

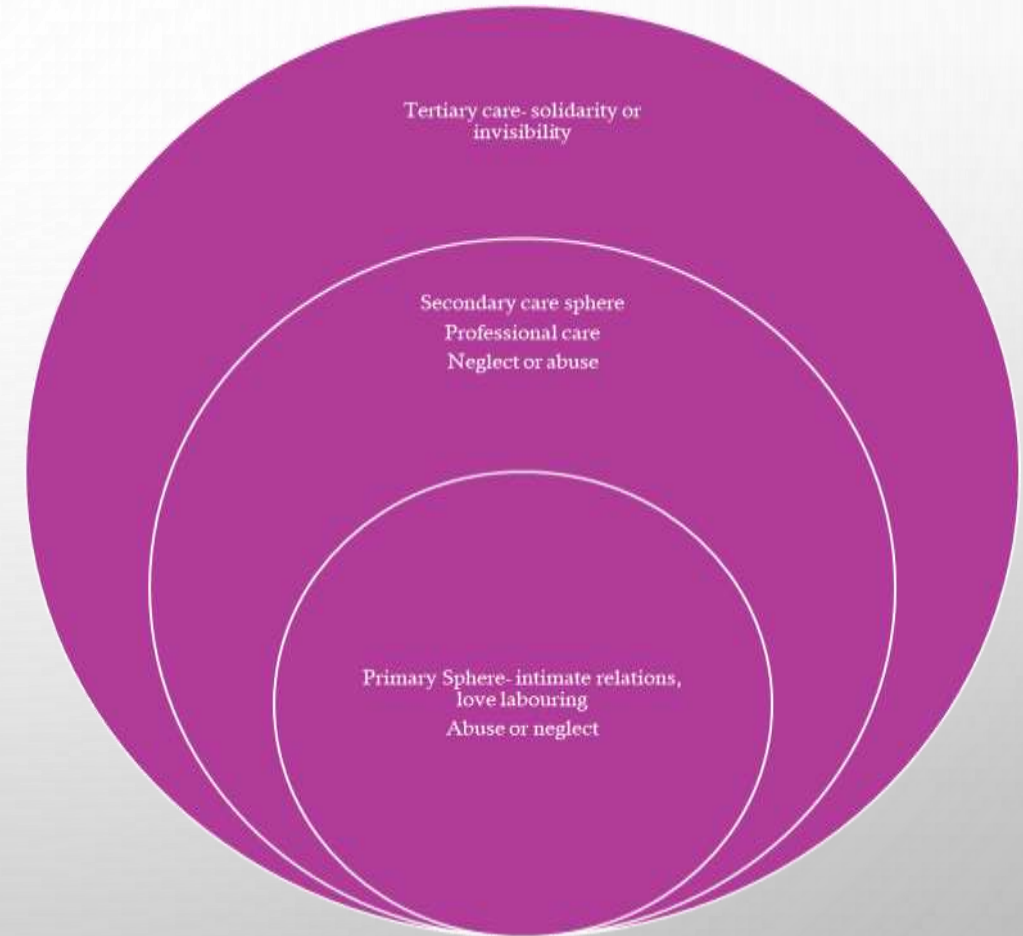
The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

HOMELESS MOTHERHOOD AND AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES

WHY A RELATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL CARING
MATTERS

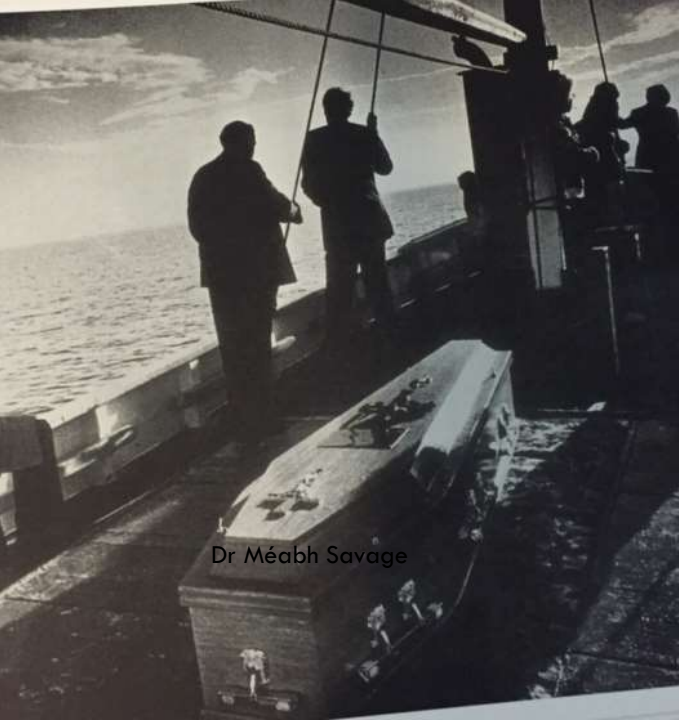
FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH

- **INTERSECTIONAL STRUCTURAL EQUALITY FRAMEWORK-AFFECTIVE, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SPHERES**
- **AFFECTIVE SPHERE** -PRIMARY (INTIMATE), SECONDARY (PROFESSIONAL CARE), TERTIARY (STATE-LED).
- **NURTURING CAPITAL** REFERS TO THE LEVELS OF TIME AND EMOTIONAL RESOURCES THAT PEOPLE RECEIVE FROM OTHERS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES; BE IT AS INDIVIDUALS, FROM WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES OR THROUGH STATE ACTIVITY (LYNCH 2007).



AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES OCCUR

- WHERE PEOPLE ARE DEPRIVED OF ACCESS TO **NURTURING CAPITAL**, OR INTIMATE LOVING RELATIONS AND BONDS OF LOVE, CARE & SOLIDARITY AND INSTEAD EXPERIENCE ABUSE, VIOLENCE OR INEQUALITY, AT ANY STAGE ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE (LYNCH ET AL. 2009).
- AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES ALSO OCCUR WHEN LOVE AND CARE WORK, CARRIED OUT BY PEOPLE IS NOT ACKNOWLEDGED POLITICALLY, SOCIALLY OR ECONOMICALLY (LYNCH 2010, P.2).
- THIS IS BECAUSE:
 - THE WORLD OF CARE IS NOT AN ISOLATED AND AUTONOMOUS SPHERE. IT IS DEEPLY INTERWOVEN WITH ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS, AND INEQUALITIES IN THE LATTER CAN UNDERMINE THE CAPACITIES AND RESOURCES TO DO LOVE, CARE AND SOLIDARITY WORK (BAKER ET AL. AS CITED IN LYNCH AND WALSH 2009, P.41)



Dr Méabh Savage



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

THE FIELD WORK FOR BOTH PHASES TOOK PLACE BETWEEN JUNE 2016-FEB 2018

THE STUDY CONSISTED OF TWO PHASES-

PHASE ONE INVOLVED TWELVE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH SEVEN HOMELESS UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF CARE ACROSS THREE SPHERES OF AFFECTIVE RELATIONS (PRIMARY/MOTHERHOOD), SECONDARY (PROFESSIONAL), TERTIARY (STATED-LED) (LYNCH 2007).

USED **PHOTO-ELICITATION** AS A TOOL TO SUPPORT A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE WOMEN.

PHASE TWO INVOLVED ONE-TO-ONE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TWELVE PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR IN IRELAND.

USING ASPECTS OF THE WOMEN'S NARRATIVES TO ENGAGE IN **CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS** ABOUT PROFESSIONALS HAVE CARED FOR THIS GROUP OF MOTHERS.

HOMELESS MOTHERHOOD IS A SITE OF INTERSECTING INJUSTICES FOR UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS, INCLUDING GENDER, CLASS AND AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES EXPERIENCED ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE-

- AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES EXPERIENCED BY THE WOMEN INCLUDE CHILDHOOD, YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE, IPV AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
 - **4/7** WOMEN SPOKE OF GROWING UP IN DOMESTICALLY ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLDS WHERE MOTHERS WERE UNSUPPORTED WITH THEIR NURTURING WORK
 - **5/7** OF THE WOMEN EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, INCLUDING RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDHOOD FOR WHICH THEY WERE UNSUPPORTED.
 - **7/7** WOMEN EXPERIENCED ABUSIVE RELATIONS IN ADULTHOOD
- AND I WAS DOWN CLOSE TO THE BOTTOM, SO I COULD LOOK IN AND I COULD SEE INTO OUR KITCHEN, AND NEXT I SEE MY MAM RUNNING OUT...OF THE KITCHEN AND MY DAD RUNNING AFTER HER. AND HE JUST GRABBED HER BY THE BACK OF THE HEAD. BANG. PULLED HER DOWN. AND HE GAVE HER ABOUT THREE PUNCHES, REALLY HARD PUNCHES INTO THE FACE. BUT THE LAST ONE, SHE HIT THE FLOOR AND HIT HER HEAD OFF THE TILES. CRACKED THE TILE AND CRACKED THE BACK OF HER HEAD. BUT SHE WASN'T ANSWERING, AND THERE WAS A LITTLE POOL OF BLOOD COMING OUT AROUND HER HEAD. AND MY DAD SAID, 'YOU FUCKING STUPID BITCH. YOU STUPID BITCH. WHAT DID YOU DO THIS TO ME FOR?' IN OTHER WORDS, BLAMING HER FOR DRAWING OUT THE ANGER ON HIM. AND IT WASN'T EVEN THE WOMAN'S FAULT. SHE WAS LOOKING AFTER ME BECAUSE I WAS AFTER COMING HOME SICK... SURE GOD LOVE US...

MELANIE SELECTED THE IMAGE OF A BUILDING SITE TO EXPRESS HER EXPERIENCES GROWING UP IN A DOMESTICALLY ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLD



Dr Méabh Savage

- “AND I PICKED UP A PICTURE OF A BUILDING SITE BECAUSE AGAIN, IT’S QUITE SYMBOLIC. THAT’S HOW ME LIFE WAS, WITH ALL THE MAYHEM, A BUILDING SITE, LIVING IN A BUILDING SITE. JUST ... NOT PHYSICALLY, BUT EMOTIONALLY, JUST EVERYTHING WRECKED, DESTROYED”.

PREGNANCY AND THE EMBODIMENT OF AFFECTIVE INEQUALITIES

- FREYA DESCRIBES THE VIOLENCE SHE EXPERIENCED AS AN EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD PREGNANT WITH HER FIRST BABY:
 - I WAS EIGHT MONTHS PREGNANT WHEN HE KICKED ME AND EVERYTHING. SO THAT'S HARD TO FORGET AS WELL. THAT'LL COME BACK HERE AND THERE. I FORGETS ABOUT THAT, BUT IT COMES BACK HERE AND THERE, ESPECIALLY WHEN MY [CHILD] TALKS ABOUT HIM, ABOUT THE GOOD 'THINGS, BUT I THINKS ABOUT THE BAD THINGS WHEN [MY CHILD] SAYS HIS NAME, CAUSE HE ALWAYS USED TO BEAT ME. THAT'S ALL I CAN EVER THINK ABOUT HIM.
- I] LAY IN THE CHAIR FOR TWO DAYS WITHOUT EVEN TALKING TO NO-ONE, WITH MY EYES OPEN... I WAS LAYING IN THE CHAIR WITH MY EYES OPEN, LOOKED AT THE SAME SPOT FOR HOURS ON END, AND NOT TALK OR EVEN MOVE OR FART OR DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
- M: AND YOU CAN REMEMBER THAT, CAN YOU?
- F: I CAN YEAH. THAT'LL NEVER LEAVE MY HEAD. ME [CHILD] BEHIND ME, PLAYING ON THE LAPTOP. IT'S LIKE THE CHAIR WAS HERE. I HAD ME TABLE OVER HERE, AND [MY CHILD] WAS SITTING PLAYING ON THE LAPTOP. AND I WAS JUST GOING, LAYING DOWN FOR A MINUTE, AND THAT WAS IT. I DIDN'T MOVE. I FELL ASLEEP THEN AND THE POOR [CHILD] IN BEHIND ME THEN PLAYING. STOP THE LIGHTS. AND [THE CHILD] HUNGRY AND EVERYTHING, TRYING TO WAKE ME UP AND NOO... GO AWAY. FUCK THAT. THAT'S HORRIBLE... BUT I'M GLAD I'M DOING BETTER NOW. THAT'S THE TRUTH. FUCK THAT. THAT WAS HORRIBLE THAT...YEAH.

- AS A 17 YEAR OLD, NOW IN HER SIXTIES, TARA RECALLS HER FIRST PREGNANCY WHICH WAS THE RESULT OF RAPE:
 - BUT...I DID GET RAPED AND HAD A BABY. AND...I WAS SENT OUT OF THE HOUSE AT 6 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING IN A TAXI UP TO [MOTHER AND BABY HOME] AND I WAS THERE FOR...SEVEN MONTHS. NOBODY EVER CAME NEAR ME. I NEVER GOT A LETTER OR A PHONE CALL. BUT ANYWAY, I HAD THE CHILD AT EIGHT MONTHS AND [...IT] DIED...AND WHEN I CAME OUT OF THE HOSPITAL I COULDN'T HANDLE IT AND I WAS DRINKING AND STAYING OUT ALL NIGHT. (SIGH) EVERY TIME I CRIED I WAS TOLD I SHOULD BE OVER IT. THEY JUST COULDN'T HANDLE IT, SO I WAS PUT INTO [PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL] FOR SIX MONTHS. I DON'T KNOW...WHEN I GOT OUT OF THERE THEN I COULDN'T LOOK CROOKED I WAS TOLD I'D END UP BACK IN THERE, BEING LOCKED UP. AND I DON'T KNOW, IT JUST WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE I THINK. EVERYTHING I DID AFTER THAT I JUST MADE A STUPID MISTAKE.

The disabling effects of affective injustices

Long-term unemployed	Educational disadvantage	Disability allowance	Long-term repeat homelessness	Mental Health	Family status
6/7	6/7	5/7	3/7	7/7	7/7
1 works in low-paid part-time employment	Only one completed their Leaving Certificate-	2 others on JSA	4 women spoke of needing housing for reunification but none available 3 housed faced risks of eviction during interview process	1 woman had serious physical health difficulties All struggled with MHD; 3 with addiction issues	Experienced separation from one of more of their children at different stages of their lives. All women had involvement of Tusla, with 6/7 children living in alternative care.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS IN
THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT RESPONSES TO
UNACCOMPANIED AND SOME HOMELESS MOTHERS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND?
PHASE TWO OF THE RESEARCH REVEALED-**

WOMEN'S RELATIONAL CARE IDENTITY AS MOTHERS IS CENTRAL TO THEIR IDENTITY

- WORKING WITH SOMEONE WITH CHILDREN **“AFFECTS EVERY SINGLE ASPECT OF THE CARE PLAN”** (PROJECT WORKER 5). WHILST ASPECTS OF CARE PLANS, SUCH AS ACCESSING TRAINING AND EDUCATION, CAN BE PAUSED DURING CHAOTIC TIMES, SHE REMARKS HOW

“YOU CAN'T PARK BEING A MOTHER. IT'S CONSTANTLY THERE...IT'S A WHOLE DIFFERENT IDENTITY...I DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY WORDS THAT WOULD QUANTIFY WHAT IT MUST BE LIKE” (PROJECT WORKER 5).

- MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE FEELINGS OF SHAME, GUILT, EMBARRASSMENT AND HUGE VOIDS IN THEIR LIVES BECAUSE OF THEIR SEPARATION FROM THEIR CHILDREN, AND SOME RESORT TO UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS TO COPE WITH THE PAIN
 - SOME MOTHERS DO NOT TALK ABOUT THEIR MATERNAL IDENTITY STRAIGHT AWAY, SOMETIMES LEAVING IT UNTIL THE END OF CONVERSATIONS (MANAGER 3); SOME DO NOT TALK AT ALL PRETENDING **“RATHER THAN HAVING TO DEAL WITH IT”** (MANAGER 3). WHILE FOR OTHERS, THEY TALK ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME (PROJECT WORKER 3).
- EITHER WAY, AS ONE WORKER STATED;
 - **IT'S ALWAYS THERE WHETHER IT IS POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE** (PROJECT WORKER 5).

EXCLUSION OF UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS AND INVISIBILITY OF THEIR INTERSECTING NEEDS

- SEVERAL OF THE WOMEN-ONLY ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS PROVIDED BY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES ARE NOT SUITED TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS (N=5). UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS OFTEN PRESENT TO HOMELESSNESS SERVICES WITH MORE COMPLEX NEEDS, WHICH SOME WOMEN-ONLY SERVICES ARE NOT DESIGNED OR RESOURCED TO SUPPORT (N=7).
- FOR INSTANCE, ONE PARTICIPANT DESCRIBED HOW:
 - **IT'S LIKE HAVING TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE SAME BUILDING, THAT ALL THE FAMILIES HERE AND THEY HAVE THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEY'RE FUNCTIONING QUITE WELL. BECAUSE FOR A WOMAN TO BE ABLE TO HOLD ONTO HER CHILDREN, IT MEANS HER LIFE IS FAIRLY STABLE. WHEREAS WE HAVE THE [NEARLY 20] SINGLE WOMEN (UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS), AND THE BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES THAT WE DEAL WITH THERE ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN THOSE FOR THE FAMILY. BECAUSE THE WOMEN...THERE HAS BEEN SOME DYSFUNCTION ALONG THE WAY. AND THAT'S WHAT WE SEE THEN IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR. IT'S LIKE HAVING TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE SAME BUILDING. (MANAGER 1)**

LACK OF RECOGNITION & RESOURCES TO MEANINGFULLY SUPPORT UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS RELATIONAL NEEDS

- THERE IS A **LACK OF “REFERRAL PATHWAYS”** FROM WHERE WOMEN CAN ACCESS SUPPORT RELATING TO THEIR MATERNAL GRIEF.
- WHILE THE MANAGER OF ANOTHER WOMEN-ONLY SERVICE (MANAGER 1) SPOKE OF HOW, ON ONE NIGHT SHE COUNTED EIGHTEEN “SINGLE WOMEN” STAYING THERE WITH **“THIRTY-THREE CHILDREN BETWEEN THEM IN THE CARE OF TUSLA... AND THAT IS NOT UNUSUAL”**.
- LACK OF RESOURCES TO MEANINGFULLY SUPPORT UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS

BARRIERS TO REUNIFYING MOTHERS AND CHILDREN- LACK OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING

Two of the women-only services facilitate mother-child reunifications. However, reunification is not immediate or inevitable.

When mothers are exiting services, the family status of mothers, as a single woman or family, can influence reunification

**M3: Sometimes... what they're advised and what they're told – they have to go out as a single person and get a unit on their own. And they're told then that their situation will be looked at in regard to having the children. That's not straightforward though...Because if they get a HAP one-bed property, you have to have that property for two years... they can't break that HAP agreement. They could be off the list for eighteen months from getting another HAP...You can't naturally or automatically transfer...You'd have to go back with a good case before the two years are up as to why you want to transfer. You're penalised.
(Manager 3)**

HOSTILE HOSTEL ENVIRONMENT FOR NEW MOTHERS

- **HAVING ACCESS TO ACCOMMODATION “MAKES OR BREAKS IT WHEN IT COMES TO PREGNANCY. IF YOU’RE IN THE HOSTEL, YOU’RE NOT COMING HOME WITH YOUR BABY AND THAT’S IT” (PROJECT WORKER 5). EVEN WHERE A MOTHER IS PRESENTING FREE FROM SUBSTANCES AND IS “DOING ALL OF THE RIGHT THINGS, IF THERE IS NOT APPROPRIATE HOUSING, THE BABY IS BEING TAKEN OFF YOU THREE DAYS AFTER YOU GIVE BIRTH, AND IT’S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.” (PROJECT WORKER 5).**

“NOTHING TO NURTURE YOU AS A PARENT” IN HOMELESSNESS ACCOMMODATION

RESIDENTS IN THIS HOSTEL ARE THERE BECAUSE

- **“FOR THE MOST PART...IT’S BECAUSE NO OTHER SERVICES CAN ‘MANAGE’ THEM OR ‘HANDLE’ THEM...THEY’RE BARRED FROM OTHER SERVICES, OR OTHER SERVICES SAID, ‘YOU’RE NOT READY YET.’” MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO STAY IN THIS HOSTEL HAVE “BEEN DISCHARGED FROM PSYCHIATRIC WARD AND THERE’S NO OTHER OPTIONS. AND THEY COME TO [THIS SERVICE]” (PROJECT WORKER 5).**

MOTHERS **“FIND IT HARD TO MARRY THEIR SITUATION IN THE HOSTEL OR THEIR INJECTING DRUG USE. IT’S VERY HARD TO MARRY THAT WITH BEING A MOTHER” (PROJECT WORKER 5).**

CONSEQUENTLY, THEY DEVELOP WHAT IS LIKE A **“DOUBLE IDENTITY”** WHERE THEY ARE TRYING TO:

- **CLING ONTO: I’M A MAM, I’VE KIDS, BUT THE KIDS AREN’T THERE. THEY’RE SEPARATED FROM THEM, SO THIS OTHER IDENTITY IS PULLING THEM THIS WAY...IT’S CONSTANT CONFLICT, INTERNAL CONFLICT ALL THE TIME, BECAUSE NOTHING IN THE HOSTEL, WHICH IS WHERE I WORK WITH PEOPLE MOST, *THERE’S NOTHING THERE THAT WOULD NURTURE YOU AS A PARENT, NOTHING AT ALL. EVEN AS PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THERE, THAT CHAOS AND THAT FEELING YOU GET, IT JUST...IT DOESN’T MARRY UP WITH BEING A MOTHER.* (PROJECT WORKER 5)**

CONFLICTING IDENTITIES AND BARRIERS TO RECOVERY

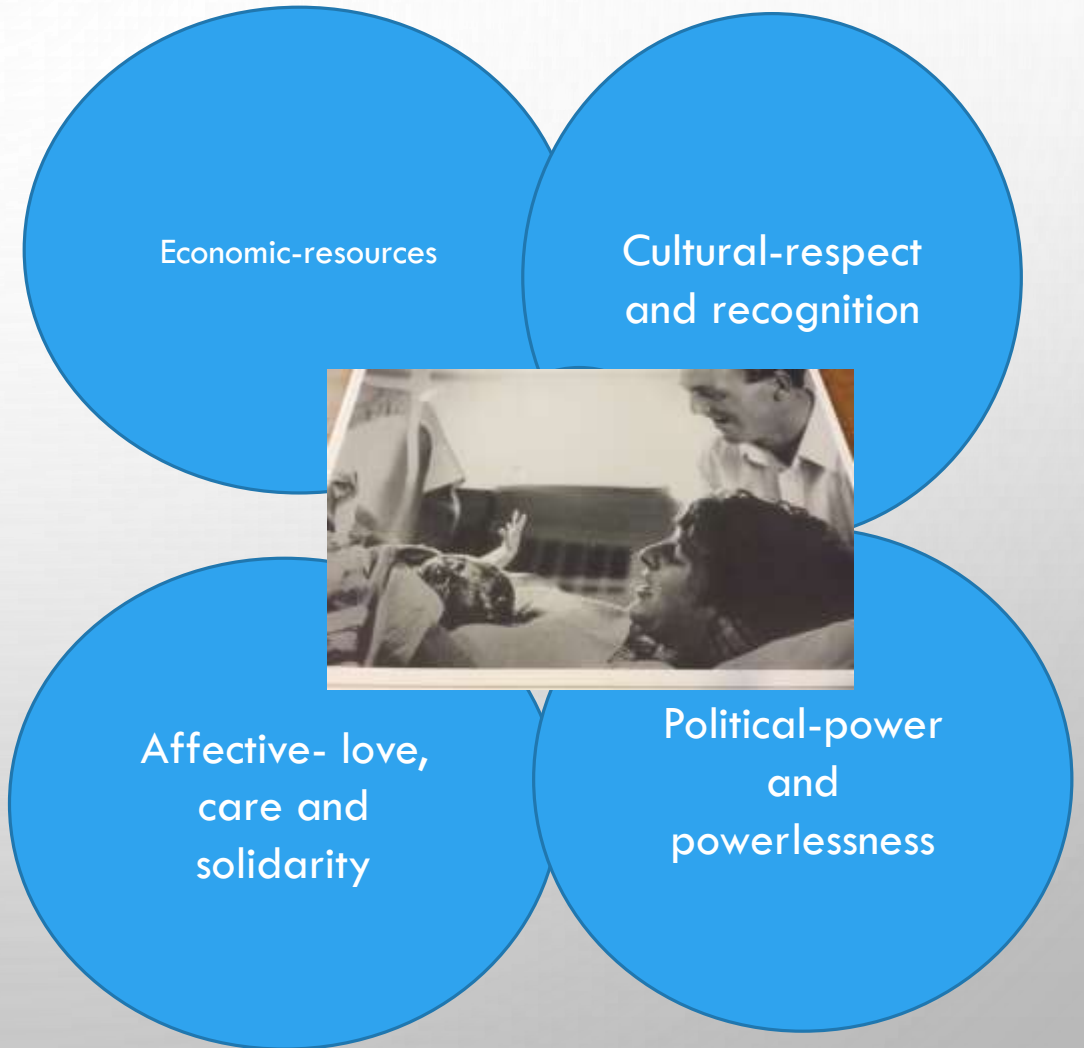
- **I REMEMBER ONE WOMAN, NOT WHO I KEY WORK, BUT JUST WHO I ENCOUNTERED ON ROOM CHECKS ONE DAY. JUST LIKE THAT, GIVING OUT ABOUT THE NOISE AND THE PERSON NEXT DOOR, AND THIS IS BULLSHIT AND THAT IS BULLSHIT. AND NEXT THING, JUST STARTED BAWLING CRYING, AND SHOWED ME A PICTURE OF HER AND HER DAUGHTER. AND IT WAS JUST ALL OF THIS BULLSHIT WAS MASKING WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON. AND WE HAD A CHAT AND SHE WAS LIKE, 'I WAKE UP EVERY DAY AND IT'S THE SAME SHIT. AND I ...' SHE SAID, 'I'M ALMOST FORGETTING MY DAUGHTER BECAUSE I'M SO DISTRACTED, BUT I CAN'T STOP MYSELF BEING DISTRACTED, BECAUSE IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE ON THE COALFACE.' (PROJECT WORKER 5)**
- NONE OF THE SERVICES, WHERE THE WOMEN WERE LIVING, OFFERED ANY SPECIFIC PEER-SUPPORT GROUP OR SPACE WHERE UNACCOMPANIED MOTHERS COULD TALK COLLECTIVELY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF MOTHERHOOD AND SEPARATION FROM THEIR CHILDREN.

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUNG MOTHERS LACKING IN NURTURING AND OTHER CAPITALS.

- “BUT THERE’S A HUGE GAP THERE. I REALLY THINK THERE’S A HUGE GAP...BECAUSE WE HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF YOUNG MOTHERS THAT NEED SUPPORT, AND THAT NEED SOMEONE TO SHOW THEM WHAT TO DO, BECAUSE MAYBE THEY JUST NEVER HAD THAT THEMSELVES, AND NEVER HAD THAT GROWING UP. THERE’S AN AWFUL LOT OF EVEN SHOWING THEM HOW TO CHANGE NAPPIES, HOW TO BATH A CHILD, HOW TO CLEAN A BOTTLE, NEVER MIND STERILISE IT. TO GET THEM, TO PROMPT THEM TO GET UP WHEN THE BABY IS CRYING TWENTY MINUTES AT NIGHT. THEY DON’T KNOW THE BASICS...ALL STAFF WOULD SAY THAT’S WHAT THEY FIND THE MOST STRESSFUL, BECAUSE YOU’RE VERY CONSCIOUS, PARTICULARLY WHEN THERE’S A NEWBORN...”

POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS- A RELATIONAL CONCEPTION OF CARE- *DOULIA*

- A RELATIONAL CONCEPTION OF CARE APPRECIATES THAT THE CAREGIVER HAS CARE NEEDS THAT MUST BE RECOGNISED AND SUPPORTED BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING INEVITABLE ABOUT THE CONTEXTS WITHIN WHICH CARING TAKES PLACE. THOSE WHO ARE MOTHERS NEED CARE FOR THEMSELVES AS PERSONS AND TO BE CARERS OF THEIR CHILDREN (KITAY 1999).



IN THE WORDS OF MELANIE, ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY:

“just people that care and that really actually want to see reunification, want to see the person housed, want to see the person flourishing in life, not just ... This is a job Monday to Friday. I’ll go and whatever”.