

# Thinking and doing differently

An approach informed by intersectionality

# First some thoughts on today

- ▶ WORLD
- ▶ HISTORY
- ▶ INVITES US TO THINK OUTSIDE OUR BOX AND REFLECT

# Key messages

- ▶ Connecting the dots between social problems
- ▶ Making Connections with other disciplines such as public health
- ▶ The contribution of intersectionality

# Symptoms of failing to connect

Siloed services which fail to recognise the realities of our human condition

Siloed thinking in Social Work the listing of issues such as poverty, mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse as if they are stand alone issues

# What has been learned from the last few years

- ▶ COVID - 19

Quote from Solnit

# Connection

- ▶ *The first lesson a disaster teaches is that everything is connected.... At moments of immense change, we see with new clarity the systems – political, economic, social, ecological – in which we are immersed as they change around us. We see what's strong, what's weak, what's corrupt, what matters and what doesn't.*

What connections were made

Let's start with our homes where we locked down .....

Let's look at who died....

# JRF stats

- ▶ Looking at the direct impact of the pandemic, the rate of deaths caused by Covid-19 was higher in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived in every UK nation. For England and Scotland, the death rate from Covid-19 in the most deprived areas was at least twice that in the least deprived areas. As an area's level of deprivation increased, so did its number of deaths.

# The social gradient

- ▶ What is that- a term used in Public Health that we need to understand to make the connections we need for our work
- ▶ The poorer you are, the worse your health will be
- ▶ Classic study of civil service- It is clear that people in the highest social strata live longer and have better health than those in the strata just below them who, in turn, live longer than those just below them and so on in a downward gradient until the bottom of the social ladder is reached.



# A child in the most deprived part of the UK

- ▶ Is over 10 times more likely to be looked after than a child in the least
- ▶ Let's make the other connections that need to be made - health, eg, asthma
- ▶ Their parents and grand parents ..
- ▶ Loss, disability and intergenerational trauma

# And yet our services chop that family

- ▶ Results are bewildering for families and have got much worse under austerity

# Thinking and doing differently

- ▶ Can intersectionality help?
- ▶ So what is it?
- ▶ How are we using it to think and do differently in relation to dv?

# What is intersectionality?

[What is intersectionality? | The British Academy](#)

Emerged from an understanding in the 1980s that race, gender and class cannot be understood as single or even incremental

‘Intersectionality is an approach in which analysis and political practice are closely linked’ (Williams, F. 2021, \Social Policy, A Critical and Intersectional Analysis, Policy Press, p.23)

Obliges holistic analysis and holistic practice- requires a lot of work on research methodology

# Domestic abuse

- ▶ Applying an intersectional approach
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Differences between me, women and children
- ▶ Thinking and doing differently

Using nationally representative data from a Scottish longitudinal survey ( N = 3,633) into children's development researchers investigated the social stratification of mothers' exposure to different types of abuse, including coercive control, physical abuse, and threats.

Overall, 14% of mothers report experiencing any type of domestic abuse since the birth of the study child (age 6), of which 7% experienced physical abuse.

**Compared to mothers in the highest income households, mothers in the lowest income quintile were far more likely to experience any form of abuse, more likely to have experienced more types of abuse and to have experienced these more often**

Age had a protective effect, with mothers aged 20 or younger at most risk of abuse, compared to mothers aged 40+.

Interaction effects between age and income suggested that an intersectional lens may help explain the cumulative layers of difficulty which young mothers on low incomes may find themselves in when it comes to abusive partners.

- ▶ Intersectional policy research addresses the fact that any given policy problem or intervention will **not be experienced by groups in the same way**; thus, the goal is to identify how specific policies address or fail to address inequalities across different social groups ([Day and Gill, 2020](#))
- ▶ Intersectional scholars have warned of the dangers associated with assumptions that all women face a similar risk of gendered violence and, therefore, require the same responses in practical and policy terms
- ▶ A key point and highly pertinent is that co-ordinated responses from police and other agencies can ensure a more equitable outcome for some marginalized survivors. **However, reducing risk via the criminal justice system is more complex for others especially communities of colour** (Day and Gill, 2020)



# Men

- ▶ Controversial topic given origins of IS
- ▶ But big literature emerging especially from places like South Africa and global south
- ▶ We have been very narrow in our focus in UK

# Treatment of men who harm

- ▶ Treatment with partner-violent men has mostly not kept up with contemporary shifts in feminist theorising, rarely takes a nuanced understanding of masculinity and takes a largely one-dimensional view on gender and power, with some exceptions (Gottzen et al, 2021).

# Working with men who harm

- ▶ The UK evidence base on programmes for people who use harmful behaviours is incomplete as the available research, albeit sparse, has typically been undertaken with predominantly white samples (Adisa and Allen, 2021)
- ▶ Adisa and Allen explored family and intimate relationship harm within black and minority ethnic communities and how we might best respond to the issue.
- ▶ Their briefing is based on research findings from a survey of students, academic, activists, and professionals from black and ethnic minority communities as well as from those supporting black and ethnic minority communities.

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# Questions addressed

- ▶ Usefulness or otherwise of the term perpetrator
- ▶ *'The only issue that I have with the term is that I know crime is racialised, so as a black man when I hear the term reinforces labels given to predominantly black men as a tool for racist behaviours to be justified';*
- ▶ *'I don't think this terminology is understood by black and minority ethnic communities';*
- ▶ *'I think the term 'perpetrator' is used widely within professional settings (police, CPS, victim support services) and it may not be seen/used within Black and minoritised communities'. Naming someone who has engaged in harmful behaviours as a 'perpetrator' may amplify destructive cultural stereotypes about race and criminality or alienate Black and minoritised people from programmes designed to engage community members in combating abuse'*

# Effective responses- recommendations

- ▶ 48% of respondents identified 'mutual trust with police' as a necessary component for an engaged community response. Trust in other professional services also
- ▶ Representative and culturally-specific interventions and encouraging effective practice and help-seeking via training and awareness raising.

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# An intersectional approach to violence prevention (Flood, 2021)

- ▶ 1. Improve social and economic conditions
  - ▶ 2. Include culturally relevant content
  - ▶ 3. Address culturally specific supports for violence and gender inequality
  - ▶ 4. Draw on local resources and texts
  - ▶ 5. Address men's experiences of changing gender dynamics in families
- ▶ Evidence that well-designed prevention efforts to engage men and boys in the prevention of violence can and do make a difference.

# Messages from international research

The trauma of different genders is entangled and can be assessed and addressed simultaneously – each with an appropriate gendered lens.

At the individual and societal levels, gender norms around masculinity and manhood inhibit boys and men's ability to properly cope with trauma

Trauma responses among men and boys are strongly linked to destructive health, social, and economic implications that not only affect the individual but also deeply impact interpersonal and community relationships.

# A final reflection?

- ▶ The balancing act required to deal with the problems that boys and men create and the problems that boys and men experience Hearn, 2007, p, 15).