

Newsletter

Issue 3: June 2007



Lifespan Research Group

Health &
Social Care



Royal Holloway - Bedford Square, University of London

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ASI training 13-15 Nov 2007
CECA training 9-11 Oct 2007

Conference - March 5 2008:
Using the Attachment Style Interview in child care practice.

Temporary relocation of Lifespan offices during summer 2007

The building at 11 Bedford Square where Lifespan has its offices will be closed from 21 June-24 September 2007. During this time Lifespan will be occupying office space in 2 Gower St (next door), and will be contactable on the same office numbers and email.

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Editorial

This newsletter attests to a high amount of research activity and output by the Lifespan Research Group in the last quarter which is highly gratifying. Our ongoing partnerships with services are flourishing, and engagement with institutions outside the university supported by our Westfocus funding and our 7-university collaborations. The training in the ASI-AF is successfully being rolled out nationally to practitioners in adoption/fostering by our partners at Child and Family Training. We are receiving good feedback on its use in practice and are evaluating this through our Surrey partners. This year has also seen an extension of our international research collaborations in Italy, Holland and Israel, and it is heartening that our research methods and findings can be

Farewell to Adina Rusu

In February this year it was time to say farewell to Adina Rusu, who worked with us at Lifespan for the last 18 months as a researcher. This was while she was also studying for her PhD at RHUL. Adina has moved back to her home in Germany, and has started a new job as a lecturer at the University of Bochum. She will however remain in close contact with Lifespan and is already arranging collaborative research. We wish her all the best in her future career.

used in so many different contexts and to further understanding of psychological disorder.

We are also pleased that Professor Nicolson, our Head of Department, a long time member of the Women's Section of the British Psychological Society has given departmental support to the conference celebrating its 20th anniversary and held in July. Professor Nicolson is giving a key note address, and Lifespan are contributing a symposium. Professor Nicolson is now in post in the college in her second year and is making a highly positive impact on the department, increasing its inter-disciplinarity and the scope and profile of its research and teaching.

Toni Bifulco

Welcome to Beverley Duguid

We would like to welcome Beverley who started work as the new Lifespan administrator in March this year. Her background is in information management and research in local government and women's charities. She has a keen interest in making information more accessible and user-friendly and has previously enjoyed setting up databases for two charities. Beverley is also a history PhD student at RHUL and has previously worked on campus.



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The Lifespan Research Group

Lifespan provides research and consultancy in health and social care, including:

Service evaluations - training in interview assessments, research consultancy, research capacity building, research dissemination, research collaboration.

Research applied to practice - training in assessment techniques, practitioner research and professional development in social care and health.

Academic research - causal factors in mental health; investigation of lifespan and intergenerational transmission of risk for social exclusion and mental health problems. Measurement design and training for researchers.

Knowledge exchange - from universities to public services (social services and health) and voluntary services. We are members of WestFocus, a consortium of seven universities.

www.rhul.ac.uk/Health-and-SocialCare/Research/LRG.html

Lifespan Partnerships Surrey Social Services St Christopher's Fellowship



Surrey Social Services CAMHS 24/7 (weekend) service

Lifespan has been evaluating the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) "24/7" weekend pilot service in Surrey, a service that aims to help young people who present at hospital A&E departments outside normal hours, with self-harm or suicidal behaviour. This service, which operates on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, is in response to government strategy that calls for a more comprehensive CAMHS service. The weekend service allows young people to receive a faster risk assessment and subsequent discharge from hospital, as well as linking them into mainstream psychological services more quickly through referral. Results from the evaluation indicate that this service is being utilised mostly by female adolescents who overdose or self-harm and present at A&E departments. Lifespan has undertaken case record analysis, telephone interviews and questionnaires to evaluate the service, which has received positive feedback from hospital staff and CAMHS weekend workers.

Investigating and disseminating self-harm

Surrey CAMHS service has also commissioned us to provide a number of workshops for nursing and medical staff in A&E and paediatric wards around the issue of self-harm. These are primarily around identification and appropriate treatment and referral, and fit well with our own research on self-harm in adolescents.

Contact: Margaret.Ramsay@rhul.ac.uk

Evaluating the ASI in adoption assessment

We have now begun a project, funded by Surrey adoption service, and in conjunction with University of Reading to examine the use of the ASI in assessing prospective adopters. We have received ethical permission from our college, and have sent out information and consent forms to the 50 or so couples involved. As the forms return we are scrutinising files in order to collect the ASI information together with other details of the adoption process the couple have been through. Dr. Steven Farnfield of Reading is doing a similar task with the AAI and the first opportunity to compare these two attachment measures will be taken full advantage of.

Contact: Amanda.Bunn@rhul.ac.uk

BAAF Conference on adoption/fostering Toni Bifulco will be presenting at the BAAF conference 6th July in Birmingham on the use of the ASI in adoption/fostering.

Partnership with St Christopher's Fellowship www.stchris.org.uk

Lifespan is continuing to work in partnership with St Christopher's Fellowship on an initiative called **The Specialist Homes Action Research Project (SHARP)**. This is a pilot intervention based on social learning and attachment principles to help adolescents in residential care. The aim of the project is to reduce antisocial behaviour and increase sociable behaviour, to stabilise adolescents within a single care arrangement and to facilitate transition to foster care or independent living. The intervention includes elements from social learning, involving a highly structured reward based protocol to increase pro-social behaviour identified on daily care reports, which allows the young people to graduate to more independent behaviour. The action research project is making good progress across the country. Preparations are being made to start the SHARP pilot in a newly opened residential home in North London. In Bedfordshire detailed assessment reports have been produced for five young people and workshops on attachment, led by Lifespan, were well received by residential home staff. Geraldine Thomas and Catherine Jacobs recently presented Lifespan's attachment approach to assessment at a multi-agency forum in Bedfordshire.

Contact: Catherine.Jacobs@rhul.ac.uk

Isle of Man

Contact with Dr David Foreman, head of CAMHS in the Isle of Man, has led to productive collaboration with the residential care youngsters and the SHARP programme. It has also led to an exciting opportunity to use the CECA to assess 16 year olds on the Island who are part of the European Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children – Isle of Man. This branch of the famous longitudinal work originally started in Avon and is now running internationally, is headed by Dr Stephanie Goodfellow. The current round of assessments of the 16 year old young people is now underway. The aim of the CECA study is to get representative information by interview on childhood experience of parental care and control as well as peer group and school experience. This information can then be analysed in relation to the wealth of information collected biannually on the children since birth, including their emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, physical health as well as parent characteristics. Partner funders include Isle of Man services and St Christopher's Fellowship. We are very appreciative of this opportunity for using the CECA interview and hope it will be informative for the Isle of Man children's services. Contact: A.Bifulco@rhul.ac.uk





WestFocus Knowledge Exchange ASI-AF Training www.westfocus.org.uk



WestFocus Social Inclusion

Child victims of abuse — developing training provision for practice

Lifespan are working in partnership with the University of Westminster on a WestFocus project aimed at scoping out the need for training resources, and the development of training provision, to improve practice in the interviewing of children and young people by social workers and police officers. This will inform the development of an interview training guide and marketable training materials. This builds on prior WestFocus funding which has investigated police practice in conducting child interviews with alleged abuse victims. Lifespan's role will be to interview Social Services training managers across London to elicit their views on training needs, whilst UoW will be interviewing police officers.

Contact: Margaret.Ramsay@rhul.ac.uk

WestFocus Health Network

Stress management in care staff

The collaboration through WestFocus in relation to observing and intervening in well-being in the community continues to be active. The project on stress management in care workers in nursing homes is progressing with contact made at a selection of homes who we are hoping will join the project. We aim to find out staff experiences by means of focus groups, interview and questionnaire. The work is in collaboration with Kingston/St George's joint faculty with Denise Forte and Liz Aitchison and with Nicky Robinson at TVU. Between the three universities we have experience on stress measurement and awareness, care of older age people and complementary approaches to health.

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Partnership with Wandsworth PCT Research Centre; The use of CBT in Adult Mental Health Teams

Lifespan Research Group has had a long partnership with Wandsworth PCT Research Centre (formerly Battersea Research Group) in aiding research into primary health care. In March, a bid was submitted by Amy Scammell, research manager, in conjunction with Lifespan to evaluate current practice and recommend improvements in the availability of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for a range of psychological disorders. This has been commissioned by the South West London Trust to examine services in

Rolling out the ASI-AF training

The partnership with Liza Bingley Miller and Dr Arnon Bentovim at Child and Family Training is working very well in meeting the increased demand for Health and Social Care professionals to train in the Attachment Style Interview for Adoption / Fostering (ASI-AF). Already in 2007 eight agencies, based across the country from Devon to Edinburgh, have completed their training and other courses have been commissioned for later in the year and into 2008. For more information see

www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk

Fostering: We have a new partnership with Portsmouth Fostering service, and Jackie Clark and Jo Anderson have been successfully using the ASI in assessing fostering parents. We hope to be able to evaluate the use of the ASI in the service in due course.

ASI Website:

The ASI website www.attachmentstyleinterview.com is now on line and expanded to include downloadable documents for people interested in the instrument and those already trained.

Contact: Catherine.Jacobs@rhul.ac.uk

The ASI and Filial Therapy:

Lifespan consultant Geraldine Thomas is a playtherapist who also conducts training for us on the ASI. She is a certified Filial Therapy practitioner and trainer and is piloting the use of the ASI as an assessment tool to aid with Filial therapy for carers and children. She is piloting this for services in Milton Keynes as well as at St Christopher's Fellowship for fostering and in residential care. Filial Therapy is a combined family therapy and play therapy intervention, whereby parents/carers learn to conduct child-centred play sessions with their children to resolve parenting problems and strengthen family relationships. This is an innovative use of the ASI assessment in conjunction with therapy.

Contact: gvdkthomas@aol.com; www.playtherapy.com

Merton over a two year period. This issue has been raised, not only because of the background of the Layard report indicating the chronic shortage of CBT practitioners, but also because of the internal audit which shows that CBT is not effectively available for some disorders. The South West London trust are currently training new associate CBT practitioners to help overcome the shortage and the evaluation will examine the impact.

Contact: A.Bifulco@rhul.ac.uk

ONGOING RESEARCH ANALYSES PUBLICATION AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS



Analysis of attachment change

Jong-Sun Lee, visiting researcher from South Korea has been examining the stability of attachment style and factors associated with positive change. She is analysing the large MRC cohort of London community women studied over a three year period using the Adult Attachment Style Interview at two separate contacts. She has found relatively high stability (73%) using crude indicators of secure versus insecure at both time points, with equal chance of positive and negative change, but positive change more common in vulnerable women. Improvements in support from partner or close other is the best predictor of positive change, with loss of job, negative support change and negative self-esteem change indicating negative change. When attachment attitudes were examined, reduction in anger and mistrust and more moderate need for closeness were most related to positive change in attachment style. These findings have implications for psychological treatments, relationship guidance or befriending interventions to improve the relationships and hence attachment style.

This analysis will be presented in July at the Annual Conference for the British Psychological Society Psychology of Women Section.

Contact: Jong.Lee@rhul.ac.uk

Attachment style in the context of physical illnesses

There is growing recent interest in attachment styles and processes such as adjustment and coping with chronic physical illnesses. Lifespan is interested in involvement in such research projects in European settings to provide patients and health professionals with additional measures and information relevant to treatment. This is aided by our collaborative work with Dr. Chris Hinzen from the University of Groningen on adaptation in cancer patients. Also, collaborative research in the area of chronic pain and attachment style and support is being discussed with Dr. Tamar Pincus (Psychology Department, Royal Holloway) and Adina Rusu (Bochum University, Germany). A joint application for funding is underway and Lifespan has been invited to run ASI training courses in Germany around issues of attachment and physical health. The first ASI course is scheduled for Spring 2008.

Contact: adina.rusu@gmail.com



Self-harm and clinical disorder among young Londoners

Adina Rusu and Toni Bifulco are currently analysing the MRC high risk adolescent data on self-harm in relation to childhood maltreatment and attachment style. Self-harm affects at least one in 15 young people and evidence suggests that rates of self-harm in the UK are higher than anywhere else in Europe with a traditionally higher rate in girls. Clinical disorder, childhood maltreatment, self-esteem, peer group relationships, school experience and attachment style were all assessed in the comprehensive lifespan interviews. Results indicate that self-harm is related to insecure attachment style, felt incompetence as a student and problem relationships with parents characterised by role reversal. Young women were more likely to have internalising disorders (anxiety, depression), which was associated with anxious attachment style. Self-harm, anxious attachment style, low self-esteem and problem peer group were identified as important predictors of disorder outcome. The results of this study will be shortly submitted for publication and will be presented at the BPS women's conference in July.

Bifulco, Rusu, Moran, Jacobs & Bunn (in preparation). *Self-harm and disorder in a series of high risk young people: The role of gender and attachment.*

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Forthcoming BPS conference

As mentioned in the editorial, the Lifespan team have been invited to present recent findings to the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society, Psychology of Women Section, 18 – 20 July 2007. The Womens Section celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The conference is being supported by the Health and Social Care Department at Royal Holloway. Toni Bifulco will chair the symposium on "The role of early life abuse, attachment style on disorder in mothers and adolescents: A focus on women and girls. She will talk about the impact of marital adversity and insecure attachment style on depression and poor parenting of the next generation. Adina Rusu will examine the role of attachment and gender for self-harm in young people and Catherine Jacobs will present on attachment in young people in residential care. Two posters focusing on attachment style will include a study of Malaysian mothers comparing those single and married by PhD student Nor Bay'ah Kadir and attachment style change by Jong-Sun Lee. Further information is available from the British Psychological Society website:

www.bps.org.uk/pows/conference

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

**Milan, Italy**

The research team in the Catholic University in Milan commissioned a research training in the Attachment Style Interview on 17-19 of May with Toni Bifulco. The research group headed by Professor Paola DiBlasio have varied interests in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Family Therapy, Childhood trauma, Adolescent development and Forensic psychology issues. The ASI

training was also attended by visiting researchers from universities in Palermo and Florence. The training was very successful with all the trainees achieving reliability. Thanks are due to Dr. Vittoria Ardino (who is from Milan but now working in the UK) for help with translation and establishing the links and of course to Professor DiBlasio for her kind hospitality. A collaboration is now being set up to validate the ASI in Italian settings.

**Palermo, Sicily**

The collaboration with Professor Vincenzo Caretti's team continues to be productive. Following from a CECA training held in 2006, a new child version of the CECA is to be developed and

trials in both representative and high-risk child series. In addition joint publications are underway. Professor Caretti has championed the Italian translation of 'Wednesday's Child' (Bifulco & Moran, Routledge, 1998) which is published on June 15th 2007. This will be in time for the conference on depression being held in Mondello, Sicily and organised by Professor Caretti. In addition, a chapter on risk and resilience in young Londoners from the MRC-data set is being drafted in Italian by Adriano Schimmenti (with Antonia Bifulco) for an edited book on trauma by Professor Caretti and colleagues. We look forward to the forthcoming conference and to a continued productive collaboration with our friends and colleagues in Sicily.

Publication— *Il bambino maltrattato. Le radici della depressione nel trauma e nell'abuso infantile* Bifulco & Moran (2007) Roma, Astrolabia).

Holland

In February a training was commissioned by Chris Hinnen and Grietke Joner Pool and colleagues at Gronningen University. This was for use in a research project on adaptation to cancer (The Cancer Attachment and Resilience study or CARE). The aim is to see if security of attachment style relates to higher support and better cop-



ing with a cancer diagnosis and lower rates of depression in the Dutch sample. The project is in collaboration with Amsterdam University. The training went very well and the trainees all achieved reliability, all showing great fluency in English!. There was interesting discussion of the ASI use in Dutch contexts and with physical and mental health outcomes. The trainees felt that the ASI would be a useful tool in their clinical practice as well as research projects. Again we are grateful to our Dutch academic colleagues Chris and Grietke for their hospitality and great organisation skills!

Israel

The One-to-one funded research project evaluating cycling interventions on emotional disorder in adolescents living in conflict zones in North Israel, from Jewish, Arab and Druze communities is progressing well. Our researcher, PhD student Sue Lawrence has gone to live in Israel in order to undertake the data collection. The plan involves a first stage of assessing the local young people from the different communities on a range of variables concerning family relationships, friendships, trauma experience and emotional health including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The research team at the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma Herzog Hospital, Jerusalem support the research and have been invaluable in helping with translated questionnaires etc. This group are involved with CHERSH a project for PTSD in children in both Palestine and Israel in a collaborative study crossing universities in both regions. We have also had tremendous support from the One-to-one charity funding the research, particularly from Hedy Wax who coordinates the work in Israel. Hedy worked with the Lifespan Research Group in 1990-3 on the project looking at trauma in the childhoods of London sisters. It is really good to be able to get her expertise on board for such cross-cultural work!

Publication

A. Bifulco: Risk and Resilience in Young Londoners. In "Treating Traumatized Children: Risk, Resilience and Recovery" (in press), Eds Danny Brom, Ruth Pat-Hoencyk and Julian Ford.



Contact Sue Lawrence: lawsue@googlemail.com

New website on CECA

We are pleased to launch our new website concerning the childhood experience of care and abuse. The website has details of training, research publications and international use of the CECA interview.

www.cecainterview.com

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS BY LIFESPAN IN 2007

June 21-22 Mondello, Sicily: 'Mood Spectrum Disorders: Evaluation, treatment and research into depression'. Risk and Resilience in Young Londoners. A Bifulco

6th July BAAF conference Birmingham—Use of the Attachment Style interview in adoption-fostering services. A. Bifulco

18-20 July British Psychological Society, Psychology of Women Section, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor. The Lifespan Research Group are presenting a symposium and two posters on attachment style and disorder.

21st September, University of Florence, Faculty of Medicine. Vulnerability to depression and trauma in childhood. A. Bifulco

31st October University of Bochum, Germany: Attachment style, physical illness & service use. A Bifulco

Conference: Using the Attachment Style Interview in child care practice

5 March 2008 in London – Central London

This conference organized by Lifespan together with Child and Family Training, will review the current growing and popular use of the Attachment Style Interview as an assessment tool in adoption and fostering as well as presenting the most recent research using the ASI in a variety of family contexts. The conference seeks to explore ways in which the Attachment Style Interview can contribute to assessments in wider child care practice including its use with adolescents. Presenters will include Professor Antonia Bifulco, Dr Arnon Bentovim and others.

Cost: £125 + £21.88 VAT - Total: £146.88.

Registered charity*: £100 + £17.50 VAT - Total: £117.50.

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Training dates at Lifespan offices, Bedford Square, London

ASI: 13th-15th November 2007 & 12th-14th February 2008

CECA: 9-11th October 2007 & 25th-27th March 2008

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