

New Research from October 2005 >>>>>>> Pioneering comparative qualitative research in relation to the education of social workers in England and Denmark and the social problem of child sexual abuse:

Title:

To what extent are social work students in England and Denmark equipped to deal with child sexual abuse? - A Comparative Discourse Analysis between the English & Danish Social Work Education in relation to Child Sexual Abuse:

Dissertation:

The above title is a dissertation submitted to Aalborg University in Denmark on the 25th of September 2005 as the final project in the Danish Masters of Science in Social Work (Den Sociale Kandidatuddannelse, Cand.scient.soc.) - subsequently this dissertation was successfully defended at exam and awarded a distinction on the 5th of October 2005.

Save the Children Denmark sponsored the author to carry out research in England during the English research phase in March 2004.

Background:

Primarily this is a comparative study between the English and the Danish social work education with particular focus on how social work students are trained to tackle CSA. This work was inspired by the author's experience of social work training and practice in both England and Denmark.

The Study & Underpinning framework:

Primarily this study is based on the accounts (interview transcripts) given by a small purposeful sample of 'trainee' social workers, social work educators, newly qualified social workers, and 'experts' from both England and Denmark to compare and contrast the extent and the content of teaching in relation to CSA against what is known from international methodologically sound research.

The underpinning theoretical framework for this study within a multi-factoral framework is that feminist and pro-feminist approaches offer the most crucial part of an explanation for the majority of cases concerning child sexual abuse in society.

Similarities, Dissimilarities and Implications for Research:

Generally the accounts given by the Danish and English participants point towards salient differences in the general training of students in relation to issues surrounding the labour market, oppression and discrimination in society and in relation to equipping students to communicate with children and tackle child sexual abuse. Moreover, the accounts are suggestive that there are differences in the 'systems' in place in both countries in relation to tackling CSA and other harmful behaviour towards children. Additionally, the accounts given by some of the participants indicate that the level of competence of the workers dealing with such cases is perhaps different in some English local authorities as opposed to Denmark.

Furthermore, the accounts from the English and Danish participants points towards a marked difference in relation to 'understanding' CSA in society. In relation to this the Danish participants gave emphasis to certain discourses that are not well grounded in empirical research.

Recommendations:

This study highlights the similarities, dissimilarities and implications for research between the two 'systems' and puts forward recommendations as to what 'elements' ought to be included on social work training programmes to equip and prepare social work students to work with the social problem of child sexual abuse in society.

The Author:

The author/researcher of this study is Kevin Perry a qualified social worker from England (Diploma in Social Work & Higher Education, BA(hons) in European Social Work and the MSc in Social Work). Kevin has 15 years experience of working with children, young people and their families in various settings - currently he works as SSP Konsulent on Bornholm.

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Best wishes

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