



Situating men's unwanted sexual experiences and help seeking in feminist care ethics

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Overview

The MUSE Project

Feminist ethics of care

Positioning care, carelessness and being
cared for

Conclusions

The MUSE Project

Two phases of data collection

- Southeast of England and London (funded by Healthy Futures, University of Brighton)
- Northeast of England (funded by the Male Survivor Partnership)

Methods

- Semi-structured interviews
- Creative workshops with artist Jon Ralphs
- Participatory analysis workshops and dissemination events (funded by UKRI)

Partners:

- ManKindUK, Male Survivors Partnership, 1in6.org, Breaking the Silence

Feminist ethics of care

“A species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Fisher and Tronto, 1990: 40)

Care as situated in relations of power

Diversity of relations of care

Care and carelessness



Positioning care

And I think I now carry quite a lot of guilt about it because like he could probably keep doing that and I feel like I... I mean, I wasn't in a position at the time to try and like challenge it ... I think I now feel like there was a bit of responsibility which I just didn't recognise and part of it was because I don't know how seriously I took it,

Charlie, 30, gay, white British.

I don't believe it would be productive for me to, to take up a space, let's say, in a group, where others may have been much more severely impacted. And of course, I know, you know, time is a great healer, as they say, but for me, there wasn't really anything to heal. And of course I'm angry about it now

Matthew, 50, gay, white British



Carelessness

It was just a friend of mine at university and we had both been drinking, and it just sort of came out my mouth in a slightly ham fisted way when we were talking about something that was vaguely relevant. If I had been completely sober, I don't think I would have actually told him then.

But his reaction was laughing and looking at me as if he didn't really believe what I was saying, and I can't remember which of us, but either I or he just quickly changed the subject to something else.

Mark, 27, gay, White British

Well at work, ... in a small company, you know, there were 200 employees on that site and not a terrible lot of staff turnover, it wasn't a transient population way out in the suburbs, so everybody knew everybody and I would expect gossip, I would expect to not be believed, to be ridiculed.

Gareth, 55, heterosexual, White British,

I went, I did go to my GP when I was 17/18 [pause] And again, it wasn't, I didn't kind of say that I'd been abused, I was just going because I felt very low and kind of numb and was being quite self-destructive and didn't [pause] And my GP wasn't very helpful at the time ... I was in a little village and the guy was just, ouch, have some antidepressants and get out.

Wayne, 32, heterosexual, White British



Being cared for

Then, when I met this, had this one session with the woman at RASAC [Rape and Sexual Assault Centre], her pretty much opening gambit was, "Whatever you tell me, I think it probably wasn't your fault and you don't need to carry any shame or guilt about it", and that was like without me saying anything. She also said, you know, "Yeah, I get that you're worried about your drinking, but it's probably kept you alive for forty years", because I was using it [alcohol] to suppress all the bad feelings I had about my abuse... it was also, of course, very liberating. Because I started to think maybe this can change, maybe I can change.

Dan, 64, heterosexual, white British

Final thoughts

We recognize that care is relational

Highlighting how caring relations are complicated for men

Using a feminist ethics of care can help to challenge injustices for those experiencing violence



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