University of Huddersfield Repository

Swallow, Amanda

Children of prisoners: Virtual communities negotiating and managing relationships, isolation and stigma.

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/9820/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

• The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
• A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
• The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Children of Prisoners: Virtual Communities Negotiating and Managing Relationships, Isolation and Stigma

Researcher: Amanda Swallow
Children of Prisoners

- only 9% of children of imprisoned mothers are cared for by their fathers – compared to 92% who are cared for by their mothers\(^1\).

- 5% of children whose mothers are in prison remain in their own homes\(^2\).

- 24% of children are cared for by grandparents\(^3\).

- between 11-15% of children are placed into care as a result of their mother’s imprisonment\(^4\).
Children of Prisoners

- Experiences of social exclusion (political and societal)\(^5\).

- Alleged increased risk of expressing anti-social behaviour – Recently used as a political tool\(^6\).

- Recent research found that imprisonment costs state agencies (NHS, social services) an average of £4,800 over six months, per family\(^7\).
Children of Prisoners

- 66% of women in prison (4,252) have dependent children.
- 7% (approximately 600,000) of the child population at school has an imprisoned parent, annually.
- Under-researched!
Children of Prisoners

It is suggested that 160,000 children are affected by their parents’ imprisonment, annually within England and Wales\textsuperscript{10}.

However!

There is no single statutory body dedicated to the care, welfare or support of these children. No actual data is collected & all figures quoted so far are \textit{estimates}. 
Children of Prisoners

The very few researchers investigating this issue agree that there are particularly negative effects upon children who experience parental imprisonment, such as:

- Experiences of trauma (especially where a parent is arrested in the home)\(^{11}\).
- Mental health issues (currently being debated and investigated)\(^{12}\).
- May be stigmatised due to their parent’s imprisonment\(^{13}\).
Legislation / Policy

- Ministry of Justice introduce gender specific standards for women in prison\textsuperscript{14}.

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 – Article 9 – implies the right that children have to maintain contact with imprisoned parents\textsuperscript{15}.

Legislation / Policy (Cont.)

• National Offender Management Service (NOMS policies) – Claim that children and families are the most important pathways\textsuperscript{17}.

• Corston Report – Four recommendations specific to female offenders, parenting and their children\textsuperscript{18}.

• Every Child Matters – Prisoners’ children have worse outcomes than other children, in terms of health and education, amongst others\textsuperscript{19}. 
For a full version of this presentation, please contact Amanda Swallow: 

amanda.swallow@hud.ac.uk
References