

2

A risky business:

A teenager's dilemma in disclosing sexual abuse

Tina Besley

Abstract

This paper re-tells aspects of a story of sexual abuse by her stepfather that Fay, a Pacific Island¹ teenage girl, disclosed to the author, a school counsellor. It reflects upon some of the dilemmas, issues and risks that arise not only for a young person who discloses sexual abuse, but also for the counsellor. While not dismissing the effects of the abuse on the whole family system, the paper is premised on the understanding that the child is the central figure, and that a genuinely child-centred approach is needed to prevent re-victimising the child by the very policies and procedures that are designed for protection, help and healing. Despite good intent, there can be, as my re-telling of Fay's narrative points out, unintended consequences and on-going negative effects. I am not suggesting that sexual abuse should not be disclosed, rather that in telling authorities about sexual abuse disclosures, counsellors need to consider cultural, legal and ethical complexities in maintaining a child-centred professional therapeutic practice.

There's a widespread notion that children are open, that the truth about their inner selves just seeps out of them. That's all wrong. No one is more covert than a child, and no one has greater cause to be that way. It's a response to a world that's always using a tin-opener on them to see what they have inside, just in case it ought to be replaced with a more useful type of tinned foodstuff (Høeg, 1993, p. 44).

Introduction: telling about sexual abuse

The paper outlines the narrative of a cross-cultural family, then explores some issues that arise in counselling when young people disclose sexual abuse. It is about the ethics and the politics of telling and the impact thereof on the child who has been sexually abused. It invokes a 'meta-telling' in the form of a narrative (or case study) that is in effect a further telling of the story by a professional for professional purposes. While not dismissing the effects of the abuse on the whole family system,

the paper is premised on the understanding that the child is the central figure, and that a genuinely child-centred approach is needed to prevent re-victimising the child by the very procedures that are designed for protection, help and healing.

The issues raised for the child and the counsellor in 'telling' include: Why tell? Who to tell? When to tell? Does the age of the child affect telling? What are the ramifications of telling? What is *sayable* and *by whom* are power issues that help constitute the relationship between counsellor and client, with both the language used and how it is used being important for both parties (Besley, 2002a; White & Epston, 1990). Telling is aimed at stopping abuse (and usually punishing the abuser); healing the victim, and preventing and protecting them and other children from being abused further. Despite assurances of confidentiality, once the authorities are told, the reality is that a lot of people end up knowing – social workers, police, therapists, doctors, judges, court officials and so on. The situation is taken out of the hands of the young person and their family by the state's agents, who assert an expertise that often assumes it knows what is best for the family. In New Zealand, where the professionals involved in dealing with sexual abuse disclosures are predominantly white and middle-class, families can easily feel patronised and powerless in this process if their needs are not listened to and if cultural sensitivities are not adequately addressed. The narrative provided highlights the point that although policy may set out procedures for counsellors to take, unintended consequences often arise, therefore the specifics of each situation need to be taken into account in choosing a course of action rather than a rigid application of policy.

Historically, many societies and the professionals who might have challenged the existence of sexual abuse of young people have met it with denial, silence and repression. For example, Freud initially revealed then denied that a common experience of many of his female patients was unwanted sexual experience or sexual abuse (Masson, 1989). Because Freud's theory was unacceptable to and rejected by professional colleagues at the time, he recanted and replaced it with a theory that seduction experiences described were expressions of children's sexual fantasies rather than reality, an Oedipus complex (Masson, 1989).

In Western societies, the veil of silence about sexual abuse was lifted with the rise of feminism in the 1970s, when the stories that women related during consciousness-raising sessions revealed that abuse had happened to them as children (Bagley & King, 1990; Bass & Davis, 1988; Doyle, 1990). Both feminism and social research have been central in exposing oppressive and abusive patriarchal practices and in enabling female voices to be heard. Research indicates that most abuse is committed by men against girls (de Francis, 1969; Finkelhor, 1984) and that having a stepfather is one of

the strongest risk factors for sexual abuse, more than doubling the risk of a girl being sexually abused (see also de Young, 1982; Gruber & Jones, 1983; Russell, 1983). In the light of this research, feminists argue that sexual abuse is a function of the inferior status of women and children and of male socialisation within patriarchal social structures. It is argued that where institutionally protected patriarchal power is exercised in the family, the form of power that is exercised – that of male power over females and children – is authoritarian, with male ‘ownership’ of women and children and in turn male sexual domination of women and children. Such a paradigm results in a high level of sexual violence and abuse by fathers, male kin and kin substitutes (Brownmiller, 1976; Herman & Hirschman, 1977; Jacobs, 1994; Nelson, 1982; Parks, 1990; Rush, 1980; Ward, 1984). Jacobs (1994, p. 11) concluded that incest is the “most extreme form of the sexual objectification of the female child in patriarchal culture” for it not only violates personal boundaries, but also destroys the bond between mother and daughter. The daughter’s right to her own body and her attachment to her mother, who Chodorow (1978, 1990) would argue is the child’s primary role model, is broken, which can have serious negative effects on the subsequent development of the child’s personality.

A preponderance of personal accounts, case studies and ethnographic literature featuring the stories of people who have been sexually abused as children show many commonalities that underline a number of important findings in the professional literature (Bagley & King, 1990; Bass & Davis, 1988; Doyle, 1990). These include a difficulty in telling that involves complex feelings of fear, shame, ignorance, and loss of self-esteem. Furthermore, better and earlier education could help children avoid and resist sexual attacks. Sexual abuse can have different and contrary impacts on victims, whereby some may act out sexually while others withdraw to protect or disguise their tortured centre of self. Consequent feelings of helplessness, moral defeat and confusion in human relationships and in sexuality can often brand victims as easy prey for future predators. In sum, the abuse disrupts or destroys childhood, diminishes adolescence and can devastate adult mental health and one’s sense of self and identity.

Fay and me: a school counsellor’s reflections after being told about sexual abuse

When I first met her, Fay was a 13-year-old Pacific Island girl in a year 9 class at a multi-cultural, co-educational high school in a New Zealand city. Fay lived with her mother, European stepfather and several younger step-siblings. She was the child from a previous relationship of her mother’s. Fay’s stepfather sexually abused her. The author, and others, counselled her for two years. The interventions that had particular resonance

for Fay included both psychodrama and Michael White and David Epston's narrative therapy (for detailed descriptions of the main features, arguments and practice-related examples see Besley, 2002a, 2002b; Freedman & Combs, 1996; McLeod, 2000; Monk et al., 1997; Parry & Doan, 1994; Payne, 2000; Smith & Nylund, 1997; Speedy, 2000; White & Epston, 1990; Winslade & Monk, 1999). Fay's story highlights the dilemma facing many teenagers when they contemplate whether or not to tell about sexual abuse. It is compounded by the difficulties of a reconstituted family of mixed ethnicity, dealing with cross-cultural issues in a dominant hegemonic Western culture. The mother and grandparents were immigrants to New Zealand from a Pacific Island nation where traditional values predominated and extended families lived together. In New Zealand, where Fay and the younger children were born, the grandparents lived at a separate, but nearby, location. Fay acknowledged that she had accepted Western values to a larger extent than her mother and grandparents. Nevertheless, despite her stepfather being European, she respected him as she would a male in a traditional, patriarchal, Pacific Island culture, as "head" of the house whose word was law, as sanctioned by both cultural and religious norms.

The dean referred Fay to me, as school counsellor, because her mother was concerned about Fay's interest in boys – a situation that teachers had observed on a school camp. When I first met Fay to talk about this concern, she was giggly and chatty and slightly embarrassed, but thought that it was all pretty normal to be interested in boys and "pushing up" at her age. Although issues of adolescent sexuality and what is permissible for adolescent girls differ considerably between families and for different ethnic groups, often related to a combination of religious or cultural beliefs about women, sex and marriage (see Figiel, 1996; Mageo, 1998; Tiatia, 1998), I agreed with Fay's opinion. But we both knew and discussed how this behaviour was disapproved of for a Pacific Island girl. Unlike many Pacific Island families, however, hers was not church-going and so was less strict on these matters than some others might have been, maybe because her stepfather was European. She knew that if her family was a strictly religious one she might have been liable to a "hiding" (beating) by a family member to teach her not to behave this way and for bringing shame on them (see Figiel, 1996). Like the dean and her mother, Fay was concerned about her reputation and that she was seen as a bit of a "pushover" by the boys. A month later Fay assured me that she had settled down, was concentrating on her schoolwork and spending a lot of time looking after her mother's new baby whom she adored. As the eldest girl in the family, as for most Pacific Island families, it was her job to look after the younger ones before and after school, and she did this willingly (see Figiel, 1996; Tiatia, 1998). With her permission I reported back to the dean, who was similarly pleased with her progress and

school report and reported such to her mother. So after about four sessions, I stopped counselling Fay.

In hindsight, with what later eventuated, maybe I could be accused of not reading the signs. I was familiar with research linking precocious, excessive or inappropriate sexual behaviour as clearer and stronger indicators of sexual abuse than any other factor, occurring in between “25–33% of all sexually abused children” (Corby, 2000, p. 174) and in 36% of 7- to 13-year-olds who had been abused (Gomes-Swartz et al., 1990). However, in my judgement and with Fay’s reassurances and improved behaviour, there seemed to be nothing at all unusual or “over-sexualised” in her behaviour compared with most New Zealand girls of her age. My assessment seemed to be backed up by the dean’s later reflection that she was not acting “abnormally” in terms of sexuality, but that some concern for her reputation arose in the light of her slightly unusual behaviour compared with most Pacific Island girls and in response to her mother’s concern. Furthermore, Fay did not seem to exhibit any of the other short-term effects that research indicates may occur in the two years after abuse has occurred: general psychopathology; fearfulness; depression, withdrawal, suicide; hostility and aggression; physical symptoms (sleeping and eating disorders); running away and acting out behaviours; cognitive disability, developmental delay and school performance; and inappropriate sexual behaviour (Corby, 2000).

Later in the year, as part of health education, I took Fay’s class for a lesson about sexual abuse and received a big wave and cheery smile from Fay and her friends as I entered the room. The school assigned a school counsellor to teach this so that students would understand what constitutes sexual abuse, what they can do about it and to whom (for example the school counsellor) they might disclose things. As I returned to my office, a tearful and clearly distressed Fay came in with a friend. They told me that a vignette I had read about a stepfather coming into a girl’s bedroom and sexually touching her once the mother had gone to work described exactly what had happened to Fay in the past. She sobbed through her story and assured me that it was all over, but had started when she was 10 years old. She was absolutely terrified about anyone else, especially her family, being told, and doubled over almost screaming in pain at the thought, begging me not to do so. She then got angry and defiant, saying that she would deny everything, pretending that she had made it up, and take whatever punishment came her way if I acted without her consent.

In taking whatever actions I chose, I had to make a series of judgement calls that protected the girl and her siblings, to act in accord with relevant policies and procedures, and above all to act ethically. My first concern was for her immediate safety if the abuse was continuing. My second concern was that the younger children might be

in danger. If this was the case, I had to inform the authorities (the New Zealand Children and Young Person's Service – CYPS as it was then known) immediately. Fay was utterly adamant that neither was the case. She pointed out that her mother no longer worked at night, and suggested that since her siblings were all her stepfather's children he wouldn't touch them; she was different, being part Pacific Island and part European. She thought that her ethnicity had something to do with it – maybe because she was more like her mother. She was very protective of the other children and said that she would rather put herself in his direction than let anything happen to them. Fay's fear that she would get a hiding for "doing it" with him, for not having told her mother and for telling an outsider was a realistic one, consistent with the experiences of many Pacific Island students whom I knew personally. The fear that she would be called a liar and not believed was something she said she couldn't live with. But by far her worst fear was that if she told, it would break up the family, something she didn't want to be held responsible for. She had worked out very quickly what she would lose – her mother would be furious with her for breaking up her marriage, her siblings would hate her for causing their father to leave, the family would be shamed in front of other friends and relatives, and all of them would suffer financially. This was a massive burden for any 13-year-old girl to bear.

Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse had prompted considerable public debate in New Zealand in the early 1990s with the passing of the Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989) and the set of 40 amendments the government subsequently passed in 1995. The legal provisions related to the care and protection of children and young people whereby their welfare and interests are deemed to come first; how child abuse was to be reported, and placed new child protection duties on the Department of Social Welfare. After extensive consultation with many groups and organisations including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Police and Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care, the government opted to emphasise education and voluntary reporting instead of mandatory reporting and so *Breaking the Cycle: An Interagency Guide to Child Abuse* was published in the aftermath. This was followed in 1996 by a set of National Interagency Protocols, signed by the relevant chief executive or equivalent from several agencies, including the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZCYPS, 1995, 1996; see Besley, 2003).

The school's policy had different procedures to follow in situations of *past* and *current* abuse, which were consistent with what a local sexual abuse counselling service outlined and with the law. I had an ethical dilemma and a judgement call to make that depended on my acceptance or otherwise of Fay's assurances about the abuse being in the past and her siblings not being at risk. If I did not accept her word, and considered

there to be serious and immediate danger, my ethical and legal responsibility was to act in the interests of child safety by informing the authorities, overriding her concerns and breaching her confidentiality (see the *NZAC Handbook*, 1995 & 2000 for the then Code of Ethics). Because I felt reasonably reassured that the abuse was in the past, I followed the procedures for that. I agreed not to tell immediately, but to work things through with her about how this would be done so she felt safer. I made it clear, however, that before long I would have to tell the authorities and her mother, because as a young person she was still under her mother's care and responsibility. Furthermore, I suggested that it was important that her stepfather was called to account and that some appropriate therapy could be provided for the family – something beyond my brief as a school counsellor and something that the authorities could provide. She thought this would be okay in the future once she'd got her head around it.

After regular counselling sessions for a few weeks, Fay agreed for me to tell CYPS, saying that she would tell her mother at the same time. Fay did not want me to tell her mother. She wanted to do this herself, arguing that she knew how best to handle her mother. As a result, Fay and her family were subjected to the formal processes of being interviewed by a CYPS social worker and Fay made an evidential video (see NZCYPS, 1995, 1996). Needless to say this was a difficult time for everyone. Fay reported that her mother was furious, but Fay's story was believed and luckily she did not get a hiding. The younger siblings had not been abused. The stepfather pleaded guilty to charges made in court and was removed from the family home but was not imprisoned. Instead he was ordered to undergo sexual abuse counselling and a legal protection order was taken out against him. Fay and her mother were entitled to individual and joint sexual abuse counselling by counsellors funded and registered by the state's Accident Compensation Commission (ACC). However, two months later Fay reported that both she and her mother were dissatisfied with this counselling. They seemed to shift blame from the threat within the family, transferring it to the external threat of the counselling agency that tried to help, but was viewed as a powerful threat to the stability and security of the family. As a result, there was no whole family therapy, they refused to continue with the agency counsellors, and her mother wanted no more counselling at all. Fay opted to return to individual counselling with me, adamant that she wanted counselling at school, even without the family knowing. This was possible because as an aspect of confidentiality and respect for individual autonomy, there is no obligation for a New Zealand counsellor to inform the family that a teenager is attending counselling (Ludbrook, 1991; Nelson-Agee, 1997). However, because I was not a specialist sexual abuse counsellor nor registered with ACC, subsequently, with her approval, I arranged for Fay to receive specialist counselling outside school fortnightly

for the next year. Both Fay and the counsellor chose to keep me informed, since I was the person on the spot in school if any problems arose, which of course sometimes happened. So a collaborative approach was maintained.

However, not only was the stepfather formally removed from the family, but also, as the result of an informal family agreement, Fay was removed. The legal protection order required that the stepfather must not come into contact with Fay, yet legally he could not be denied seeing the younger children for whom family visits were important. To enable his visits to the family while complying with the court order, the family chose to send Fay to live with her mother's parents, ostensibly to look after them and to be able to concentrate more on her schoolwork – at least that was the official, face-saving story the family gave to explain things to family and friends. The truth about why both the stepfather and Fay left the home was not told to the younger children, because they were considered too young to understand the unpleasant reality that their father had been convicted of sexual abuse. As a consequence, they believed that Fay had done something wrong and was the cause of their father no longer living with them, and questioned her about this. She discussed this situation in counselling but, despite the pain she felt, she was adamant and believed that it was best to collude with the fabrication and continue to sacrifice herself for the greater good of the family. She worried about how they would react when they eventually learned the truth about their father and about growing up with a lie. In effect she had “lost” her immediate family and had little contact with her mother, with whom things remained tense, and with her siblings. Fay had become something of a scapegoat, but seemed to mostly take it in her stride because she said that on balance she was relieved that the abuse had stopped and she was no longer fearful of it happening again.

Just when things seemed to be going well, Fay came under another round of intense family pressure when the temporary legal protection order was due to become permanent. She definitely wanted to continue counselling, despite opposition from the extended family who thought she should be over it by then. The lawyer (known as “counsel for the child”) who had been assigned by the court to protect Fay's interests was vehemently supportive of her rights to on-going legal protection and to on-going counselling. After the lawyer spoke with the adult extended family members about how they had inadvertently framed the situation in such a way as to assign an element of blame on Fay, the pressure subsided.

Two years after I first met Fay, she was receiving ACC-funded counselling fortnightly and was doing well at school, but had become somewhat less outgoing. She reported that counselling had helped her to deal with her continued feelings of anger towards her stepfather and her mother, of guilt, worthlessness and not deserving

better in relationships. Her relationship with her mother became more difficult after the sexual abuse disclosure because she sensed that she was being accused of being something of a “Lolita”, and she resented her mother’s strong and largely continued tie with the stepfather instead of receiving her wholehearted support. The barriers for both of them may well have diminished with some more joint therapy but Fay was unwilling to take that risk and her mother was not interested. Fay was sad about this, but resigned to it and thought that in the future she would only go to counselling once a month.

Some issues for the counsellor

In this section of the paper I select and briefly address only some of the issues that Fay’s story highlights. These include trust, confidentiality, the form of counselling and ethnicity. In dealing with sexual abuse disclosures a counsellor has to rely on law, formal policy and procedures and ethics, bringing to bear on these his/her expertise and knowledge gained from past experience, theory and research. There is one set of personal dilemmas of telling for the client and another ethical set for the counsellor, but both are centred on trust. The client needs to trust the counsellor to be sensitive with his/her story, to uphold confidentiality and to act to stop the abuse. The counsellor needs to be able to trust the client’s story, respect their autonomy and, acting with the principle of beneficence in mind, judge when to tell (see the NZAC Code of Ethics, NZAC 1995, 2000). The counselling process may even involve a certain amount of persuasion rather than non-directive counselling when a child or teenager is, understandably, extremely reluctant to tell. However, rushing ahead and overriding the autonomy of a young person is highly likely to be detrimental to their ability to trust and have a sense of control of their lives – the very things that have been damaged by the abuse. Further counselling may be resisted if this is the case, as seemed to happen with the specialist agency that Fay and her mother went to.

Confidentiality is a major ethical issue in such situations, and the number of people who seem to need to hear the story can make the client and family believe that all and sundry know about it. At one stage Fay complained that she was thoroughly fed up with telling her story yet again to another person and at first resisted seeing the lawyer. She requested me to speak on her behalf while she just nodded or shook her head. She just wanted it all to go away and to get back to normal. This aspect of the process is clearly painful and Fay expressed strong and understandable annoyance at its intrusiveness. While confidentiality is expected to be maintained within the team of professionals, since it is likely that at least six to ten people may become involved, this leaves plenty of room for slippage, especially if some professionals involved do not

have a code of ethics or do not adopt a similar stance on confidentiality. At school, the mother told the dean. Fay's close friends knew. Other staff, and even students, may well have worked out that something serious was afoot and jumped to the right conclusion with Fay's regular absence from class to attend counselling. Although the professionals may well be acting with as much propriety as possible, the legal nature of the process once the authority of the state is invoked – involving social workers, police, lawyers, judge, counsellors – can become bewildering, and upsetting. The situation is taken out of the control of the client and the family and can make the victim re-victimised to a certain extent, wishing they had just kept quiet instead of telling, just as Fay expressed quite clearly.

There are issues about best practice in terms of the structure of counselling in situations of sexual abuse – should there be full family counselling; individual counselling; parent-child counselling; should the offender be included; whether and when the truth should be relayed to young children, and so on, and who decides this? This paper does not attempt to debate these questions but to point out that although the whole family system is affected by the abuse, surely it is the wishes and needs of the abused young person that are paramount, followed by those of the family with their different needs. To prevent a repeat of the abusive dynamics of power, control and secrecy within the family, the offender should not be included without the informed consent of the victim and not before his therapy has resulted in substantial progress in taking responsibility for the abuse and understanding the damage done (Jenkins, 1990). As Fay's narrative highlights, the decisions about the form of counselling would seem to be generally best left to the abused person and the family, depending somewhat on the young person's age and capability, with such decisions possibly being made in consultation with a different counsellor.

Child protection in New Zealand has primarily been the responsibility of the Children & Young Persons Service and its successor organisation, Child, Youth and Family (the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services). This organisation has the multiple functions of protecting children and young people from further abuse, organising therapy for the abused and their families, and gathering evidence that is forwarded to the Police for the criminal justice system to act against offenders (NZCYPS, 1995, 1996). Offenders may or may not be imprisoned, but they will often be required to undergo extensive counselling courses to change their aggressive sexual behaviour if they are to return to the family after imprisonment. Some professionals argue against imprisonment of offenders on the grounds that it increases family denial and retaliation against the abused, instead recommending a whole-family counselling approach aimed at reconciling and reconstituting the family (Corby, 2000;

Doyle, 1990; Giaretto, 1982). In Fay's situation, despite her father receiving a non-custodial sentence, whole-family counselling was rejected and elements of denial and rejection of the victim remained.

For counselling, there are also issues around ethnicity, and it is often asserted that people should see counsellors of the same gender and ethnicity as themselves. Not one of the professionals that Fay or her family saw was a Pacific Islander, and the only non-European was the female lawyer who acted as "counsel for the child". Although a Pacific Island counsellor was available, Fay opted to see either me or the outside counsellor, who were both Pakeha. She indicated that it was nothing to do with ethnicity, solely personal preference because she felt comfortable with multi-ethnic friends and with people she trusted. Nevertheless, in this case the dearth of professionals from other than Pakeha backgrounds points to an urgent need for increasing the number of professionals, including counsellors, from a range of ethnic groups in New Zealand, to provide balance, appropriate cultural contexts and real choices for people. This is something that schools, universities and NZAC are attempting to address. However, in the interim, it also points to the need for Pakeha counsellors to have a high level of knowledge and understanding of the sensitivities involved in cross-cultural situations.

Counselling is not just about helping people to cope with the bad stuff that happens to them in their lives. It has a wider ethical, professional and moral responsibility in acting to promote social justice and social action, "taking stands on social issues and working to eradicate systems and ideologies that perpetuate discrimination and disregard individual rights" (Lee, 1999, p. 16). Stopping child sexual abuse is one component of this. To achieve this there seem to be two goals: first, the child needs to be in an environment where he/she is not subject to abuse, and second, they need to develop skills and attitudes to recognise and deal with abuse should it arise if or when the abuser returns to the family. The first involves a challenge to traditional patriarchal power relations so that women and children gain status and are not subjected to a structure that facilitates male aggression and sexual domination. The second indicates the need for appropriate sex education for children. This remains the one area of the New Zealand curriculum that parents are legally able to withdraw their children from. Apart from those who view it as the right of the family to impart such education, it is usually religious or cultural taboos that are raised as arguments against sex education in schools because of fears that education will sexualise children too early and will result in them becoming sexually active. The unfortunate paradox is that "denying children sexuality allows some of those who recognise it to abuse it" (Blagg et al., 1989, p. 7) and lack of sexuality education leaves children with no protection from those who are intent on taking advantage of the child's trust, innocence and ignorance.

Conclusion

In the situation described in this paper, the dilemma for teenagers and for counsellors is when to tell and what the ramifications are likely to be. It seems imperative that in deciding to tell, the client who has been abused must not suffer undue consequences and that it should be the offender who receives the penalty. But as Fay's story shows, despite various legal protections, the situation is by no means clear-cut for the client. All members of the family system are affected to a greater or lesser extent. Regardless of policy and procedures, the professionals involved would do well to remember that it is not they who have the structure and security of their family at stake when they are deciding whether or not to tell.

References

- Bagley, C. & King, K. (1990). *Child sexual abuse: The search for healing*. London & New York: Tavistock/Routledge.
- Bass, E. & Davis, L. (1988). *The courage to heal: A guide for women survivors of child sexual abuse*. London: Vermillion.
- Besley, Tina (2002a). *Counseling youth: Foucault, power and the ethics of subjectivity*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Besley, A.C. (Tina) (2002b). Foucault and the turn to narrative therapy. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 30 (2): 125–43.
- Besley, A.C. (Tina) (2003). The professionalisation of school counselling in New Zealand in the 20th century, special issue of *Access*, 21 (2), in press.
- Blagg, H., Hughes, J.A. & Wattam, C. (1989). *Child sexual abuse: Listening, hearing and validating the experiences of children*. London: Longman.
- Brownmiller, S. (1976). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Chodorow, N.J. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chodorow, N.J. (1990). Psychoanalytic feminism/psychoanalytic psychology. In D.L. Rhode (Ed.), *Theoretical perspectives on sexual difference*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Corby, B. (2000). *Child sexual abuse: Towards a knowledge base* (2nd ed.). Buckingham & Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- de Francis, V. (1969). *Protecting the child victim of sex crimes committed by adults*. Denver, CO: American Humane Society.
- de Young, M. (1982). *The sexual victimisation of children*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Doyle, C. (1990). *Working with abused children*. Houndmills & London: Macmillan.
- Figiel, S. (1996). *Where we once belonged*. Auckland: Pasifika Press.

- Finkelhor, D. (1984). *Child sexual abuse: New theory and research*. New York: The Free Press.
- Freedman, J. & Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York: Norton.
- Giaretto, H. (1982). *Integrated treatment of child sexual abuse*. Palo Alto: Science and Behaviour Books.
- Gomes-Swartz, B., Horowitz, J., Cardarelli, A. (1990). *Child sexual abuse: The initial effects*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Gruber, K. & Jones, R. (1983). Identifying determinants of risk of sexual victimization of youth. *Child and Abuse, 7*: 17–24.
- Herman, J. & Hirschman, L. (1977). Father-daughter incest. *Signs, 2*: 1–22.
- Høeg, P. (1993) *Miss Smilla's feeling for snow*. Trans. from the Danish by F. David. London: Flamingo.
- Jacobs, J.L. (1994). *Victimised daughters: Incest and development of the female self*. London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, A. (1990). *Invitations to responsibility: The therapeutic engagement of men who are violent and abusive*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Lee, C.C. (1999). Counsellors as agents for social change: New direction for the millennium. *NZAC Newsletter, 20* (2): 12–17.
- Ludbrook, R. (1991). *A New Zealand guide to children and the law*. Wellington: Imprint.
- Mageo, J.M. (1998). *Theorizing self in Samoa: Emotions, genders, and sexualities*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Masson, J. (1989). *Against therapy*. London: HarperCollins.
- McLeod, J. (2000). The development of narrative-informed theory, research and practice in counselling and psychotherapy: European perspectives. *European Journal of Psychotherapy Counselling and Health, 3* (3): 331–33.
- Monk, G., Winslade, J., Crocket, K. & Epston, D. (Eds) (1997). *Narrative therapy in practice: The archaeology of hope*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nelson, S. (1982). *Incest: Fact and myth*. Edinburgh: Stramullion.
- Nelson-Agee, M. (1997). Privacy and the school counsellor. *Access, 16* (1): 20–36.
- New Zealand Association of Counsellors (1995). *NZAC handbook*. Hamilton: Publisher.
- New Zealand Association of Counsellors (2000). *NZAC handbook*. Hamilton: Publisher.
- New Zealand Children & Young Persons Service (1995). *Breaking the cycle: An interagency guide to child abuse*. Wellington: Publisher.
- New Zealand Children & Young Persons Service (1996). *Breaking the cycle: Interagency protocols*. Wellington: Publisher.

- Parks, P. (1990). *Rescuing the "inner child": Therapy for adults sexually abused as children*. London: Souvenir Press.
- Parry, A. & Doan, R. (1994). *Story re-visions: Narrative therapy in the post-modern world*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Payne, M. (2000). *Narrative therapy: An introduction for counsellors*. London: Sage.
- Rush, F. (1980). *The best kept secret*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Russell, D. (1983). Incidence and prevalence of intrafamilial and extrafamilial sexual abuse of female children. *Child and Abuse*, 7: 133–46.
- Smith, C. & Nylund, D. (1997). *Narrative therapies with children and adolescents*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Speedy, J. (2000). The "storied" helper. *European Journal of Psychotherapy Counselling and Health*, 3 (3): 361–74.
- Tiatia, J.S. (1998). *Caught between cultures: A New Zealand-born Pacific Island perspective*. Auckland: Christian Research Association.
- Ward, E. (1984). *Father daughter rape*. London: Women's Press.
- White, M. & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Winslade, J. & Monk, G. (1999). *Narrative counseling in schools: Powerful and brief*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International Association for Counselling (IAC) Conference, Lonavla, Maharashtra, India, May–June 2001.

Footnote

1. Fay (not her real name) gave me verbal permission to tell her story. Many years have since passed and consequently I am unable to show her this finished article, as I would prefer. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity I have selected certain details and omitted others, given Fay a pseudonym, not identified either the school or the city, and deliberately used the term "Pacific Island". I do not assume a cultural homogeneity of Pacific Island nations, but specifying an ethnicity or Pacific Island nation might compromise anonymity. The cultural context is important, but is only partially explored in this paper.