

# 'Children and Domestic Violence in Rural Areas'

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# What do we mean by 'Rural'?

- Settlements between 10,000 and 1,500 people (Countryside Agency, 2004)

*'Ultimately, the definition of rural communities is arbitrary and open to debate.'*

*(Websdale, 1998:40)*

- Myths about Rural Crime
  - Myth #1: Rural/Urban Dichotomy
  - Myth #2: Collective efficacy = low crime
  - Myth #3: Rural Crime Rates
  - Myth #4: Jekyll and Hyde of Rural Images(Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014)

# Domestic Violence and Children

- Neglect of children experiencing DV compared to women (Humphreys and Morley, 1994:2)
  - ¼ women experience DV and ½ half children living with them (Mirlees-Black, 1999)
  - Damaged whether experience DV ‘directly’ or as ‘observers’ (Humphreys, 2000:6; Mullender, 2002:207)
  - 1/3 to 1/2 of children know their mother is experiencing DV (The Cabinet Office, 1999)
  - Higher risk of child abuse (Parkinson and Humphreys, 1998:149)

# Domestic Violence and Rural Areas

- Lack of research exploring the geographical nature of DV
  - ‘...*decidedly an ‘invisible’ problem*’ (Squire and Gill, 2010)
- Higher urban incidence rate commands majority of resources
- ¼ victims live in a rural location (Walby and Allen, 2004)
- Lack of economic resources and ‘close-knit’ communities an issue for victims of domestic violence (Websdale, 1998)
- Experiencing DV in rural areas *is different* needing a *tailored* service provision response (Squire and Gill, 2010)

# The Rural Domestic Violence Project

## Aims

- Fill a gap in research
- Experience of DV in rural area for children
- Access to and awareness of DV services for children
- Participatory Research with children

## Stages of Research

- Stage 1: Literature Review and Service 'Mapping'
- Stage 2: Questionnaire Distribution
- Stage 3: Interviews and Consultation

# The Rural Domestic Violence Project: Access to and Awareness of Service Provision

- Telephone Helplines *most* helpful to Children
- *'I have my mobile phone and if I need the police all I have to do is press a button and I phone the police straight away... I have Childline as well. The first time I had my phone I put them on straight away because I knew it was the most important thing to do... You have to have the most important things on your phone in case.'* (Jamie, aged 11)
- Insufficient awareness of services for children
- *'[Young people] might need more help because they don't understand what's going on. There should be more advertising for how children can get help. More on the Net or somewhere kids go a lot so they can see where to get help from.'* (Jade, aged 15).
- Rurality affects physical access to provision– anonymity
- *'Everybody knows everybody certainly. People do know – and of course there are generations of families as well, so even if somebody doesn't know someone, they will probably know someone else in that family.'* (Rural Refuge Workers)

# Access to and Awareness of Service Provision: Good Practice

- Use of the media in rural areas (Cotswold Victim Support)
- Directories of domestic violence services (Coventry Domestic Violence Partnership)
- Rural Transport Partnerships/Parish Transport Fund/Connexions
- Inter-agency working – ‘getting all the slices of the cake’
  - *‘I’ve tried to convince our trustees that half our work is with other agencies and half of it’s with young people but they just haven’t got their head around that yet, that our inter-agency work is just as important. If we haven’t got the agency work we can’t help the youngsters.’ (Homelessness worker)*
- Geographic confusion to joint provision?