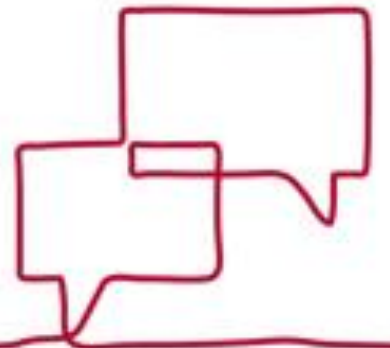# The reality for women affected by severe and multiple disadvantage

**Learning event hosted by the Scottish Frontline Network**

Ursula Hofeldt, Policy and Participation Manager, Cyrenians

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Teams 'housekeeping'

- Please mute yourself during presentations or when someone else is speaking

- Turn camera off if you have problems with your internet connection

- If possible, turn camera on for breakout room discussions and when asking questions

- Use the chat: please introduce yourself and ask questions throughout

- Slides will be shared after the event
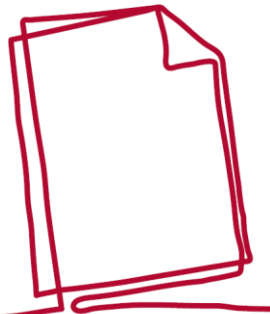
Agenda

Introduction – What is the Scottish Frontline Network?

Hard Edges: The Reality for Women Affected by Severe and Multiple Disadvantage – Presentation by Professor Sarah Johnsen

Q&A session

Discussion in breakout rooms – Sharing experiences and good practice

Wrapping up and feedback

Introduction

The Frontline Network aims to build relationships, share best practice, develop solutions, and communicate the experience and views of frontline workers across the UK.

- Free 'in-house' training opportunities
- Annual survey and conference
- Training Fund
- VRF (Vicar's Relief Fund)

Scottish Frontline Network: shares updates from the sector, facilitates events and training sessions providing a regular opportunity for frontline workers in Scotland to network, share expertise and experience, and link to decisionmakers.
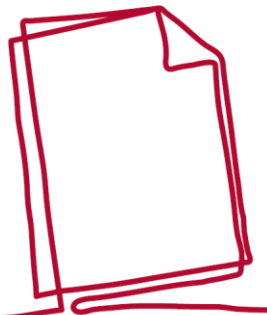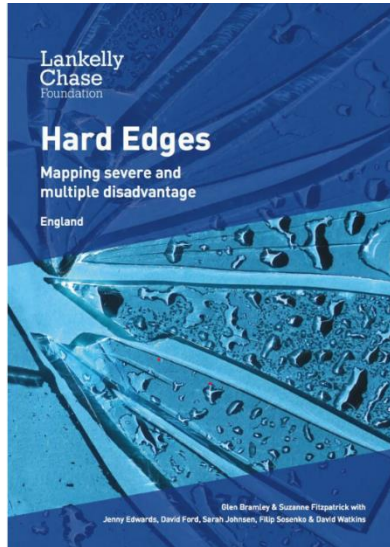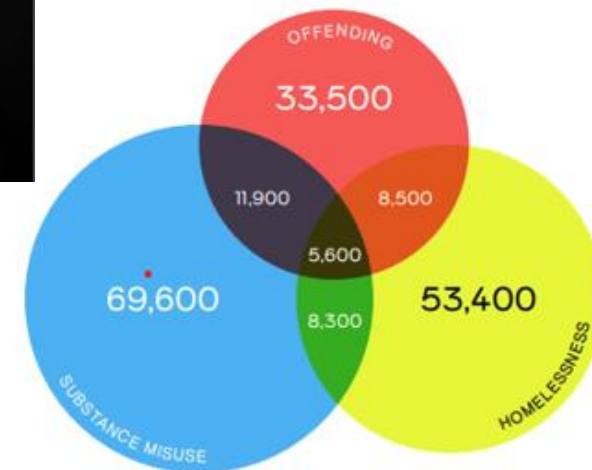
Hard Edges:

The Reality for Women Affected by Severe and Multiple Disadvantage

Prof Sarah Johnsen & Dr Janice Blenkinsopp

Background: 'Hard Edges'
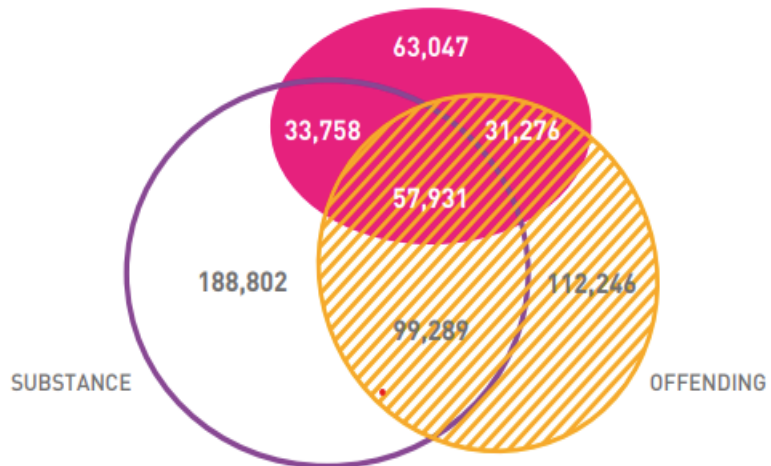
Background: 'Gender Matters'
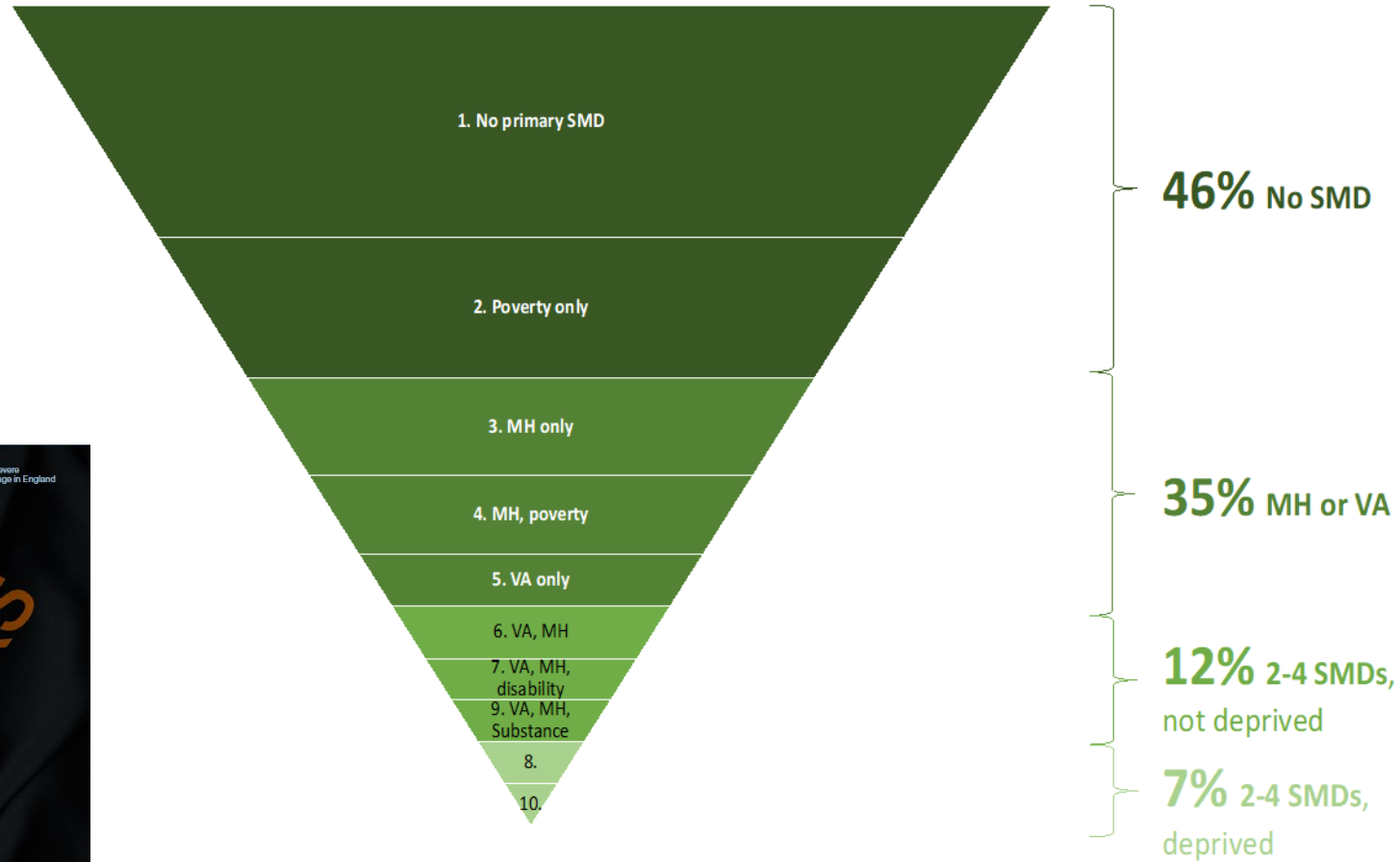
Research Questions

- How (if at all) does the combination of different types of disadvantage influence **service responses and women's experiences** of these?

- When and why do women with experience of SMD **first seek help** from support services?

- What if any **opportunities** to support women with experience of SMD are **'missed'**?

- What factors **facilitate and/or inhibit** their access to and engagement with support services?

- How do women **perceive and experience** the services available?

- What are the **implications** for the commissioning, design, and delivery of support services?

Methods

Qualitative case study approach, involving 2 services in each of 4 cities across UK (Belfast, Glasgow, Stoke-on-Trent, Swansea) *(n=8 services)*

Phase 1

- In-depth interviews with women with lived experience (timeline and traditional) *(n=60 participants)*
- Focus groups with frontline support workers *(n=26 participants)*

Phase 2

- Local area consultation in each city *(n=14 participants)*
- National key informant interviews *(n=14 participants)*

Childhood
TRAUMA
e.g. sexual &
Physical Abuse

—

Kids being
born (2)
of them
lost/taken
from me

—

Lead to homelessness
& drug abuse.
Lasting 3/4 years
(due to the loss of
my kids/trauma)
Met another
Abusive and manipu
lative of a partner

— Linking in with
homeless & drug
services to get
clean & see my
kids (SPT Program)
Pregnant with 3rd son.
Still using during pregnancy.
Meth didn't agree with
baby.

— Had got clean
and I stayed clean
for my other pregnancies
doing Really well for
5 years, seeing
kids, had a house
linking in with certain
services (welcome
centre) (external)
Rosemary St. &
homeless extern

— Bit of a Re-
lapse, homeless
again. Got
clean. 5th
son born.
ended upon
(coaming)
clean
now
for a
nearly year.

7 years
BEFRIENDING SERVICE, found it USEFUL.

Stopped for summer holidays

During childhood had amazing holidays to various countries, which were amazing twice a year with mum made Great memories.

Went to see DAD in NEWQUAY for holiday with Grampa, Had an amazing time. Went scubba set and body boarding, loved it, bright

Summer/1st year Started smoking, drinking still ice Skating.

2011 MARCH 10th
mum Suddenly Passed away due to a Heart murmer

19th MARCH.
Mums funeral Disagreement in Family, where my living arrangements were

BACK TO SCHOOL
Became more focused in my work & wanted to learn, as before I was basically a class clown & didnt care.

JUNE 2011
Step dad ANDY PASSED Away, Really Awful time.

2011-2012
Friends house was a party house had Some great memories there a lot of madness with alcohol. My Friend moved to LONDON AND ONE NIGHT APER A PARTY ME & a Friend had Broke IN Smashed the place, and a fire was Set.

School 2012.
Done my prelims & exams, notall of them unfornatly that was my last year at school

Summer 2012.
Fell in love with my 1st proper boyfriend took ecstasy for the first time and loved every moment of it, I was the happiest ever.

WENT TO CRAIG TARA with my Friends & their mum for 2 weeks was my first time there we had a Brilliant time

2012.
Moved in with friends When DAD WAS IN A BAD PLACE.

LATE 2012.
In SUFE! Picked up a few offences.

2013
BROKEN UP WITH first BF took it a bit hard & Started Hammering Alcohol & ecstasy for weeks and Cannibis everyday. Basically A MAD FEW MONTHS

April
Was getting sorted for court, & learning, got lifted from dads house and picked up a few charges. Missed My sentencing at HAmilton for fireraising.

21st APRIL '13'
Went to Hamilton Sherrif Not expecting jail time I got 12 months detention & coaccused got 18. We were seperated on our transport to jail & met some nice boys on GEO van.

PRISON IN 2013 for 12 months
HAD A Great experience & made Some Great friends I still have to this day Got my Painting & decorating Qualification, Got my Higher maths. Done a presentation for young offenders.

PRISON 2014 for 5/4 months.
I was pregnant at this point, had SW Come to see me about pre birth assesment, everything was well.

PRISON 2018 / 19 months.
IN JANUARY 2018, Was a hard time For myself, I was mentally in a bad place. I got raped on the night Jan 19th. I woke up to it happening As He had drugged me, with now I know to be Suboxone & valvium. I think thats what tipped me over the edge completely, now stop crying, hiding things, Head was just mental So a week or so later police came & lifted me for Warrants

In Glasgow, which was going back to my 21st Birthday. Friday it was, went to addewell to see my ex Partner, police came with warrents, so was devastated, went home with friends, every drop of alcohol & took drugs, and ended up with my Door Art in & 14 charges! The NEXT FRIDAY DONE ANOTHER weekender, Picked up 2 charges. IN JANUARY I was Remanded for 3 weeks & I asked for a prison Sentence in hope of help with my Mental Health. DURING MY TIME in Greenock I worked at the wood workshop making picnic tables. In Polmont I won a competition for a recovery poster + won a great WEE prize, also done a lifeskills programme, got my naloxone training & many other things.
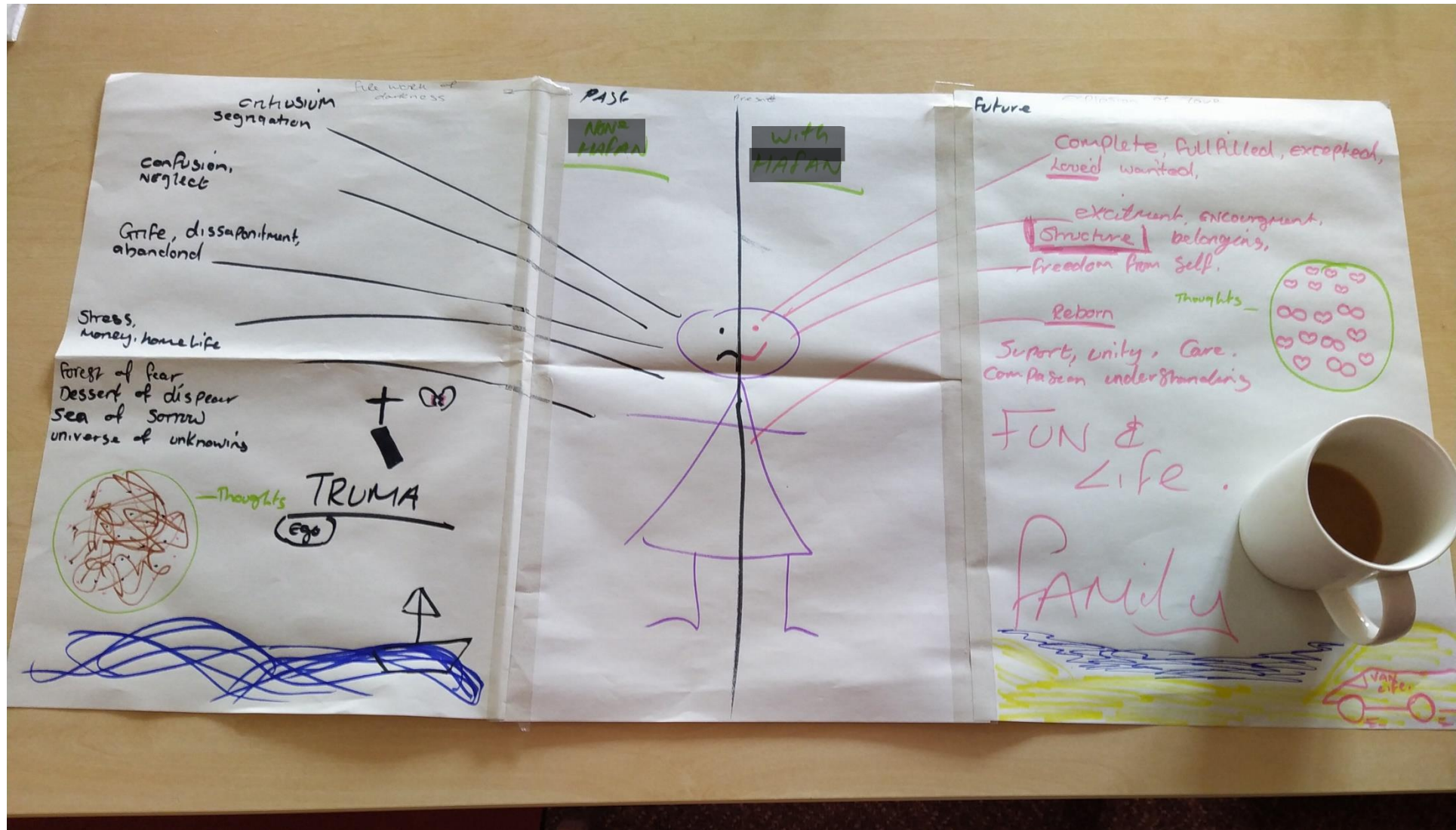
IN 2014 I feel pregnant to my first baby girl, was so happy & nervous as I was 19, my pregnancy went Great & Childs father just got out of prison to see her being born, couldn't of been anymore cuter she was perfect. 22/11/14 She was born, the day after mine & her dads anniversary. IN MAY 2015 I found out I was pregnant with baby girl no2 was more nervous than ever this time, I was a lot bigger also, Baby was late and was Born 17.12.15. She was a gorgeous Big baby weighing 9.01 & R was 6.4!! They were just 2 perfect girls, Growing up they were Just amazing & had amazing wee charecters. Later on in there lifes a few things had happend and unfornatly. got removed from my care, I done Everything they asked of me & Failed At the same point thats when I went to Prison.

WOMANS AB
Social Work
FAMILY NURSE PARTNERSHIP
CARES TEAM (Addictions)
CDN & CPO

I got banned from visits with warrent, I didnt accept it drank

Me & the childrens father had a good not so good Relationship controlling to the highest degree, I never thought anyone would ever love or even look at me again & Not To LONG LATER I FELL IN Love AGAIN♥ We had an AMAZING adventure & hopefully one day we can continue our last chapters x

enthusium
segregation

confusion,
neglect

Grife, dissapointment,
abandoned

Stress,
money, home Life

Forest of fear
Dessert of dispear
sea of sorrow
universe of unknowing

Thoughts   TRUMA
Ego

PAST

Non
Human

Present

With
HUMAN

Future

Complete, fullfilled, excepted,
Loved wanted,

excitrent, encourgment,
Structure belongeris,
freedom from self.

Reborn   Thoughts

Suport, unity, Care.
Compasion understanding

FUN &
Life.

FAMILY
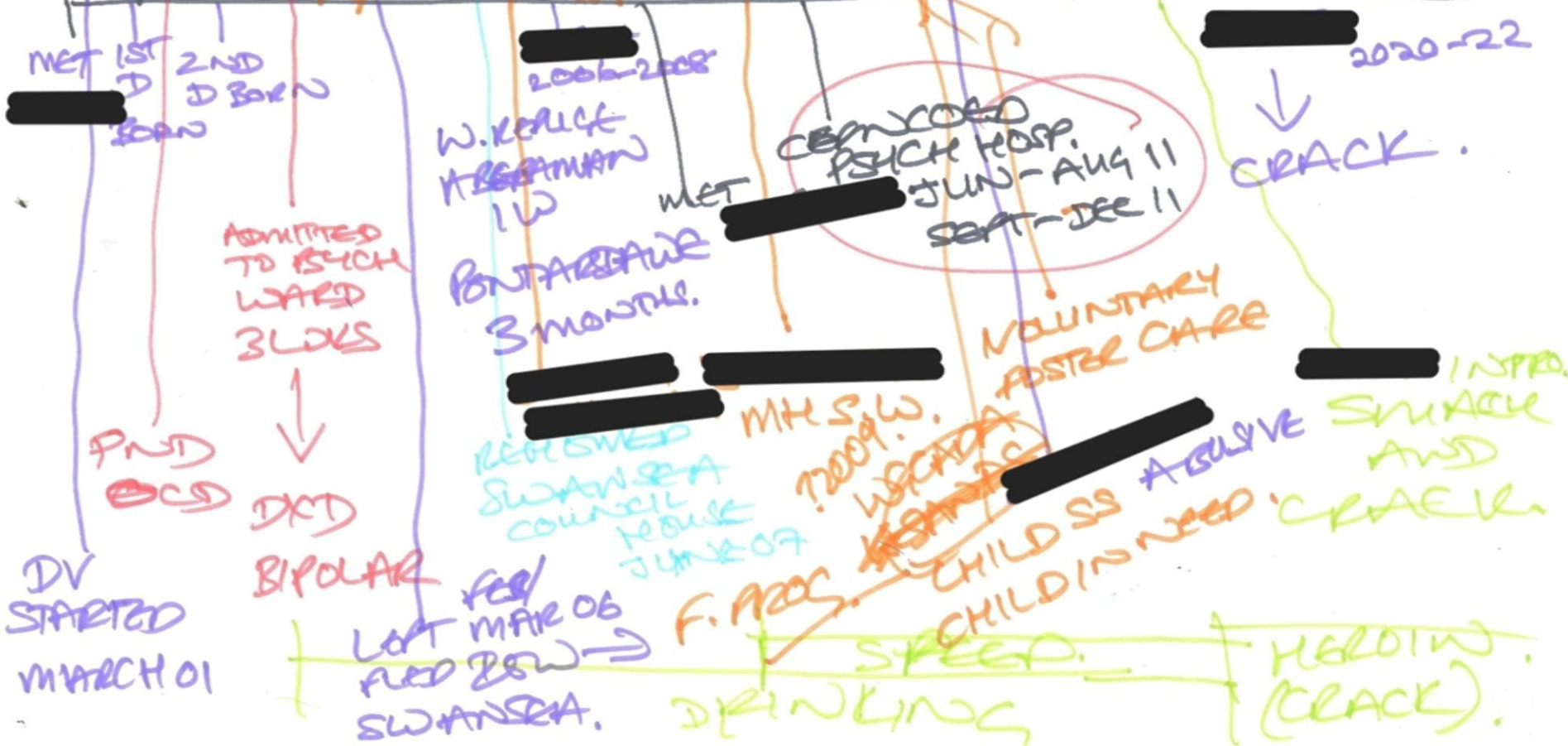
Influence of Compound Disadvantage on Experiences and Service Responses - 1

- Routes into and experiences of SMD domains **highly gendered**; exploitation by men a key theme

- Co-occurrence **compounds disadvantage**, esp. for those experiencing other intersectional disadvantage (e.g. minoritised ethnicity, neurodivergent, physical disability)

- Disadvantages coalesce in myriad ways but with same outcome of **heightening barriers** to mainstream support

- **Increased recognition** of inter-relatedness of disadvantages in policy/practice debate – and concerted effort to overcome them in places

Influence of Compound Disadvantage on Experiences and Service Responses - 2

- But success in joint working largely symptomatic of **commitment and goodwill** of individual stakeholders; progress re systems change limited

- Some services continue to **operate as if oblivious** to relationships between disadvantage domains

- Lack of mental health provision for women affected by **dual diagnosis** extremely problematic

- Concerns re perceived increase in number/ proportion of women diagnosed with a **Personality Disorder**

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Missed Opportunities and Critical Junctures for Intervention

- **Absence of / inadequate responses** to trauma
  - **Childhood**: sexual/ physical/ emotional abuse, neglect, family dysfunction
  - **Adulthood**: sexual violence, domestic abuse, loss of children
- **Critical junctures** and 'red flags'
  - Problematic drinking / disruptive behaviour at school
  - Leaving care
  - Transition from CAMHS to adult mental health
  - Child removal

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(In)visibility and Inhibition Regarding Support

- Active attempts to **conceal or downplay severity** of circumstances … which can **exacerbate or prolong** exposure to risk

- **Reluctance to seek/ use support** founded on:
  - Fears re access to children
  - Presence of men
  - Deterrence by partners
  - Prior negative experience of services
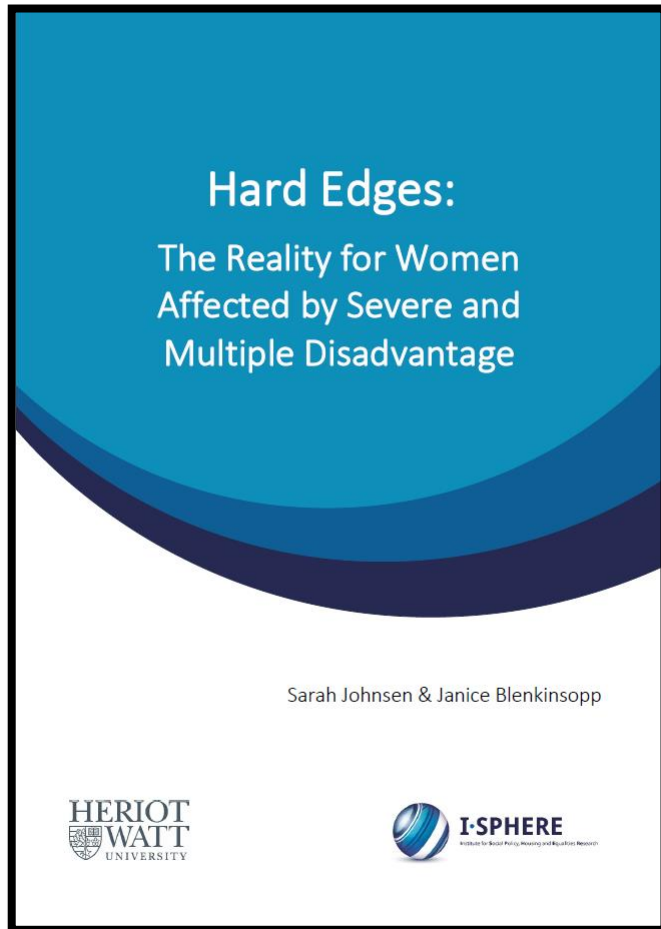 - Shame, embarrassment, and stigma

Perception and Experience of Services

- **Pockets of good practice** re trauma-informed and (to lesser extent) gender-informed support; but postcode lottery
- Widespread '**shunting**' between and/or exclusion from services
- '**Luck**' re timing, point of entry, and appropriateness of response
- **Key ingredients** for promoting engagement + positive outcomes:
    - Enabling choice (of accommodation and support)
    - Low threshold access requirements
    - 'Sticky' support
    - Emphasis on outreach
    - Use of navigators
    - Relational approach
    - Rapid response
    - Long-term support

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Implications for Policy and Practice

- Stakeholders across <u>all</u> relevant sectors need to **share**:
    a) **responsibility** for responding, and
    b) **risks** in responding
- Need for clear **leadership at national level** and greater **cross-sectoral commitment** (esp. health and social care)
- Call for more investment in **trauma- and gender-informed** services, and **women-only** provision
- Need for greater recognition of **severity of trauma** and its impact on ability to make use of support
- Appetite for greater focus on **prevention**

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Download the Report

Hard Edges:

The Reality for Women Affected by Severe and Multiple Disadvantage

Sarah Johnsen & Janice Blenkinsopp

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https://researchportal.hw.ac.uk/files/107153525/HardEdges-RealityForWomen_FullReport_logo_.pdf

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Discussions in breakout rooms

• What is your experience of supporting women with SMD?
  Does the research resonate with this?

• Can you share examples of good practice/support in the
  area you work?

• Key learning/any actions you will take from today?

Final thoughts

- Hard Edges: The reality for women affected by severe and multiple disadvantage (report)

- Scottish Frontline Network – sign up to newsletter here

- St Martin's Frontline Network – Training Fund and Vicar's Relief Fund

- Feedback form – help us improve

We'll share slides after the event