with an increased likelihood of an offender confession. The studies comprised interviews with convicted sex offenders, an experimental study of offenders' perspectives of police interviewing techniques,

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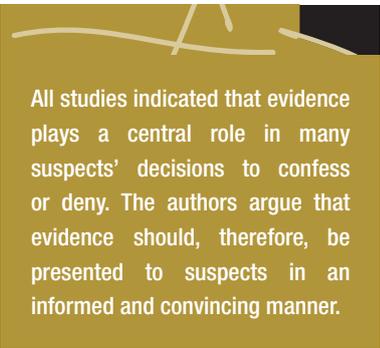
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an experimental study on the role of evidence, and interviews with police officers. The studies examined a range of variables, specifically: humanity (including levels of police friendliness, respect and cooperation, as perceived by suspects), dominance (including perceived levels of police officers' aggression, hostility and insults), police officers' understandings of cognitive distortions common among sex offenders, offence minimisation and maximisation, ethical interviewing techniques, and accuracy and detail of evidence.

All studies indicated that evidence plays a central role in many suspects' decisions to confess or deny. The authors argue that evidence should, therefore, be presented to suspects in an informed and convincing manner. The report concludes that fair and ethical strategies can be taken to increase confessions from sexual offenders. The report recommends that such strategies are further researched, developed and implemented, as this will improve the rate of convictions and, ultimately, justice.

The full report is also available online at www.aic.gov.au/crc/reports/200304-12.html



All studies indicated that evidence plays a central role in many suspects' decisions to confess or deny. The authors argue that evidence should, therefore, be presented to suspects in an informed and convincing manner.

High-risk offenders: Post-sentence supervision and detention. Discussion and options paper. Sentencing Advisory Council. (2007). Melbourne: Author.

The question of how to best deal with convicted high-risk sex offenders upon their release from prison is often a controversial topic. The Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council (VSAC) is investigating this problem, and their *Discussion and options paper* provides a review of the legal status of this issue around Australia.

At the end of a sentence that has been imposed, some offenders may still be deemed to present a risk to the community. There are legal restrictions on imposing a further custodial sentence for the same crime. This is where the mechanisms of post-sentencing supervision and detention come in. Currently, five Australian states have provisions for post-sentence *supervision* of sex offenders (Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia). Post-sentence *detention* is an additional option in Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales. VSAC has proposed a model for Victoria that would allow for continued detention where it is deemed necessary.

From a legal perspective, post-sentence management is not for the purpose of further punishment (which could be deemed unconstitutional), but for the protection of the community, and also often for the purpose of rehabilitating the offender. The provisions of an order will be guided by the degree of risk that the offender poses to the community. Assessing the degree of risk is no simple matter, and the shortcomings of current approaches are discussed in this VSAC paper.

This and the VSAC final paper, *High-risk offenders: Continued detention and supervision options. Community issues paper*, are now available through the VSAC website: www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au. The *Discussion and options paper* contains an overview of post-sentence schemes across Australian states and territories. Also available is *Recidivism of sex offenders: Research paper*.

Sexual coercion among gay men, bisexual men and takatapui tane in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Fenaughty, J., Braun, V., Gavey, N., Aspin, C., Reynolds, P. & Schmidt, J. (2006). Auckland, New Zealand: Department of Psychology, University of Auckland.

This research consisted of two distinct projects—one project was concerned with the broad population of gay/bisexual men in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and one was concerned with the Kaupapa Maori population. This report is on the first project. Structured interviews were conducted with 18 men who identified that they had had a coercive sexual experience, and focus groups were conducted with 22 men who may or may not have had such experiences. Service providers and professionals ($n = 23$) were also consulted as informants.

Their review of prior literature suggests that the prevalence of sexual coercion (including a fairly broad range of acts) is 14–51% among men who have sex with men, a rate that is higher than that of the general male population.

The authors discussed the political dangers of raising issues of sexual assault by gay men, including the risk of further confirming cultural stereotypes of gay men as being sexually aggressive, and adding further stigma to an already marginalised group. Their interpretations suggest that ‘it appears that it is gay and bisexual men’s *masculinity*, rather than their *sexuality*, that is the key feature to consider. It is important that this be recognised, so that gay male communities are *not* (further) targeted as ‘inherent’ sites of sexual risk’ (p. 37).

The report documents how heterosexism operates to dissuade gay men from reporting sexual assault. This was evidenced in the men’s experience with police and medical professionals. The authors conclude by promoting an ‘ethic of care’ as a positive strategy for creating non-abusive sexual interactions, which incorporates consideration of power and care for one’s sexual partner as integral features of sexual practice.

The report is available at www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/research/research-groups/GCG/HRC%20report%20final.pdf

REVIEW

Sex and the law

A guide for health and community workers in New South Wales

REVIEWED BY HALEY CLARK

FPA Health. (2006). *Sex and the law: A guide for health and community workers in New South Wales*. Sydney: Redfern Legal Centre Publishing. 160pp.

This book provides a guide to the laws relating to sexual and reproductive health in New South Wales. The publication is targeted to an audience of community and health workers, with an aim of helping to establish clear knowledge of legal and ethical issues relevant to their work. The book is written in clear, simple English and so may also be useful to community members more broadly. The publication provides information on a range of legal issues as they apply in New South Wales, including: medical treatment, clients’ rights, privacy, reproduction, contraception, sexually transmissible infections, sexual offences, domestic violence, disability, minors and sex work. The book provides an overview of definitions of a range of both legal and illegal sexual behaviours, and makes reference to the Acts that govern sexual offences. The topics covered include: consent, sexual preference, ‘special care’ relationships, aggravating circumstances, masturbation, sexual assault, indecent assaults, attempts to commit a sexual offence, aiding and abetting sexual offences, mandatory reporting, sexual harassment and domestic violence. Case studies are provided throughout the book to illustrate the legal issues presented. The book also includes a glossary, as well as providing lists of relevant agencies and references.

FPA Health (previously known as Family Planning Australia) also provide FPA Healthline (1300 658 886), a telephone information service staffed by clinical nurses and specialists, and FPA Healthweb (www.fpahealth.org.au), which contains current information relating to sexual and reproductive health.

Haley Clark is a Project Officer with the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Developing ethical sexual lives

Young people, sex and sexual assault prevention

REVIEWED BY ANTONIA QUADARA

Carmody, M. & Willis, K. (2006). *Developing ethical sexual lives: Young people, sex and sexual assault prevention*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney. 88 pages.

Moira Carmody and Karen Willis have released a report on the first stage of a three-year project that explores sexual assault prevention education for young people. Here, ACSSA provides a review of this report.

Sex education for young people and their experiences of sex can generate anxiety and concern. In their report, Carmody and Willis comment that ‘the preparation for adult sexuality by formal sex education is a highly contested area’ (2006, p. 28). There are social mores against the expression of sexuality of young people, as Powell (2006) noted in the last edition of *ACSSA Aware* (Aware 14). Schools often debate how sex education should fit into the school curriculum, while others, including some parents, feel that sex education destroys children’s innocence (Carmody & Willis, 2006, p. 29). Yet at the same time, people between the ages of 16 and 25 experience higher levels of interpersonal violence, including sexual assault (ABS, 2006).

Background

Developing ethical sexual lives reports on the first stage of a three-year Australian Research Council Linkage Grant, funding a partnership between the University of Western Sydney and the NSW Rape Crisis Centre. Both authors share a concern about sexual assault prevention education and how this is implemented in schools. Of great importance to this project is the role of and expertise that young people bring in articulating their experiences of sex and sexual violence, so that sexual assault prevention education more adequately addresses their needs. Interviews with 56 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 across New South Wales were carried out. In light of what young people have said about these issues, the project will develop, assess and evaluate an educational training program to promote ethical non-violent relationships between young women and men.

In addition to the centrality of young people’s experiences, a second strength of the report is the diversity of young people represented. The majority of participants (62.5%) were from rural/regional areas, compared to 37.5% from metropolitan areas. Indigenous young people were also well represented, with 12% of the sample being from an Australian and Torres Strait Islander background. A fifth of the sample indicated a cultural background other than Anglo-Australian. Almost three quarters were female (71%). Most were in some form of education and identified as heterosexual.

Findings

Participants were asked about their experiences of formal and informal sex education, their own sexual experiences and how they negotiate sexual encounters with partners, the role of sex

Of great importance to this project is the role of and expertise that young people bring in articulating their experiences of sex and sexual violence, so that sexual assault prevention education more adequately addresses their needs.

education in these experiences, and their experiences/thoughts around sexual assault prevention education. Here we summarise the key findings.

The mismatch between experience and education

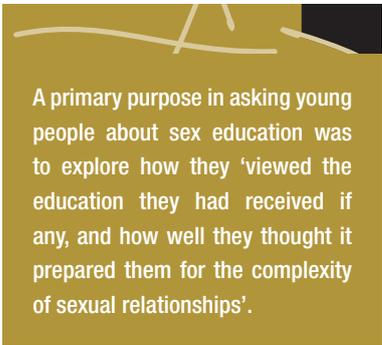
What emerges clearly is a mismatch between the education that young people are provided with by schools and, in many cases, by their parents, and the kinds of experiences they are having in their own relationships. Sexual activity occurs at an earlier age than it has in the past. *Developing ethical sexual lives* found that 90% of young women and men were sexually active by the age of 18 (Carmody & Willis, 2006, p. 41). Of the participants in this study, 32% of the women reported experiences of sexual assault.

Experiences of first-time sex were characterised by feelings of disappointment, regret, necessity and positivity. Casual sex, or 'hooking up', was common among the participants (64%). In such encounters, Carmody and Willis (2006) found that:

- alcohol consumption was a key factor;
- minimal discussion occurred between the parties about what was happening (p. 53);
- going home with the person implied consent;
- sex was assumed to be intercourse; and
- establishing boundaries rarely involved explicitly saying 'no'.

For participants, casual sex was mostly about the sexual act rather than the person. This meant different things for young men and young women. For young men, 'going wild' and self-gratification were key. For young women, there was a sense in which not knowing the person inhibited their ability to express how they felt about what was happening: 'in a casual one you're more likely to let it go on' (participant, p. 55). For both men and women, negotiation of what was okay and not okay, and what kind of sexual activity was going to take place, was not part of the equation. Such discussions were reserved for ongoing relationships.

Formal and informal sex education



A primary purpose in asking young people about sex education was to explore how they 'viewed the education they had received if any, and how well they thought it prepared them for the complexity of sexual relationships'.

A primary purpose in asking young people about sex education was to explore how they 'viewed the education they had received if any, and how well they thought it prepared them for the complexity of sexual relationships' (Carmody & Willis, 2006, p. 30). New South Wales has a well-planned and integrated curriculum for students between Years 7 and 10. Yet few participants recalled anything about sex education at school that (a) went beyond the biological aspects of sex, or (b) that dealt with violence in relationships. Sex education was limited to: reproduction, biology, and a basic harm-minimisation approach to safe-sex education. Sex education in mixed gender groups was found to make it difficult to discuss

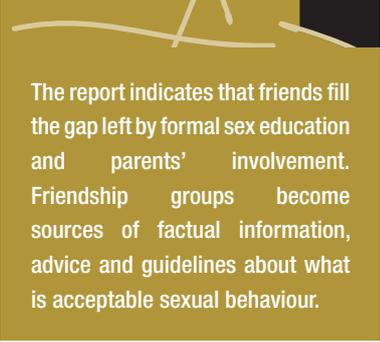
issues around sexual intimacy. The authors point out that given that a third of the women and half of the men are engaging in some form of sexual activity before the age of 16, many are ill-equipped to deal with sexual relationships by this education.

The overall impression given by the sex education they received was that sex was dangerous, either due to unwanted pregnancy or disease. The majority of participants had very little memory of input that addressed relationships, how to negotiate them or how to make decisions about whether to have sex or not, and what things to take into account when making these decisions (Carmody & Willis, 2006, p. 30).

Parents' involvement in sex education varied according to how open parents were with their children about sexuality, and to the kinds of values parents wished to impart. Accordingly, Carmody and Willis' participants variously reflected on the ways their parents emphasised abstinence and heterosexual relationships or, conversely, sexual exploration and sexual autonomy. In addition, it was frequently

mothers who talked to both their sons and daughters about sex education, while fathers and sons rarely engaged in discussions about sexuality. The authors conclude that parents' influence in educating their children about sex, sexuality and sexual intimacy was erratic. 'Many parents felt incapable or unwilling to take on the task [of sex education] or they felt the matter was being dealt with by schools' (Carmody & Willis, 2006, p. 33).

The report indicates that friends fill the gap left by formal sex education and parents' involvement. Friendship groups become sources of factual information, advice and guidelines about what is acceptable sexual behaviour. Such groups, the authors contend, have the ability to reinforce or challenge gender expectations about sexual relationships. They are disappointed to find that 'after 30 years of feminist campaigning ... young men and women continue to report that gender equality was absent in relation to sexual activity of young men and women' (p. 35). The double standard of identifying women as 'sluts' or 'slags' for engaging in casual sex or knowing too much, and men as 'studs' for the same behaviour endures. While young women are judged and policed for their sexual behaviour, Carmody and Willis reflect that 'missing from the narratives is any sense of young women's own sexual desire and pleasure as part of their decision to have sex with someone' (p. 36).



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Ideas about violence and sexuality education

Amid the contradictory experiences of sexual encounters, sex education at school and what their family and friends had to say about sex and sexual intimacy, young people had a number of things to say about what they would like to see included in sex education and sexual assault prevention education. Issues identified by the researchers were:

- *Communication.* Participants wanted to learn more effective ways to talk with partners and potential partners.
- *Consent.* 'No means no' was seen as inadequate for addressing the complexity of consent. Participants stated that while sexual assault prevention education was great information, it didn't provide for 'that really grey complicated stuff that happens in between' (p. 64) the two absolutes of 'yes' or 'no'.
- *Gender and relationships.* The issue of gender and how this impacts on sexual intimacy needs to be addressed, including issues around violence against women.
- *Ethical intimacy.* Participants spoke of developing respect for themselves and for others in sexual relationships. Ideas raised here included: reflecting on your expectations of sexual intimacy before situations arise, enhancing awareness about making choices and the values informing those choices, boundary setting where alcohol is involved, resisting pressure to have sex and challenging particular forms of masculinity.
- *Challenging violence and supporting victims.* Addressing sexual assault at high school in informative, accurate ways was seen as crucial. Supporting victim/survivors was also emphasised.
- *Delivery of education.* Beginning education about sex, sexual intimacy and sexual violence early (Year 7), the use of real-life situations in education settings (for example, individuals who could come to the school and talk about the impact of violence on their lives), opportunities for separate education for young men and women, and attention to language used to talk about sex and sexual assault were seen as essential to making sex education more relevant to the experiences of young people.

Conclusion

In light of their discussions with young people, the authors make the following conclusions about promoting ethical sexual relationships and preventing sexual assault:

- Gender continues to be a major influence on how both young men and women think about and experience sexual intimacy. Double standards and expectations about male sexual entitlement and feminine acquiescence impact on the ability to negotiate sexual encounters.
- Consent, gender and communication overlap. The authors suggest that the process of consent—a ‘highly gendered dance rather than a process of mutual exploration’ (p. 80)—points to the need to have alternative approaches to negotiating sexual intimacy to inform sexual assault prevention education.
- Awareness about sexual assault, especially in rural communities, and information about support services for victim/survivors needs to be increased. This needs to be done alongside more general awareness of other forms of violence.
- More needs to be done to address the diversity and complexity of relationships within school curricula and to support suitably qualified educators in implementing the curriculum.

This report on the first stage of the research offers incredibly important insights about young people’s experiences of sexual intimacy and what they need from schools and their families to help them negotiate these encounters in ways that are ethical.

This report on the first stage of the research offers incredibly important insights about young people’s experiences of sexual intimacy and what they need from schools and their families to help them negotiate these encounters in ways that are ethical. As the participants made clear, what a sexual ethic means for them is the incorporation of personal awareness, respect for one another, and awareness of and resistance to gender expectations when learning about and making decisions about sexual intimacy. The point being made in this report is that for effective sexual assault prevention education to take place, more is needed than avoidance and risk management

tactics. What is required is to give young people the tools to negotiate—to create—ethical, mutually respectful sexual encounters, both in casual and ongoing relationships.

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Publish in ACSSA Aware

As there are so few forums in which those working in the sexual assault field can share information with one another, we are keen to publish articles in this newsletter written by you on the topic of sexual assault. The items would be of particular interest to those working in the sector, and to all those interested in preventing sexual assault. We accept article contributions of up to 5,000 words, and shorter items, such as book and film reviews, news of conferences, and training and research projects, of up to 1,500 words. If you would like to contribute an article or review to *ACSSA Aware*, details of how to do so are on page 39 of this newsletter. You can also access our “contributor’s guidelines” from the website (www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/pubsmenu.html) or contact ACSSA directly.

Lighting the path

Reflections on counselling, young women and sexual assault

REVIEWED BY CAMERON BOYD

Lighting the path: Reflections on counselling, young women and sexual assault. Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre, Brisbane

This collection is a unique addition to the Australian sexual assault literature. Written by a range of authors, from experienced researchers to practitioners writing about their own practice, the authors collectively demonstrate that thoughtful, provocative and insightful writing about sexual assault counselling practices need not be dry, jargon-laden or overly technical. Nor do they need to be simplistic, prescriptive or patronising to the reader. In fact, one of the strengths of this collection is its bringing together of a range of styles and approaches, from the theoretical to the poetic.

The book overall holds a commitment to feminist understandings of sexual violence. It is evident that the editors have taken a relatively broad interpretation of feminism, resulting in some productive tensions between (and sometimes within) articles. The book is structured into three sections, headed: 'Reflecting on the context—Feminism, young women and sexual assault'; 'Working with young women in specific settings'; and 'Feminist counselling practice with young women survivors'. While this gives an easy-to-navigate map for those wanting to 'dip in' for a particular issue, I found that it was valuable to notice the interconnections, commonalities and tensions across the articles throughout the book.

Joanne Baker's theoretical chapter, 'Girl power' and its implications for work with young women', sets the political scene, exploring the implications of a neo-liberal, supposedly post-feminist context, in which gender equality is said to have been achieved. This political rhetoric, strongly promoted in the commercial media and advertising images, as well as among self-declared post-feminist writers, promotes images of women and girls as empowered, confident and in control. While such images can be useful in promoting self-esteem for young women, Baker argues they also have the effect of defining vulnerability as a personal deficiency. In this context, young women who have been victims of sexual assault may see their victimisation as a result of their own lack of awareness or strength. The practical implications of this are highlighted in the chapter by Claudia Schiek and Jodie Sloan, 'Reconnecting the threads by challenging the pattern', on overcoming self-blame. They write about the difficulty of naming sexual assault and assigning responsibility to offenders in an environment that encourages young women to think of sexual assault as just 'bad sex'. In a related chapter by Lynne Harriott, 'Town bikes unite', dominant attitudes about women's sexuality, particularly the issue of 'promiscuity', are examined. Harriott encourages workers to engage with 'the meanings that women give to their own experiences of sexuality', especially in the aftermath of sexual violence.

Some common themes emerge across articles, reflecting certain issues that feminist counsellors must engage with in their work with young women. One example is the role of trauma theory, a contested issue in the broader feminist literature. The usefulness and difficulties of trauma theory in understanding the lives of 'young women who grapple with dangerous and alienating behaviours' are emphasised by Jenny Dwyer and Robyn Miller in their chapter, 'Nasty young madams' or 'poor little buggers'. They share the concerns of Erica Fernandez and Kirsty Young ('The world is not black or white, or shades of grey. It is many rich colours') about the totalising identity prescriptions

The authors collectively demonstrate that thoughtful, provocative and insightful writing about sexual assault counselling practices need not be dry, jargon-laden or overly technical.

that the concept of trauma can allow, where women are 'permanently defined by their experience of trauma'. Felicity Rousseaux ('Talking about the talking'), in a different approach, provides an overview of neurobiological perspectives on trauma, and how an understanding of this assists in creating a context of safety for young women to talk about their abuse. Deb Kilroy, in 'The silent scream of sexual assault', discusses the often-overpowering influence of traumatic experiences and memories in the lives of women in prison, and the very real obstacles to addressing these in a context where expressing vulnerability is dangerous. Kate Harrison and Yonna Powell are adventure-based therapists who, in their chapter 'Learning to set your own boundaries', explain why they 'take a person who has experienced trauma in their lives' and 'scare the wits out of them in a place they have never seen before!' Each of these chapters offers a slightly different perspective on the trauma debate.

Another theme connecting several of the chapters (especially, but not only, in Section 2) is that of space and place. Hannah Moran ('Finding your place'), a non-Indigenous worker working with remote Indigenous communities, highlights the 'history of oppression, institutional racism and pain', and why it is important for a non-Indigenous sexual assault worker to learn about and understand this history for the particular community. Pam Stein's beautiful and powerful chapter, 'Counselling in the car', describes literally kicking up a storm to help young Indigenous women in remote Northern Territory connect with their unspeakable anger at the repeated abuse they experience. In 'Making connections in informal settings', Judy Kulisa highlights the gendered nature of youth-work spaces, and the implications that this has for providing a safe space in which to provide support for young women. Such spaces are historically male-oriented, with youth workers often adopting a 'masculine' style that can inadvertently alienate young women. The effects of place are also explored in other articles about women in prisons (Deb Kilroy—see above), adventure-based therapy group work ('Crawling through caves—Standing tall in the sun' by Stephanie Blake and Maria Katsikas; and also the chapter mentioned above by Kate Harrison and Yonna Powell), and young women's dealings with mental health and psychiatric institutions (Jenny Dwyer and Robyn Miller).

These and other chapters also explore the complexities of counselling with interpreters ('Changes and challenges in the therapeutic relationship when using a counsellor' by Annabelle Allimant, Beatriz Martinez and Eunice Wong), counsellors 'use' of their own personal experiences (Erica Fernandez and Kirsty Young), art therapy (Elaine Pollen), and the narrative approach of 'externalising' self-harm in counselling young women survivors ('Working with young women who self-harm' by Katie Perry).

The book is intended primarily for counsellors with some knowledge and practice experience in the field, but it is also a useful resource for people in the community who are supporting young women who have been sexually assaulted.

As Marg D'Arcy's introduction notes, the book is intended primarily for counsellors with some knowledge and practice experience in the field, but it is also a useful resource for people in the community who are supporting young women who have been sexually assaulted. As a collection, the book convincingly frames sexual assault as a community and societal problem, while also being practically useful for those assisting individual

young women to heal from the violence they have experienced. In doing so, theory and practice are not only linked to each other, but the distinction between the two starts to blur. There is an implicit insistence that theory be made useful, and that practice be thoroughly reflected upon in light of workers' theoretical and political commitments.

Readers who are interested in this book might also like to follow up Zig Zag's other excellent publications, including *Working with young women who self-harm: A resource for workers* by Christy McGuire (2004). Copies of several Zig Zag publications are held at the AIFS library. They can also be ordered through Zig Zag's website, www.zigzag.org.au

Cameron Boyd is a Research Officer with the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Perspectives on the treatment of men and boys who sexually abuse

CAMERON BOYD

Introduction

A CSSA Issues Paper 5, *Sexual violence offenders: Prevention and intervention approaches* (Chung, O'Leary & Hand, 2006), gave an overview of current treatment models being used in sexual offender treatment programs in Australia. In that paper, the authors argued 'that contemporary feminist theory and critical studies in masculinity that address social practices of gender relations provide an important perspective to address sexual violence on a larger scale, but have been largely ignored in treatment perspectives' (p. 1). In this paper, I explore this important area, which has, for the most part, been neglected in the treatment literature regarding men and boys who have been sexually violent.

A tension exists between the literature on offender treatment and gender or feminist-informed theories of sexual offending. These can be summarised by the questions one is led to ask. Much of the treatment literature asks a variation of the question: 'What is it about this particular (young) man's childhood experiences (particularly with his family), and the psychological consequences of this, that can help us to understand why he behaves in sexually abusive ways?' In contrast, a view emphasising gender, social and cultural factors asks: 'What is it about masculinity, power, sexuality and violence, that (young) men choose to sexually dominate others less powerful than themselves?' Of course therapists are first and foremost concerned with their individual clients and their abusive behaviour, yet the decision of these individual men and boys to act in abusive ways occurs in a social context.

The first half this paper explores the literature that has engaged with the tension between these divergent views. The second half of the paper focuses on a small but stimulating body of literature that places gender and power at the centre of understanding and working with boys and young men who commit sexual violence. There is, of course, a vast feminist literature that articulates a gender-informed analysis of men's sexual violence. The focus of this paper, however, is on literature that focuses directly on therapy and interventions ('treatment') with adults, boys and young men, or that seems to offer productive insights for practice.

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The context

This absence of feminist theory in the treatment of sexual offending (whether by men or boys) has been critically noted by several writers (e.g. Allan, 2004; Herman, 1988; Lamb, 1991, 1996, 1999; Lancaster & Lumb, 1999; Liddle, 1993; MacLeod & Saraga, 1988; Messerschmidt, 2000a, 2000b; Purvis & Ward, 2006). On one level, this can be interpreted as a result of the successful colonisation of sexual offender treatment by the 'psy' professions (e.g., psychiatry, psychology), which have a history of treating sexual offenders independently of feminist activism and theory (Lancaster & Lumb, 1999).

This may explain why intervention with abusive men in the domestic violence field has a more explicit connection to feminist theory, as these programs tend to be historically related to the feminist domestic violence movement. Nevertheless, this neglect demands attention, given that the work of feminist activists, theorists and therapists has been central to the recognition of sexual assault as an important social problem, as well as contributing significantly to the provision of support (including therapeutic intervention) to children, women and men who have been the victims of men's sexual violence.

Practitioners' engagement with feminist theory

Lancaster and Lumb (1999) investigated the engagement with feminist understandings of child sexual assault in the writing and work of practitioners working with child sex offenders in the UK. They found that while most practitioners are cognisant of the issues of 'theory, power, and the fixity of gender' (p. 120) that constitute the core concerns of feminist theory, these kinds of analyses have little impact on the actual work of 'treating' sexual offenders. They conceptually distinguish *explanatory* knowledge of causation—or why men sexually abuse children—from the psychological constructs that form the knowledge base for *intervention*. Practitioners have generally not incorporated feminist analyses into actual treatment, even where they hold a feminist analysis of the causes of sexual violence. Some practitioners interviewed by Lancaster and Lumb also explicitly rejected a feminist analysis.

In Australia, a feminist-informed 'responsibility approach' to sexual violence work with men and boys has been influential; however, this 'influence' appears to be more at the level of rhetoric than practice (Allan, 2004, echoing the finding of Lancaster & Lumb, 1999), especially in relation to boys and young men. Allan's research was with 36 practitioners working with sexually violent children. Of these, 30 named feminism as an informing influence in their work, and Jenkins (1990, discussed below) was widely cited. However, when these practitioners discussed their work, they tended to locate the cause of children's sexual violence with their family environment and their mother in particular. Indeed, the counsellors in Allan's study engaged in explicit mother-blaming discourse; even where a male partner was being violent towards his female partner, she was viewed as failing in her responsibility to be emotionally available to the children, which in turn was linked to her child's sexual violence.

A recent critical review of the relevance of a range of feminist theories in the treatment of men who have sexually abused children concluded that the value of feminist theory lies in its ability to inform preventative efforts at the social change level, but is of little clinical utility to practitioners as it is unable to account for individual differences among men (Purvis & Ward, 2006). These authors also argued that some feminist theories offer no account of how male offenders can change, obviously a pressing question for practitioners. Ultimately, the article is a succinct example of the tendency to give rhetorical acknowledgement to the importance of feminist analyses at a social level, but a reluctance to work at applying these insights to treatment. Their statement that 'it is not clear what role feminist ideas could have at this level other than perhaps providing ideals of equality in gender relationships' (Purvis & Ward, 2006, p. 310) leads one to ask what the goal of such treatment efforts are.



The main focus of the critical literature on the treatment of sexual offenders tends to be concerned with two closely related features of the treatment literature: the question of offender responsibility and agency, and the lack of detailed attention to the role of masculinity in men's and boys' sexual violence.

The key criticisms of the treatment literature

The main focus of the critical literature on the treatment of sexual offenders tends to be concerned with two closely related features of the treatment literature: the question of offender responsibility and agency, and the lack of detailed attention to the role of masculinity in men's and boys' sexual violence. The lack of feminist analysis in the literature on the treatment of sexual offenders was identified almost 20 years ago (Herman, 1988), and a persuasive critique of the reliance on psychodynamic and developmental models of understanding and treating sex

offenders was developed. Herman's central point was that 'in many psychopathological explanations of the sex offender's behaviour, the offender himself tends to disappear', and factors such as the offender's 'parents, wife or victim' (p. 707) were considered to be most relevant to understanding and treating his abusive behaviour, while the decision of the offender to abuse was a marginal consideration. At that time, family systems theory was influential in understanding men's sexual abuse of their children. Other feminist writers argued that the family systems literature discussed men 'as if they were children, more frequently passive, aroused by what others do to them, or spontaneously acting and in need of control' (MacLeod & Saraga, 1988, p. 34).

Responsibility

The same considerations apply to more recent theories that locate the cause of the offender's behaviour with developmental and psychological aspects of the individual offender. It could be argued that psychological theories of child sex offending that focus on the offender are a step forward from those explanations that either claimed incest allegations were a product of the child's fantasy, or that situated the cause of 'incest' with the mother and/or child. Yet there are continuities from the family dysfunction theories of incest, to the attachment-based and other psychological theories of sexual offending. The continuities are related to the themes of mother-blame, deferment of the offender's responsibility, the assumption of men's 'needs' in and of themselves being legitimate, and a focus on the need for external constraints.

To briefly illustrate a contemporary example of this position in the treatment literature, consider the following quote from the most recent publication by William L. Marshall, a particularly influential figure in the field of sex offender treatment:

At the base of our model are the problematic childhood experiences of males who become sexual offenders. These early experiences involve poor child-parent attachments; childhood physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; neglect; inconsistent discipline; and early exposure to pornography (Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & Fernandez, 2006, p. 15)

This account explicitly locates the cause of sexual offending in highly individual historical/developmental experiences that have a (at least partially) deterministic effect on adult psychological functioning. Such 'explanations' for sexual offending tend to neglect the choice, or the agency, of the offender (Lamb, 1996). As mentioned earlier, of particular concern are the 'mother-blaming' aspects of theories of sexual violence, which trace the problem to childhood experiences and attachment issues (Allan, 2004, 2006; Breckenridge, 1999, 2006, also notes the mother-blaming tendencies of interventions concerning intra-familial child sexual *abuse*).



Of particular concern are the 'mother-blaming' aspects of theories of sexual violence, which trace the problem to childhood experiences and attachment issues.

This is of particular importance, given that therapists working with sexual offenders see the offender's acceptance of responsibility as a key goal of therapy (e.g., Marshall et al., 2006; see Jenkins, 2005a, for a discussion of responsibility with young men who sexually abuse). This aim seems to be in direct contradiction to explanations where the offender is represented as being profoundly shaped by childhood experiences. Of course, the point of therapy would be to develop the offender's awareness of these forces so that he is enabled to regain self-control. This constructs an unsatisfactory picture of the offender as an individual unable to exercise self-control without the benefit of therapeutic expertise and intervention. (Although it is worth noting here that this criticism could be made of a range of therapeutic models, including those discussed in the last part of this paper. In fact it may be argued that, in general, therapy as a response to sexual offending is inherently problematic for this reason.) This is why some practitioners are able to discuss men who sexually abuse children in terms of their powerlessness, rather than their power (Lancaster & Lumb, 1999). The complex issues of power and the *experience* of powerlessness are discussed later in this paper.

This logic of 'determinedness' (i.e. that men's sexual violence is determined to some extent by their past experiences) stems partly from contemporary ideas of victimisation that deny the decision-making ability of those who have been sexually assaulted (Lamb, 1996, 1999). While there can be temporary benefits in this subject position of 'victim' (e.g., a time of relief from some responsibilities, social legitimisation of the harm caused and, in the US at least, benefits related to insurance), it can become a 'totalising' description. The term 'victim' has taken on a meaning beyond the fact of being subject to violence. 'Victim' has become an identity, with its own set of expected behaviours and 'symptoms'. Lamb challenged this notion of victimhood, specifically by applying the logic to perpetrators of sexual abuse. She argued that experiences of victimisation should not be minimised or denied; however, we need to have a concept of victimisation that does not neglect the agency and responsibility of individuals. She suggested that the offender's behaviour cannot be explained by his own victimisation.

Gender and masculinity

The lack of critical attention to gender in studies of sexual violence in residential care has been recently noted in the UK literature (Green, 2005). In line with Green, we might ask what we mean when we ask that 'gender' be considered. Is it merely noting that girls are more often the victims of abuse and boys are more often the offenders? Or are we asking that we look more thoroughly at the way in which ideas and practices (discourses) of gender, sexuality and violence are implicated in sexual abuse committed by boys and young men?

What Green (2005) emphasised and illustrated, through the use of interviews and field observations, is that boys' sexual objectification and abuse of girls in residential care occurs in a context of rigid expectations about gender and sexuality that normalises aggressive male sexuality and passive female sexuality. Gender expectations are aggressively policed through physical and verbal abuse (including homophobic abuse of boys who do not perform this aggressive masculinity, and denigration of girls, who are seemingly penalised no matter how they deal with gendered sexual pressures). These beliefs and practices are perpetuated not only by male and female residents, but staff as well. In this context, aggressive sexual behaviour by boys is seen as normal and rarely considered to be abuse.

The lack of theorising about gender in relation to sexual violence in UK residential homes is also noted in research by Barter (2006). In her interviews with residents and staff, she found that while most participants felt that boys' sexually abusive behaviour was 'inappropriate', they attributed blame to girls for being 'provocative', and saw boys as victims of girls' provocation. 'Paradoxically, girls are viewed as being in control of their sexuality while boys are seen as the victims of their normal, but uncontrolled, sexuality' (Soothill & Walby, 1991, cited in Barter, 2006, p. 352). Those who attributed responsibility to boys often deployed the notion of the 'pervert' to explain his behaviour. 'By using the term 'pervert', young people are able to situate the boy's behaviour outside the normal range of male sexuality. This enables them to condemn his actions without having to challenge wider gendered relations of inequality and power' (Barter, 2006, p. 352). Many of the staff understood male and female sexuality in highly traditional gendered ways, with the themes of natural male sexual drive and female responsibility for men's sexual violence often cited.



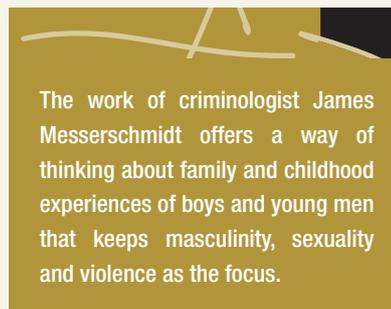
While understanding sexually abusive behaviour as being only about gender is limiting, gender needs 'to be a *part* of the complex link between vulnerability and power that is *already* established by practitioners in their thinking about these young people'.

The above research projects reflect the importance of understanding the particular contexts in which boys' and young men's sexual violence takes place. It also shows how issues of masculinity and responsibility are connected in explanations of sexual violence. The cultural norms that operate in specific places can actually create an environment that fosters sexual violence as acceptable while minimising the individual boys' responsibility. This has implications for treatment, as it suggests that close attention must be paid to how men and boys might resist engaging in violence in the

context of their day-to-day lives, and that many situations may arise where sexual violence is seen as acceptable to some degree.

While understanding sexually abusive behaviour as being only about gender is limiting, gender needs 'to be a *part* of the complex link between vulnerability and power that is *already* established by practitioners in their thinking about these young people' (Brownlie, 2003, p. 528). This is particularly relevant in the context of the increasing attention being paid to the links between family violence and sexual offending by male children and adolescents, 'links which are often presented in an ungendered way ... The difficulty lies in making these links and in finding ways of talking about a continuum of sexual violence—which involves boys as well as adult men—without slipping into explanations which demonise the former' (p. 528).

The work of criminologist James Messerschmidt (2000a, 2000b) offers a way of thinking about family and childhood experiences of boys and young men that keeps masculinity, sexuality and violence as the focus. Family dynamics and childhood experience are not discounted, but reinterpreted in terms of the culturally dominant practices of masculinities that families and boys engage with in the process of achieving a sense of identity. The performance of 'hegemonic masculinities' (which can include violence and sexual abuse) is an important way in which boys connect to their father or other male attachment figures. Interactions with parents are gendered and young men are active participants 'in the ongoing, collective family definitions of appropriate masculine practices' (Messerschmidt, 2000b, p. 87).



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Much of the research into the family-of-origin of adolescent sex offenders looks at factors such as family violence as a feature of individual families. However, family violence is in fact connected with much broader patterns of masculinity and gender relations. 'In attributing child sexual abuse to the phenomenon of family dysfunction, the family is seen as an entity isolated from its cultural, religious and social contexts' (Cossins, 2000, p. 38). This calls into question the idea that such violence is indicative of 'dysfunction' in particular families.

According to Brownlie (2001), where gender does appear in the therapeutic literature (regarding young people), it tends to be about one of three issues:

- the gender of the victims or practitioners in the therapeutic relationship;
- as an 'issue' in relation to girls who sexually abuse; or
- as part of making sense of the reluctance of some practitioners to see boys' sexually abusive behaviour as abusive.

There are some exceptions to this lack of engagement with gender (Cook & Taylor, 1991, and Templeman & Stinnet, 1991, both cited in Brownlie, 2001) that link the behaviours of young sexual offenders to that of 'normal' boys. A danger of framing sexual offending in terms other than individual pathology is that it may elicit a backlash, as it would make explicit the need for broad social change if sexual violence is to be reduced (Glasgow, 1993, cited in Brownlie, 2001). However, it also reflects an unwillingness to think about sexual offending, as well as childhood, in gendered terms.

Alternative approaches

This section looks briefly at some of the recent work (research, theory and therapy) that engages directly with men and boys who sexually abuse and employs a perspective that shifts the focus away from developmental and childhood factors or offers alternative ways of understanding these experiences.

Three important points can be drawn from Messerschmidt's (2000a, 2000b) research:

- interactions with parents are gendered, and young men are active participants 'in the ongoing, collective family definitions of appropriate masculine practices' (2000b, p. 87);

- not all the boys' fathers are overtly abusive; however, all families do engage with constructions of what it means to be a 'real man' in some way; and
- the role of school and peer culture in developing practices of masculinity are as important as family (they are interrelated).

A sense of masculine entitlement may be particularly important in relation to boys' sexual violence to women and female peers. As one of Messerschmidt's research participants says: 'I felt entitled, 'cause I'm a guy' (Messerschmidt, 2000a, p. 297). Their family may or may not have contributed to this understanding of masculinity, as this may also be supported by sources in society other than the family. Stillman (2006), for example, works with the idea that families can either support or resist dominant and abusive masculinities. This draws out the point that gender identities do not originate from within families, but that individuals and families have a relationship with broader ideas about masculinity, sexuality and violence. Nor do young men engage with these ideas solely in the context of their family (school is especially important), and there is no reason to assume a causal relationship between the beliefs and practices of a boy's family (which themselves might be diverse) and his own practices of masculinity.

Anne Cossins' approach in *Masculinities, sexualities and child sexual abuse* (2000) shares this focus on gender. She provided a succinct summary of her project, which:

challenges the methodology of disciplines, such as psychology and psychiatry, which have, in relation to child offenders, reduced an historically widespread and socially tolerated cultural practice to the individual qualities or tendencies of the offender, thus obscuring the historical context of child sexual abuse, the social context of the offenders' life, the structures of power that constrain his life, the ongoing and dynamic impact of that context on the offender, the offender's active engagement with his social context and the implications of that engagement for understanding his sexual practices. (p. xvi)

Cossins (2000) noted that in highlighting the importance of masculinity in sexual offending, there is still a need to explain why some men who 'act within the dominant script' sexually abuse children, some abuse adults and most men do not sexually abuse. She argued that this is related to men's experience of powerlessness in other spheres of their life, especially in their relations with other men. She argues that it is the unattainability of the 'masculine ideal' that contributes to men's experience of

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powerlessness: 'They are the feelings of men who were raised to believe themselves entitled to feel that power, but do not feel it' (Kimmel, 1994, p. 136, cited in Cossins, 2000, p. 109). Cossins argued that child sexual offending can be understood as a masculine practice engaged in by men who experience powerlessness in the context of their relationships with other men, in contrast to the psychological theories that posit child sexual offending as a deviation from normal masculine sexual practice. She asked: 'is child sexual offending a particular masculine social practice by which a man can accomplish gender?' (p. 111)

Despite the welcome focus on masculinity as a central factor in men's sexual offending, one of the shortfalls of this approach, especially in Messerschmidt's work, is that it does not account for sexual offending by men who are 'successful' in their pursuit of the masculine ideal. One way to account for this is to understand masculinity not as a fixed identity that, once accomplished, is secure. Rather, it must be constantly reasserted and always achieved, as a man's claim to masculinity is always under challenge. So even men who are powerful in general still experience a sense of powerlessness, or at least the potential for or fear of powerlessness (Cossins, 2000).

The above sociological approaches to understanding men who sexually abuse offer useful insights for therapeutic practice. The kind of thinking developed in this work is applied more directly to therapeutic

work by Australian therapist Alan Jenkins. Jenkins is probably best known for his book *Invitations to responsibility* on working with abusive adult men (Jenkins, 1990), although he has written more recently about work with younger men who sexually abuse (Jenkins, 2005a, 2005b). His unique contribution is the development of a practice model that eschews many of the traditional psychological constructs and is firmly grounded in an understanding of the ways in which (young) men's identities are formed in a cultural context that promotes violence and abuse. He also pays close attention to the power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship itself, and takes seriously the importance of an ethical orientation in the therapist–client relationship.

I will give one example of how this approach differs from the current dominant models. While much of the psychology-based research posits exposure to violence as a risk factor or contributing factor to the development of sexually abusive behaviours, an entirely alternative approach is offered by Jenkins (2005a). Rather than understanding exposure to, or direct experience of, violence as a factor in the development of sexually abusive behaviour, Jenkins argued that these experiences are themselves oppressive and unjust. The guiding principle here is the development of an 'ethic of fairness', in contrast to (for example) the resolution of childhood trauma, or addressing issues related to attachment patterns. The young man's experiences of abuse must be acknowledged in their own right, as instances of violence inflicted upon him. Jenkins is careful to distinguish this acknowledgment of abuse suffered from the idea that the experiences of the past have caused or led to the current abusive behaviour. It is not a matter of resolving past trauma in order to discover the individual, historical causes of one's abusive behaviour. Firstly, as a therapist, the relationship with one's client involves relations of power. Jenkins believes that it is an irresponsible and unethical use of power to fail to acknowledge the young man's own experiences of injustice. It would be politically and philosophically inconsistent to acknowledge one instance of injustice (the abuse committed by the client), but to minimise another (the abuse suffered by the client). Secondly, the intent is to nurture a consistent 'ethic of fairness', which produces new possibilities for action for the client. It is, in this sense, 'forward looking' (Jenkins, 2006), rather than the traditional psychological practice of explaining the present by looking to the past. Importantly, this might involve engaging the young man in a consideration of the ways in which ideas about masculinity encourage men to behave in abusive ways to women and children, whether this fits with his own sense of ethics, and what other 'preferred' ways of being are possible through resisting these invitations of male privilege.

One possible criticism of this focus on the social and cultural aspects of masculinity is that it could be seen to minimise the responsibility of individual offenders. This is to miss an important point in this approach, which is that social and cultural constructs of masculinity support men's violence, and that these ideas about masculinity and men's violence also excuse individual men from responsibility. I discussed this earlier in this paper, showing how theories of family dynamics and developmental/psychological factors can be used to minimise men's responsibility for their violence. The idea of working against these 'restraints' to accepting responsibility is a cornerstone of Jenkins approach (see especially Jenkins, 1990).

The central concern then of this approach, and what marks its difference from the currently dominant models, is that its central focus with (young) men who sexually abuse (and those working with them) is 'to address, in a comprehensive way, their relationship with masculinity and, in particular, their relationship with some oppressive ideas or attitudes that underlay a construction of masculinity that promotes



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abusive behaviours' (Slattery, 2000, p. 82). In this approach, masculinity is placed 'centre stage' as the focus of treatment. It recognises that all men and boys must engage in some way with powerful ideas about gender, many of which invite them to behave in ways that are abusive and harmful. This can be contrasted to the traditional psychological approaches that focus on learning specific 'skills' and managing particular problematic behaviours without specific reference to the social and cultural context in which men's abusive behaviours occur. In the approach I have been discussing, change is brought about by the development of a pervasive ethical position.

Conclusion

At a broader level, there is some concern that the focus on intra-familial dynamics in the development and treatment of sexually abusive behaviour is misplaced and misleading. Some writers have expressed concern that current Australian responses to male violence against women and children are becoming less influenced by feminist analyses and more focused on identifying and treating problematic intra-family dynamics, shifting attention away from the gendered structural, political, cultural and social factors that contribute to men's sexual violence (Allan, 2006; Costello, 2004–2005). In relation to sexual offending, this applies specifically to the questions of men's responsibility and the role of masculinity. While this concern is validated by a critical review of the treatment literature, there is also a small body of work that provides the basis for alternative models for working with boys and men who use sexual violence. The overall aim of this paper has been to highlight the relevance of a feminist-informed gender analysis of sexual offending, and the challenge for treatment providers and researchers is to build upon these insights in working with boys and men who sexually abuse.

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Erratum

The article 'Judging rape: Public attitudes and sentencing', by Haley Clark, *ACSSA Aware* 14, pages 17–25, omitted a key sentence from a quotation from the *Victorian Sentencing Manual* (Judicial College of Victoria, 2005):

The article gives the following extract from the *Victorian Sentencing Manual*:

"24.6.2.11: Conduct of the victim prior to the offence—The sentencer is entitled to take into account the conduct of the victim prior to the crime. That conduct may render the offender's actions more or less serious. The sentencer must proceed on the basis that where absence of consent is an element, the pleas of guilty or jury verdict has established that element. Foolish behaviour or unintentional provocation, or risk taking does not necessarily justify a reduced sentence" (pp. 20–21).

The extract should actually read:

"24.6.2.11: Conduct of the victim prior to the offence—The sentencer is entitled to take into account the conduct of the victim prior to the crime. That conduct may render the offender's actions more or less serious. **Sentencers should avoid too ready an acceptance of submissions that stereotype the victim as being responsible for the offence.** The sentencer must proceed on the basis that where absence of consent is an element, the pleas of guilty or jury verdict has established that element. Foolish behaviour or unintentional provocation, or risk taking does not necessarily justify a reduced sentence: **Murphy 20/12/1974 CCA NSW.**" (The wording that was omitted when this was cited in our article is highlighted in bold text).

It should also be noted that all extracts from the *Victorian Sentencing Manual* contained in this article are a reflection or summary of existing case law, and not a normative statement by the Judicial College of Victoria endorsing such views. By discussing a wide range of case law, the *Sentencing Manual* provides a more extensive consideration of the issues to consider in relation to victims' characteristics or previous behaviour than was portrayed in the three examples used in the article. The entire *Victorian Sentencing Manual* can be viewed online at: www.judicialcollege.vic.edu.au

Considering 'elder abuse' and sexual assault

ANTONIA QUADARA

The status and wellbeing of older people has received considerable attention in recent months. Federal reforms for reporting elder abuse in aged cared settings were announced in July 2006 (as discussed in *Aware* 13, see Quadara, 2006), and more are pending. Furthermore, the International Day of Older Persons (1 October) and more locally based events, such as the Victorian Seniors' Festival, have drawn further attention to the issues that face an ageing population, including those of violence and abuse.

But how does the violence experienced by older people intersect with gender? As many researchers have noted, it is important to understand how violence against older women, in particular sexual assault, is connected to gendered violence experienced over the lifespan. For many women, the dynamics of what may be termed 'elder abuse' and previous sexual violence has much in common. In this article, we consider the research on the nature and impact of sexual assault against older women, and suggest implications of this for responding to older women as victim/survivors of sexual assault.

The prevalence and nature of sexual assault against older women

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Much research on the prevalence of sexual assault notes that little attention is paid in the empirical literature to women over the age of 50 (Ball, 2005; Del Bove, Stermac, & Bainbridge, 2005; Elder, 2000). The results of the Personal Safety Survey (see article in *Aware* 13 by Morrison, 2006) show that Australian women of all ages experience sexual assault—it is not limited to younger women. However, it is often unclear what the age distribution over 45 is, and what the nature of

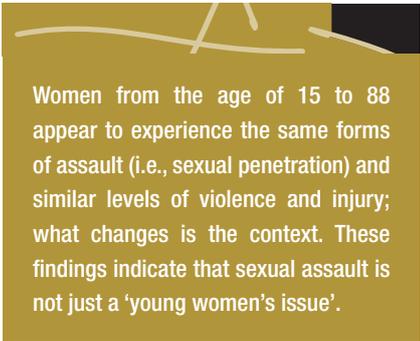
the sexual assault is. The British Crime Survey (Kershaw, Chivite-Matthews, Thomas, & Aust, 2001) found that of sexual assault victims, 0.6% were over 50. A smaller study in Canada (Del Bove et al., 2005) compared the sexual assault of 61 women between 55 and 87 years with two other age groups (31–54 years and 15–30 years). Data on the nature of the assault, the degree of coercion, and injuries sustained were gathered from a database of clients presenting at a hospital-based Sexual Assault Care Centre. The researchers found that sexual assault against women in the 55–87 group (the mean age was 65) shared many characteristics with the assaults against the younger groups. Specific findings were that women in the oldest group:

- were just as likely to experience severe methods of coercion such as physical violence and restraint as the two younger groups;
- were just as likely to be assaulted by an acquaintance as by a stranger; and
- sustained similar injuries, including soft tissue damage (for example, bruises) and lacerations, but sustained slightly higher rates of vaginal injuries than younger women.

The similarity of sexual assaults across the age groups surprised the researchers and is at odds with much of the other literature, which suggests that older women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by strangers (Del Bove et al., 2005). This similarity is especially significant given the data used. The Sexual Assault Care Centre is part of a larger emergency crisis unit. It is likely that many victim/

survivors of sexual assault would not present at an acute service such as this, particularly in instances where sexual assault is part of an ongoing or interpersonal relationship. In other words, sexual assault against older women by intimates might be more prevalent than this study suggests. In addition to these similarities, a range of particular differences were shown. For example, older women were more likely to be living on their own and least likely to report supportive friendships. However, 15% of the women were living in a group setting, which the researchers suggest could mean a residential or institutional home (Del Bove et al., 2005). As well as these differences, the research found that there was a higher rate of cognitive disability among the older women, a quarter of older women were accompanied to the centre by ambulance, and they were more likely to be assaulted in their own homes in comparison to the other two age groups of women.

The similarities and differences shown in this research point not just to the particular vulnerabilities of older women, such as social isolation; they also point to the fact that the characteristics of sexual assault against older women do not differ by virtue of age (Del Bove et al., 2005). Women from the age of 15 to 88 appear to experience the same forms of assault (i.e., sexual penetration) and similar levels of violence and injury; what changes is the context. These findings indicate that sexual assault is not just a 'young women's issue'.



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Sexual assault as part of elder abuse

While the research by Del Bove et al. points to a continuity in experiences of sexual assault across the ages, there is a tendency in much of the research for older women to “drop off the radar”; there is a lull or gap in knowledge about older women and sexual assault. Where sexual assault emerges again is in the context of ‘elder abuse’.

Research in this context has found that in many cases, women continue to experience violence and abuse at higher rates than men. A Curtin University of Technology study estimated the prevalence of elder abuse of women in Western Australia to be two-and-a-half times that of men (Boldy, Webb, Horner, Davey, & Kingsley, 2002)—a finding replicated in other studies (Faye, 2003; Roberts, 1993; Sadler, 1993). The study by Boldy et al. also found that:

- material/financial abuse accounted for 81% of known incidents, followed by psychological abuse (55%) and physical abuse (32%);
- 43% of perpetrators were the victim's children, with sons and daughters being equally represented; and
- spouses or other relative accounted for 35% of perpetrators.

Another Western Australian study (Faye, 2003) found that the majority of incidences of elder abuse occurred in the victim's home (87%). At the outset, then, gender differences are evident: women remain more likely to experience abuse at the hands of carers, family members and other trusted individuals. The dynamic of elder abuse is therefore similar to other forms of interpersonal violence women experience—it occurs in the private domain, among family members and is complicated by various forms of dependency (perhaps the older person lives with the family and depends on them for financial security, physical mobility, etc.).

Although sexual assault makes up about 3% of known cases of elder abuse in care facilities, research suggests that women are overwhelmingly the victims in situations of elder sexual abuse. One of the first studies on sexual assault against older women, conducted in Massachusetts, found that, of the 28 cases examined, all victim/survivors were women, all but one of the offenders was a man and the majority of offenders were caregivers to the victim/survivors (Ramsey-Klawnsnik, 1991). A study

conducted in the UK also found that 86% of victim/survivors of elder sexual abuse were women, and in 98% of cases the offenders were male (Holt, 1993).

These studies are indicative of the fact that although elder abuse may take many forms, sexual assault of more elderly women resembles the pattern of sexual assault generally: an overwhelming proportion of victims are women who experience violence at the hands of family members or those in positions of trust.

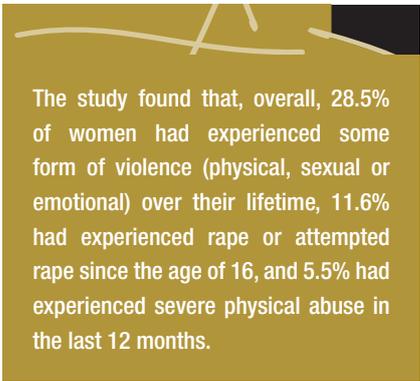
So how well does the term 'elder abuse' encompass women's experiences of violence, not just at particular points in their lives, but over the lifespan?

The prevalence of sexual violence over the lifespan

Older women experience sexual violence at significant rates, and this continues beyond the age of 65. Sixty-five is an age nominally seen to transform 'women' into 'old'; that is, if a woman experiences sexual assault over 65, it is viewed as an issue of age rather than gender. It is therefore becoming increasingly important to consider the prevalence of sexual violence not only in certain age categories, but over the lifespan. This is an area of increasing interest to service providers, clinicians and researchers.

Research conducted in the US highlights the ongoing, persistent, and epidemic quality of violence against women: 1 in 5 girls are sexually abused (peaking between 8 and 12 years old); in adulthood, 1 in 4 women are raped (peaking between the ages of 18 and 24); intimate partner violence affects 1 in 5 women (most likely between the ages of 24 and 32); pregnancy has emerged as a factor associated with physical and sexual violence, with 1 in 6 pregnant women being assaulted; and 1 in 20 women over the age of 60 experience 'elder abuse', a likelihood that increases with age where victims are more frail or vulnerable (Filtcraft, 1995).

In a longitudinal Melbourne-based study of middle-aged women, 362 women between the ages of 51 and 62 completed a questionnaire regarding their experience of physical, sexual and emotional violence (Mazza, Dennerstein, Garamszegi, & Dudley, 2001). The study found that, overall, 28.5% of women had experienced some form of violence (physical, sexual or emotional) over their lifetime, 11.6% had experienced rape or attempted rape since the age of 16, and 5.5% had experienced severe



The study found that, overall, 28.5% of women had experienced some form of violence (physical, sexual or emotional) over their lifetime, 11.6% had experienced rape or attempted rape since the age of 16, and 5.5% had experienced severe physical abuse in the last 12 months.

physical abuse in the last 12 months. Similar findings were generated by a US study (Stein & Barrett-O'Connor, 2000) of 533 women between the ages of 50 and 80 (where the median age was 75), of which 12.7% had experienced sexual assault. Of these women, more than a fifth said they had experienced sexual assault repeatedly over the course of their lifetimes.

These findings are also reflected in qualitative studies with older women for whom sexual violence is an enduring part of their lives, in their relationships with fathers, husbands and sons (Duncan, 2006; Elder 2000; Hightower, Smith, & Hightower, 2001; Mears, 2002; Olle, 2005; Pritchard, 2000).

Often, the trauma of the experience was not fully felt until women were in their 40s and 50s (Elder, 2000, p. 21), and in some instances, the women had not disclosed that sexual violence had occurred until 40 years later (D'Arcy, 1999).

In light of women experiencing multiple instances of victimisation, sexual abuse in childhood, sexual assault as a teenager and intimate partner violence (including sexual assault) over many years, Hightower et al. (2001) questioned whether the focus on age, rather than on the act or relationship between perpetrator and victim, creates artificial divisions in the identification of violence against women. In other words, 'elder abuse' can truncate the recognition that rape of older women is part of a continuum of violence over the lifespan.

The importance of recognising the continuum of gendered violence

It is difficult to know the true extent of sexual assault against older and elderly women. Firstly, very little research has been done specifically around the issue of sexual assault among the elderly; as Pritchard (2000) described, it is regarded as a ‘taboo topic’ and ‘incredibly difficult’ to detect (p. 4). Secondly, where it is detected, this is often through intervention into other forms of abuse, such as physical abuse or neglect (Quinn, 1994). In addition, physical, cognitive and communication impairments can make disclosure of sexual assault difficult. Finally, when it comes to community perceptions of what actually constitutes elder abuse, it appears that sexual assault barely figures. An ACT study found that, when asked what elder abuse referred to, respondents commonly stated ‘physical’ and ‘psychological’ abuse. Only 3% of respondents referred to sexual assault. In short, the extent and nature of sexual assault as a form of elder abuse is difficult to determine. For many working in the area of sexual assault prevention and service provision, this is further compounded by using the term ‘elder abuse’ to describe the sexual and physical violence experienced by older women.

The definition of elder abuse can be broad. The Victorian Government defined elder abuse as:

Any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse may be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or neglect. (Office of Senior Victorians, 2005)

In their submission to the Victorian Government’s elder abuse prevention policy, the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) observed that no population studies existed in Australia that compared rates of violence experienced by men and women across their lives. This has only recently been examined in the Personal Safety Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). CASA’s report, *Older women’s experience of violence* (Elder, 2000), argues that it is important that ‘elder abuse’ does not conceal violence against women; neither domestic violence nor sexual assault should become redefined as ‘elder abuse’ simply by virtue of the victim/survivor turning 65. In the study, CASA observed that the term ‘elder abuse’ is both broad and gender-neutral; yet at the same time, there is little information about the nature and impact of violence against older women.

It is important to question how the adoption of the terminology of ‘elder abuse’ can conceal the structural, socially embedded nature of women’s experience of violence. The term ‘elder abuse’ can make it seem as though “there is something inherent about the situation, context or relationship that evokes, provokes, explains and justifies the violence and abuse” (CASA House, 2005, p. 2). Analyses of, and adequate responses to, older women’s experience of violence “must recognise the gendered nature of that experience” (Elder, 2000, p. 9).

Recognising key issues for older women as victim/survivors of sexual assault

Older women who are victim/survivors of sexual assault face a unique set of issues that can make disclosure and healing particularly difficult. A survey of the current literature suggests the following as major elements in recognising how sexual assault impacts upon older women.

The ‘triple jeopardy’ of older women

In addition to acknowledging the experience of sexual violence throughout the life cycle, it is essential to also take into account the particular position of older women as victims of sexual assault. It is recognised that the “combination of ageism, sexism and the view that the family is a caring unit that should not be interfered with, makes the task of recognising when older people are being abused, a very difficult one” (Mears, as cited in Duncan, 2002, p. 5). In addition, social values and attitudes around the issues of marriage, gender



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roles and expectations, and violence in families for women born before 1950 can make both disclosing sexual assault and accessing services difficult (Duncan, 2002, pp. 14–16).

In the qualitative research available, women spoke of staying “40 years in a [sexually violent] marriage. ‘I thought that’s how it was’” (Elder, 2000, p. 23); the inappropriateness of going outside the family for assistance; the inability of GPs at the time to adequately respond: “the doctor would only have given me Valium” (Elder, 2000, p. 19); and the fear of the consequences of disclosure, since in many cases women’s partners controlled finances or would use children as a coercive factor. These barriers are exacerbated for women from non-English speaking backgrounds (Ana-Gatbonton, 1999). Ana-Gatbonton identified language barriers, the impact of immigration (grief, loss and fear at relocating to another country), refugee experiences, and traditional cultural norms that require women’s obedience to the family as fostering a sense of social and cultural isolation for older women experiencing sexual assault.

Difficulties in accessing sexual assault services

Women of all ages and for a variety of factors find it difficult to share experiences of sexual assault. This is exacerbated for older women. Indeed, none of the 102 women interviewed for the CASA report on older women used a service following a sexual assault (Elder, 2000). The reasons given by the women as barriers to access included financial dependence, a lack of response after telling GPs or police, rural isolation, a sense that no-one would appreciate their situation, expectations about marriages in which women were expected to ‘keep quiet’ and stick with bad marriages, being unaware of the available services, and not feeling entitled to access services. For women from linguistically diverse backgrounds, information regarding sexual assault against older women and legal/support avenues for older women who have experienced sexual assault is not communicated in targeted multilingual ways and inhibits women from saying anything about their experiences.

Health impacts of violence over the lifespan



Sexual violence that is experienced over the lifespan (which is often also experienced alongside other forms of violence such as intimate partner violence, stalking or harassment) has long-term impacts upon the mental and physical health of victims/survivors.

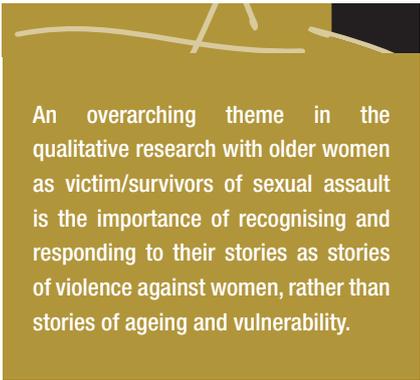
There are two important things to acknowledge here. The first is that sexual violence that is experienced over the lifespan (which is often also experienced alongside other forms of violence such as intimate partner violence, stalking or harassment) has long-term impacts upon the mental and physical health of victims/survivors. This can take the form of arthritis and rheumatism, gastro-intestinal problems, increased risk of breast cancer (Stein & Barrett-O’Connor, 2000), anxiety, depression, changes in eating habits, panic attacks, alcohol and drug use, and sleep disturbance (Olle, 2005).

The second point is that the health issues of older women can be misattributed to ‘ageing’, rather than to violence over the course of one’s life (Olle, 2005, p. 35). For example, in Stein and Barret-O’Connor’s study (2000), they found that 1 in 5 women were taking a thyroid hormone for thyroid disease, suggesting, in their words, “overdiagnosis and presumptive treatment of malaise, ‘tiredness’ or weight-gain”. They warn that this misclassification could obscure any true association with sexual assault. To extend their warning, it is likely that a range of physical and mental health issues that bring women to GPs and other health professionals have an association with experiences of violence, both in the past or more recently, or in an ongoing way. If lifetime experiences of violence are not brought to the forefront of research on sexual violence, and if classificatory ‘silos’ such as ‘elder abuse’ sever these connections over time and space, then not only will the health impact of sexual violence remain under-examined, but women will also not receive the most adequate and productive health care.

Responding to older women's experiences of violence

It is important to recognise both women's shared experience of sexual violence over the course of their lifetimes, and the particularities of women's circumstances. Stages in the lifespan are part of this. As McCreadie noted of the available literature: "the domestic violence literature has barely concerned itself with older people, and the elder abuse literature has barely concerned itself with domestic violence" (as cited in Mears, 2002, p. 2). In her study of older women's experience of domestic violence, Mears highlighted the conceptual difficulty of using the term 'elder abuse' to define interpersonal violence. Through her interviews, Mears engaged with the 'living ethnographic material' of how women give meaning to the sexual and domestic violence they experienced: "when women began telling their stories, it became clear that they saw and experienced their lives as a continuous whole, and so using an arbitrary 'cut off' age in regard to the age at which the violence occurred, was just not appropriate" (p. 4).

There is a danger that the terminology of 'elder abuse' will obscure the continuous way in which older women experience sexual assault. This does a significant violence to how older victim/survivors make sense of, and tell others about, their experiences. In addition, there is a danger that defining 'elder abuse' as something that happens 'after 65' will perpetuate the gap in knowledge of which McCreadie wrote (as cited in Mears, 2002). An overarching theme in the qualitative research with older women as victim/survivors of sexual assault is the importance of recognising and responding to their stories as stories of violence against women, rather than stories of ageing and vulnerability.



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Friends of 'Comfort Women'

ANNA SONG, FRIENDS OF 'COMFORT WOMEN' IN AUSTRALIA,
INTERVIEWED BY HALEY CLARK, NOVEMBER 2006.

1. Who are the 'comfort women' that Friends of 'Comfort Women' in Australia (FCWA) aims to service, and how is FCWA going about this?

'Comfort women' is the euphemistic term used to describe the estimated 200,000 women who were forced and trafficked into military sexual slavery by the Japanese government during World War II. There are victims and survivors of the 'comfort women' system all over the Asia-Pacific region, including North and South Korea, China, Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Friends of 'Comfort Women' in Australia (FCWA) is a group established to mobilise supporters in Australia in the spirit of friendship to bring justice to 'comfort women'. We do this by demanding a formal apology, and that legal responsibility is taken, reparation is made and the correct teaching of history takes place regarding the 'comfort women' system during World War II by the Japanese government. We hold peaceful demonstrations and gatherings outside Japanese embassies and consulates, as well as utilising Australia's democratic political system to speak out against the Japanese government's continued denial of responsibility. While doing so, we spread the message of peace and ending human rights violation against women during war.

2. What are some of the specific issues faced by this group of women and their families?

For most of these women, even after 60 years, they still feel a sense of shame and are keeping silent about this issue, and thus are dealing with the ongoing trauma alone. At the time of their human rights abuse, no counselling or support was provided for them to overcome the pains of their experiences. Thus, many still suffer daily from nightmares and fear as a result of the sexual slavery they had to endure.

Furthermore, many former 'comfort women' were never able to marry and have children because of the abuse they suffered. As a result, many are without the company of husbands or children and experience financial and emotional vulnerability as well as loneliness in their old age.

Many surviving 'comfort women' also suffer from health failures directly related to sexually transmitted disease and the unhygienic environments they were forced to live in while being used as military sex slaves. Survivors also suffer ill health from the violence and torture they were subjected to during this time. For example, the Korean 'comfort woman' survivor who campaigned in Australia in 2006, Jang Jeom Dol, has bad hearing and suffers migraines when travelling on airplanes due to her being beaten on the face by Japanese soldiers.

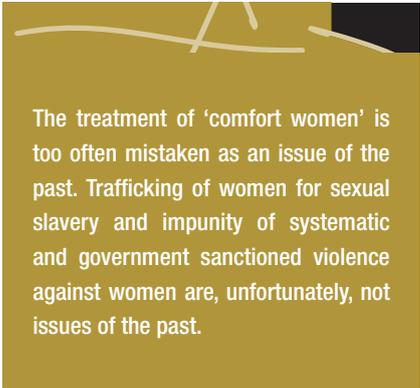
3. What led to the establishment of FCWA?

In August 2006, a Korean 'comfort woman' survivor, Jang Jeom Dol, and Secretary General Yoon Mee Hyang of the Korean Council for Japanese Military's 'Comfort Women' (formally known as the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan) were invited as speakers at Amnesty International Australia's (AIA) campaign, Stop Violence Against Women. From the powerful testimonies of 'Grandma Jang' and the rich and insightful activism experience of Secretary General Yoon, supporters of the campaign gained a wealth of knowledge on the issue and were inspired to begin

action in Australia. Also, at the last forum of the AIA's campaign in Sydney, the Korean–Australian community showed active support for ongoing campaigning on this issue.

4. Why is there a need for FCWA?

The treatment of 'comfort women' is too often mistaken as an issue of the past. Trafficking of women for sexual slavery and impunity of systematic and government sanctioned violence against women are, unfortunately, not issues of the past. During the AIA campaign, we heard from an East Timorese health worker whose aunty is a former 'comfort woman'. Through her experience, we learnt that for



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Timorese women, violence from the military did not end with the Japanese. All too soon after World War II, Timorese women once again were subjected to systematic sexual violence by the military.

The repetition of such a painful history of human rights violations is what motivated Australian 'comfort woman' survivor Jan Ruff O'Herne to speak out about her past, having kept silent for over 50 years. When rape was used as a weapon of war on women in Bosnia and other republics of the former Yugoslavia, Grandma Jang saw that atrocities against women during wars were continuing. Like Jan, FCWA is committed to seeing a non-repetition of such injustice against women

during war and to break the cycle of forgetting through the impunity of human rights violations against women. As such, it is not only important to support Australian women such as Jan in their activism for justice, but to protect the human rights of these Australian citizens through the Australian democratic system and to utilise Australia's place within the international community to bring justice for 'comfort women'.

FCWA is also committed to becoming part of an international solidarity movement for 'comfort women' and making the Japanese government accountable. We believe in the power of a global voice for justice and a global commitment to uphold human rights. The surviving 'comfort women' are already realising this; with FCWA the Japanese government have a new chance, another chance to commit to human rights and justice in spirit of friendship.

5. What are the main values, aims and objectives of FCWA?

So far, our objectives are as below. However, in continued collaboration with survivors, their families and NGOs globally, we hope to widen the objectives of FCWA.

Objectives

Empowering Australian activists and supporters, or those in Australia, in order to:

- establish a friendship and support network;
- put pressure on the Japanese government, in the spirit of friendship, starting from a Wednesday demonstration on International Women's Day in March 2007; and
- actively participate in a global solidarity movement with the focus of mobilising support for the cause of 'comfort women' in English-speaking communities and media outlets.

6. You have been touring overseas with Amnesty International Australia. What have been some of the main goals and achievements of this recent campaigning?

'Comfort women' survivors have been actively campaigning in Japan, Europe and the USA for more than a decade. But in August 2006, for the first time, AIA campaigned on the 'comfort women' issue in Australia, with a national speaking tour to Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney. The tour started with a meaningful meeting between two survivors: Grandma Jang from Korea and Jan Ruff O'Herne

from Australia. At Jan's home, the two women (without a common language) shared so much of their pain, strength and friendship. Bringing these two women together was a campaign achievement in itself, as it contributed so much to their healing process, as well as solidifying the reasons behind our campaign.

On Wednesday, 9 August 2006, the campaign joined dozens of cities around the world for the Global Day of Action to Bring Justice to 'Comfort Women'. In Melbourne, we held a photographic exhibition as well as an 'Afternoon Tea with a Human Rights Survivor' in a personalised and intimate setting with AIA members in high schools. The high school students learned about human rights and history from the real life experiences of Grandma Jang and her testimony. This afternoon tea with Grandma Jang inspired the students to be defenders of human rights, because they learnt about the true value of upholding them. Throughout the tour, there was keen interest from Australian local media and the Korean–Australian community media, with over a dozen interviews and five front-page newspaper articles.

As a result of the AIA campaign, we were able to draw together already existing supporters to organise the Wednesday Demonstration in Australia for International Women's Day 2007, in front of the Japanese Consulate in Sydney. In all four cities that the tour visited, supporters with a keen awareness of human rights were able to connect the 'comfort women' issue with their pre-existing knowledge.

And, of course, one of the most noteworthy achievements of this campaign was the establishment of FCWA. Through the AIA campaign, we were able to mobilise Australian supporters whom we hope will initiate a widespread grassroots movement in the English-speaking world in order to bring justice for 'comfort women'.



FCWA is also committed to becoming part of an international solidarity movement for 'comfort women' and making the Japanese government accountable. We believe in the power of a global voice for justice and a global commitment to uphold human rights.

7. What are some of the future plans and activities for FCWA?

Our first activity planned is the Wednesday Demonstration for International Women's Day in front of the Japanese Consulate in Sydney. After this initial demonstration we are planning to hold monthly Wednesday Demonstrations in order to show solidarity and build up support in Australia for this issue.

By doing this, we are hoping to emulate the Wednesday Demonstrations outside the Japanese Embassy in Korea, where it has become the longest consecutive weekly demonstration in the world. Children, students, nuns, adults and survivors from all over the world come together to demand justice and to learn about the meaning of human rights, particularly the government's responsibility to abide by human rights and the grassroots movement's commitment to uphold it.

8. How can people assist and/or become involved in FCWA?

I would recommend that first people get to know about the 'comfort women' issue. There is now a wealth of information out there, thanks to the brave survivors who have shared their stories with us. For instance, Australian survivor Jan Ruff O'Herne has a book entitled *50 years of silence*, and her son-in-law has made a documentary of the same title.

Amnesty International's comprehensive report, *Still waiting after 60 years: Justice for survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system*, was published in October 2006.

A copy of the report, *Still waiting after 60 years: Justice for survivors of Japan's military sexual slavery system*, is available on the Amnesty International website at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA220122005>. ACSSA reviewed the report in *Aware 11*, available online at: www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/newsletter/n11.html

A documentary by Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, *Silence broken: Korean comfort women*, with English subtitles, is available on VHS. See www.twotigers.org/silence/silencefilm.asp for more information about the film.

Currently we are also supporting the Korean Council's fundraising to build a War, Women and Human Rights Museum in Seoul, Korea.

Post-interview update regarding the activities of Friends of 'Comfort Women' in Australia

On Wednesday, 7 March 2007, around 60 people, including three survivors of the 'comfort women' system, gathered in protest outside the Japanese Consulate in Martin Place, Sydney, for the Wednesday Demonstration. The protest included speeches and the presentation of a petition and letter of appeal to a Japanese Consulate representative. To date, there has been no formal apology. The demonstration received wide media attention.

The invitation to join FCWA is open to anyone who is ready to demand justice for 'comfort women' in Australia. Subscriptions to our newsletter may be made by emailing fcw_australia@hotmail.com. Further information on FCWA can be found on their website: www.fcwa.org.au

ACSSA's Promising Practice Database

Many readers would be familiar with the ACSSA Good Practice Database, the online database of Australian sexual assault projects and services. This has been a popular resource, recording nearly 30,000 visits during 2006, and we hope this will continue to be a useful source of information.

As a 'work in progress', we are always thinking about how to improve the database. We are introducing a few minor changes to make things easier for those who are accessing the database, as well as for those who would like their work to be included.

Firstly, the database will now be called a 'Promising Practice Database'. This reflects the fact that ACSSA simply does not have the capacity to conduct a thorough evaluation of every project. To use the term 'good practice' suggested that the projects had been independently evaluated as meeting a particular set of standards, and this was not the case. While there is a set of criteria that projects respond to, these are more for the purpose of description rather than evaluation.

Secondly, we are working with the Web Officer to come up with ways to make the database more searchable, to make it easier for you to find what you are looking for! You might notice some changes to the way the database is organised when you visit over the coming months.

Lastly, we tried to make the submission process smoother. This will always be a challenging part of the process, as we try to balance the time constraints faced by workers in the field, with the need to get enough information about the projects to make the database as comprehensive as possible. We have made some small changes to the submission form, which we hope will make things clearer. Please be assured that all existing entries will remain online—there is no need to complete a new form for projects already in the database.

People who want to submit a project for the database have two options:

- download and return the completed submission form to ACSSA; or
- contact ACSSA and arrange for someone to go through the form with you over the phone.

We are always open to your suggestions about how the database could be improved and would be happy to hear from you. Visit www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/ppdb/promisingpractice.html

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

COMPILED BY JOAN KELLEHER, LIBRARIAN

The following are a selection of resources recently received by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) Library. Print resources are available via the interlibrary loan system. Contact your local library for details of this system. Electronic resources are available directly via the web address.

Abduction

Victims of abduction: Patterns and case studies. (2006). Fitzgerald, J., & People, J. Sydney: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/cjb94.pdf/\\$file/cjb94.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/cjb94.pdf/$file/cjb94.pdf)

Police figures suggest that New South Wales has the highest recorded rate of abductions in Australia. This report discusses the circumstances that give rise to reports of abduction or kidnapping in New South Wales. It describes the nature of the 238 offences recorded between January and June 2004, the motivation of offenders, the age and gender of victims, the victim-offender relationship and the victim's experience of physical and sexual violence. Of the 393 cases, 57% of victims were actually abducted, 32% of cases were attempted abductions, and the remaining incidents did not occur or did not fit the definition of abduction or kidnapping.

Adolescent offender treatment

GetOverIt!: Facilitator's manual. (2006). Men and Relationships Program, Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland. Toowoomba, Qld.: Author.

The GetOverIt! program is a 5–6 week community-based intervention group program targeting adolescents who are identified by the youth justice or education systems as exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviours. It promotes healthy family and school relationships and skills for addressing anger and violence. This manual explains the theoretical framework of the program and outlines each session.

Adolescent offenders

Treatment of young men who sexually abuse: The involvement of family. (2006). Boyd, C.

Family Relationships Quarterly, 2, 6–8. <http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/newsletter/newsletter2.html#treatment>

Should families be involved in the therapeutic treatment of young people with sexually abusive behaviour? This article considers whether family background contributes to sexually abusive behaviour, given that young men engage in sexually abusive behaviour in a gendered social and cultural context. The article outlines the appropriate level of involvement for family members in the assessment, supervision and treatment of young offenders.

Adult survivors

Point last seen: A road to recovery after childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence. (2006). Hunter, R. Noosa Heads, Qld: Debut Publishing.

The author, a victim of abduction and sexual abuse as a child and of domestic violence as a wife, recounts her experiences, the coping strategies she developed and the path she followed to recovery.

Depression

Depression: Women's sadness or high-prevalence disorder? (2006). Clarke, H. *Australian Social Work*, 59(4), 365–377.

Depression is expected to become one of the world's largest health problems by 2020, with women twice as likely as men to receive this diagnosis. While psychiatry focuses on inherited symptoms and brain chemical deficiencies, psychology stresses individual dysfunctional thinking styles. These practices have reinforced the development of depression as a high-prevalence disorder resulting in the medicalisation of women's depression.

However, is this the only way to understand depression? Women themselves focus on how they have become demoralised by aspects of their lived experience, aspects such as abusive or unsupportive relationships, inadequate housing, financial insecurity and the competing demands of their culturally defined caring roles as women. These are familiar social work issues. Should we understand these women as sick or sad? Women seeking help in dealing with depression often report feeling that they are not listened to or taken seriously by health professionals. In contrast, women who have attended a support group describe feeling accepted and encouraged by the discovery that they are not alone in experiencing these kinds of feelings. The present article examines current ideas about why women may become depressed and then outlines a group-work program, focusing on improving women's emotional wellbeing, that was implemented as an alternative response to depression. (Journal abstract, edited)

Domestic violence

Children and domestic violence: A system of safety in clinical practice. (2006). Cooley, B., & Frazer, C. *Australian Social Work*, 59(4), 462–473.

This paper provides a framework for working with children and families where there are domestic violence and child protection concerns. A model of practice developed by the St George Domestic Violence Counselling Service and the St George Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the South East Sydney and Illawarra Health Service is outlined. The paper includes a discussion on a recently developed service agreement between the two services and a case study focusing on a system of safety when working with children. It focuses on the effects of domestic violence on women and children by male perpetrators. The paper does not ignore that men may be victims of domestic violence; however, the authors recognise the gendered nature of domestic violence and the significant number of women and children who experience and live with domestic violence. (Journal abstract, edited)

Family violence in the United States: Defining, understanding, and combating abuse. (2005). Hines, D. A., & Malley-Morrison, K. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

This book examines all types of family aggression. The book is designed to provoke readers into questioning assumptions, evaluating information,

formulating hypotheses and designing solutions to problems of family violence in the United States. Using an ecological framework, authors Denise A. Hines and Kathleen Malley-Morrison provide a discussion not only of the most well-recognised forms of maltreatment in families, but also of less understood and more controversial issues, such as husband abuse, parent abuse and gay/lesbian abuse. (Book jacket, edited)

Talking with men who have used violence in intimate relationships: An interview with Tod Augusta-Scott. (2006). Augusta-Scott, T., & Denborough, D. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 4, 23–30.

Tod Augusta-Scott works in Canada with men who have used violence in their intimate relationships. This interview considers a number of key themes in this work, including ways of inviting men to consider the effects of their violence, ways of exploring expressions of shame and remorse, the importance of developing alternative story lines of respect and responsibility, approaches to group work and the use of documentation. Tod also reflects upon his own work practices and performance of masculinity. (Journal abstract, edited)

Victorian Family Violence Database: Five year report 1999–2004. (2006). Kirkwood, D., & Diemer, K. Melbourne, Vic: Victorian Community Council Against Violence, Department of Justice. <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internet/Home/Crime/Research+and+Statistics/JUSTICE++Victorian+Family+Violence+Database++Five+Year+Report++PDF>

This report is in three parts: part one (30 pages), part 2 (32 pages) and an appendix (163 pages). It outlines the findings from the analysis of family violence incidents reported in Victoria between 1999 and 2004 and recorded on the Victorian Family Violence Database (now administered by the Victims Support Agency in the Department of Justice). It includes data from Victoria Police family violence incident reports, finalised intervention order applications from the Victorian Magistrates' and Children's Courts, and the Victorian Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The analysis provides a snapshot of the numbers and characteristics of people accessing these services. The appendix contains information on family violence incidents reported to police and finalised intervention order applications in the Magistrates' and Children's Courts of Victoria, by

the residential Victorian Local Government Area (LGA) for aggrieved family members/victims.

Violence-induced disability: The consequences of violence against women and children. (2006). Olle, L. Collingwood, Vic: Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre.

Information on disabilities resulting from domestic violence, including how domestic violence may precipitate disability or further disability, is presented. The paper covers terminology; violence during pregnancy; shaken baby syndrome; indirect violence against children; developmental, learning, behavioural and social disability; violence, unwanted pregnancy and disability; a 'violence and disability' cycle; violence and mental health, post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety, and eating disorders; violence and acquired brain injury; violence against older women; current federal and Victorian government policy and policy gaps; a specialist service response; community education campaigns; public health campaigns and links to other public policy; and recommendations for further research.

Gender issues

Are women as violent as men? (2006). Hopkinson, S. *Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research Newsletter*, 5(2), 4–8. <http://www.noviolence.com.au/public/newsletters/news18.pdf>

Despite evidence that men commit significantly more domestic violence than women do, there seems to be less and less willingness to accept that domestic violence is a gendered problem. This article looks at evidence from the 2005 Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey and other studies to clarify this issue. It considers where ideas of gender neutral violence come from and discusses the fathers' rights anti-feminist movement.

Conversations in groups with women about their experiences of using anger, abuse and violence. (2006). Sach, J. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 4, 32–44.

This paper considers the gendered construction of anger and how women's experiences of using anger, abuse and violence may be shaped by these. It also examines the contribution of difficult life experiences like trauma and abuse in shaping women's anger responses. The article describes an evolving approach to group work

with women that seeks to address some of these complexities. (Journal abstract)

Intimate partner abuse

'Intimate' violence against women: When spouses, partners, or lovers attack. (2006). Lundberg-Love, P. K., & Marmion, S. L. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

In this concise work, a team of writers examines the emotional, physical and sexual abuse of women. They explain the risk factors for becoming a target of 'intimate' abuse, including the effects of class and culture on this type of violence. They look at potential legal issues and explore effective treatments for recovery. (Book jacket)

Law reform

Family law dispute resolution: The implications for victims of violence. (2006). Kirkwood, D. *DVIRC Quarterly*, 4, 16–23.

What issues does the introduction of dispute resolution for separating couples raise for cases involving family violence? This article looks at arrangements for screening for family violence cases in the new family law system, the conflict between traditional principles of mediation and compulsory mediation under the new system, the financial implications of parenting agreements, the potential benefits and disadvantages of dispute resolution, and concerns about dispute resolution in cases involving family violence.

Sexual assault procedures change. (2006). Victorian Law Reform Commission. *Law Institute Journal*, 80(12), 84.

The Victorian Government has recently implemented several recommendations made by the Victorian Law Reform Commission for legislative reform in the area of sexual assault. These include improved police responses, improved court efficiency, training for prosecutors and judges, and prevention programs within the Department of Justice and Department of Human Services.

Legal issues

Seeking safety, needing support: A report on support requirements for women experiencing domestic violence and accessing the Family Court. (2006). Tinning, B. Townsville, Qld: Sera's Women's Shelter.

Women coming into contact with the Family Court in Townsville as a result of family violence were interviewed about their experiences of the court system. This report presents the findings of the study, showing that the support needs of women who are separating from an abusive partner are different from those of other separating couples in the court system. It recommends the development of a support program for such women.

Offender treatment

Responding to men's violence: An interview with Nancy Gray. (2006). Gray, N., & Denborough, D. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 4, 3–14

In their work with men who have enacted violence against their partners, a team of workers at New Start in Halifax, Canada, draws upon the metaphor of 'migration of identity' to assist men to move away from violence and domination and towards different forms of masculinity. This interview describes some of the key ideas that inform their work. It conveys how the migration of identity map and the reauthoring conversations map can be put to work with men who are violent. It also conveys some of the unexpected discoveries that emerge as a result. (Journal abstract, edited)

Police role

Domestic violence: Improving police practice. (2006). New South Wales Ombudsman. Sydney, NSW: NSW Ombudsman. <http://www.nswombudsman.nsw.gov.au/publication/PDF/specialreport/DV%20Improving%20police%20practice%20dec%202006.pdf>

These recommendations, the result of an examination of policing in New South Wales, are targeted at enhancing the policing and prevention of domestic violence. The report focuses on enhanced support for victims of domestic violence; better cooperation between NSW Police and other agencies, especially the Department of Community Services and local courts; and more effective frontline policing responses. It discusses the incidence of domestic violence in NSW, the legislative framework, the role of police, how police currently respond to domestic violence, police officers' views about responding to domestic violence, service providers' views about how police respond to domestic violence, Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders, Domestic Violence Liaison Officers, the court

system, child protection, the need for an effective interagency response, family and domestic violence in Aboriginal communities, domestic violence training for police, frontline policing strategies for responding to domestic violence, and achieving a comprehensive response to domestic violence.

Lessons learned from the Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaigns 2006. (2006). Police and Crime Standards Directorate. [London]: Home Office. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/Domestic-Violence-10731.pdf>

This report outlines the findings of research conducted by police forces in England and Wales during two Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaigns carried out in February/March and June/July 2006. The campaigns were designed to improve police performance in gathering evidence, enforcing the law, and increasing the number of offenders brought to justice. Results were encouraging in that, during the second campaign, offenders were more likely to be charged rather than cautioned, and there was a reduction in the number of 'no further action' and 'bail over four weeks' outcomes. The second campaign, which was timed to coincide with the FIFA World Cup finals, indicated a strong link between sporting events, alcohol consumption and reports of domestic violence. The report recommends that police and other agencies be aware of this connection, and factor it into their planning for such events.

Prevention programs

Developing ethical sexual lives: Young people, sex and sexual assault prevention. (2006). Carmody, M., & Willis, K. Drummoyne, NSW: NSW Rape Crisis Centre.

A three-year joint project by the University of Western Sydney and NSW Rape Crisis Centre, from July 2005 to June 2008, focuses on promoting ethical non-violent relationships between young women and men. This report on Stage 1 of the project contains the literature review, describes the research methodology, and presents and discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings of interviews with a sample of young women and men from three metropolitan areas and three regional towns in New South Wales. The interviews focused on how young people negotiate sexual intimacy and how they make decisions about having sex or not and

with whom, and what influences their decision-making.

Sexual violence and the spectrum of prevention. (2006). Davis, R., Parks, L. F., & Cohen, L. Enola, Penn.: National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

‘This article describes a primary prevention approach to addressing sexual violence. Sexual violence is a learned behavior that can not be learned in the first place. In other words, sexual violence is preventable. Grounded in the belief that a single individual or sector cannot address the problem alone, it explores the conditions that create environments in which sexual violence occurs, and provides a tool, the Spectrum of Prevention, for effectively developing a comprehensive prevention strategy. It is designed for advocates, practitioners, and educators who are interested in advancing a community solution to preventing what is unacceptable, yet all too common—sexual violence.’ (p. 3)

Rape

Real rape: Help for women sexually assaulted by male partners. (2006). McOrmond-Plummer, L. *DVIRC Quarterly*, 4, 11–15.

Women who are raped by their partners are often not recognised as victims of a crime. This article describes the author’s experiences of sexual assault by a partner, and the impact of common myths that this is not ‘real’ rape. The article summarises the research on the prevalence of partner rape, outlines some of the problems with current service responses and describes a book the author wrote for women raped by partners. (Journal abstract, edited)

Recidivism

High-risk offenders: Post sentence supervision and detention: Discussion and options paper. (2007). Victoria. Sentencing Advisory Council. Melbourne, Vic: Sentencing Advisory Council. http://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/Sentencing+Council/resources/file/eba90107f6f1edf/High_Risk_Offenders_Dis-Opt_Paper.pdf

This discussion paper considers whether a continuing detention scheme for high-risk offenders should be introduced in Victoria. It is intended for use with offenders who have reached the end of their sentence but are still considered dangerous, such as sex offenders and

violent offenders. The paper discusses the legal and moral bases of these schemes, and how such a scheme might operate, and examines examples of similar schemes in other Australian states, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Is risk management enough? Approach and avoidance goals in the treatment of sex offenders. (2006). Eccleston, L., & Ward, T. In R. Wortley & S. Smallbone (Eds.), *Situational prevention of child sexual abuse* (Crime Prevention Studies vol. 19, pp. 223–250). Monsey, NY, USA: Criminal Justice Press.

This chapter reviews situational theories of offending and the risk management approach to sexual offending. Standard approaches to rehabilitation and treatment focus on changing internal implicit theories and controlling external situational conditions. The chapter argues that treatment places too much emphasis on avoidance goals and negative goods in the environment, and suggests that it would be more productive to strike a balance between risk management and need fulfilment. It proposes a ‘good lives model’ in which sexual offenders are equipped with internal and external conditions to secure primary goods in adaptive ways that reduce their situational risk of offending.

Recidivism of sex offenders research paper. (2007). Gelb, K. Melbourne, Vic: Sentencing Advisory Council. http://server-au.imrworldwide.com/cgi-bin/b?cg=downloads&ci=vic-sac&tu=http://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/Sentencing+Council/resources/file/eb820202da647a8/Recidivism_Sex_Offenders_Research_Paper.pdf

This research paper focuses on the recidivism of sex offenders and is designed to provide background information to a further discussion paper examining current legal responses in Victoria and other jurisdictions to high-risk offenders. The research paper examines the most recent evidence about whether sex offenders do indeed pose the danger to the community that they are often perceived as posing, discussing the tension between community protection and legal principles. Although they are the least common form of sexual assault, sexual offences committed by strangers have been the priority for policymakers over the years, despite the fact that most sexual offences are committed by ordinary men in the context of everyday relationships. Statistics are provided on the incidence and prevalence of sexual offences

in Victoria, and on the nature and costs of sexual offending. The literature is reviewed to determine what is known about sex offenders and their crimes and to clarify the evidence on levels of recidivism among sex offenders. A brief overview of treatment programs and their efficacy is provided, with a final discussion of the implications of the research evidence for current policy and prevention programs.

Risk assessment

Assessing risk for violence in the Australian context. (2005). Ogloff, J. R. P., & Davis, M. R. In D. W. P. Chappell (Ed.), *Issues in Australian crime and criminal justice* (pp. 301–338). Chatswood, NSW: LexisNexis Butterworths.

The level of risk presented by an individual in the context of the criminal justice system is difficult to determine. This chapter considers the practice of violence risk assessment and looks at areas of contemporary Australian criminal law that may require violence risk assessment. It discusses forensic psychiatric patients, serious offenders and indefinite sentences, the evolution of the accuracy of the assessment of risk for violence, the violence risk factors of mental illness, psychopathy and substance abuse, some violence risk measures or schemes, and risk for violence among sexual offenders.

Sex offender treatment

Engaging resistance: Creating partnerships for change in sexual offender treatment. (2006). Flinton, C. A., & Scholz, R. Oklahoma City, OK: Wood 'N' Barnes Publishing.

Engaging resistance explores the manner in which offenders resist change and how this resistance both mirrors and is facilitated by treatment providers, the criminal justice/child welfare systems, and society. The book suggests that resistance at each of these levels creates obstacles to effective partnerships and sustainable interventions. The authors believe that any meaningful change in reducing the vast number of sexual offences will require a multi-system approach that increases client motivation and public awareness and facilitates changes that hold the offender, society and the criminal justice/child welfare systems accountable for reducing sexual offending. (Book jacket, edited)

Treating sexual offenders: An integrated approach. (2006). Marshall, W. L., Marshall,

L. E., Serran, G., & Fernandez, Y. M. New York: Routledge.

This book is a comprehensive guide that prepares clinicians, administrators, parole and probation officers, and court officials to effectively treat identified sexual offenders. Focusing on adult males, this essential resource is based on research and clinical activities in prison-based and community-based programs, making it applicable to a variety of settings and with a number of different disorders. (Book jacket, edited)

Sex offenders

An investigation into the effective and ethical interviewing of suspected sex offenders. (2006). Kebbell, M., Hurren, E., & Mazerolle, P. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi327.html>

Sexual assault is less likely to be reported to police than other crimes and, once reported, can be difficult to prosecute successfully. This paper examines ways of increasing the likelihood that guilty offenders will confess during police interviews, thus making it easier to secure more convictions in adult sexual assault cases. Confessions are likely to depend on the credibility of the evidence and the manner in which it is presented to the suspect during the police interview.

Sexual offending: Victim, gender and sentencing dilemmas. (2005). Warner, K. In D. Chappell & P. Wilson (Eds.), *Issues in Australian crime and criminal justice* (pp. 233–251). Chatswood, NSW: LexisNexis Butterworths.

What is the impact of gendered notions of sexuality on offender behaviour; the legislative boundaries of sexual offences; the reporting behaviour of victims; and police, prosecution, trial and sentencing processes? This chapter looks at evidence on the incidence and nature of sexual offending, the impact of rape and sexual assault and criminal justice processes on victims, and discusses the effectiveness and the slow nature of rape law reform, moving the risk of misunderstanding from complainant to defendant, and sentencing. It argues that a reduction in the incidence of sexual assault will depend on changes to social attitudes to women, but notes that the law plays an important symbolic role in reinforcing ideas of what is normal in sex and gender roles.

Victoria's Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005: Implications for the accuracy of sex offender risk assessment. (2006). Wood, M., & Ogloff, J. R. P. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 13(2), 182–198.

Victoria's new *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005* established a new regime whereby high-risk child sex offenders can receive intensive long-term supervision in the community post-incarceration. This article reviews the nature and purpose of this new sex offender legislation and discusses some of the theoretical, practical and clinical issues in forensic psychiatric and psychological research highlighted by its implementation. The sole focus of the legislation on child sexual offenders implies that these offences are more severe or more recidivistic than other sexual or violent crimes, a contention that is not wholly supported by the literature. Furthermore, research on many of the crimes specified under the Act is limited and many questions remain unanswered regarding our ability to predict sexual recidivism, particularly in legal contexts where the consequences of false predictions are so severe. (Journal abstract, edited)

Violence statistics

Measuring domestic violence and sexual assault: A review of the literature and statistics. (2006). Phillips, J., & Park, M. (Rev. ed.). Canberra, ACT: Parliamentary Library. <http://www.aph.gov>

[au/library/intguide/sp/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm)

Major research and studies on violence against women and sexual assault in Australia, and some major international surveys, are summarised. The report presents information on the incidence of violence against women; on whether violence against women is growing in Australia; what proportion of victims know the perpetrator; injuries to women in cases of sexual assault; state and territory comparisons; how many victims access support services; criminal justice system outcomes; women's fear of violence; the economic, social and health costs of violence against women; and at-risk groups.

Violence against women and men in Australia: What the Personal Safety Survey can and can't tell us. (2006). Flood, M. *DVIRC Quarterly*, 4, 3–10.

The Personal Safety Survey, a national survey of physical and sexual violence against women and men, has recently been released. Key findings include that rates of violence against women have declined, and that there is a high rate of violence against men. This article discusses the contrast between men's and women's experiences of violence, and raises concerns about the survey's definitions and measurements of violence and the possible misuse of survey data to claim that one-quarter of domestic violence victims are men.

ACSSA PUBLICATIONS FEEDBACK



ACSSA welcomes any feedback that enables us to better resource the sector and provide accurate information. In this section, and with the writers' permission, we reprint feedback of a substantial nature on our publications, particularly corrections or additions to our published material, in the interest of keeping readers well-informed and up-to-date.

We invite your views

ACSSA invites readers to discuss the issues raised in our publications through our email discussion list, *ACSSA-Discuss*. *ACSSA-Discuss* is a moderated email list for the discussion of topics of interest to people involved with the sexual assault field. To join *ACSSA-Discuss*, send an email to "majordomo@aifs.gov.au" with the message "subscribe acssa-discuss", and leave the subject line blank. For more information about the ACSSA email discussion group, visit the Mailing Lists page on the ACSSA website at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa.

CONFERENCES

COMPILED BY HELEN ARCH, WEB OFFICER

The following conference listings are taken from the website of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. For more conferences and events visit the Conferences page on the ACSSA website: www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html

Victorian Offender Treatment Association Biennial Conference

28–30 November 2007,
Melbourne

The VOTA conference aims to attract a wide body of representation drawing from all agencies and disciplines involved in the management of and working with sexual offenders and victim/survivors, and encourage collaboration between such agencies.

International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Stalking

31 March–2 April 2008,
New Orleans, USA

Organised by End Violence Against Women International. Details available online at www.evawintl.org

For up-to-date information on upcoming Australian and international conferences, please check our website: www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html

ACSSA Reference Group

The current ACSSA Reference Group convened for the first time, on 2 March 2007 in Melbourne. The reference group consists of highly regarded professionals from the practice, academic and policy arenas related to the issues of sexual assault and violence against women in Australia. The gathering of such an accomplished and passionate group was energising for the ACSSA team, and the day generated a host of ideas for future directions and priorities. The discussions highlighted not only what has been accomplished and the progress being made to improve responses to sexual assault in Australia, but also reminded us of the many challenges still ahead. We hope our future publications and activities will reflect some of the enthusiasm, generosity and wisdom present on the day.

The ACSSA Reference Group members are:

- Annabelle Allimant, Co-ordinator, Immigrant Women's Support Service, Queensland
- Dorinda Cox, Manager, Aboriginal Healing Project, WA
- Dr Lesley Laing, University of Sydney, NSW
- Gaby Marcus, Co-ordinator, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, NSW
- Vanessa Swan, Director, Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service, SA
- Dr Caroline Taylor, University of Ballarat, Victoria
- Karen Willis, Manager, NSW Rape Crisis Centre, NSW

as well as representatives from AIFS and the Office for Women, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Contribute to ACSSA *Aware*

Service providers, researchers and those interested in working against sexual assault are encouraged to contribute to the *ACSSA Aware* newsletter. We are interested in short reviews (no more than 1,500 words) of books, conferences, workshops and projects. We will also consider more substantial articles (no more than 5,000 words) on significant issues in understanding, responding to, or preventing sexual assault.

ACSSA Aware aims to provide a lively forum for ideas, argument and comment: thus we welcome readers' letters, comments and feedback on issues discussed in ACSSA publications.

Please email contributions in a Microsoft Word document to acssa@aifs.gov.au, or post to the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Level 20, 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

Join *ACSSA-Alert*

News Alert Email Service: ACSSA-Alert

ACSSA-Alert is an email list for news and updates from the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. You will receive messages with announcements about updates on the ACSSA website, release of publications, and new information or services.

You can join ACSSA-Alert through our web page on:

www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/emaillist.html

We welcome your feedback

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

Help to shape the work of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. We are interested in hearing your views on the best way to meet the needs of our stakeholders. If you have any comments on services that could be offered, possible topics for publications or areas of research, please fill in the section below and return it to the Institute. Comments can also be provided on-line via the ACSSA website, or email us at: acssa@aifs.gov.au

What other services would you find useful for your work?

What topics would you liked covered in ACSSA's publications, or considered for research projects?

Membership form overleaf ►

ACSSA services

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs through the *Women's Safety Agenda*. ACSSA provides stakeholders with a variety of services (see below). ACSSA is located at the Australian Institute of Family Studies in Melbourne.

Resources

ACSSA is building a collection of publications and best practice literature, reports, and training resources to inform initiatives and programs directed at improving the understanding of, and response to, sexual assault. These materials are available for browsing at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Information Centre, or may be borrowed through the interlibrary loan system. Bibliographic information on these resources may be searched online via the Institute's catalogue.

Research and advisory service

ACSSA's research staff can provide specialist advice and information on current issues that impact on the response to sexual assault. Email research queries to acssa@aifs.gov.au

Policy advice

ACSSA offers policy advice to the Australian Government and other government agencies on matters relating to sexual assault, intervention and pathways to prevention.

Publications

ACSSA produces Issues Papers, ACSSA *Wraps* (short resource papers) and Newsletters which are mailed free of charge to members of the mailing list. Publications can also be received electronically.

Promising Practice database

ACSSA is continuing to build its *Promising Practice* database, to document and publicise best practice projects and activities being undertaken in relation to sexual assault.

Research

ACSSA staff undertake primary and secondary research projects, commissioned by government and non-government agencies.

Email alert and discussion lists

ACSSA-Alert and *ACSSA-Discuss* keep members posted on what's new at the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault and in the sexual assault field generally, and allow networking and communication among those working on issues related to sexual violence against women.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

If you would like to join the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault mailing list, please fill in this form and return it to the Institute. Membership of the Centre is free.

- Please add my name to your mailing list to receive ACSSA publications I would like to receive publications electronically
 I would like to receive back issues of ACSSA publications I would like to receive publications in hard copy

Title _____ Full name _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Send this completed form to:

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault
Australian Institute of Family Studies
Level 20, 485 La Trobe Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/