

**Adoption & Fostering journal #11 | Vol.48 Issue 3 introduction with Dr Dennis Golm and Vicky Walker transcript**

Welcome to CoramBAAF Conversations, the podcast series dedicated to adoption, fostering internship care. We asked children, social care professionals, and experts by experience to join us to share with us and you, our listeners, their experiences, reflections and knowledge. I hope you enjoy.

Welcome to the adoption and fostering Journal podcast, and this is one of our introductions to an issue. We've got a bumper issue for volume 48 issue 3-4. So we have eight articles as well as the editorial in this issue. Bit of a Christmas present.

I'm Vicki Walker. Production editor of the journal and Dennis Golm Editor and Chief of the journal. And we have Vicky back. Can we say that Vicky was on maternity leave?

That's true. I was. Having a baby and looking after the baby. I'm now back. Yes. So this is. Yeah. The first issue that I'm kind of back working on, which is exciting.

If you missed Vicki from our previous episodes. And now she's back.

Like Arnold Schwarzenegger? So yeah, but I'm excited to talk to you about your editorial for this for this issue. I know that you've reflected a little bit or you're reflecting in your editorials on one of the articles from the issue and thinking about mental health and protective characteristics as well, so some of. Better politics, maybe.

Yes, a little bit of politics. I always feel like I'm to disclose that I once had a comment from a student, I teach in my in my day job where I'm not an editor. I teach also module for undergrads on childhood, maltreatment, mental health. And I once had a comment asking me to be less political. And I know the feeling was no, I shouldn't be less political because childhood maltreatment is a human rights issue and it's a fundamental disregard of human rights, and I feel like you cannot be political or not political when we talk about issues of early trauma, adoption. You know, it's tied to governmental regulations.

And actually, I think you know when we talk through the issue that kind of government regulation is going to come up again and obviously it is political. What's the kind of key thing in your editorial this time?

Well, I was inspired by the article by Young and colleagues, and I assume when they're discussing barriers to accessing mental health. And I think their sample are all care leavers, but I picked up on some of the quotes in the article, so one of the ones where I also start the editorial with is you've seen this troubled scene as defiant, angry, or all of these. Like all of this negative. Or another one is like I was normal as a person because I had all these issues and it was kind of like I had to contain myself to society norms in order to be treated with respect by my peers. And I felt like these kind of quotes highlight maybe some of the stigma

against people in care people. With a who are care experienced? Yeah. And this brought to mind the kind of independent care review. Where one of the suggestions in that review was that care experience should be made one of the protected characteristics, so that's in line with religion, disability, gender reassignment, gender.

The government, in their in their response, the government did not take up this suggestion. Basically so that was the, then still Conservative government, however, was also not part of the Labour manifesto. The only political party that had it in the manifesto was the Lib Dems.

Yeah, interesting isn't it?

Change government. I felt it might be worth kind of. Kind of focusing the attention or bringing it to the government's attention, maybe that this might be another chance to to maybe consider it because I think the advantage would be obviously protects against discrimination. At, for instance, the workplace. But it also would be included in official reports as a characteristic, so I think it looks like it would be very helpful thing to have.

And actually, even though it has not been adopted by the government, it has been adopted by local authorities and they have actually they are they. I think they signed a letter basically agreeing to treat it as if it was a protected characteristic. The official numbers I found were around 78 has found it, but I know from Twitter that it is actually more it's I think we are in the triple digits now. It should be I think last time I checked it was around announced it was 100 now but you can't really cite Twitter. I'm guessing it's over 100 now. So what local authorities were treating it as? If it if it was a protective characteristic?

And when you say, it does make so much sense that it should be. It seems a bit of an injustice, really, that there that there isn't that protection there already.

Yeah, I think one worry that they kind of discussed was maybe. It could maybe backfire a bit, so if people you know lose it, but then what? They were but. But I think the point, the independent Social Care review is making it said it's a hidden characteristic. So people can decide whether or not to disclose.

Yeah, and that's critical, isn't it that have that choice? Which is kind of key to having a protected characteristic in some sense, like the choice to declare aspects of yourself or not, and fascinating. Well, that sounds actually wonderful editorial. And obviously the article by Young and colleagues. Dance. Sparked off that it's brilliant, isn't it? Because it's looking again at the something that is really important to us in the journal, which is sort of seeking the voices of people with experience. Of care that lived experience and we've got that, haven't we from a few articles. So the young and colleagues article looking at young people in care and Matthews and colleagues as well where they're looking at what's important to young people. Adolescents, isn't it in care? The things that kind of matter to them, so we're sort of like we've got those those two articles speaking to each other quite nicely.

We're both using the same method, so both of them use a photo elicitation method.

Where people basically bring photographs to the interview. I think in the Matthews article they asked young people to take picture of what is important to them right now. Yeah. And I think I just remember one of the pictures was sort. The black cat.

Yeah, yeah, which is it's. Isn't it because actually so in the March, gosh, I'm going to say the the March 2024 issue of adoption and fostering, we had an article on pets. And the importance of pets, their children in care. And we've had a few other pets featuring, aren't they?

And I feel I feel like the the topic or the theme seems to be coming up here and there. So it just shows that pets can be really, could be potentially very important. Apply the role for young young people in in, in care. I remember I think that was from the pets article. Maybe this and that but but the one thing that comes up is that I am on judge mental and you can. Talk to them.

Yeah, yeah.

Patiently.

I say. Have you bet that really resonates with me? Definitely. So yeah, so we have the photos there and handing the the young and colleagues article, which is about barriers to accessing mental health support, isn't it? And as you're saying that kind of stigma and hopefully encouraging more research but also encouraging. Kind of training to. Produce some of those barriers or? Help implement some processes that make it easier for young people in care to feel that they can reach out to support and they can get that that much needed support as well. And so then moving. The next article that we've got is. About Ugandan. Fostering and I mean this is just so interesting. So this is by.

It's manual or a Kagan and Nuga Shani.

Wonderful. Yeah.

And the article is titled The Uncounted and Unseen Challenges of Refugee Foster families in Kampala, Uganda. And.

This is. Striking figure kind of early on at 1.5 million refugees in Uganda currently and an open door policy. But we're fostering there's not sort of, it's not an official legal process. So that is the articles kind of looking at that, isn't it and kind of what this direct and indirect fostering that is happening, how it's happening, but also what that means in practise for the care of these children? And I find it very eye opening. Opening.

An article on the kind of integer sectionality between kind of fostering and kind of refugees or or asylum seekers.

Yes, yes, definitely.

And I think one of the points they were making that off, these one and a half million. A. Proportion so over half like 6065% are actually children. And also I think the the number of I was quite surprised that I think.

Yeah, yeah.

They they they assessed quite a large number of foster families of 52, but but the more striking numbers that those 52 families care for, 200 and 889 children, which are swords. It's also saying something right.

Up to 10, like substituting in one case and guess. Yeah. So it's, it's. Yeah. And I think they will also sort of make the point that they want to break down this dichotomy as accompanied unaccompanied kind of asylum seekers or refugees because it's a situation that evolves and changes. For one, for any given individual or child, it's not the case that you can kind of label them one or the other. Jerry, Jerry. Eye opening. I thought very interesting indeed. The next article. I think I recognise one of. Co-authors. So I'm going to hand over to. For that one.

Yes. So so that was a proud supervisor moment of mine.

Umm.

Is the article was actually authored by my then trainee in the in our doctorate of Educational Psychology.

Yeah.

I'd be Komen, but it's now Doctor Abbie Komen.

And congratulations, Abby.

Yes.

And she did a study on the the Association of School belonging and well-being in in, in adolescence in care. And then, as I feel like as a disclaimer, I should should say. But I did not handle the submission as an editor, but this was.

Now it. We had a guest editor overseeing the submission and review process and the decision.

But. I was not. But in any stage, so this is just my legal disclaimer here.

Yeah, absolutely.

And I'm I'm just very happy to see Abby's hard work. Published so.

It's brilliant and it's there's an issue, isn't there? I think it's discussed about kind of quantitative and qualitative research in our field, which I think is some of interesting thing, isn't it because most of our research is. Qualitative that we publish because it's quite hard to get quantitative research, isn't it? Why is that?

Click part of it is trying to recruit the numbers you need for quantitative research, so just having.

Yeah, yeah.

People to take part, for instance, and I know and. And we have quite low numbers in this article, actually or relatively low numbers because it was very hard to recruit the young people, which was also I think still an aftermath of the pandemic probably as well. And we did, we did.

Right.

And I using the. Voila, we're here because actually epic. A kind of committee of young people in care to study, design by them and one one thing they asked us not to do was ask about their experiences of early trauma.

Right, right.

But we did not.

Yeah.

So I think it. Is valuable to do some participant engagement to see. To to make to to create a study that hopefully is relevant to the young people or to whoever participants. Obviously. But it's, you know, it's. Like yeah, I always feel like getting the numbers is is might be probably I think sometimes also people might feel that the voice is obviously individual voices are heard much better in in qualitative research like you use illustrative quotes right and and you are in depth exploring individual experiences and quantitative research looks. On an overall. Overarching group level.

Yeah.

But I think. The the. Advantage of of quantitative research, I guess, is that it's more more generalizable than because well qualitative research doesn't. You know also says that they that's not what they're aiming for. But and. Think what we what? What we what we like is if we get a mix of quality quantitative research and that particular love one they kind of complement each other.

Yeah.

But yeah, and then and then and here. I was also quite happy that we had then two qualitative studies that use creative methods. As artefact design, so I think I was. I feel like I always tell my my my students you know that when they write essays that they should consider studies with different designs and have a look of how those complement each other like you might.

Yes.

A. Study with a cross section of design. And the advantage is that it's a very large study, but the disadvantage is it's it's, it's not longitudinal and you can't really say something about the temporal order. Of things. And then you might have a smaller longitudinal studies, which has a really useful design, and then you have a qualitative study which adds steps to the results through the insightful findings and quotes, or could even generate a hypothesis for the next quantitative study to pursue.

Yes. Yeah.

Certain we need all of them to paint a picture.

Yeah. And everything kind of comes together and and in the journal, in within an issue and across our issues as well as within articles, it's about kind of. That patchwork, isn't it? Of different kinds of research, different results that build up this understanding for us to, to be able to kind of conduct better research and and get the findings, you know, to make lives better, for for young people in care and adopted.

I mean. Are moving towards more participatory designs generally in research and I think a very good thing just kind of including the participants that studies aimed at and asking them so this. What they're trying to?

You.

Is that important to you? This is why we think it's important. How should we go about it? I think those approaches really, really key going forward in a lot of our authors are doing it, which is.

Fantastic. Yes. Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And. So then. Article that we've got is an abcx model of family adjustment for children with intellectual disabilities. And this is a Spanish study. It This one hears from parents, it was a self report questionnaire, wasn't it? And I think again that's kind of hearing from foster parents in in families where there there are children with these complex needs. It's it's more of a kind of hearing voices. The. Who are in in the know and experiencing things? The most relevant factor that came out was family expectations, so kind of aiding adjustment in this context. Which is an interesting finding, isn't it? And. Good. Kind of. To come out of the research, really.

A family expectation also came out in another article. We'd be published where where they looked at expectations of adopters. That also played a role in there. So, and this is obviously now a study on on Foster Alison Nicks is that people with families with adopted and foster children.

Yeah.

Right. Sorry. Yes, it's both.

But see.

Yeah, and interesting. I mean, because obviously it's a Spanish study, but it shows you that these things kind of cross across. Cultures. And important in that respect as well.

A relatively large study was 62 families being involved.

Yeah, that's that's that's great and. Jill Schofield and colleagues, looking at long term foster care as a permanent plan because this is interesting, isn't it, that it's although it's been around since the 80s, kind of in in some respects, only in 2015 did it come into government regulations and. Guidance and it seems that there are decades kind of concluding that overall it's been a positive thing, but there are obviously. It's found that some things could be better. They asked local authorities and they were people were working in that capacity to comment on how it did the impact that it had on their working lives really and their procedures and practises. And lots of varied approaches. Yeah. So.

So there you survey data from local authorities. They did interviews with over 14 managers. Across 30 local authorities. So I think, yeah, quite insightful data that they have.

Really. Insightful. Yeah. And. And get good, good big numbers again. In this case, that makes sense for this kind of research project, doesn't it, to be able to get. Some some conclusions kind of coming out of that. I mean it seemed to be a big call for consistency really was one of the main main factors. The consistency in terms of how the guidelines are kind of being interpreted and implemented and. Obviously it needs government support, which I think is important because that loops it back to you that we have less politics. Well, no, you can't because it's political, isn't it? It's always going to be political. We're talking about kind of government guidelines here and you need that government support and in a way it cuts across. Like party lines, it's not about specific parties necessarily, but it is always going to be political and and that's not the key.

Thank you ideally. Leads to changes in policy and practise, right? So so either that the clinical guidelines that could be impacted on Nice guidelines for treatment of mental health problems that could be treatment of policies. On a national level. Or national level, right?

Yeah.

Be like for instance, with the institutionalisation BBC big strong policy messages there. You know that try to have an impact internationally on institutionalisation, for instance.

So yeah, so so I think. This is generally something research strives for, I suppose.

Yeah, one of its key functions if you like. Not just in its box. And then we have an article on attachment predictors. This is Sol Hillman. I it's such an important and interesting study that the people, Anna Freud, Centre and UC LS and it kind of largely. And the project that was running collaboration there, I I I think I want to defer to. Really. Because. To get it right, talking about these sort of matters about like attachment that project.

I feel like for this one, we should only give a teaser and just say if you want to know all about predictors of attachment in early and late place. And you should listen to our adoption fostering Journal podcast episode with. Saul Hillman from the Anna Freud Institute, who is talking about this study but also about the wider project. And some more publications with in line with that kind of on the topic.

Absolutely.

You're not going to spoil it for you, but say please have a listen because it's all is fantastic and he explained it much, much better than we ever.

Absolutely. And it said, yeah, it's really important research that's going on there as well, isn't it? And lots of it. Very prolific researchers, but projects going on, which was fantastic. So absolutely TuneIn and that is coming, is it?

I think it's already. Isn't it already out? Let me check.

This is where I see I'm going to I. On leave so.

I think yeah, it is. There we go. It is already out and it's episode #9 in our adoption fostering Journal podcast. And you might have noticed the podcast. Recently evolved was integrated into quorum conversations. So. So previously we hosted it on our research web page in the journal. But apparently. It has gorged interest, which we are very happy about, quite a bit and it is now integrated into the wider kind of quorum conversations, podcast theories series, but it's still kind of retained its name adoption, fostering Journal, podcast and the episodes of the. Journal podcast are still numbered consecutively and this is episode #9.

Fabulous. Great. I'll just go and cheat in.

And I would say that. Last study in our issue is by. Past guests on.

Our podcast. Yes, yes. Oh, this is all. You think we planned this, wouldn't you? It's all coming together.

And I think Sarah Lloyd is, as you can mentioned, if she's an occupational therapist. \*\*\*\*\*, and she developed the bus model which we discussed in a previous podcast episode. I think it's episode #5.

As good Knowledge episode 5. Yeah, brilliant article.

She discusses data from 2 service evaluations of leaflets and early years programme for children in foster care and adoption, which is based on the bus model and bus stands for building underdeveloped sensory motor systems. So it's too qualitative service evaluation supported, if I'm not mistaken by trainees on the doctorate programme in clinical psychology and I want to say Leeds University.

I suggest it is at Leeds. Yeah, yeah.



Because we're always happy to feature work from kind of early career researchers on the journal we.

Really. Are and. Yes, as you say, we've had this previous. Call which is in volume 47, issue 2 July 2023. The article on the bus models say this is a sort of sort of follow up from that and then as you say, we had the broadcast on that where we spoke. Sarah, which was really lovely about the bus model. Yeah. So two really interesting sepsis. Projects and looking at fostering and adoption sort of two respective groups and the benefits they had and. I just always I. Love this research and the work that Sarah's doing and find it really interesting of thinking about. I guess the holistic aspects of maybe the difficult start in life that some children have and the effect that that can have emotionally, but also on their relationship with their body and how that relates back to how they feel about themselves and their happiness levels and well-being as well. I think it all kind of. It's all integration. You have research and the work that she does, which. Which is good. Lovely. So we're not quite the issue, isn't. It's a.

Very full issue. Lots of lots of interesting articles. I hope you liked our teaser. And we'll we'll give it a read and listen to our podcast episode with Doctor Saul Human.

Thank you for listening to us today.

Bye bye.

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