

Research mindedness – collaborations in Wolverhampton

March 2023

Presenter:

Jenny Rogers
Principal Social Worker

Increasing research mindedness and capability

Lyn Romeo (Chief Social Worker for Adults) had research as one of the top priorities for 2022-2023:

Priorities in this area were to:

- **Address the top 10 priorities for social work research**
- **Influence investment to increase research mindedness and capability in the local authority social care sector**
 - **Promote a pipeline in social work for academics and researchers**
- **Advise on further research for emerging issues, including COVID-19 impact and recovery, social work leadership, social work practice in working with homeless people, digital capability and models for future social work practice**

Widely recognised that good, effective social work is informed by research and evidence. But often frontline social workers find it difficult to access or find relevant research and academics struggle to maintain close links to practice for a variety of reasons

Research by social workers for social workers

“Research carried out from within an organisation...can have great strengths, given that the practitioner-researcher has prior knowledge of systems, established networks for a sample of participants or respondents, a closeness to practice problems and relationships in place which can help to create the trust needed for openness in responses. It can establish a sense of ownership of the research, which Nutley et al. (2007) argue is important in helping practitioners to engage in research-minded practice itself”

Many of the skills you use as a good social worker are also used in good research. For example:

- The understanding of theory, values and ethics in practice strengthens the research process
- Ability to use chronologies helps with the skills needed for systematic recording of qualitative research data
- Skilled handling of sensitive emotional situations will help you to ask personal questions
- Social workers draw together information from a variety of sources, including what you hear, read and observe; you analyse this information in the light of your knowledge and make decisions based on this evidence – similar to research

Collaboration with The University of Wolverhampton

- Sponsorship of PhDs
- Research circles
- Practice Educator Hub
- World Social Work days
- Social work briefing research sessions

Innovating and Transforming Social Work Practice

Presenter: Elaine Arnall, Professor of Social Work, Associate Dean and Professor
(Strategic), University of Wolverhampton

Innovating and Transforming Social Work Practice

- How PhDs came about,
- The process
- Why its such a good thing to do
- Awareness building and growing research utilisation
- Some reflections on re-learning identities as an experienced social worker to a new researcher.

So, How Did It All Begin...?

- Social Work and Care professionals needs to be in a position to influence, direct and inform social work and social care policy, practice and research. Needs to think about where it positions itself nationally and internationally on the design and delivery of intervention and care in a social and community setting.
- Research suggests social workers and social care workers are less likely to use research than other professionals
- Research on social work and care practice frequently undertaken by people with other disciplinary backgrounds - psychologists , sociologists, ethnographers, medical or health care people
- I decided to invest in innovation and change. Could we develop social work research, theory and practice by social workers / by those in current practice by funding PhD student(s) via a fee bursary.
- Working with local partners I discussed opportunities for employers to sponsor or support applicants and Wolverhampton City Council Social Services agreed to sponsor a place by allowing an applicant who was successful time off to study.

Poll

Research suggests social workers and social care workers are less likely to use research than other professionals.

In your current role, do you use research to inform your practice , intervention, service or policy design?

Always

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

The Process

- Call for research bursaries focused on developing research in an area in which I have expertise – violence and social work practice
- It was a general call, but 1 bursary was also sponsored by City of Wolverhampton Social Care, Adults and Childrens for a member of social work staff
- Number of good applicants submitted proposals for a research project to meet a PhD requirements
- Short list of candidates drawn up and invited for interview
- 2 very strong candidates from City of Wolverhampton Adults and Childrens Social Care - they agreed to also sponsor both giving 1 day per week.

Why its such a good thing to do

- The proposals that have been supported from Wolverhampton City Council Social Care are for people who are practicing senior social work professionals: Satvir Panesar and Levy Sibenke
- The proposals were focused on current child protection issues of relevance to current social work practice
- They draw on practice methods – genograms
- The proposals are focused on and address issues of diversity, inclusion and anti-racist practice
- The research will advance social work theory and method and will impact practice.

Re-learning identities

- Moving from being a senior professional person to an inexperienced person in another area is challenging.
- It involves rethinking your identity: Social worker? Researcher? Social work researcher?
- It involves rethinking what you think you already 'know' – for example - what do you assume about things like ethics, interviewing, data collection...?
- It involves reflecting on, questioning, challenging social work practice which is not always easy to do – but is the only way social work practice can develop and grow and practice can improve and become more effective and better meet people's needs.

PhD Opportunity

Satvir Panesar- Advanced Practitioner & PhD Student

Presenter:

Levy Sibenke- Senior Social Worker & PhD Student

A word cloud centered around the words 'SOCIAL' and 'WORKER' in large, bold, dark red letters. Other words in various sizes and orientations include: PROFESSIONAL, ADULT, CHEERFUL, TALKING, PEOPLE, TOGETHER, TEAM, PERSON, HELP, GIRL, OFFICE, HEALTH, DISCUSSION, ELDERLY, HEALTHCARE, COMMUNICATION, DAUGHTER, HAPPINESS, CARE, NURSE, EMPLOYER, TEAMWORK, SENIOR, HOME, HAPPY, SERVICE, INDOORS, ASSISTANCE, FAMILY, PATIENT, PROBLEM, WORK, OCCUPATION, and NURSING.

A word cloud centered around the word 'DOCTORATE' in large, bold, green letters. Other words in various sizes and orientations include: EDUCATION, DEGREE, ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, PROGRAM, GRADUATE, PROFESSIONAL, DOCTORATE, ASSISTANCE, FAMILY, PATIENT, PROBLEM, WORK, OCCUPATION, NURSING, CARE, DAUGHTER, HAPPINESS, EMPLOYER, TEAMWORK, SENIOR, HOME, HAPPY, SERVICE, INDOORS, ASSISTANCE, FAMILY, PATIENT, and NURSE.

How does using a genogram allow social workers to explore honour-based abuse?

- No statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse
- It is an umbrella term for many violent acts which include murder, unexplained death, suicide, great of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse, child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment and forced abortion (NPCC strategy, 2015).

Scale of the problem

- Nearly a quarter (23%) of victims at risk of HBV were not eligible for most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance
- 15% of cases seen by the Forced Marriage Unit involved a victim below 16
- Before accessing support, victims at risk of HBV experienced abuse for 2 years longer (5 years vs 3 years) than those not identified at risk of HBV
- Victims at risk of HBV were more than 7 times more likely to be experiencing abuse from multi perpetrators (54% vs 7%) compared to those not identified at risk of HBV
- 68% of victims of HBA were at high risk of serious harm of homicide compared to 55% of those not identified at risk of HBV

ONE CHANCE RULE

PhD Research

Research will be conducted in three parts:

- Surveys for social workers to complete around their current knowledge and exploration of experiences working with HBA
- Semi-structured interviews completed with victims/survivors of HBA, using the genogram to explore family patterns
- A focus group with social workers to discuss findings of study

'Honour' based abuse
is a 'culture thing'

NO!

It is **NEVER** acceptable
#ShinetheSpotlight

MYTH



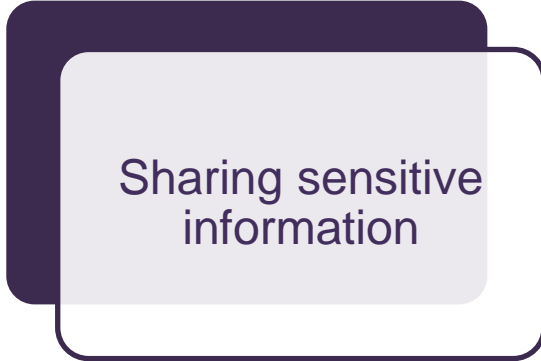
PhD Ethical considerations



Confidentiality



Consent



Sharing sensitive
information

Interesting considerations from research

- SafeLives Insight data reports victims at risk of honour-based violence were 7 times more likely to be experiencing abuse from multiple perpetrators.
- Mother's indeed can also play a role in perpetrating HBA "sacrificing" their daughters and conforming to social norms which enables them greater sense of security within their community (Aplin, 2016).
- When we consider the murder of 17-year-old Shafiea Ahmed there were diverse factors including gender and generational conducts and dysfunctional family dynamics that contributed to her murder (Gill, 2014).

Linking research with Practice

Research relates to the way knowledge is exchanged and by bridging the gap between research and practice as practitioners we can widen our thinking and expand our knowledge.

- Explore current issues in social work practice
- Advance social work theory and methods
- Bridge the gap between research and practice

**An exploration of the views of parents of
African heritage in England on physical
chastisement: The case of child
chastisement and child protection in social
work practice**

Why I chose this topic

- According UNICEF 2017a report 300 million children around the world between the ages of 2 and 4 are victims of physical chastisement by parents or care givers
- The approach to this problem has been more of dealing with symptoms than the root causes of the problem
- The top part of the iceberg is what we see as the problem and yet there is a hidden driving force which is which is below
- The behaviours of physical chastisement by some African parents we see at the top are heavily influenced by values, culture which are hidden from sight
- The heavy handed approach leads to disguised compliance



Aims and objectives

This research project is aimed at

- Exploring some African parents' views and perceptions of use of physical chastisement to discipline children.
- Sharing some insight with professionals as to why some African parents resort to use of physical chastisement as part of their parenting techniques
- Finding out parents and professionals understanding of Section 58 of 2004 Children act on reasonable chastisement
- Exploring parents' knowledge and use of alternative ways of disciplining children without physical chastisement.
- Exploring if the African children are over represented in child protection cases

What is a literature Review

A Literature review is an overview of the previously published work on a topic. It involves analysing, reading researching and summarising scholarly literature.

The Purpose of Doing Literature Review

- To identify gaps in knowledge and unresolved problems that a research can address
- To familiarize the researcher with the current state of knowledge on the topic
- To develop your theoretical framework and methodology eg Quantitative and Qualitative etc
- To provide an overview of the key findings and debates on the topic

Searching the literature

- Search for credible sources of literature some might not be acceptable like the Wikipedia
- Sources can be text books , journals, conference papers, theses, peer reviewed articles, websites like Google scholar , data bases like EBSCO , SAGE
- Citing of an article many times does not mean it's a sound article
- Setting up alerts like on Google scholar using key words



Linking research and practice

As of June 2021, ten African states (Benin; Cabo Verde; Congo; Guinea; Kenya; Seychelles; South Sudan; South Africa; Togo; Tunisia. Tunisia has not ratified the African Children's Charter.) have prohibited corporal punishment of children in all settings. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Committee) and other human rights bodies have made it very clear that all corporal punishment of children must be prohibited and eliminated, including within the family. The African Children's Committee increasingly examines states on their progress towards prohibiting and eliminating corporal punishment and has made recommendations to prohibit and eliminate it in state parties.

Source **BMJ Publishing Group LTD- INTERNATIONAL CHILD HEALTH GROUP**

Linking research and practice

- In a study that was conducted by Secker (2010) entitled *Report on Accusations of Witchcraft Against Children in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria* in Akwa they noted that children who were accused of witchcraft were subjected to severe forms of violence which resulted in the children sustaining serious injuries. They identified 83 children affected by this practice which made up 32% of the 260 cases which were documented. The 83 children suffered one or more of the following forms of abuse:
 - Being severely beaten (69 cases in total)
 - Being burnt with acid, fire or hot water (9 cases in total)
 - Being buried alive (2 cases in total)
 - Being poisoned or forced to ingest hazardous chemicals or other dangerous substances (5 cases in total)
 - Having nails or machetes driven into their heads (4 cases in total)
 - Being raped/molested (7 cases in total)
 - Thrown into a river (1 case).

Linking research and practice

- As example statistic taken from **Afru Community Research Project (September 2018)** based on Greater Manchester shows that 66% of the cases referred from African Families on physical abuse were in care proceedings while 26% were under Child Protection Plans . It was noted that the 75% the cases were due to physical chastisement
- On a National Level statistics from **Department for Education 2018** states that there were 2600 Black children on Child Protection Plan in 2017 . 391 of these cases were due to physical chastisement
- How reliable are the statistics ?

Poll

In your current role if it was possible, would you apply to undertake a PhD related to a challenge in your social work practice or fund a social worker to?

Yes- definitely

Yes- with the right support

Maybe in the future

Never

Thank you, Any Questions?

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela