



Violence Abuse and Mental Health Network May Newsletter

VAMHN Opportunities

Exciting announcement – the VAMHN is running for one more year!

We are incredibly excited to announce that the VAMHN has secured additional funding from new sources and will be running for another year! We're super excited to continue connecting with our amazing members until 2024. Our activities for the VAMHN's upcoming fifth year will centre around the theme of Coercive Control.

Coercive control sits at the heart of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence, but also plays a central role in many other forms of violence and abuse. Around the world, too little is known about the mechanics and nuances of this highly manipulative form of abuse. Estimates of coercive control have risen year-on-year, with 41,626 offences of coercive control recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2022. However, this figure is a conservative estimate of the problem, given most people do not report their experience to the police.

One of the grants to VAMHN is provided by global business leader, Cristiana Falcone, and her team at the BECS Foundation, which aims to spearhead academic and clinical research into coercive control in the UK. Falcone has 20 years of experience advising global corporations on the boards of Revlon and Viacom, and international governmental organizations including the World Economic Forum. Since 2006, she has served as CEO and trustee of the JMCMRJ Sorrell Foundation, leading transformative global initiatives in health, education and poverty reduction.

Cristiana Falcone commented: *'Across our global society, domestic abuse is a serious intergenerational issue, and one we have a fundamental duty to address. I am honoured to lend my support to King's College London and the VAMHN as leading organisations that are committed to enhancing our understanding of the critical early warning signs. My hope is that we can be even better equipped to stop cases of coercive control and domestic abuse in their tracks.'*

Professor Helen Fisher, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at King's College London and co-leader of the Network, commented: *'Coercive control and domestic abuse*

are critical social issues which demand truly pro-active, interdisciplinary action. We believe strongly in the potential of the pioneering research that those with lived experience, researchers, clinicians, and other members of the VAMHN are leading, and are extremely thankful for the support of advocates such as Cristiana, which is essential to progress this vital work.'

Over the next year, the VAMHN will continue to run the platforms and activities you've been engaging with over the past 4 years, as well as developing some new opportunities for all our members to get involved with. Some of the upcoming activities we've got planned include:

- Recruiting new members of our Lived Experience Advisory Group to strengthen the VAMHN's activities.
- Hosting webinars to share learnings on the challenges and opportunities around tackling coercive control.
- Launching our new podcast series on coercive control called "Pulling the Strings".
- Continuing to send out our monthly newsletters, tweeting from our twitter account (@VAMHN), hosting our online forum and updating our website.

There will be loads of exciting opportunities for get involved with our upcoming activities this year, and we'll be sure to keep you updated through our newsletter and twitter account.

New VAMHN Coordinator

We'd like to give a warm welcome our lovely new Network Coordinator - Marge Zdrojkowska. Marge will take over coordination of the VAMHN's activities from our previous coordinator Anjuli Kaul, and help to run the Network over the coming year. You can continue reach out to our VAMHN Coordinator with any network related queries on our usual email address – vamhn@kcl.ac.uk which will now be managed by Marge.

Survivors' Voices Researcher Network

Are you a researcher with lived experience of any kind of abuse or trauma? Whether you work in research now, hope to soon, are a student, participant, or co-producer the Survivors' Voices Researcher Network may be relevant to you. This Network was created by Survivors' Voices and is funded by the VAMHN. It is a peer led educational exchange and support network which meets for one hour, monthly on zoom.

When we research subjects close to personal traumatic experiences aspects of the process can cause unexpected triggering. Knowing how best to work with these, learn to selfcare and support our traumatised participants can be a work in progress. Even those who support us in academic or institutional contexts may not understand or appreciate the painful struggles survivors face: peers, however, often do. Our shared histories make frank, honest and empathic support possible. Members benefit from the transfer of learning and solutions to difficulties, practical or emotional in every meeting.

The meetings offer a space to share present moment challenges, and triumphs! We discuss best practice and we invite guest speakers. The Network is run in accordance with the

Survivors' Voices Charter for Survivor Engagement which places safety, transparency, equality and respect at its heart. For more information or to join please email Susanna at research@survivorsvoices.org. This information is also available on our website [here](#) so feel free to share with your contacts and networks.

End of Network videos – Arts Competition Projects

We've had a wonderful 4 years of the VAMHN funded by the UKRI and have amassed over 1,200 amazing members from around the world, all with expertise in the field of violence, abuse and mental health. To showcase some of the work we've done during this time, we are releasing a series of videos and resources from our network members.

Our most recent video series showcases the work of the five project teams we funded as part of the VAMHN Arts Competition. In 2021 we launched our fourth funding competition to provide awards of up to £15,000 to artistic public engagement projects that sought to further the public discussion around violence, abuse and mental health. We will be releasing all the videos over the coming days. To find out more about these projects, to access their final outputs and to watch video and executive summaries from each project team, visit our website [here](#).

End of Network videos – Measurement, Understanding and Interventions

Last month, we were tweeting all about the work we've done under the three themes of the network under the hashtags #MeasuringVAMH #UnderstandingVAMH and #VAMHinterventions. You can look at what resources we shared under each hashtag and tag us @VAMHN.

We also launched a series of videos from the project teams who were awarded up to £25k for their research projects under each theme. In these videos, you can find out more about the findings of their VAMHN funded projects, as well as some additional videos from speakers including Nicole Jacobs (Domestic Abuse Commissioner), Concetta Perot and Jane Chevous (Survivors' Voices), and VAMHN grantholders Dr Jude Towers (Edge Hill University), Dr Alana Harris (King's College London) and Dr Leonie Tanczer (University College London). You can watch these videos and read more about their projects on our website [here](#).

Other Training, Events and Opportunities

The 16th Equality, Diversity and Inclusion International Conference (EDI) will take place at City, University of London on the 10th-11th July 2023. To find out more click [here](#).

The annual Nazir Afzal Essay Competition organised by the HARM network is now looking for entries. The essay question is: How is 'honour' abuse different from other forms of domestic abuse? The first prize is £500. Deadline 5th September 2023. To find out more click [here](#).

Ongoing research

Alex Mitchell is an MSc student from the University of Sunderland and is seeking participants who are either survivors of domestic abuse and/or professionals who work with survivors of domestic abuse to take part in a 30 minute interview to gain insight into what supports need to be improved and/or changed for survivors, and insight into the issue of coercive control. If you are interested in taking part, please follow the link [here](#) to be taken to an online survey regarding this study.



Resources

Keeping Students in Mind: Understanding Student Mental Health Research – SMARTen Network

The SMARTen Network has released this podcast to amplify the voices and lived experiences of students in the UK, ensuring that the research and conversations around student mental health are actually addressing their concerns. To listen to the podcast click [here](#).

Intimate partner violence perpetration and mental health service use in England: analysis of nationally representative survey data – Bhavsar et al, 2023

This paper looks at mental health service contact by perpetrators of intimate partner violence. To read the full paper in *BJ Psych Open* click [here](#).

Interpersonal violence and mental health: new findings and paradigms for enduring problems – Howard, 2023

This editorial was written by VAMHN founder Prof. Louise Howard for the VAMHN linked series on Violence, Abuse and Women's Mental Health published in the *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology Journal*. To read the editorial click [here](#), and to access the papers published in this series click [here](#).

For more useful resources and links, take a look at [our website here](#)

VAMHN Forum

Whether you want to share a survey, find collaborators for a bid or discuss a paper you've written, the VAMHN forum is a space for you to do that. To sign up to the forum and start connecting to other VAMHN members click [here](#). Full instructions on how to use the forum can be found on the homepage.

VAMHN Directories

The VAMHN has developed three active directories available on our website for our members to access. To access our directories masterpage click [here](#).

1. **VAMHN Data Directory**

This resource indexes UK datasets, data repositories, and aggregate/published statistics about violence, abuse, and mental health, providing you with information about these resources and how to access them. To access this resource, click [here](#). We'll be continually adding to the data directory, so if you know of a resource that we haven't yet indexed, please tell us about it by completing the template at the bottom of the Directory webpage and emailing to vamhn@kcl.ac.uk. Please note that the resource should be either publicly available or available upon application. You do not need a password to access the data directory.

2. **VAMHN Expert Directory**

Our Expert Directory collates details of Network member expertise – e.g., academics, policy-makers, practitioners, those with lived experience, etc. This resource can be used to help members find experts to help with bids or research or more general questions and queries. To access the Expert Directory webpage click [here](#). **The password to the webpage is UKRInetwork1!**

3. **VAMHN Network Directory**

This directory is for organisations and networks – again, academic, policy-making, practitioner, lived experience, third sector, voluntary sector, etc. These may be formal or informal; organisations, discussion forums, mailing lists; etc. The resource can be used to help members find relevant networks to join, to signpost others to and potentially to help with bids or research or more general questions and queries. To access the Network Directory webpage click [here](#). **The password to the webpage is UKRInetwork1!**

Both the expert and network directory webpages include instructions on how to use them effectively, and also include a video introduction from our network co-investigator Dr Jude Towers.

If you would like to add your details either the expert or network directory, you can download the template form from our website at the web-links above and send to vamhn@kcl.ac.uk.

We hope you find the directories useful! If you would like to refer these directories onto colleagues who are not currently members of the VAMHN, please kindly ask them to join the network [here](#) and contact us at vamhn@kcl.ac.uk to request the password.

4. **VAMHN Blog Directory**

Our blog directory which contains blogs by people with lived and living experience of violence, abuse and mental health. The blogs are about diverse forms of domestic and sexual violence, diverse types of mental health and different experiences of services e.g. health, policing, research etc. To access the blog directory, click [here](#). The password to the webpage is *UKRInetwork1!* For any and all enquiries about this directory please contact vamhn@kcl.ac.uk.



Useful Links

VAMHN website: <https://www.vamhn.co.uk/>

VAMHN twitter: @VAMHN

If you have any collaboration or funding opportunities, events or resources for our newsletter, or you would like your organisation to be featured in our community spotlight, please contact us at vamhn@kcl.ac.uk

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