Dissertation Abstract.
Over the past three decades, the cultural and legal meaning of sexual violence has changed dramatically. While it is commonly acknowledged that child sexual abuse is a pervasive problem, children’s interpretations of abuse are generally ignored in academic, legal, and policy research. This study examines children’s linguistic descriptions and interpretations of sexual abuse through an experiential and constructivist lens. Using 100 semi-structured videotaped interviews of children’s disclosures of sexual abuse from 1995-2004, the study focuses on how memory construction is negotiated through interactional conversation, and more broadly, on the culturally collective ideologies embraced and rejected by children. Included in this work are the social, historical, and cultural factors that contribute not only to how children describe abuse, but to how institutions interpret and decide, collectively and legally, what constitutes child sexual abuse. Analyses focus on how similarities and differences in meaning and interpretation are patterned discursively by children and professionals in an interview setting according to demographic (e.g., gender, age, race) and case characteristics (e.g., abuse type, perpetrator relationship). This study contributes to an understanding of how children assign different meanings to sexual abuse, and as such, how language provides the link between personal and collective experience.

Research and Teaching Interests.

Criminology, Gender and Sexuality, Criminal Justice, Mental Health, Research Methods

Publications.


Manuscripts in Progress.

- Justice for All? Children’s Dilemma of Deciding Whether to Disclose Sexual Abuse
- Exploring the Use of Anatomical Dolls by Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviewers
- Collective Conscious or Moral Panic? The Public Response to Sexual Predators
Awards and Honors.

**Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship • 2007**
University of Minnesota Graduate School, Amount: $21,500

**Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award • 2007**
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota

**Invited Program Committee Member**
American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, Georgia • 2007

**Professional Development Travel Award**
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, Amount: $400 • 2006

**Anna Welsch Bright Research Fellowship**
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, Amount: $3,000 • 2005

**Graduate Research Partnership Program**
College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, Amount: $5,500 • 2004

**Life Course Center Travel Award**
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, Amount: $400 • 2004

Professional Presentations.

American Society of Criminology, Annual Meeting, November 14th, Atlanta, GA • 2007

Heather R. Hlavka*. “To Tell or Not to Tell: How Do Child Attributions and Perpetrator Framing Impact Children’s Disclosures of Sexual Assault?”
American Society of Criminology, Annual Meeting, November 4th, Los Angeles, CA • 2006

American Society of Criminology, Annual Meeting, November 17th, Nashville, TN • 2004

Heather R. Hlavka* “Rape Trauma Experts in the Courtroom: The Construction of Knowledge and Memory”
Annual Sociological Research Institute, University of Minnesota • 2003

Community Presentations.

Heather R. Hlavka*. “Child Sexual Abuse: Re-conceptualizing Power and Resistance”
Neighborhood Involvement Program, Rape and Sexual Abuse Center, Minneapolis, MN • 2005

Heather R. Hlavka* and Timothy Clark. “Being a Successful Teaching Assistant”
Center for Teaching and Learning Enrichment Workshops, University of Minnesota • 2004
Research Experience.

Minnesota Exits and Entries Project
Research Assistant and Interviewer
Research project design, development and in-depth interviewing. The focus is on vulnerable young adults entering the general population after exiting from one of six different institutional settings including: (1) foster care; (2) mental health treatment; (3) chemical health treatment; (4) the armed forces; (5) the juvenile justice system; and (6) the prison system.
Co-PIs: Chris Uggen, Candace Kruttschnitt, Ross Macmillan, Jeylan Mortimer, Teresa Gowan, Teresa Swartz, and Carl Malmquist, University of Minnesota • 2006-present

Women’s Experiences of Violence: Victimization and Offending in Women’s Lives
Research Assistant and Interviewer
In-depth interviewing, management and analysis of interview data on women’s experiences of violence sponsored by The National Consortium on Violence Research (NCOVR)
Co-PIs: Candace Kruttschnitt, University of Minnesota, Julie Horney, Sally Simpson, and Rosemary Gartner • 2002-2004

The Use of Anatomical Dolls in Forensic Interviewing
Research Assistant and Consultant
Research assistant and survey construction consultant for Anatomical Doll Project.
With Ross Macmillan, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota
CornerHouse, Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota • 2004

McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, LLP
Paralegal
Research assistant, document analysis and trial preparation for environmental and healthcare litigation firm. Training and supervision of legal assistants.
Los Angeles, California • 1999-2001

Minnesota House of Representatives
Research Assistant and Public Policy Intern
Analysis and tracking of bills in action regarding marriage dissolution and child support during 1997 legislative session. Committee/Senate Conference documentation and final research report.
With Jacquelyn Zita, Department of Women’s Studies, University of Minnesota • 1997

Teaching Experience.

Instructor Appointments
Domestic Criminal Violence, Summer 2007
Sex Crimes and Moral Panic (Instructor-designed incorporating Service Learning), Fall 2006
Criminal Behavior and Social Control, Fall 2005, Spring 2006
Sociological Research Methods, Summer 2005
Introduction to the American Criminal Justice System, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, Summer 2006
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota • 2004 – current

Administrative Fellow, Graduate Teaching Assistant Mentor
Co-facilitator, Teaching Assistant Mentorship Program, Fall 2004
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota • 2004
Laboratory Instructor Appointments
Sociological Research Methods, Professor Erin Kelly, Fall 2003, Summer 2002
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota ● 2002-2003

Teaching Assistant Appointments
Killing, Carl Malmquist, Spring 2007
Senior Major Projects Seminar, Candace Kruttschnitt, Spring 2003
Social Theory, Yakov Shchukin, Fall 2003
Domestic Criminal Violence, Candace Kruttschnitt, Fall 2002
Sociology of Law, Elizabeth H. Boyle, Spring 2002
Crime and Criminal Justice, Joel Samaha, Fall 2001, Spring 2002, Summer 2002
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota ● 2001-2004

Educational Development
Community Project: Community Learning and Activism in the Classroom
Take Back The News undergraduate student and service agency collaborative project publicizing the voices of victims of sexual violence on and around the University of Minnesota campus.
Media: “Project Lets Rape Victims Speak Out” – Minnesota Daily, Tuesday March 27th, 2007

Teaching Resource Center Project: Community Service Learning in the Classroom
Compiled comprehensive case histories of community partners and developed (with Jennifer Lee) a guide to incorporating service learning into coursework.
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota ● 2003

Teaching Training
American Sociological Association Pre-conference Teaching Workshop ● 2007
Teaching Through Interactive Lectures, Fall 2006
Maximizing the Value of Group Work, Fall 2006
Powerpoint Reconsidered, Fall 2006
Speaking Frankly in the Classroom, Fall 2005
Community Service Learning in the Classroom, Spring 2004
Ten Learning Assessment Tools, Spring 2003
Reducing Anonymity in Large Lectures, Fall 2002
Teaching Assistant Orientation and Training, Fall 2001, Fall 2002
Center for Teaching and Learning Enrichment Workshops, University of Minnesota ● 2001-2006

Community Service.

The Neighborhood Involvement Program, Rape and Sexual Abuse Center
Crisis Intervention, Group Facilitator, and Counselor/Advocate
On-call crisis intervention and advocacy. Women’s Rape Survivor Support Group facilitator.
Minneapolis, Minnesota ● 2002-current

WATCH Court Monitoring
Court Monitor and Systems Advocate
Systematically observed criminal and civil court and compiled data on victims’ safety and offender accountability. Edited reports to judges, prosecutors, and probation officers.
Minneapolis, Minnesota ● 2004-2006
The Aurora Center, Program Against Sexual Violence
Crisis Intervention, Advocate and Educator
On-call crisis intervention and peer advocacy including emergency hospital and court
accompaniment. Focus group facilitation and educational seminars in area high schools/colleges.
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota • 1996-1998

Departmental Service.

Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota
Guest Lecturer, Introduction to Sociology, 2005-2007
Graduate Student Representative, Department Service Award Committee, 2006
Graduate Student Representative, Faculty Mentoring-Service Award Committee, 2005
Graduate Student Facilitator, Teaching Assistant Mentorship Program, 2004
Graduate Student Representative, Graduate Student Committee, 2004
Graduate Student Representative, Faculty Mentoring-Service Award Committee, 2004
Graduate Student Representative, Sociological Research Institute Committee, 2001

Reviewer.

Violence Against Women
Roxbury Publishing
The Journal of Interpersonal Violence
The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice

Professional Memberships.

American Sociological Association
American Society of Criminology
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Violence
Society for the Study of Social Problems

References.

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