Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence

Rydges South Bank, Brisbane
Rooftop Room

Friday September 12th, 2008
Welcome to the 2008 Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence Symposium hosted by the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance and the Violence Research and Prevention Program at Griffith University.

Domestic violence is an issue that affects many families and communities in Australia, and indeed throughout the world. The challenges and consequences of domestic violence are significant and varied and require effective responses from both the government and non-government sectors.

Effective responses to domestic violence requires an expanded research evidence base as well as effective partnerships between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. This symposium provides a unique opportunity to be informed about current and emerging research on domestic violence as well as some of the strategies and responses currently in place. The importance of developing research partnerships and an expanded research commitment to inform interventions is a prominent theme of the symposium.

Bringing together research experts from across Australia and other parts of the world provides a wonderful opportunity for fostering greater understanding and awareness between researchers, policy experts, practitioners and community representatives in working toward tangible solutions to prevent domestic violence.

Thank you for participating in this symposium. Special thanks are also due to the sponsors of this event, Griffith University. I anticipate that the symposium will illustrate both the challenges we face in understanding and preventing domestic violence as well as the importance of working together to develop practical and effective solutions.

Sincerely

Professor Paul Mazerolle
Director, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance
Director, Violence Research and Prevention Program
8:00 - 9:00  **Registration**
Tea and coffee will be served.

9:00 – 9:15  **Welcome & Overview**
**Professor Paul Mazerolle**
Director KCELJAG & the Violence Research and Prevention program, Griffith University

9:15 - 9:45  **Working in collaboration: The Canadian observatory on the justice system response to intimate partner violence**
**Dr. Carmen Gill**, Director, Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick, Canada

9:45 - 10:15  **Exploring the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of an Indigenous standpoint to end family violence**
**Heather Nancarrow**, Director, Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, CQ University

10:15 – 10:45  Morning Tea Break

11:00 – 12:30  **Emerging PhD Research on Intimate Partner Violence in Australia**

*Understanding the help-seeking behaviour of female domestic violence victims – An examination of two competing theories*

**Silke Meyer**, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Griffith University

*Health & healthcare for women affected by domestic violence*
**Marion Tower**, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Griffith University

*Intimate partner violence in the diverse Australian Muslim community: exploring attitudes, beliefs and direct involvement*
**Nada Ibrahim**, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice & Governance, Griffith University

12:30 - 1:15  **Lunch Break**
Parklands Bar & Grill Restaurant, Rydges Hotel
1:15 - 3:15

Justice Responses to Domestic Violence: Current Research
Professor Kathleen Daly (Chair), School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University

Developmental pathways to intimate partner homicide: Understanding individual and institutional dimensions
Professor Paul Mazerolle, Director, KCELJAG, Griffith University

Breaches of Protection Orders: Criminal Process Problems
Dr Heather Douglas, T.C. Bierre School of Law, University of Queensland

Defining justice from victim perspectives
Robyn Holder, ACT Victims of Crime Coordinator

Critical Reflections on Restorative Justice Responses to Domestic Violence
Professor Julie Stubbs, Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney

3:15 - 3:30

Afternoon Tea Break

3:30 - 4:55

Justice System Responses to Domestic Violence: Partnerships and Reform

Sharing the proud results of a Partnership Project: Effective police response to intimate partner violence
Dr Elizabeth Blaney, Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Deputy Chief Leanne Fitch, Fredericton Police Force, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

Men’s Domestic Violence Rehabilitation Programs: Ecology, Controversies, and Evidence
Dr Brian Sullivan, School of Social Work, University of Queensland

Domestic Violence Death Reviews
Betty Taylor, TAVAN Institute

4:55 – 5:00

Overview of the day
Professor Paul Mazerolle
Director, Key Centre For Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, Griffith University

5:00 - 6:00

Reception
Boulevarde Level, Canapés and Beverages
Dr Carmen Gill

Working in collaboration: The Canadian observatory on the justice system response to intimate partner violence

Since the beginning of the nineties, the criminal justice system assumed a more pro-active and interventionist role in terms of responding to intimate partner violence. In Canada, as in several jurisdictions around the world, this resulted in a number of justice system responses. One innovative justice system response has been the development of specialized domestic violence courts in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These new mechanisms for dealing with cases of intimate partner violence addressed many of the identified problems of non-specialized processes, such as improved victim services and programs for abusers, greater collaboration between family and criminal matters, and an array of new law enforcement policies and legislation, such as pro-arrest policies and domestic violence legislation. In Canada, different provincial and territorial jurisdictions have implemented specialized domestic violence courts. However, emerging research raises critical questions on the role of courts in society. Judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors and victim advocates, while expressing support for a specialized domestic violence court model, are still concerned about issues of victim safety, the safety of children, and offender recidivism. Victims continue to face difficulties in the justice system Impeding their participation and therefore, weakening the justice system’s usefulness as a resource for their protection. In 2007, experts from the Canadian observatory on the justice system’s response to intimate partner violence, commenced the groundwork to fully understand the process and the effectiveness of specialized domestic violence courts.

In this presentation, I will explain what the Canadian observatory is and the work it is undertaking. It will be an opportunity to discuss our international collaboration examining the justice system response to intimate partner violence.

Heather Nancarrow

Exploring the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of an Indigenous standpoint to end family violence

Effective cross-cultural partnerships to end Indigenous family violence require non-Indigenous workers to step outside their own world view and mainstream practice paradigms, and operate from an Indigenous stand-point. Using the values described in the NHMRC Guidelines on Ethical Matters in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003) as an analytical framework, the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of such cross-cultural partnerships will be explored. This exploration will be facilitated by considering the results of two specific research projects; first a collaborative partnership between the Queensland Centre for Domestic
and Family Violence Research, an elder of an Aboriginal community in Central-West Queensland, and the local school to develop and implement a violence prevention program; and second, a project examining Indigenous women’s views about restorative justice as a response to family violence.

Silke Meyer

*Understanding the Help-Seeking Behaviour of Female Domestic Violence Victims – An Examination of Two Competing Theories*

This paper examines the nature and extent of help-seeking behaviour of female victims of domestic violence in a theoretical context. A particular focus will be given to the two competing theories emerging from the literature on women’s responses to intimate partner violence, namely Survivor Theory and Theory of Learned Helplessness. Gondolf’s Survivor Theory predicts increasing help-seeking behaviour with women’s increasing experiences of intimate partner violence (Gondolf et al 1990). By contrast, Walker’s Theory of Learned Helplessness supports the view that women’s help-seeking behaviour decreases with increasing experiences of violence, due to increasing levels of isolation (Walker 1991). The presentation will discuss women’s experiences of violence and their different responses.

Using data from a national community sample in Australia (n=6700) and building on past research, this study explores the applicability of the two competing theories to women’s processes of help-seeking in Australia.

Marion Tower

*Health & healthcare for women affected by domestic violence*

Women who are subjected to domestic violence seek help from a wide range of professionals within health and social care sectors, and evidence suggests that their experiences tend to be negative.

This paper presents findings about the healthcare encounters of women who lived with domestic violence and traces central policy development in relation to health and human services’ responses to domestic violence.

Healthcare responses to women affected by domestic violence are currently enacted under policy that de-genders this form of violence and fragments responses to women’s needs. Within healthcare settings trajectories for their care and treatment are outcome focussed and embrace therapeutic values of diagnosis, treatment and cure. However, this response fails to acknowledge the complexity and needs of women affected by domestic violence. Further the findings demonstrate that the approach also has negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of women who present for healthcare.
Nada Ibrahim

*Intimate partner violence in the diverse Australian Muslim community: exploring attitudes, beliefs and direct involvement*

Intimate partner violence (IPV) research though cross-disciplinary in nature and committed to preventing and ending IPV worldwide, has lacked plausible applicable research within the Australian Muslim community, despite their growing presence. Various barriers exist that hinder access of services by Muslims across Australia. Existing IPV prevention and intervention strategies are skewed towards the mainstream culture which fails to address faith, family unit, and the value system of Muslims. Further, is the exploitation of Qur’anic verses and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad by many Muslims to justify inherited ‘cultural’ practices of IPV. Despite the shared values and beliefs among Muslims, very little research has been conducted to identify ethnic/cultural differences in attitudes and beliefs towards IPV among Muslim subgroups.

This research aims to identify and analyse the existing attitudes and beliefs within the Australian Muslim community, and the prevalence with which IPV occurs; to provide an evidence-base of misinformed or skewed attitudes and beliefs towards IPV. Findings of the research will inform policy and practice in relation to IPV under faith-based intervention strategies for a marginalised group of the Australian population, particularly in the design of effective preventative strategies that challenge core assumptions towards IPV which promote and justify IPV. The findings will contribute significantly to research in this field by highlighting the importance of working within the cultural and religious framework in preventing IPV.

Professor Paul Mazerolle

*Developmental pathways to intimate partner homicide: Understanding individual and situational dimensions*

Intimate partner homicide (hereinafter IPH) has significant consequences for families in Australia and places a major burden on justice, health and economic systems. This presentation describes the key aspects of a recent ARC funded national level study into IPH.

The aims of the research are to examine the causes of IPH in order to improve understanding of pathways to IPH and responses by criminal justice, health and social welfare agencies. The study is especially concerned with examining the individual, social and situational factors related to IPH; the factors, events or circumstances associated with an escalation of risks for IPH; the developmental pathways linking intimate partner violence and IPH; gender differences in IPH perpetration; and the further potential of police and social welfare agencies in assessing...
escalation of risks prior to the occurrence of fatal incidents.

This study represents the first major study of IPH in Australia and one of the few in the world that involves face to face interviews with perpetrators. The research project is large in scale and will involve interviews with over 400 male and female perpetrators of intimate partner homicide. There is a strong emphasis in the project of understanding the paths from violence to homicide events and ensuring preventative opportunities are better understood. With the impact of partner violence across families, especially within Indigenous communities, this project is seeking to provide some tangible benefits for preventing homicide into the future.

Heather Douglas

Breaches of Protection Orders: Criminal Process Problems

This paper draws on a study of 645 magistrates’ court files and associated police files relating to prosecutions of the charge of breach of a domestic violence protection order. The study explores criminal process issues which are likely to impact on the way a victim of domestic violence experiences the criminal process. The data discussed in this paper demonstrates that the prosecution of a criminal breach often involves a minimisation of the harm inflicted on women by perpetrators, police and magistrates; a ruthless contest about the facts and numerous court appearances before resolution. the data also suggests that prosecutions of breaches of protection orders often result in no conviction being recorded or in trivialising fines. The paper concludes with some suggestion about how processes may be improved so that they better support victim’s engagement with the criminal law.

Robyn Holder

Defining justice from victim perspectives

Over the past two decades or more a lot of effort has been expended in improving criminal justice responses to domestic & family violence. But more proactive intervention from criminal justice agencies has not been without its critics. The interests of victims of domestic violence have been portrayed by some as being in conflict with those of the justice system. This presentation explores this interaction using evaluation surveys and qualitative data from interviews with 360 victims of domestic violence in the ACT. Using a smaller sub-set of respondents, the article provides an exploratory examination of victims’ engagement with criminal prosecution and how they place themselves within the decision-making process and the objectives of the system. The presentation suggests that there is more congruence between victim objectives and interests and those of a public interest justice system than critics suggest. and a US site - to partner locations in Canada for three-year international research collaboration on justice responses to intimate partner violence.

Prior to her work in Australia, Robyn worked in the Community Safety
Unit at the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (UK) from 1987-1995. She was Honorary Advisor on Women’s Community Safety to the Association of London Authorities, a member of the Analytical College of the European Forum on Urban Safety, and a visiting tutor on the Bramshill Police Staff College ‘Violence Against Women Course’. Robyn has written extensively on issues of domestic violence and is enrolled as a doctoral candidate at the Research School of Pacific & Asian Studies at the Australian National University.

Professor Julie Stubbs

**Critical Reflections on Restorative Justice Responses to Domestic Violence**

The use of Restorative Justice (RJ) in response to offences such as domestic violence continues to be highly contested, but the debate has become more complex and nuanced. While the literature emphasises the possible benefits for victims of RJ, many claims remain untested. Emerging evidence suggests that experiences of RJ might vary according to victim, offender and offence characteristics and to the subjective experience of victimisation. In this paper I critically examine competing claims about the possibilities and limits of RJ in the context of domestic violence. I argue that common features of domestic violence offer particular challenges for RJ, and that generic models of RJ are ill-equipped to respond safely and effectively to domestic violence.

Deputy Chief Leanne Fitch

**Sharing the proud results of a Partnership Project: Effective police Response to Intimate Partner Violence**

In late Fall of 2005 the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick and the Fredericton Police Force embarked on an innovative partnership with an aim to reduce, prevent and better intervene in situations of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Over the course of the following two years, with the help of many strategic partners, focus groups and consultations, this effort resulted in the creation of a comprehensive Train-the-Trainer program titled, “Understanding the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence: Helping Police Officers to Better Intervene”.

This presentation will focus on the power of partnership activity in addressing complex issues facing society in general, and the policing community specifically. Our presentation will provide an overview of our training, with a particular emphasis on how partnering enhances the quality of training delivered to police officers who are intervening in situations of intimate partner violence.

“Sharing Proud Results of a Partnership Project: Effective Police Response to Intimate Partner Violence” will demonstrate the powerful outcome of working with strategic partners to address complex police related issues. Our program has meet with great reviews and is generating interest across Canada. Aside from the obvious results of providing meaningful training to our officers, this experience clearly demonstrates...
Abstracts

how important it is to engage your communities and your officers in the planning and implementation of progressive projects. It is our hope that "Understanding the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence: Helping Police Officers to Better Intervene" will be adopted as a training standard to follow by police agencies and academies in New Brunswick and beyond.

Dr. Brian Sullivan

Men’s Domestic Violence Rehabilitation Programs: Ecology, Controversies, and Evidence

There is uncertainty and controversy around men’s domestic violence rehabilitation programs. Some researchers and practitioners argue for them and others argue that because the evidence for them is not strong, why waste money when outcomes are not supported. This presentation will cover a range of topics examining the positioning of men’s programs in our response and intervention to domestic violence; various controversies in regards to men’s programs; the evidence for and against them; and when they are effective and when they are not.

Betty Taylor

Domestic Violence Death Reviews

Each year in Queensland a significant number of adults and children die as a result of domestic/family violence. If this tragic cost in human life is to be stopped we need to learn from such events. Internationally, domestic violence death review boards have been established which bring together representatives from various agencies: Police, Courts Coroner, Child Protection, Community Corrections, Health, Domestic Violence Services, Shelters, Perpetrator Programs and other professionals with relevant expertise. This multi-disciplinary team conducts a detailed review of public records and other documentation regarding domestic violence related deaths in order to identify gaps in community responses to domestic violence and barriers to effective intervention. This presentation will explore the challenges and options in establishing such a review process in Queensland.
Speaker Profiles

Dr. Carmen Gill,
Director, Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Dr. Carmen Gill is the Director of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research and Director of the Canadian observatory on the justice system response to intimate partner violence at the University of New Brunswick. She is also cross-appointed as an Associate Professor of sociology. Over the last three years Dr. Gill has been able to establish a strong network of experts involved in research and policy development on the justice system’s response to intimate partner violence. In 2007, she was successful in securing $2.1 million funding for the Canadian observatory under the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This grant has allowed the establishment of a research network emphasizing continued bilingual dialogue and in-depth research on the justice system’s response to intimate partner violence in all parts of Canada and in Australia, United Kingdom and the United States. She is presently conducting the evaluation of the Moncton Provincial Court – Domestic Violence Pilot Project in New Brunswick. Her areas of expertise are in the fields of family, social policy, violence against women and the justice system response.

Heather Nancarrow,
Director, Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, CQ University.

Heather Nancarrow has worked in the field of domestic and family violence prevention for 27 years, including practice and advocacy in community-based domestic violence services, management of government policy and legislation and professional development and research. In addition to her role as Director of the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, she is the Deputy-Chair of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children; Chair of Queensland’s Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence; a member of the Australian Government’s Steering Group on Homelessness; and Convenor of the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network. Heather has a Master of Arts (Hons1) in Criminology and Criminal Justice, a Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) and an Associate Diploma in Community Welfare. Her current PhD thesis concerns the impact of mainstream domestic and family violence policy on Indigenous women.
Speaker Profiles

**Silke Meyer,**  
School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Griffith University

Silke Meyer moved to Australia from Bremen, Germany, in 2006 to commence her PhD at Griffith University. She has a background in Criminology, Victimology and Social Work. She studied in Germany, Belgium and Scotland and she holds a Diploma in Social Work and a Master in Criminology. Silke worked with young offenders as well as adult victims of intimate partner violence in the past and her current PhD research focuses on victims’ help seeking behaviour in cases of intimate partner violence.

**Marion Tower,**  
School of Nursing and Midwifery, Griffith University

Marion Tower is a Lecturer and PhD Candidate at the School of Nursing & Midwifery, Nathan Campus, Griffith University. Her research about domestic violence and women’s health and healthcare experiences resulted from working as a Registered Nurse in an Emergency Department and her experiences with working with women affected by domestic violence and other health professionals who provided care for them. She also holds a keen interest in safety and quality issues in health and healthcare services and serves on a local Safety & Quality committee and on a Queensland Health, Health Community Council.

**Nada Ibrahim,**  
Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice & Governance, Griffith University

Nada Ibrahim has a Bachelor of Human Sciences (Honours) in Psychology (with a minor in Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Heritage), a Masters of Education in Guidance & Counselling, and a Diploma in Accounting. She was involved in a pioneer research (2001) and follow-up program (2003) on the area of domestic violence in the Muslim community with the Islamic Women’s Association of Qld (IWAQ). Nada regularly contributes to the IWAQ newsletter and the SALAM magazine, and occasionally to the Queensland Muslim Times. She has been invited to speak on various topics such as mental health, various issues in Islam, and on her research by various organisations including Queensland Transcultural Mental Health, Brisbane City Council Library, Redland Bay Library, Rotary Club, Tattersals Club and Mission of Hope, among others. Her growing passion includes finding solutions to issues related to disadvantaged Muslim women and children and effective use of resources in community development.

Currently Nada is doing her PhD with the Griffith Islamic Research Unit under the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance at Griffith University, researching on the topic Intimate Partner Violence in the diverse Australian Muslim community: Exploring attitudes, beliefs and direct involvement.
Speaker Profiles

Professor Paul Mazerolle,
Director, KCELJAG, Griffith University

Professor Paul Mazerolle is Director of the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance and the Violence Research and Prevention Program at Griffith University. He is also a Research Associate at the Centre for Youth at Risk, St Thomas University, Canada, and Editor of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology. Paul undertakes research into the processes that shape criminal offending across the life course, the consequences of violent victimization for criminal offending, youth violence, and intimate partner violence. He is engaged in a series of funded research projects examining juvenile offending behavior, repeat violent victimization, intimate partner homicide, and violence around licensed establishments.

Dr. Heather Douglas,
T.C. Bierne School of Law, University of Queensland

Heather Douglas researches in the areas of criminal law and legal history. She is particularly interested in the relationship between Indigenous people and the criminal law and the way the criminal law impacts on and constructs women. 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. She currently teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure and Evidence and is the author (with Sue Harbridge) of Criminal Process in Queensland (Thomson, 2008).

Professor Julie Stubbs,
Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney

Julie’s research focuses on violence against women, with reference to race/ethnicity and gender, domestic violence law reforms, sexual assault, defences to homicide and the battered woman syndrome. Her publications include Gender, race and international relations: Violence against Filipino women in Australia (with Cunneen), Women, male violence and the law, (as editor), a special issue of Theoretical Criminology on gender, race and restorative justice (with Cook and Daly), and Negotiating child residence and contact against a background of domestic violence (with Kaye and Tolmie). She is Professor of Criminology at the University of Sydney.

Deputy Chief Leanne Fitch,
Fredericton Police Force, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

Leanne Fitch is Deputy Chief of the Fredericton Police Force. She has a Masters of Arts degree. Her thesis topic was the sociology of policing, community policing and organizational change for which she was nominated for a Governor General’s Gold Medal award. She has taught criminology with St. Thomas University and has published on the topics of community policing, organizational change and other police related topics. Leanne was the lead officer in the partnership project between the Fredericton Police Force and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Center for Family Violence Research.
Speaker Profiles

that resulted in the development of a training manual “Understanding Intimate Partner Violence: Helping Police Officers to Better Intervene”. Since the completion of the project, she and Elizabeth Blaney have co-authored summary articles of the project which have been published in 2007 in Canadian Chiefs Magazine and Women Police Magazine.

Leanne has been recognized for her efforts in crime prevention and community policing by community groups, as well as the Federal and Provincial Departments of Public Safety. In 2002 the Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement Association named her “Top Cop” in Atlantic Canada. In 2003 the International Association of Women Police honored her as “Officer of the Year”.

Dr. Elizabeth Blaney,
Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Elizabeth Blaney is the Research Associate at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. At the MMFC she has developed an ongoing program of research on intimate partner violence. She works closely with community and government agencies, developing materials, including the train-the-trainer curriculum for police officers to improve their effectiveness in responding to incidences of intimate partner violence. Presently she is the coordinator of an international consortium of academics, government officials, and community activists across Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States working on the justice system’s response to intimate partner violence. Elizabeth also teaches in the Faculty of Education, Women’s Studies, and the Family Violence Issues certificate program. In 1997, she was part of a collaboration of faculty members at UNB and MMFC to develop a Family Violence Certificate Program, the only Canadian program of studies directed toward university-streamed and community practitioner students. She has written and presented extensively on women’s and girls’ experiences of violence, gender inequalities, and the issues and challenges of social service professionals responding to societal problems. Elizabeth has a doctoral degree in education.

Professor Julie Stubbs,
Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney

Julie’s research focuses on violence against women, with reference to race/ethnicity and gender, domestic violence law reforms, sexual assault, defences to homicide and the battered woman syndrome. Her publications include Gender, race and international relations: Violence against Filipino women in Australia (with Cunneen), Women, male violence and the law, (as editor), a special issue of Theoretical Criminology on gender, race and restorative justice (with Cook and Daly), and Negotiating child residence and contact against a background of domestic violence (with Kaye and Tolmie). She is Professor of Criminology at the University of Sydney.