

Seminar Series 2009

Wednesday 22 April 2009

Mothers, domestic violence and child protection

Presented by Associate Professor Heather Douglas

Seminar Abstract

Domestic violence is now recognised as a risk factor in child protection matters. Given this position, it ought to be axiomatic that mothers who experience domestic violence should not fear the removal of their children from their care if they seek help from child protection agencies to remove themselves and their children from the violent situation. The research presented here draws on five focus group interviews with workers who support mothers dealing with both domestic violence and child protection matters. Our study participants claimed that many of the women they support do fear that their children will be removed from their care if they seek assistance from child protection services. The primary concern raised by study participants was that child protection officials often misunderstand the dynamics of domestic violence and that this has negative consequences for both mothers and children. We conclude that to properly protect children, it is critical that child protection workers have a clear understanding of the dynamics of and issues related to domestic violence and that mothers experiencing domestic violence, and the workers who support them, must be able to trust and engage with child protection authorities if children are to be kept safe.

About the Speaker

Heather Douglas is an Associate Professor at the T.C. Beirne Law School, The University of Queensland. She researches and teaches in the criminal justice field. She is particularly interested in the role of the criminal law in responding to domestic violence and the relationship between Indigenous people and the criminal law. Her work has been published in Canada, Europe and Australia. Heather was a part-time commissioner with the Queensland Law Reform Commission from 2001-2007. In 2004 she was a visiting scholar at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford University. Heather teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure and Evidence.

Publications: <http://www.law.uq.edu.au/staff.php?nm=heatherdouglas>

Wednesday 22 April 2009

12:30pm – 2:00pm

Mt Gravatt Campus, Building M10 Social Sciences, Room 5.01

Tea, Coffee & Biscuits will be provided

RSVP preferred - please email rachael.williams@griffith.edu.au or phone 3735 5997 if you will be attending.

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