

# *STORIES OF VIOLENCE*

Based on dissertation research entitled  
*Understanding Family Resilience in  
Divorce*

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# NARRATIVE METHODS

- ◉ Analysis of narrative material
- ◉ Purposeful sampling was used with pre-interview selection criteria
- ◉ Interview guide was based on theory and looked at personal qualities, environmental supports & how resources were used
- ◉ Narratives were defined as a coherent account of participants description of adversity & resolution (Cohler, 1991)

# *THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK*

- ◉ **Salutogenic Perspective** - Sense of coherence - appraisals of situations as meaningful manageable, & comprehensive
- ◉ **Ecological Theory** - Level of analysis start with the individual & include micro, mezzo, exosystem and macro systems of the environment
- ◉ **Family Stress & Coping Theory** - analysis is based on the family's ability to cope with non-normative adversity in context of normative demands

# ANALYSIS

- ◉ Focus of analysis was based on how resilience was fostered - personal qualities, processes, resources, and events
- ◉ Interpretative process starting with transcription and includes repeated listening of the interview

# NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

(LIEBLICH, TURVAL-MASHIACH & ZIBLER, 1998)

## *Holistic*

- ◉ The entire life story was the basis of analysis
- ◉ Interpretation of sections was based on the context of the entire story
- ◉ The whole person is the subject of interest

## *Content*

- ◉ Aims at explicit accounts of what happened
- ◉ Themes of resilience emerged

# *OVERVIEW OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS*

- ◉ 7 Interviews with parents - 6 female, 1 male and 1 child interview
- ◉ Broken down based on reasons for divorce - Stories of Betrayal & Stories of Violence
- ◉ Overlap in stories & includes one parental alienation story
- ◉ Re-occurring themes of addictions & mental health in 5 out of the 7 stories

# *SADIE'S STORY - WE SURVIVED*

- ◉ Family resilience is safety & survival - leaving does not end domestic violence
- ◉ Perseverance to overcome injustices - by courts, police, child protection
- ◉ Importance of domestic violence outreach services
- ◉ Informal supports
- ◉ Hope & self-responsibility

# *CHELSEA'S STORY - TURNING ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY*

- ◉ Outsmarting her ex to find safety
- ◉ Huge consequences of legal incompetence
- ◉ Acquiring knowledge - to protect
- ◉ Turning adversity into opportunity - working for the services who can help
- ◉ Economic security is family resilience
- ◉ Redefining family after divorce



# *CINDY'S STORY - FORGIVENESS, NOT JUST FOR YOURSELF BUT FOR YOUR CHILDREN*

- ◉ Forgiveness - to detach and set boundaries
- ◉ Trust & rebuilding - in all helping relationships, mentor was a positive role model
- ◉ Remarriage does not replace the father's role
- ◉ Permanent effects of divorce & divorce does not mean there are no problems regarding impact of domestic violence

# *BRAIDEN'S STORY - LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY*

- ◉ Being allowed to be a father is family resilience in high conflict
- ◉ Taking personal responsibility for problems
- ◉ Parenting problems when children share residences
- ◉ Hope - something to look forward to
- ◉ Importance of support from family and friends
- ◉ Use of sports to build family unity

# *CATHY'S STORY - I AM A MOTHER- I WILL NOT FAIL*

- ◉ Face problems directly
- ◉ Compromises are needed, but not when it comes to the kids
- ◉ Necessity of clear boundaries between homes for cooperation
- ◉ Good parenting is family resilience
- ◉ Small town & support - Use of social supports, counseling, importance of introspection (owning your problems) and a mentor

# COMMON THEMES FROM STORIES OF VIOLENCE

- ◉ Pathways varied - but common to all was the use of counseling; being open; & introspective
- ◉ Vital importance of domestic violence services
- ◉ Important role of the court
- ◉ Personal qualities of the custodial parent
- ◉ Hope & faith
- ◉ Importance of one person who knew the whole story
- ◉ Importance of functional support - child care

# IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- ◉ Counseling that helps parents understand & make meaning of family & divorce
- ◉ Stability in routines
- ◉ Advocacy, education & access to resources
- ◉ Help non-violent spouse determine access that is safe for children & herself
- ◉ Help non-violent parent separate parenting issues from parental issues

# IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

- ◉ Importance of continued funding for domestic violence programs
- ◉ Risk-benefit screening by the courts - to determine how to provide safety & access to children
- ◉ Importance of access to education & employment that pays a viable wage
- ◉ Clarification in policy in child protection
- ◉ Training for police

# LIMITATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS

- Based on a homogeneous sample - therefore generalizability to First Nations people & other cultural groups cannot be made
- Results have highlighted the need for clarification of policy in the courts, child protection services, and police & provided practice implications
- Reinforced the need for on-going funding and even the expansion of services for intimate partner violence

## REFERENCES

- ◉ Cohler, B.J. (1991). The life story and the study of resilience and response to adversity. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 1(2 & 3), 169-200.
- ◉ Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T.. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 47. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.