



Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies

Research, Practice, Training & Knowledge Exchange

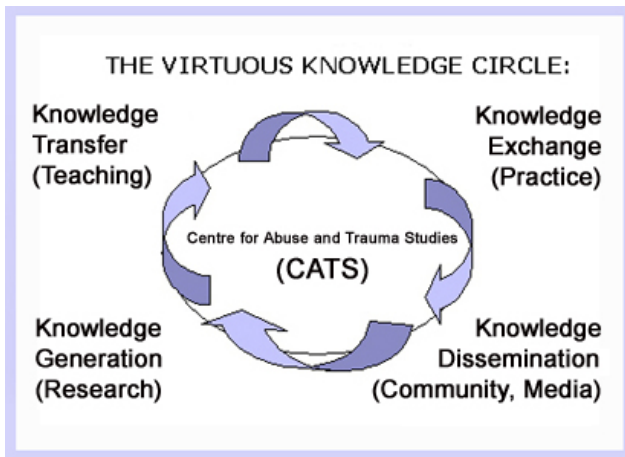
The Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies (CATS) is a new centre for research, practice and training based at Kingston University, London. The Centre incorporates Lifespan Research Group, formerly part of Royal Holloway University of London. CATS draws on research expertise, taught courses and knowledge exchange of its directors and associates, together with input from an expert advisory panel, to further the understanding, identification, treatment and policy implications of abuse and trauma.

CATS provides research, consultancy, media information, practice training, continuing professional development, knowledge transfer and learning in a broad range of abuse and trauma related topics across the lifespan. This includes both the victim and perpetrator perspective, in arenas such as child and family abuse, with children, adolescents, adults and in older age, around bullying and victimisation, offender profiles and treatment, internet abuse and internet safety. It also involves an inter-disciplinary focus on forensic science and criminology, social and clinical psychology and psychiatry, social work, legal perspectives and government policy. The centre aims to disseminate such knowledge in the scientific, policy, public and community domains.

Centre provision for research and practice consists of a diverse array of services such as service evaluations (e.g. child safeguarding; interventions with Looked After children in residential care; police practice with vulnerable victims; educational services around abuse prevention; interagency working of professionals), providing workshops on abuse/ trauma related topics (internet abuse; interviewing child victims; risk assessment of serious offenders; abuse assessment; child safeguarding), providing short training courses on assessment (e.g. child abuse; internet offenders and risk and methods around assessment, self-evaluation and research tools) and consultancy for researchers and practitioners.

The Centre consolidates expert support from a wide array of partners and advisers. Centre partners include voluntary organisations, statutory services, universities and research centres. The advisory board covers a wide range of specialisms and expertise.





CATS directors

Professor Antonia Bifulco



The Lifespan Research Group directed by Toni Bifulco, has a long history of researching abuse victimisation in the family context, and its effect on mental health in the immediate and longer term. Research programme funding over 10 years from the Medical Research Council allowed for intensive

interview investigation of the causal effects of early life neglect and abuse on later experience and psychological disorder in women and intergenerationally. The research has been published widely in international peer reviewed journals and a book co-authored with Patricia Moran, 'Wednesday's Child' (1998) is still a primary text for students and researchers in the area of long term effect of childhood neglect and abuse. The Childhood Experience of Care and Abuse (CECA) interview was developed by Toni Bifulco as a standardised interview tool for collecting information on abuse in early life. This is increasingly used by practitioners in forensic, social work and psychological fields.

Professor Julia Davidson



Julia Davidson is a Professor in Criminology and Sociology At Kingston University. She has conducted a considerable amount of research in the criminal justice area, her PhD explored the effectiveness of psychiatric treatment programmes for convicted child sexual abusers. Julia Davidson has extensive

experience of applied research and has directed and conducted work with young victims, serious violent and sexual offenders, criminal justice practitioners and sentencers. She has acted as a reviewer for the Department of Health and National Institute for Mental Health Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP). She has recently published a book '*Child Sexual Abuse, Media Representation and Government Reactions*'. She has experience of regular media contact and provides expert advice on criminal justice issues to the media.

About CATS

CATS brings together expertise from the Lifespan Research Group, (formerly part of Health and Social Care Department at Royal Holloway, University of London) and the Department of Criminology and Sociology at Kingston University London. The Centre is directed jointly by Prof Antonia Bifulco and Prof Julia Davidson. The centre directors have conducted a considerable amount of research, teaching and practitioner training on abuse issues, around offenders, victims, criminal justice and social services practitioners. This includes experience of physical abuse/domestic violence; psychological abuse and sexual abuse/sexual assaults in children, adolescents and adults. The Centre focuses upon high quality assessment and increased understanding of models around psychosocial causal factors accounting for victim vulnerability and perpetrator actions. It utilises a lifespan perspective in examining early life abuse and its impact on child, adolescent, adult and older age behaviour in both further victimisation and perpetration of abuse. Centre members retain a strong interest in government policy and legislative provision for both perpetrators and victims of abuse. The Centre aims to be a focus of expertise on issues related to abuse, whether in its investigation and research, its teaching and training to professionals or knowledge dissemination to related professions and the community.

The two directors provide complementary areas of expertise from their respective departments, and have a wide range of networks and professional contacts to further the activities of the centre. The collaboration was initiated as part of the West-Focus initiative for undertaking knowledge exchange in a consortium of seven universities in the West of London in relation to a range of social inclusion issues. In terms of the developing centre it funded joint work on child victims of sexual abuse in the police system and training for social workers in child abuse and attachment issues. The former was in response to a Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Command request to explore police and social work practice with young victims of sexual abuse and the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration, investigative ABE (achieving best evidence) training of police officers and provision for women post release from custody. The training for social workers in interview assessment methods is based on grants from voluntary and statutory agencies to aid in best practice in child and family services. The success of trainings in both Attachment Style Interview (ASI) and Childhood Care and Abuse (CECA) assessments have led to greater demand for CPD training in services. The success of this collaboration led to the creation of the centre sponsored by the two universities.

Academic Research

CATS combines expertise from Lifespan Research Group, and from KU criminology and sociology department. The Lifespan Research Group is an externally funded academic and applied research team, directed by Prof Bifulco, with a long history of researching abuse victimisation in the family context, and its effect on mental health in the immediate and longer term. The team offers training to both researchers and practitioners in interview assessments on a regular basis. A partnership with Child and Family Training (www.childandfamilytraining.co.uk) has enabled the extension of training to health and social care practitioners nationally. PhD research currently supervised includes investigation of Post Traumatic Stress and emotional disorder in adolescents across communities in conflict zones in Israel (funded by One-to-one Israel); testing a child interview on neglect and abuse and study of partner conflict and mental health in both Malaysian and Taiwanese women.

From Criminology and Sociology Department, Prof Davidson provides considerable expertise in the criminal justice area and has extensive experience of applied research. Her research work has involved young victims, serious violent and sexual offenders, criminal justice practitioners and sentencers. Recent funded work includes a study funded by the Metropolitan Police Authority and Crimestoppers which sought to explore child safety on the internet and the role of the police in raising awareness amongst children about sexual abuse; an evaluation of approaches to risk assessment and management of Internet sex offenders funded by the Risk Management Authority (Scotland). PhD research currently supervised includes a study exploring the way in which the Metropolitan Police investigate the online sexual abuse of children and relationship between the collection of indecent images of children and the risk of contact sexual abuse.



CATS Projects

Metropolitan Police—Child Victims in the Investigative Process. An exploration of young victims experiences and perceptions of the investigative process, undertaken on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Command. The research aims to begin the process of affording young victims an opportunity to express a view regarding their treatment in, and experience of, the entire investigative process from allegation to case conclusion, focusing upon positive and negative aspects.

CEOP & National Audit Office - Evaluation of Online Safety Programme. The THINKUKNOW programme aims to raise awareness amongst young people about the dangers they may encounter online. The programme also provides a resource for teachers for use with pupils. The Evaluation has been conducted in UK schools and has explored young peoples experience and perception of the programme, as well as the views of those delivering the programme regarding its impact. The research has also explored young peoples awareness of Internet safety issues. The results of the study will be published shortly.

European community - Internet Groomers and Young Peoples Online Safety. This new project has been successfully funded by the EC. The partnership is headed by Stephen Webster at the National Centre for Social Research, together with Prof Julia Davidson and Prof Antonia Bifulco at Kingston University and partners in Oslo (Prof Gottschalk), Belgium (Prof Pham) and Italy (Prof Caretti). The grant covers a 30 month period to scope out the legal and policy framework in member European countries of internet abuse, and to investigate profiles of online groomers. The aim is also to disseminate preventative messages to schools and parents in member countries. CATS is involved in the partnership and through use of its advisory board to oversee the project.

St Christopher's Fellowship—has commissioned an evaluation of its Specialist Homes Action Research Programme (SHARP). This involves an enhanced assessment of the young people in the programme before and after the social learning model being implemented. The aim is to improve outcomes for young people in care.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Courses Project

Funded by [West London Lifelong Learning Network](http://www.westlondonlifelonglearningnetwork.org), the project is developing CPD courses directed towards criminal justice workers, social workers, psychologists and workers in the legal professions, with the aim of covering issues around abuse and trauma, such as issues in assessment, treatment, and research knowledge



of victims and offenders. to match the needs of both qualified and non-qualified staff. The courses will be integrated into a CPD Framework, which will be designed to enable a flexible learning pattern to match the needs of both qualified and unqualified staff. The opportunity to accredit such training within existing or new Masters courses in the universities is being explored.

CATS Training

The CATS centre offers workshops and short weekly training courses on a wide range of issues around abuse and trauma. The range covers abuse in different age groups and settings, and covers victims, perpetrators and legal issues. The centre is supported by Kingston University London for the development of knowledge exchange between research and practice. Our innovative approach takes high level of expertise from academic background, as well as from a range of expert partners nationally and internationally, to generate courses of high quality, which are amenable to frequent updating as research knowledge, policy and law change. Our approach is multi-disciplinary and academically rigorous, but with a view to practical application and to the needs and constraints of practitioners to increase their professional development.

Issues Covered

- Child & family abuse
- Domestic violence
- Bullying & victimisation in different contexts
- Stranger abuse
- Internet abuse & Internet safety
- Psychological disorder related to abuse and trauma
- Social policy in relation to abuse issues
- Evaluating social and police services
- Conducting assessments with children, teenagers and adults

Practice Applications

Our courses cover issues of Assessment around abuse, trauma and risk issues; Research updates on abuse and trauma issues, including understanding conceptual and causal models of risk and resilience; Implications for practice and knowledge exchange; Basic principles of research and how to evaluate services in relation to assessment and evidence-based practice.

Who are CATS courses suitable for?

Our courses and workshops are directed towards criminal justice workers (police, probation, youth offending and forensic services), social workers (child protection; 'looked after' services; family support services) and psychologists (clinicians in child and adolescent mental health and adult services) and workers in the legal professions.

Individualised provision of courses

A coherent 'menu' of courses can be provided singly or in any combination to services on site, or held at Central London university premises. These can be offered as half day, or one-day courses or longer.

For further information please email cats@kingston.ac.uk

or Prof Julia Davidson j.davidson@kingston.ac.uk (criminal justice services)

or Prof Antonia Bifulco antonia.bifulco@kingston.ac.uk (social work and clinical services).

