

# COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE



## Stalking

Sam Taylor & Claudia Miles



# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES STALKING

- ▶ Individual and Collective Resilience
  - ▶ The Research Context
  - ▶ Resilience as a Defense Mechanism
  - ▶ Resilience and Reduced Vulnerability
  - ▶ Ability to Adapt to Adversity
  - ▶ Wider Strategies (Stalking Law Reform)
- 

# AUTOETHONOGRAPHIC APPROACH

- ▶ We are the subjects of our own research.....
- ▶ Definition - “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political” (Carolyn Ellis (2004))

# THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

- ▶ Resilience isn't just an individual's capacity to overcome adversity.
- ▶ Resilience also depends on social and ecological factors around us; families, schools and communities.
- ▶ Positive behaviours depend on what we as a community facilitate for our children.

**(Michael Ungar PHD)**



# STATISTICS

(INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO STALKING LAW REFORM)

- ▶ 72 % of those taking part report being unhappy with the criminal justice system.
- ▶ 65% of the victims said they were not satisfied with the police's response.
- ▶ More than 50% of the victims had been stalked for more than eighteen months.
- ▶ In 78% of cases the CPS were not even involved.
- ▶ On the remaining 22%, 77% said they were not satisfied with the CPS's response.
- ▶ In 47% of the cases the perpetrator was not even charged and in 41% of cases the case did not even progress that far.
- ▶ In 88% of the cases the perpetrator got away with it and did not receive any form of sanction through the criminal justice system.

# PROTECTION AGAINST STALKING

- ▶ Individuals coming together - victims, community, professionals, agencies, politicians.....



# RESILIENCE DEFENSE MECHANISM

**“Resilience can be viewed as a defense mechanism, which enables people to thrive in the face of adversity” (Davydov DM, Stewart R, Ritchie K, Chaudieu I, Resilience and Mental Health, clinical psychological review 2010)**

- ▶ Survival and Defense against perpetrator and the system.
- ▶ The victims trust and confidence in the criminal justice system conversely decreases and they fear no one can help or protect them; only once the perpetrator has seriously harmed and injured the victim does the system react and respond. By then it's too late the victims pay with their lives. (Inquiry report)
- ▶ Work collectively to highlight weaknesses in the system to enable recognition and understanding of the stress/risk factors and create the necessary mechanisms to respond appropriately.

# RESILIENCE AND REDUCED VULNERABILITY

A range of studies have suggested that resilience' can be seen as synonymous with reduced vulnerability' (Hofer, 2006; Schneiderman, Ironson, & Siegel, 2005),

- ▶ Individual
- ▶ Cultural
- ▶ Corroborated evidence
- ▶ Type of abuse and social context



# ABILITY TO ADAPT

- ▶ A range of studies have suggested that resilience can be seen as an ability to adapt to adversity or cope (Stanton, Revenson, & Tennen, 2007; Kim-Cohen, 2007; Cameron et al., 2007)

An Open Mind is a resilient mind

- ▶ Victims
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Professionals
- ▶ Politicians

# OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE

- ▶ Stalking is a two part crime. The first part is the offenders behaviour incorporating real and cyber stalking. The second is the impact on the victim, which is described as a subjective test. (Ann Moulds – Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law Reform)

# UNDERSTANDING PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY

- ▶ Perpetrator isolates/disempowers/terrorises the victim – increases vulnerability.....
- ▶ Social pressure and social unacceptability of behaviour.
- ▶ It is quite clear that short-term prison sentences are not making an impact on stalking offences. Programs which address this type of behaviour need to be developed. (probation officer – Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law)
- ▶ In terms of requiring new stalking law was to recognise that the current systems mirrors the behaviour of the perpetrator.....

# STALKING LAW REFORM, RESILIENCE & INCREASED IMMUNITY

- ▶ The victims I hear from are saying the same things I was fifteen years ago. What's changed? We need to do more. This is about murder prevention. (Tracey Morgan – victim of stalking)
- ▶ All those participating were able to extrapolate from their experiences about what was needed to make it less likely that there would be future victims of stalking; what needed to change in the law and what training was needed. (Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law)
- ▶ Increasing awareness of the reality of stalking behaviour amongst the public in line with governments policy of bullying and violence women and girls. (Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law).

# WIDER STRATEGIES

- ▶ There are different examples of group and individual resilience factor interaction from national to community levels, from political to social orientating strategies (Steptoe & Wardle 2001, Arrindale & Steptoe and Wardle 2003)
- ▶ If the right questions are asked and the right answers are found then the wider community (Government) should be obliged to put in place the necessary mechanisms to promote a higher rate of reduced vulnerability.
- ▶ Organised Service User Groups empowered to promote and deliver training thereby building individual and collective resilience against suffering in silence.

*VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD*

# STALKING AND MENTAL HEALTH VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR

- ▶ Dr Emma Short, from the University of Bedford told the inquiry that sentencing guidelines needed to take into account the high rates of PTSD amongst victims.
- ▶ Between 50-60% of women mental health service-users have experienced domestic violence and up to 20% will be experiencing current abuse. (Department of Health 2003).
- ▶ There should be a proper psychiatric assessment by a psychiatrist who understands stalking behaviour. This would help with risk assessing and devising treatment plans for these. (Inquiry Report)
- ▶ It is essential that NHS psychiatric services are more commonly available to courts, victims, perpetrator programs. With psychiatrists trained specifically in domains of stalking risk and to assist with sentencing process, treatment and management. (Inquiry Report)
- ▶ Psychiatric assessments in respect of perpetrators are largely absent. (Inquiry Report)

# HOUSE OF LORDS

**Baroness Royall of Blaisdon:** My Lords, today we are almost there: a **new law on stalking**, for which Parliament rather than Government has been in the driving seat. Over the past six months, a staggering amount of progress has been made, much of it due to the advocacy of **noble Lords on all Benches**. Like the Minister, I pay special tribute to the noble Baroness, Lady Brinton, and the noble Baroness, Lady Howe, along with my noble friends on these Benches. The progress is also **testament to the campaigners**, the excellent parliamentary inquiry, and most of all to the survivors and their families that we will soon achieve proper protection in law for the victims of stalking. I also pay tribute to those women who have shown extraordinary courage in the face of this harrowing crime: **women like Claire Waxman, Tracey Morgan, Sam Taylor, Tricia Bernal and Claudia Miles**, whose lives were stolen by their stalkers, but all of whom are utterly determined to make sure that future victims get the justice and protection that they deserve.