

28th CIF Conference 3rd-8th August 2009  
Kiljava, Finland

## ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOPS

### D. Families needing support

\*\*\*\*\*

Merchant, Munira (USA)  
Ph.D., LCSW, Graduate Faculty, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN  
Sufi, Shamim (USA)  
M.A., LCSW, Clinical Practitioner  
[tffm@yahoo.com](mailto:tffm@yahoo.com)

### **Family Support Services: A Response to the needs of Chicagoland's Ethnic community**

The Muslim Community in Chicagoland has seen a rise of family related problems (for e.g. domestic violence, marital conflict, identity issues among the youth) in the past decade. Family Support Services (FSS) was started in response to this felt need. This workshop will highlight the experiences of the professionals in the suburbs of Chicago, who initiated the process of establishing this non-profit organization for the last two years. A report about the activities of FSS will be shared. We will discuss the challenges as well as the success and future direction.

---

Hartikainen, Katriina & Siimes-Tiainen, Sini (Finland)  
Bachelors of Social Services, Instructors, City of Hamina

### **Measuring good parenthood and family rehabilitation in Sahakoski family support center**

In August 2007 a development project was started in the Sahakoski family support center in the town of Hamina. The project was to develop new forms of helping families in child welfare. A unit named Kaisla was established for the project in Sahakoski. Kaisla has four places for children or adolescents and two family apartments and it is meant for short term care. The forms of work comprise surveying of the life situation, assessment of parenthood, and family rehabilitation.

Main causes for a period in family rehabilitation are: instable circumstances in family life, intoxicant abuse and mental health problems, disability in parenthood. Main causes for the life situation surveying period are: child dangers his/her own development by using intoxicant, missing school, committing crimes or parents being disabled in parenthood.

The project lasted for 2 years and there was one full-time project worker who was in

charge of the project. Social workers and family workers are working in close collaboration with the instructors of Kaisla. The work is based on fulfilling the interests of a child and co-operation with the families. Most of the working methods include conversations and dialog. The assessment and rehabilitation concern issues such as taking care of the child\_s needs, management of everyday life as well as the physical, mental and social welfare and interaction relationships of the family.

Within two years, working has become more systematic, target- and client oriented. The co-operation with institutional and non-institutional personnel has increased and developed. New methods to help families have been found.

The project worker interviewed families and the feedback received was mainly positive. Most of the clients considered the Kaisla-period a meaningful experience in their lives, and it gave support and clearness to their life situation. The project has shown that there is need for this kind of social service in Hamina. One important outcome is that now the social workers have a better overall picture in child welfare; both in the non-institutional and institutional care.

Challenges in the future are: continuing the development of co-operation, collecting more feedback from the clients and professional training for personnel.

---

Nousiainen, Kirsi (Finland)

D. Soc.Sc., Senior Researcher, SOCCA The Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in Helsinki Metropolitan Area

[kirsi.nousiainen@hel.fi](mailto:kirsi.nousiainen@hel.fi)

## **Domestic violence and motherhood - A view to non-residential mothers' life stories**

In my presentation I shall look at the concept of home as a dialogical space in case of domestic violence. The presentation will be based on my doctoral dissertation for which I interviewed 18 non-residential mothers. In the interviews the mothers told me their life stories and most of the women had experienced domestic violence in their childhood families or/and in their own family.

Specifically I am interested in what effect domestic violence has on the women\_s experience of their lived spaces in which they construct their identity as mothers. In my presentation the concept of lived space and construction of identity are based on the notion of dialogue and the holistic concept of wo/man in which situationality is essential.

The life stories of the interviewed mothers contain dense descriptions of experienced violence of which I as a researcher have constructed stories of restricted spaces. I also reflect a little on how to use life stories as means of social work and telling new stories to construct new identities.