

Dr. Sigrún Sigurðardóttir

Title of keynote: Childhood Sexual Abuse: Consequences and Holistic Intervention

Summary of keynote: Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) can have serious and far-reaching consequences for the health and well-being of both men and women. In order to develop a holistic program for Icelandic survivors of CSA it is important to base such a program on in-depth knowledge and understanding of these consequences for CSA survivors in Iceland within the healthcare system. The aim of the study was to increase the knowledge and deepen the understanding of the consequences of CSA, for both men and women, in order to increase nurses' and other healthcare professionals' competence in giving gender appropriate care to CSA survivors. To develop and explore a holistic therapy for female CSA survivors, from the women's own perspective and look into the experience of the healthcare system.

A phenomenological research approach was used, to increase the knowledge and deepen the understanding of the above phenomena. In Study I, participants were seven Icelandic men with a history of CSA. Two interviews were conducted with each of them, a total of 14 interviews. In Study II the experience of these seven men and seven Icelandic women (from another study of the author) were compared, 28 interviews in total. In Study III seven interviews were conducted with one Icelandic woman with a long trauma history after CSA. In Study IV 10 Icelandic women who participated in the Wellness-Program, a holistic program for female CSA survivors that was developed by the author, were interviewed thrice, a total of 30 interviews. Thus, in all, 65 interviews were used as the basis for this thesis.

The main results of the studies were that the consequences of CSA, for both men and women, were serious for their health and well-being. They felt they had not received adequate support and understanding from healthcare professionals, but participation in the Wellness-Program seemed to improve the health and well-being of those attending.

Presentation of speaker: Ph.d.in Nursing, Assistant Professor at School of Health Sciences, University of Akureyri. I finished Police Academy 1993, I worked as a Police Officer all around Iceland from 1991-1998, I finished my Nursing degree 2001 and have been working in Psychiatric Units (rehabilitation and addiction) in Public health service. In my lecture I will focus especially on the connection between psychological trauma, such as CSA and mental health problems.