# Current Research on Stalking Seminar

## PROGRAM

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<td>Great expectations: Balancing the scope of stalking laws and the needs of victims</td>
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<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Nicola Cheyne, PhD Scholar, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Stalking: Times, Locations and Invasion of Personal Space</td>
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<td>Dr Lena Stadler, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice</td>
<td>The impact of parental ex-partner stalking on children: Qualitative insight from professionals and victims</td>
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<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>Dr Michele Pathé, Forensic Mental Health Service, Queensland Health</td>
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Wednesday 18 November 2009  
1:30pm - 4:30pm  
Social Sciences Building (M10), Level 5, Room 5.01  
Mt Gravatt Campus, Griffith University

The violence research and prevention program is a cross university, interdisciplinary research program that examines the causes, and consequences, of violence and various strategies for its prevention.
Current Research on Stalking Seminar

Speaker Abstracts and Profiles

Susan Dennison

Great expectations: Balancing the scope of stalking laws and the needs of victims

Abstract:
With the introduction of stalking laws came the expectation in the community that a range of repeated behaviours that were harassing or fear-inducing could now be prosecuted. In fact, it is likely that a large gap still exists between the situations which arouse fear in individuals and that which is proscribed as stalking. This seminar draws on research on community perceptions of stalking and a survey of perpetrators to discuss the spectrum of behaviours identified as stalking. It is suggested that some stalking-like behaviours are relatively common, particularly during the pursuit or cessation of a relationship, but that they nevertheless cause great distress to the recipient. Given that prosecution of these more widespread forms of harassment is unlikely to be desirable, methods to better support both victims of the criminally defined stalking as well as victims of lower levels of harassment will be identified and discussed.

Speaker Profile:
Dr Susan Dennison is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University and recent recipient of an ARC Future Fellowship. She received her PhD in forensic psychology from Charles Sturt University (New South Wales) in 2001 and is a member of the Australian Psychological Society’s College of Forensic Psychologists. Her research sits within a criminology and human development framework and includes community perceptions of stalking and the scope of stalking legislation, the role of the law in interpersonal relationships, challenges to healthy development for families of prisoners, systemic approaches to working with young people, and trajectories from child maltreatment to juvenile offending. She is the recipient of national competitive research grants on the topics of child maltreatment and juvenile offending, juvenile offending trajectories, and the effect of parental incarceration on the developmental outcomes of children. Dr Dennison has also written many scholarly articles on stalking, child maltreatment, juvenile offending, and applications of psychology to law.

Nicola Cheyne

Stalking: Times, Locations and Invasion of Personal Space

Abstract:
Research on stalking has increased over the last twenty years due to the criminalisation of stalking behaviours. However, few research studies have explored the contexts in which stalking occurs. In the seminar, research will be presented that explores the times and locations of stalking behaviours, and the impact of these contexts on fear, and on invasions of personal space and privacy. The contexts of stalking were firstly explored by examining court transcripts. Secondly, a questionnaire containing hypothetical stalking scenarios was utilised to investigate feelings of fear and invasion of personal space and privacy. Anticipated engagement in crime prevention strategies was also explored through this questionnaire, with a view to matching these strategies to situational crime prevention strategies. This was undertaken in order to preliminarily suggest situational prevention plans in accordance with the contexts of stalking.

Speaker Profile:
Nicola Cheyne is currently completing her PhD in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She has a Bachelor of Behavioural Sciences/Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice and an Honours degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice. The research for her thesis examines the times and locations of stalking, as well as stalking behaviours, with the aim to connect these elements to feelings of fear, invasion of personal space and invasion of privacy.
**Current Research on Stalking Seminar**

**Speaker Abstracts and Profiles**

**Dr Lena Stadler**  
*The impact of parental ex-partner stalking on children: Qualitative insight from professionals and victims*

**Abstract:**
Victims of ex-intimate partner stalking who have children with the stalker are confronted with two different philosophies – the one of the criminal justice system requiring a clear break-up of contact and communication in order to be eligible to obtain a protection order or to be able to prosecute the stalking criminally, and the one of the family law system demanding parental cooperation, conflict resolution and sharing child custody. Basing on qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews with victims and expert interviews with professionals dealing with these cases this paper addresses the particular dynamics and how these involve and affect the children. Gaining an understanding of the impacts of the parental stalking on the children and the ways how it interacts with elements of the legal disputes, custody arrangements and visitation rights are important aspects to consider ensuring the child’s best interest. Finally, a new approach of stalking intervention in Germany and its contribution to the management of these cases will be presented.

**Speaker Profile:**
Dr Lena Stadler is a psychologist and Lecturer in the Griffith University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She was awarded her PhD from the University of Bremen, Germany, in February 2009. Her empirically based PhD thesis was focused on ex-partner stalking and impacts on children in the context of family law disputes. In Germany Lena worked as a mediator in criminal cases, especially in cases of youth crime, and conducted counselling with victims and perpetrators in a ‘crisis intervention team for stalking and domestic violence’. One of her future research interests in this field is a cross-cultural comparison of anti-stalking legislation, intervention and responses of the CJS as well as the underlying concepts of stalking.

**Carleen Thompson**  
*An Integrated Theory of Stalking Violence*

**Abstract:**
Very little is known about the causes of stalking violence. What little knowledge has accumulated is largely derived from investigations of dispositional, historical and static factors. Little research has investigated dynamic contextual variables. In this paper, the causes of stalking violence are analysed in a sample of stalking cases derived from Magistrate, District, Supreme and Appeal court transcripts (N = 43) in Queensland, Australia. A theoretical framework is applied to the stalking cases to investigate the causes of stalking violence integrating predisposing and contextual factors. The results indicated that most cases that included a combination of historical factors (i.e. predisposing factor), an intent to hurt/harm the target (i.e. contextual factor) and either triggering events, opportunities or disinhibitors (i.e. additional contextual factors) included a violent component. Those cases without risk factors across these domains were less likely to perpetrate violence. The implications of these findings for the development of crime prevention strategies will be discussed.

**Speaker Profile:**
Carleen Thompson is a Lecturer within the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She has a background in Criminology and Psychology. Her research work has focused on risk assessment in the justice system and stalking. Carleen is currently completing her PhD dissertation investigating the etiology and escalation of interpersonal violence in stalking cases.
Abstract:
There are multiple domains of risk in stalking, including the risk of violence, the risk that the stalking will persist, the risk that the stalking - if it has stopped - will recur, and the risk of psychosocial damage to the stalker and the victim. There are also different types of stalker and risk factors may vary according to stalker type. This talk introduces latest developments in relation to assessing and managing risks in stalking, using a unique approach that addresses the multifaceted nature of stalking risk and takes account of the differences that motivation brings to risk within each domain. The talk will cover stalker typology, latest research findings and the clinical, behavioural and contextual factors associated with increased risks.

Speaker Profile:
Dr Pathé is a forensic psychiatrist with Queensland Health’s Forensic Mental Health Service and Senior Lecturer at Queensland University. She was formerly a senior forensic psychiatrist at Forensicare in Victoria and the Director of Threat Management, a private clinic in Melbourne for victims of stalking and related crimes. She has published three books, a doctoral thesis and a range of scientific papers and book chapters on the subject of stalking and sexual offences. She has recently co-authored a comprehensive risk assessment tool for stalkers that draws upon her clinical experience and current research in relation to the stalkers of ordinary citizens and prominent figures.