

Lone Mothers and Photovoice:
Reducing Marginalization
through Action

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Moncton Campus

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Participatory Action Research (PAR) or CBPR

- A collaborative approach
- With all involved equitably as partners
- Recognizing the unique strengths of each member
- Combining knowledge for community improvement



PAR..

- Attempts to reduce power differences
- Involves shared learning
- Means cooperation and shared responsibility
- Can strengthen the community



Photovoice as method of PAR

- Combines picture taking with telling the stories behind the pictures
- **VOICE =**Voicing **O**ur Individual and **C**ollective **E**xperiences
- Respects local expertise and world view of participants



Photovoice aims to...

- Reach, inform, and organize people to enable discussion of priority concerns, problems, and solutions.
- Invite people to promote their own and their community's well-being.



Photovoice...

- “...is a method that enables people to define for themselves and others, including policy makers, what is worth remembering and what needs to be changed”.





Theoretical Foundation

- **Paulo Freire:** dialogue, community, lived experience, praxis, consciousness leading to transformation/liberation.
- **Feminist Theory:** power, representation and voice in relation to gender; respect of diversity.
- **Documentary Photography:** power of the visual image for change.
- **Health Promotion:** empowerment, reflexivity, holism, equity, sustainability.

Themes/Issues

- Finances
- Transportation
- Public Services
- Stress
- Place

- Violence/Abuse
- Personal Development
- Social Support

Finances

It is so easy to take the essential things in life for granted: healthy food, clean clothes, activities, work) to name a few. However, many of us live with limited resources and daily must make difficult choices on how scarce resources are spent—even when we know they are a compromise on our family's level of health and wellness.



Additional to 'The Utmost Drive'
Currency is another tool that provides status, food, warmth, and entertainment. Our approach needs to be responsible, not obsessive.



The Meaning of Money
Money is a reflection of what you make it. It can be used powerfully, possibly bringing our generosity and creative thing. However, it can dominate our minds with worry, burdening us, and suppressing our creativity.



Finances can be confusing, we feel trapped. Then there is the eternal hope of financial freedom that lottery offer us. However this elusive dream becomes a mental barrier to experiencing life to its fullest.



Laundromat Wash - \$1.75, Dry - \$1.00.



Vacations and Traveling should be for everyone.



Change and Recreation encourage team and social interactions and physical and mental well being (self-esteem and personal development). There are many barriers though membership costs, transportation outfits, and tournament expenses.



Attitude determines perspective. We try to avoid the puddles because they are messy, uncomfortable, and costly. Like the ripples of a puddle, finances affect every aspect of our lives. We are in the middle, caught up in the movement, and can feel to enjoy ordinary things around us.



We are what we eat -
Pop 2 Liters: 69 cents / Milk 2 Liters \$3.00.
It is so important to put good things into our life if we and our children are to grow and develop to our potential. You can't run a car without the proper fuel and the same goes for our bodies.



Give a child a puzzle and he is a king for a day.
Children need us that sometimes we have to take a risk. Despite limited resources we can capture the essence of life and live in the moment.
We want our children to be confident and have equal opportunities, even if they are limited financially.



SHATTERED LIVES



**The Photos That Aren't:
Too Personal,
Too Painful...**



Where's the Play in Playground?
Things that should represent safety and fun are threatened by violence, despair, and addictions.



Services are in place but what's behind those services can lead to The Photos That Aren't

Violence



Services are in place but what's behind those services can lead to The Photos That Aren't



Loneliness
Paper torn from a book in anger—like families that are torn apart through violence.



Do we know our neighbours and what they might be experiencing? Or do we avoid knowing what is happening to people around us, people who are hurting? Are we keeping abuse alive by our silence, our fear of getting involved?



Risky Escape - Moving from entrapment and pain to freedom and the unknown.



Once a tree is cut there is no return to its original way of living. Like people experiencing abuse the question becomes how life can ever be good again; how we can ever return to a normal life.



The roots of this tree remind me that the experience of abuse is like having your Self exposed, without giving consent or even having awareness. But roots also represent growth and therefore, the hope of returning to a place of safety, comfort, and productivity.



Peace and Contentment
For me, living in the corner of an attic in peace with a morsel of food is better than living in a palace with a banquet and strife. I am safe and free to be me!

Dissemination/Action:

Presenting research findings to the public, media, and local government officials.

Marguerit, co-researcher

Nancy Hartling, community partner

Moncton Mayor Lorne Mitton, PI



Open House: Support to Single Parents, Inc. February 14th to 16th



Single moms focus of photo research project

■ Photo expo chronicles everyday lives of women

BY JAMES FOSTER
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

An innovative research project that armed single moms with cameras with which to document their lives will be showcased in Moncton.

"Single Mothers and Photovoice" is a community-based action research project facilitated by Dr. Lynne Duffy of the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Nursing in Moncton, in partnership with Support to Single Parents and its executive director, Nancy Hartling.

The photo expo is the result of community health-assessment research that took place in Metro Moncton last year.

"Several single mothers became co-researchers," Hartling says, "and with cameras in hand, captured and described many aspects of their everyday lives."

"The main themes that emerged from the study are creatively presented through their photos and stories in a visual display."

Besides the photos, the researchers involved in the study will also be on hand throughout the Feb. 14 showing to explain the idea behind the exposition and to answer questions.

The information presented will prove helpful to single parents, community agencies, city councils and anyone interested in the

health and well-being of communities.

Besides building up the women's sense of empowerment and community, the expo's findings should increase community awareness and lead to further action to improve community health and quality of life for people who have low incomes in the Metro Moncton area.

Photovoice is a process that has been used in many parts of the world. Through photography, less advantaged people are able to find their voices and express themselves.

Viewers of the photos are offered a rare close-up view of their lives. The photos allow others to see those involved in Photovoice projects as real individuals and to change the perception some hold of others as victims or as being simply irrelevant to the rest of society.

It also offers researchers some keen insight into their study subjects.

"A process like Photovoice that has been used in many parts of the world enables people to define for themselves and others, including policy makers, what is worth remembering and what needs to be changed to make our communities happier, safer and more just places to live."

The exposition of those photos will be held at Support to Single Parents, 154 Queen St. in Moncton on Feb. 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; on Feb. 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Feb. 16 from 9 a.m. to noon.

■ For further information, contact Duffy at 856-2682 or via e-mail at lduffy@unb.ca



Tina

Report to Codiac Transit: May 10th





Tina, Marguerit, John Allain, Cathy



What was the experience like?

- All through my life, no matter what I have done, I have never felt like I belonged. Doing this research is the first time I felt I belonged. It has been amazing. I feel more a part of the community and take a stand when needed.

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- At first I thought ok, I will take pictures and I didn't think anything would come of it, but we have done things together and even on my own.
 - My confidence has gone up and I am able to talk in public with little or no anxiety. I was on social assistance when I started and now I'm employed.

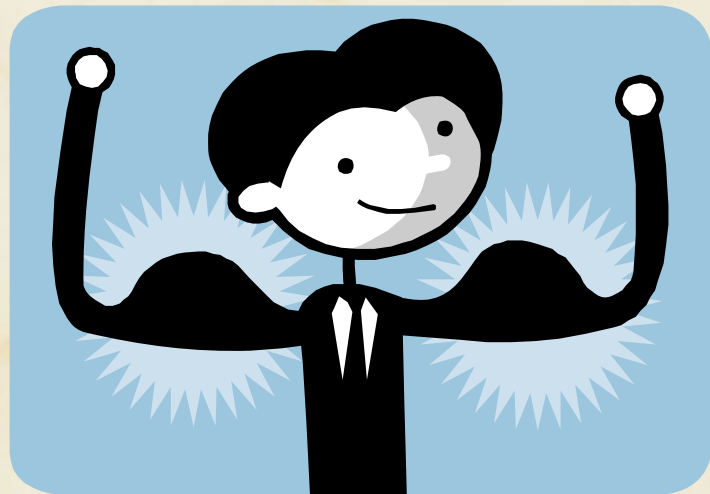
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- After leaving an abusive relationship I didn't believe in or trust myself; always being told that women weren't worth hearing from. I questioned whether I should be there—in the public. Now I'm doing what I want to do and have stopped worrying about the past.
 - I still hear those voices telling me I shouldn't speak, but the difference is I don't listen to them anymore.

- In part, Photovoice gave me back my voice and was a step toward an increase in my self worth. It was a wonderful learning experience about each other, our city, and life.
- The project kept me focused and gave me tasks when I was down—I was appreciated for my presence even when I wasn't able to do much.



Empowerment

All the women report that their level of empowerment has gone from a low level 2 years ago to moderate or moderately high.





Empowerment

- “...Confidence, control, decision authority, influence, autonomy and self-trust.”
- Developed through relationships, social networks
- Self-efficacy (e.g. Bandura), mastery, competency.



Empowerment

- “...is part of a process where individuals who have little say in what happens to them, become conscious that they have a voice, that they have a right to use that voice to have a say in what happens to them, and that what happens to them personally is related to what happens in the social, political, and economic world around them” (Breton, 2002, p. 25).



Community Empowerment

- Interrelated with personal empowerment
- Multi-level—people gaining control of their own lives while participating with others to change contextual realities
- Decision-making, participation, networking, leadership development, and social change are part of an empowering process.



Empowerment and PAR

1. **Conscientization** (Change at the personal level, e.g. cognitive restructuring)
2. **Social Action** (Change at the collective level, e.g. socio-political restructuring)

Social problems are not rooted in the individuals who experience them.

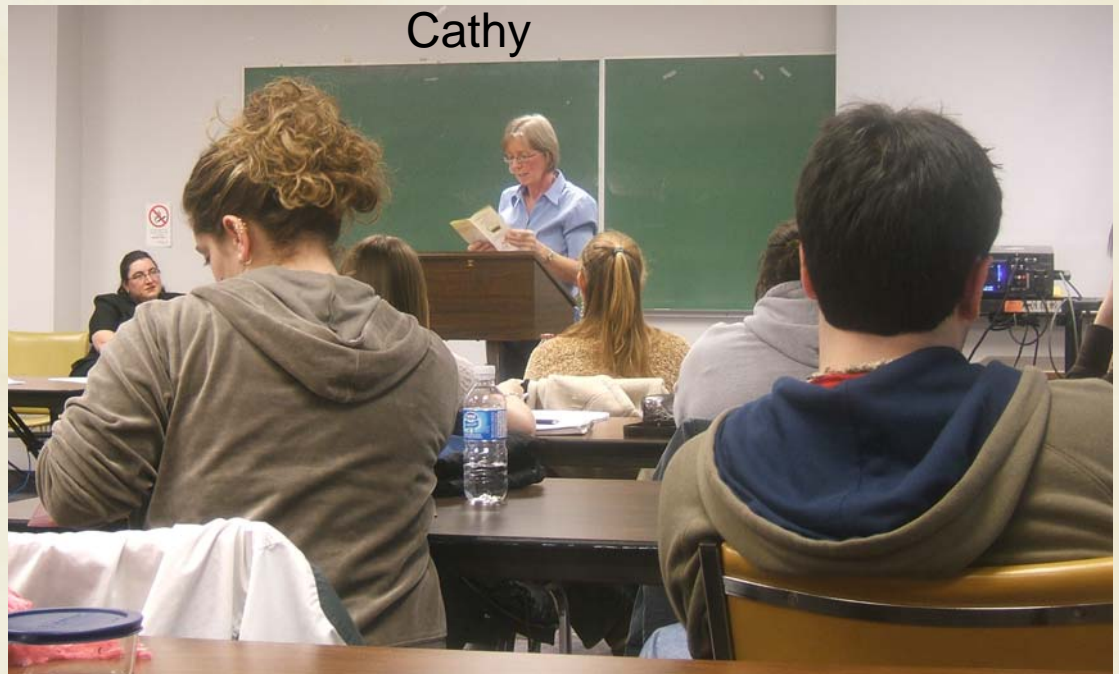
Empowered Voices

- We've become a solid unit. We co-exist for a purpose.
- It brought me in touch with others going through similar phases; breaking the isolation to be in contact with other women, to get out and speak out.

Marguerit



Photovoice started us thinking. We began to really assess our living conditions and from there began to make changes. It started 'inwardly'- our perception determines our attitude, attitude determines our thoughts, words, actions...Then we started educating, advocating- that's empowering.



- I'm more honest with myself and others; more able to express emotions, feelings, how it is— voicing these instead of keeping it inside like I used to.
- The project gave us a mission and a voice— both are empowering.

Left to Right:
Cathy, April, Tina
Interviewed by a
Mt. Allison
Student for a
sociology project.




We have gone from being a small group into wider connections and actions...

- I find myself helping younger women with child care and relationship issues.
- I never thought I would be volunteering but I am. We want to improve our neighbourhood, to bring some pride back to the housing project.

Public
Housing
Playground



- 
- I have started a sewing club to teach women to sew and maybe some will start a business (Cathy);
 - We're "healing women, one stitch at a time"



“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”





Our role...

- Help people believe in themselves and in their ability to bring about change.
- Help them to gain pride and confidence in themselves.
- Create opportunities to do things in a better way, to enable the community to act on its own.
- Be an agent of change, not only for health care, but for the awakening of people to their potential and ability to make things happen.

References

On request:

lduffy@unb.ca

- Photovoice research
- Empowerment
- Participatory action research

Photovoice website:

www.photovoice.com

