

Presentation title:

Exploring the gendered impacts of stalking through the experiences of stalked mothers

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It has been documented that stalking can have a wide range of complex and long-term psychosocial effects on victims' lives (Korkodeilou, 2020). It has also been demonstrated that people around stalking victims (parents, friends, children, colleagues) - or else known as secondary victims- can be significantly affected and/or severely traumatised either by becoming direct targets of physical, verbal, emotional violence perpetrated by stalkers and/or by witnessing and being exposed to the violence the primary victims are subjected to by their tormentors (Sheridan et al., 2001; Nikupeteri and Laitinen, 2015; Korkodeilou, 2016; 2017). Little, closer attention has been paid to the ways stalked mothers negotiate, navigate and perform roles of motherhood within the threatening context of stalking. This is an important area to consider given the long-term and multifaceted gendered impacts stalking may have on the lives of victims' children and especially their daughters. By drawing on from empirical research and relevant literature, in this paper I will provide a critical, feminist and trauma-informed glimpse into this less explored aspect of stalking (secondary) victimisation: the effects of stalking on the quality of parenting in cases where victims are mothers and the impacts of stalking on their children. In particular, I will explore the dynamics of being a mother within the context of abuse by (male) stalkers (ambiguities, dilemmas and struggles) by examining the effects of constant intrusions, uncertainty and lingering fear on the relationship with their daughters. I will then consider these experiences by locating them within current socio-cultural and theoretical context. The aim of this paper is dual: a) to acknowledge and understand the impact stalking can have on the relationships between stalked mothers and their daughters and the gendered ramifications of this impact b) critically reflect on interventions adequately addressing this group of victims' and their children's specific needs.